



## **Managing Disruptions of Energy**

Most people are aware of the fight-flight response associated with stress. We all know what it feels like! What we are less aware of is the complex internal dance of biochemical, neurological and energetic changes that underlie the stress response. It is not necessary to know all the details about this physiological experience; however it is helpful to have some basic knowledge that can help with positive choices that interrupt the cycle and bring about better outcomes for health and well being.

Decades ago early stress research provided us with many tools to manage and eliminate the effects of stress on our body and mind. Recent research has expanded our understanding of stress, its consequences and effective remedies to include energy modalities. We respond first at an energetic level to our world and so it is particularly effective to intervene at that level in order to reduce the damaging effects of stress.

### **Energy and the Stress Response**

When we are stressed or threatened there is an increase in our flow of energy. This increased flow precedes the biochemical and emotional shifts that prepare us for fight or flight. Fight or flight was a viable option when we lived in the jungle but are not effective choices in our modern world! When neither fight nor flight are possible or appropriate we must override our inner pressure and the result is an energetic contradiction within our bodymind: energy is both activated and inhibited.

The influx of energy and subsequent biochemistry that occurs during stress is a survival mechanism designed to function in the short term. It is not meant to be a preferred or permanent management tool! With acute physical danger when the fight/flight response is triggered and then the stress has passed there is a balancing effect that occurs as the relaxation

response kicks in. With the kind of stress that we typically face today this does not occur and we are left with all that energy/biochemistry that was triggered. The result is that our systems wear down and out over time and eventually illness can take hold.

If trauma or stress is repeated over time with no safe place for release and discharge of the activated energy, it results in a condition of frozen intensity known as tonic immobility or the freeze response. Energy becomes locked in the trauma and full, free expression on all levels by the affected person is inhibited. This certainly happens with overwhelming trauma, but can also occur as a result of chronic repetitive levels of stress.

Damage to our energy can also occur through physical injury, emotional hurt, or lack of attention to a particular aspect of our being. A common example in our culture of the latter is the overdevelopment of the intellect to the detriment of emotional energy or a focus on the physical/material at the expense of spiritual or creative energies that add meaning, purpose and richness to life.

Another quite common source of damage to our energy system is limited belief systems, conditioned responses, restrictive & exhausting habits. All these things can create negative consequences on personal energy. Methods that work to heal and transform ourselves from the inside out aid to rebalance the energy system and reactive, conditioned responses and destructive habits can more easily be released. The result is that energy is returned to the system and it becomes easier to develop new more powerful ways of approaching the challenges of life.

### **Energy Excess/Deficiency**

*Our energy is our power. Dissipating it or binding it in negativity renders us powerless.*

So, to cope with stress we increase, decrease or freeze our energy. An increase or excess of energy in the system is manifested as a pattern of overcompensation for fear or weakness. We see this in individuals who dominate situations and people. On the surface this may *look like* a powerful approach. However, internally the excessive energy required to accomplish this behavioral style tends to become stagnant and create a

health problem for the individual in whatever area of the body the excess has accumulated.

A decrease in energy or a freezing response is manifested in withdrawal in order to avoid conflict or challenge. This deficient energy state produces a feeling of being unable to cope, or *have what it takes* to work through situations, hence retreat is chosen. Unfortunately this often has the consequence of reinforcing the original state and the person experiences even more of a sense of emptiness, restriction, and uselessness.

How can we know how we are managing the invisible inner resource of energy? Our bodies **and** habits give us clues. Behavior is an outward manifestation of how we are managing energy but the shape our body takes as well as in how we carry ourselves also gives us evidence of how we are managing energy. Pay attention to how you carry your body. How do you stand, sit and walk? Do you stand tall or do you hunch over or inward? Do you breathe deep from your belly or shallow from the top of your lungs. Perhaps you don't even notice.

It may feel daunting at first to begin to see yourself and others through the eyes of energy. It is a wonderful way to learn more though. This deeper awareness is the start of learning new, more efficient ways to effect change. Our energy systems are highly responsive to change and there are a wide variety of approaches that can be used for transformation. This is truly preventative healthcare in action.

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