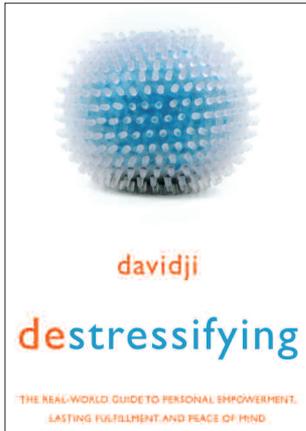


Plugging Into Peace



Stress is universal. It touches everyone. But some handle stress better than others. In his newest book, “destressifying: The Real-World Guide to Personal Empowerment, Lasting Fulfillment and Peace of Mind,” author, stress-management expert and meditation teacher davidji shares his secrets and tools to manage stress and transform the way we live our lives.

“The main reason most people suffer with stress is because they don’t have the right tools to address it,” he says in the book. “It’s the reason I twisted for more than 20 years in the corporate world, struggling with restless sleep, living without balance, feeling overwhelmed, and searching for deeper fulfillment

that rarely seemed to come . . . and was fleeting when it did.”

In the book, davidji maps out the five keys to living a “destressified life,” including Mastering Your Awareness, Mastering Your Needs and Mastering Your Emotions, and breaks it into three parts. The first teaches readers about stress, the second teaches how to master destressifying, and the last assists readers in keeping the practice going every day.

“We all face stress and we will continue to — in our big moments and our quiet contemplations. destressifying will allow you to face it; move through it; transcend it with grace and ease; and come out the other side stronger, calmer, braver, clearer, more powerful, and masterful in living life on planet Earth.”

The below excerpt is taken from Chapter 4 — Beyond Stress: The destressifying Response, and details one of the techniques offered in the book.

destressifiers have highly sharpened coping practices that they use in stressful scenarios. Regardless of what’s happening in their environment, they moderate their stress levels, keeping them low, which guarantees that the response is short-lived and its impact is negligible. Our society’s most visible “performers” have regular destressifying rituals they employ in the face of millions of fans, global TV audiences, screaming detractors, big money, and high pressure stakes. The next time a big game is on, or you’re at a concert or a play, or you’re watching a live show, spend a few minutes observing the stars taking deep breaths, closing their eyes for a moment, settling in, anchoring their feet, tightening their muscles . . . then relaxing them. This is all designed to allow them to release stress, calm the mind, relax the body, and be their best in the moment, or what we call self-actualized.

SQUEEZE&RELEASE

Let’s try one of the most powerful destressifying techniques, known as *squeeze&release*.



davidji, author
of “destressifying:
*The Real-World
Guide to Personal
Empowerment,
Lasting Fulfillment
and Peace of Mind*”

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Think of something stressful that has been troubling you for the past month. Play it over in your mind. Connect to the emotion it makes you feel. Say it out loud. Now locate the feeling of discomfort it creates someplace in your body. Maybe it's your throat, your heart, your chest, your solar plexus, or your belly. Place your fingers on your whole hand on that space. Rate the level of stress it makes you feel on a scale of 1 to 10.

Now take a deep breath in and make a really tight fist with your right hand (it's okay to move your hand away from the "stress spot" where you just had it). Keep holding your breath. Holding that fist tight, tense your right arm from your wrist to your forearm, elbow, bicep . . . right up to your shoulder. Hold this tension and your breath for about ten seconds, and then release both. Next do the same with your left side, starting with taking a deep breath in, clenching your left fist, and then extending the squeeze up through your left arm. Hold that tension and your breath for about ten seconds, and then release both. Shake it out.

Now do the same with your right foot, ankle, calf, and thigh for about ten seconds, taking a deep breath in and holding it as you squeeze all those muscles really tightly. Release your breath and muscles at the same time. Next do the same on your left side, squeezing the muscles in your foot, ankle, calf, and thigh for about ten seconds, taking a deep breath in and holding it as you squeeze all those muscles really tightly. Release your breath and your muscles simultaneously. Shake it out.

Now take a long, slow, deep breath in. Tense your arms and legs on both sides, hold your breath, and then tighten your belly as well . . . just for ten seconds. Hold it. Hold it. Keep holding it. Just a little bit longer. And now release it all — your breath, your fists, arms, feet, legs, and belly. Just rest for a few seconds and let the blood return to the rest of your body. You may actually feel it move back into your head, pelvis, neck, and back. Now take a long, slow, deep breath in through your nostrils, and sigh as you exhale through your mouth. Breathe in and out three more times, and sigh as you exhale. And, when you're done with the last sigh, breathe normally and just observe your body and mind.

That was just under a minute. And in that minute, the tension we placed on our physiology pooled all the blood in our body in those selected areas, chemically stimulating a fight-or-flight moment without an external threat. We stressed our body — but only for a minute.

Because we moved that "stressor" around from side to side, from upper to lower extremities, and then tensed our core — surging blood into our belly — we triggered a familiar fight-or-flight physical sensation, connecting with our autonomic nervous system. The amazing thing is that the formal act of releasing then sent a signal to our bodymind that the threat was over, powering down the fight-or-flight response and all its repercussions.

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