

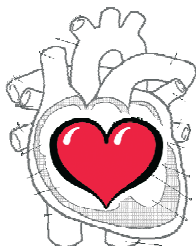


MENTAL HEALTH

“Auntie” Stress

by Marianna Paulson

Read this. It's good for your heart



Ahhhh - Amore! Love!
L'amour! All symbolized by the month of February. Even The Heart & Stroke Foundation has chosen to make this “their” month.

So, what's all the fuss about? Plain and simple, it's the heart. We often defer to the brain when it comes to the important decisions in our life, however we need to be aware of the power of the heart. Those chocolates that are passed around in February are not brain-shaped for a reason!

Scientists know that there is a brain in the heart, which communicates with the brain sending and receiving information. Based on this information, our body is constantly making physiological adjustments. Ever have a near-miss while driving? What happened afterwards? You were probably shaky, for one thing – that's a very noticeable adjustment that the body made – it released adrenaline, along with a cascade of other hormones, in response to that

frightening event.

Unless we learn to change our perceptions, other events, which we often describe as 'just life', trigger the same hormonal cascade, regardless of whether or not it is a true life or death situation. What type of events, you ask? It could be anything from over-sleeping, to hitting every red light when you're late, or the kids are scrapping, business worries, traffic...Multiply these events over time and they can show up as aches & pains, fatigue, frustration, lack of concentration, irritability, poor memory, inability to sleep well, health concerns, etc.

Our interpretation of these events wears out our nervous system and ages us. Cortisol, “the stress hormone”, is produced in response to how we think and feel. This is important to know, because as cortisol production

increases DHEA, “the vitality or anti-aging hormone” is reduced. Think of it like a teeter-totter. Cortisol goes up – DHEA goes down. So, if you've ever heard yourself say, “I feel and look old and tired”, you'll have an idea of what is contributing to that. The great news is that by learning how to change the way you interpret the events in your life, you are immediately making a positive change in your body.

So, for the month that has come to symbolize love, allow the power of your heart the opportunity to increase your joy, and thus living a better life. Why not celebrate February year-round?

By Marianna Paulson - “Auntie-Stress”

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