

## **The Stress Hormone that can make you FAT!**

**Cortisol is referred to as our body's primary "stress hormone"** but in fact it is the body's natural stress-fighting and anti-inflammatory hormone. Stress, either physical or emotional or even lack of sleep, will cause the adrenal gland to over release adrenaline. Cortisol is produced in response to the over release of adrenaline. Cortisol causes hunger and cravings and therefore encourages your body to store fat. It is not just a "mental" thing when you crave comfort food during times of stress. Cortisol causes that hunger and those cravings when you are feeling stress.

Stewart is correct; there are stresses we encounter in life that can be positive. An example of this might be the "stress" he is putting himself through as a part of the Ultimate Fitness Quest. He is stressing his body in new ways, and as part of sharing his experience he is under deadlines and pressures to write about and share his experiences. Still, so long as he is enjoying the experience and engaged in the process, this can be positive stress. The kind of stress that harms us the most is from things we tolerate on a day to day basis. Examples can be as simple as daily traffic we encounter, unpleasant situations that we tolerate at work or home, tasks that continuously loom over us as "undone" or that overwhelm us, or relationships that no longer serve us but we still tolerate. From time to time we will all encounter stressful situations that challenge us in new ways, and this is a part of life.

We need tools and inner resources to deal with stress more than ever in our fast paced society. It is not just about work-life balance. Rather, it is a matter of having tools and self awareness to deal with our everyday experiences in a way that we can move calmly amidst the chaos, as the eye

of the hurricane is the quiet place in the middle of the storm. There are many techniques we can use to manage stress.

- **Journaling** If you have a negative experience you need to “let go of” write it down and then create a ritual to release or let go of it – burn it and let the ashes go to the winds ...
- **Practice Acceptance.** The first and most important part of dealing with a difficult situation is acceptance. Accept things as they are and decide what you want to do to move forward.
- **Commit to Action Steps** to effectively deal with whatever situation you are currently encountering and to move you toward the outcome you wish to have in this situation.
- **Meditation.** We discussed earlier in this program the power of meditation as an antidote to stress.
- **Yoga** – Yoga comes from a Sanskrit word “yug” or to yoke or unite. Through Yoga we can unite all aspects of our being: mind-body-spirit-emotions & intellect; through that union we are better able to manage stress we encounter in our day to day lives.

Understand that in times of intense stress it is a “win” just to maintain your progress; tune in and listen to the wisdom of your body. Having a strong foundation and a healthy lifestyle structure to fall back on in times of stress is a very positive thing.

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