



MENTAL HEALTH

“Auntie” Stress

It's About *Bloomin'* Time!

by
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It's About *Bloomin'* Time

Bette Midler summed it up when she sang the following lines from “The Rose”.

...just remember in the winter
far beneath the bitter snows
lies the seed that with the
sun's love
in the spring becomes the
rose.

I moved to B.C. in 1993 from Thunder Bay, Ont. Dare I say that spring always meant pussy willows and ever-so-slow-to-bud leaves. My first winter here was one of rain like I'd never seen. Once the deluge let up, I was astonished at the gradual unveiling of the “Spring Flowers”. Such colour & scents – a virtual, visual and olfactory feast!

This spring has me reflecting upon my own “*blossoming*” - no, I don't mean *that!* For decades, I have lived under an umbrella of stress – most of it self-induced. Some of you may be able to relate – the voice that replays a situation – over & over & over again. Or, the 2 part “conversation” you have in your head - “He'll say such & such.” “Then, I'll say ---.” To which, he'll respond with---.”

Let's not forget the other 'voice' – the one that tells you that you can't do that because you're too old, too young, not good, pretty or smart enough. Anybody have a visit from Mr. Pessimism? “I can't do that because it **never** turns out anyway.” Best not to try for fear of getting hurt or disappointed.

It wasn't until I started doing the work that I now do, that I realized that a lot of those types of thoughts are created by anxiety, which is one of the many masks that stress dons. Stress can contribute to the following: fear, worry, depression, loneliness, anger, frustration...

We've learned, from our various experiences (family, school, social) to protect ourselves. This can include withdrawing from society, obsessive compulsive behaviours or pessimism, to name just a few. At the time, we did the best that we could or that we knew how to do. The problem arises because it may not be the best for us now that we're at this stage in life. In protecting ourselves, we keep everything out, including the good stuff – the things that bring quality and joy to our lives. That has been a huge “ah-ha!” for me. How many of you have secret desires that you stop

yourself from doing/pursuing? Take it from me, you'll have a lot more energy and happiness when you quiet the “static” that is in your head.

How do you make changes? Start by listening to the voice that comes from your heart. It's the one that doesn't get heard too often when stress is running your life.

Learn to transform those stress hormones and you'll be amazed at your *bloomin'* success. I know that I am!

Spring is here, so it's time to uncover those *rose bushes* that have been dormant for far too many *winters*.



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