

How to Alleviate Stress and Anxiety

The first step toward alleviating stress is to identify the point from which both stress and anxiety originate. Most commonly, stress and anxiety occur when our unreasonable desires create a disparity between what we desire and what we have. Therefore, to eliminate stress we must first eliminate the first two levels of desire: desire for lust and desire for wealth. If we do not desire the physical pleasures that lead to attachment (and therefore stress when the object of attachment is lost) and if we do not desire the acquisition of material possessions, then we can focus on the last two levels of desire: service and freedom. If we desire only to give of ourselves to others and to know the ultimate Truth and unity, then we can lead a life of purpose unencumbered by stress.

If we understand the difference between the four levels of desire, then we can discriminate between what is important and what is superficial. Knowing that desires for physical pleasure and material gain are inconsequential and not worth pursuing, we can relinquish these desires and focus on serving, giving, and knowing. This understanding will remove the disparity between what we desire and what we possess, because we can always obtain an unlimited amount of giving. Furthermore, if we desire freedom and detachment, our attainment of these desires can never be taken away from us by “takers”.

Focusing on the desire for wealth and physical gratification only creates fear and anxiety that arise when the gap between what we have and what we want cannot be bridged. The first two levels of desire focus on the reward rather than the process, and this erroneous focus only

increases stress because the fear that the desire will not be met interferes with the process of attaining that desire.

Once you have moved beyond the first two levels of desire, you will mitigate the distractions that arise from internal desires for worldly temptations. Once you become a giver, you must apply the five positive core values of integrity, commitment, persistence, teamwork, and communication. This will not only reduce your stress but the stress of others. Knowing that you are a giver will also increase your self esteem.

Stress is also caused by obstructions, which are created by external forces that disrupt our flow. Except for obstructions we cannot predict (such as accidents), we should use our knowledge to navigate our boat around these obstructions. If we are secure in our purpose and meaning of life, these distractions will not interrupt our flow. When stress and anxiety do arise, despite your efforts to eliminate desire and navigate around obstructions, focus on habitual meditation, prayer, and worship. Once you are on the journey of meditation, you will find yourself less stressed, and your level of anxiety and insecurity will be reduced.

To summarize, alleviating stress and anxiety is an internal process focusing on self-improvement through an a reprioritization of values. Rather than seeking to destroy external sources of stress and anxiety, seek to stabilize your mission and purpose in life. This is most effectively achieved through meditation and through giving. If you do not desire physical or material pleasures then you will achieve freedom and detachment: two crucial factors leading toward Flow.