Spirituality &Health

The Soul/Body Connection

Susan Sarandon:
The Making of
a Meaningful Life

The Second Coming of Psychedelics

60 Affirmations
to Take Charge
of Your Inner Life

WHO IS CARING FOR YOUR FAMILY?
Inside the struggle
for caregiver rights

40+
RETREAT
CENTERS FOR
**BODY, MIND
& SPIRIT**

+ **The Joy of Quitting
7 Steps to a Stress-Busting Attitude
Foods for Sexual Vitality**

SEVEN STEPS TO A
Stress-Busting Attitude

Stress affects our circulation, slows our digestive system, and even increases our blood sugar levels. Try these tips from naturopath **DOCTOR MICHAEL MURRAY** *to reduce stress and boost your health.*

STEP 1:
Become an Optimist

Optimism is a vital component of good health and an ally in the healing process. Focus on the positives even in challenging situations.

STEP 2:
Become Aware of Self-Talk

Our self-talk makes an impression on our subconscious mind. Become aware of your internal dialogue, and then consciously work to send positive messages to the subconscious mind.

STEP 3:
Ask Better Questions

Author Tony Robbins contends that whatever question you ask your brain, you will get an answer. For example, if an individual is met with a particular challenge or problem, he or she may ask: "Why does this always happen to me?" Instead, try "What can I do to make the situation better?"

STEP 4:
Employ Positive Affirmations

Positive statements of affirmation can imprint the subconscious mind to create a healthy, positive self-image. In addition, affirmations can actually fuel the changes you desire. Choose an affirmation like "I am blessed with an abundance of energy," and recite it to yourself through the day.

STEP 5:
Set Positive Goals

Achieving goals helps you feel better about yourself, and the better you feel about yourself, the more likely it is that you will achieve your goals. Make your goals attainable and realistic, and be specific. The more clearly your goals are defined, the more likely you are to reach them.

STEP 6:
Practice Positive Visualizations

Positive visualization or imagery is another powerful tool in creating health, happiness, or success. In terms of health, you must picture yourself in ideal health if you truly want to experience this state.

STEP 7:
Laugh Long and Often

Researchers have found that laughter enhances blood flow to the body's extremities, improves cardiovascular function, and plays an active part in the body's release of endorphins and other natural mood-elevating and pain-killing chemicals.

Based on an excerpt from *Stress, Anxiety and Insomnia: What the Drug Companies Won't Tell You and Your Doctor Doesn't Know,* by Michael T. Murray, N.D. Mind Publishing, 2012. Used with permission.

practice

Learning to Relax

An important step in fighting stress is learning to calm the mind and body. Use these techniques to trigger a physiological "relaxation response."

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Breathing from your diaphragm physically activates the relaxation centers in the brain. Try this 10-step technique:
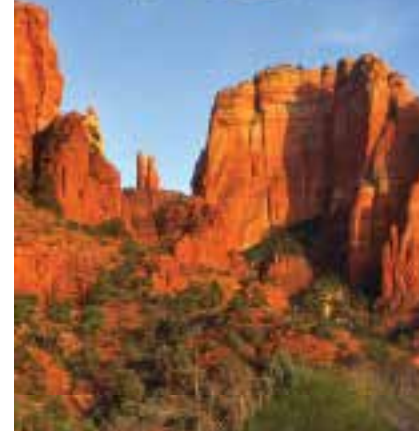
• Find a comfortable and quiet place to sit or lie down.

• Place one hand on your abdomen near your navel. Place the other hand on your chest.

• Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth.

• As you breathe, pay attention to which hand is rising and falling with each breath.

• Gently exhale most of the air in your lungs.

• Inhale while slowly counting to four. As you inhale, slightly extend your abdomen, causing it to rise about one inch. Make sure you are not moving your chest or shoulders.

• Imagine the warmed air flowing into your lungs and through your body.

• Pause for one second, then slowly exhale to a count of four. As you exhale, your abdomen should move inward.

• As the air flows out, imagine all your tension and stress leaving your body.

• Repeat the process until you feel a sense of deep relaxation.

Progressive Relaxation

Many people are not aware of the sensation of relaxation. In progressive relaxation, an individual learns what it feels like to relax by comparing relaxation with muscle tension.

The basic technique is to contract a muscle forcefully for a period of one to two seconds, and then give way to a feeling of relaxation in that muscle. Begin with contracting the muscles in the face and neck, then the upper arms and chest, followed by the lower arms and hands. The process is repeated progressively down the body, from the abdomen through the buttocks, thighs and calves to the feet. Repeat the process two or three times.