

AVOIDING dealing with problems and AVOIDING suffering is the source of mental illness.

DISCIPLINE is the key to solving problems. --The Road Less Traveled, M. Scott Peck

STRESS & DEPRESSION: KEYS

Guidelines to increase vital Neurotransmitters in the Brain....(Serotonin, Dopamine, Endorphins, Oxytocin, and Norepinephrine)

EXERCISE: 30 min 5-7 days a week both cardio and muscle work/weights to reduce stress hormones and boost the natural "feel good" hormone endorphin.

SLEEP: 7-9 hours on a schedule to enhance your natural circadian rhythm, & decrease stress hormones

DIET: Boost "brain foods" (nuts, seeds, healthy omega-3 fats, antioxidant fruits & veggies), balance meals with lean protein, and limit sugars and simple "empty carbs" (bread, pasta, rice, potato).

VALUES: Going against what you feel is right depletes Serotonin and Dopamine...and self-esteem.

PRODUCTIVITY: Completing a task or projects gives us a sense of accomplishment which boosts Dopamine levels, fuels pride, and promotes self-confidence.

"PLAY": Kids do this well—but we forget as adults we still need to feed our soul and curiosities by making time to do those things that bring us joy, as they enable us to be more resilient when life throws us curve-balls or 2020!

LIGHT: Living in northern hemisphere light can be low and contribute "SAD" (Seasonal Affective Disorder) with dropping Vitamin D levels. Get outdoors into natural light or if not possible, trial "happy" UV lights during dark seasons...this naturally boosts your Serotonin levels!

HUMOR: Laughing and watching comedy increases endorphins our pleasure hormones, and lightens spirits. Avoid/limit dark or sad movies, books, or news broadcasts if your moods are vulnerable.

KINDNESS: Little gestures of kindness such as giving someone a compliment, holding the door for a stranger, helping your partner with a chore...can improve moods and increase the release of Oxytocin as well as earn good-will from those your kindness touched!

NATURE: Take a walk outdoors—nature is grounding, brings relaxation, and promotes Serotonin release.

STRESS MEDIATION: Make a list of life stressors, separate them into those you have control over (even if difficult, like making a career change) and those you truly have no control of (we all have them). Start prioritizing those things you can influence, and actively release responsibility over those things you hold no power over. De-clutter your time from fillers (Facebook, TV, etc), so you can make room for those things that truly fuel happiness and fulfillment (family, art, active-play, music, self-care, etc).

HUMAN TOUCH: Hugs, holding hands, cuddles (furry animals count), and human contact are powerful healing tools and allow us to be more resilient to those burdens that are out of our control. Isolation depletes neurotransmitters and allows negative thoughts to predominate. Stay connected!

****Suggested Reading:***

-Mindset: The New Psychology of Success: (by Carol S. Dweck)

-Fearless: (by Max Lucado)

-Loving What Is (by Byron Katie)

-The New Earth / The Power of Now (by Eckart Tolle)

-Feeling Good: (by David Burns)

-Panic to Power: (by Lucinda Bassett)

****Apps for your phones to help track and journal moods:***

-Moodnotes

-Moody

-Thought Diary

-Tangerine

-Headspace

Supplements that may be helpful at boosting spirits:

-Vitamin D3 2000 to 4000 units / day for bones, immune, and seasonal affective spirit changes

-Magnesium supplement prior to bed for natural calming affects

-Omega-3's from supplement and/or food for natural anti-inflammatory affects and "brain-food"

-Methylated Folate (B Vitamin with Methyl Group) promotes serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine.

-SAM-e daily supplement for Serotonin affect