



How to Feel Better in a Matter of Minutes

Stress makes us feel bad. Muscles contract, breathing gets shallow, we feel anxiety or dread, etc. What compounds this problem is we tend to automatically suppress negative feelings such as sadness, fear and anger. We can temporarily escape those feelings by watching television, shopping, drinking or do a myriad of other behaviors. But the problem with these escape behaviors is that they do nothing to raise our energy level. The temporary feeling simply masks the feelings we are avoiding.

So what is a better way to deal with stress? You have to “get into your body.” It’s all about where your attention is focused. Most of the time, our attention is directed either outside of us or in our heads. The way to begin paying attention to your body is to ask yourself the question, what does my stomach area feel like or what does my chest area feel like? Is my stomach area soft and relaxed or tight and contracted? Is my heart area open or closed? Is my jaw clenched or relaxed? Any of these questions immediately puts you in your body.

Once you are there, you’re now in a position to relax and release. As you read this sentence, stop and notice how your

body feels and in what areas you might be experiencing tension. Let go of the resistance to feeling these feelings and welcome them. Allow yourself to feel whatever it is that you feel and breathe through the feelings. Notice how the feelings subside or change or get replaced by another feeling - possibly a more pleasant one.

There is a story of a man who goes to a prophet and asks him how he can get to the Gates of Heaven. The prophet tells him to roam the desert until he discovers a huge sword that will point him directly to the Gates of Heaven. The man does as instructed and eventually finds the huge sword. Feeling a little intimidated, he takes a step back and the sword moves a little towards him. Then he takes several steps back and the sword gets even closer. He turns around and starts to walk away and the sword follows him. He begins to run and the sword is right at his back. No matter how fast he runs, the sword stays with him. Exhausted, he stops and turns to face the sword, at which point the sword stops and points the man directly to the Gates of Heaven.

We all unconsciously run from our fears, hurts, regrets, etc. But if you face them and feel them, you’ll often discover that there are no feelings stronger than that of your spirit. Once you come to this realization, you’ll feel better, more relaxed, less fearful and more in control. The following are tips to feel better in a matter of minutes:

- STOP.
- Get in your body by paying attention to it.
- Feel your feelings; breathe through them.
- Open your heart to all that is good. Take a break from your fears, angers and disappointments. Find something/anything to feel grateful about.

This is a simple way to take care of yourself, and if you make these suggestions a habit, it will significantly change your life for the better. **HB**

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