

To better cope with stress, listen to your body

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

To handle stress and adversity more effectively, we should probably pay closer attention to what is happening inside our bodies, according to a fascinating new brain study of resilience and why some people seem to have more of it than others.

We live in difficult times. Worries about the state of our world, our safety, our finances, health and more can lead to a variety of physiological and psychological responses.

“When faced with stress, whether it’s giving a talk in front of a hundred people or feeling pressured to get a second gold medal at the Olympics, we experience changes in our body,” said Lori Haase, a clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California in San Diego and lead author of the new study. Our heart rates rise, breathing grows shallow, and blood levels of adrenaline and other stress chemicals soar.

While this stress response can have desirable results – “I need anxiety to motivate myself to write a grant,” Haase said – it can easily get out of hand.

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