

## Chapter 11

# Stress verse Distress

*"Stress is a natural part of the body and it's way to rise to the occasion for a task. The goal is not to get read of stress, the goal is to get the right kind of stress. When it's the right kind of stress, we love it."*

We are discussing the internal dialogue and how this directly affects your body's stress response. Remember the earlier illustration of two brains, a thinking brain and a feeling brain. We discovered when the chatter is unregulated its natural is to be toxic or negative. The negative chatter then creates the emotional hijack and the feeling brain hits the panic button, which releases adrenaline and other stress hormones into your system. This is natural by design and a wonderful illustration of the brain and body working together.

The brain sends the body a signal to the adrenal gland located in your mid-section. The release of these stress hormones enables your body to support you on the task and rise to the occasion in the moment. Your blood pressure goes up. Your blood flow to the limbs increases. Your breathing pattern varies and there are so many other physical signs that you will learn to monitor and regulate.

If the chatter is negative for an extended period of

time, these stress hormones start to work against you. When this happens, an emotionally distressed state occurs in the body from an overload of these stress hormones. As a result, your decision-making is hindered and your ability to perform a routine task can be greatly altered even after thousands of hours of practice and repetition. In the National Geographic documentary, “Stress Portrait of a killer”, researchers say:

*“To make sense of what’s happening in your body, you’ve got these two hormones that are the workhorses of the whole stress response. One of them we all know, adrenaline, American version epinephrine. The other is a less known hormone called Glucocorticoids. It comes out of the adrenal gland along with adrenaline. These are the two backbones to the body’s stress response system. The stress response and those two hormones are critical to our survival. When you run for your life (or*

*basically the extreme of pressure) basics are all that matter. Lungs work overtime to pump mammoth quantities of oxygen into the bloodstream. The heart races to pump that oxygen throughout the body so muscles respond instantly. You need your blood pressure up to deliver that energy. You need to turn off anything that's not essential, growth, reproduction, you know, you're running for your life this is no time to ovulate, tissue repair, all that sort of thing. Do it later if there is a later".*

Follow the sequence of events inside of you, all starting with your chatter. The thinking brain repeats the negative, the feeling brain hits the panic button and sends a signal down to your body's adrenal glands and you get a flood of stress hormones. Too many stress hormones for an extended period of time begin to work against you and your future performance. Too little stress hormones and you lack the necessary motivation and energy to act in excellence. You need to

know this and what's happening in your body all based on what you allow in your thought patterns.

Your body responds to the stress hormones in different ways. You need to learn to detect subtle clues or signals. For example, you might feel a little sweat above the brow. Your breathing rate changes, you might take shorter breaths and your blood pressure will rise from your heart beating faster. You might have a tingle and need to use the bathroom. These are all signs you must learn to monitor that indicate a low (or high grade) emotional hijack. The research on stress and the body go on to say,

*“When the animal escapes the pressure, its stress response shuts down, but human beings can't seem to find the off switch. We turn on the exact same stress response for purely psychological states thinking about the ozone layer, the taxes coming up, mortality, thirty-year mortgages, we turn on the same stress response and the key*

*difference is we're not doing it for a real physiological reason and we're doing it non-stop. By not turning off the stress response when reacting to life's traffic jams, we wallow in a corrosive bath of hormones. Even though it's not life or death, we hyperventilate, our hearts pound, muscles tense. Ironically, after a while, the stress response is more damaging than the stressor itself because the stressor is some psychological nonsense that you're falling for..."*

Athletic Translation: "We turn on the exact same stress response thinking about how we messed up so badly and how we let everyone down. Toxic thoughts about losing our position, choking under pressure, the last failure pops up over and over again and the key difference is we're not doing it for any real good reason. It's just our chatter, "chasing-cats" and we're doing it non-stop."

What a classic line, "psychological nonsense that

we fall for”. The psychological nonsense is all that negative, toxic chatter that’s going on in your head throughout the day. By allowing the chatter to run rampant, the chatter becomes our own worst enemy from within. You must learn how to recognize the enemy so you can deal harshly even when you find it within yourself.

### **11.1 Movie Scene: Peaceful Warrior**

Recently, I had the privilege of sitting with Emanuel “Manny” Arceneaux. If you follow Manny, he graduated from a small town in Louisiana and worked hard to earn the chance to play college and professional football in the National and Canadian Football Leagues. Manny and his experiences represent a wonderful story of never giving up in the chatter and beating the odds.

During one of his return trips home we had the chance to meet and talk what I call the “seventh level”. Deep intimate conversation about how he deals with the chatter and all the disruptive

emotions.

Manny said to me, Peaceful Warrior. It's a movie that every athlete needs to watch. Manny went on say that he watches this movie every night before a big game. A classic for your personal library, it is based on the true story of Olympian Dan Millman. Millman represented the United States in 1966 winning four gold metals in gymnastics.

Millman's book, Way of the Peaceful Warrior was brought to the big screen in 2006. In the movie, Nick Nolte (nicknamed "Socrates") is coaching Millman who at the time is a young aspiring Olympian athlete. The coaching, however, is on the mental game. The entire movie is about Millman's struggle with the mental game and learning to regulate the chatter.

Throughout the movie it is clear Millman has a strong work ethic. He applies the daily physical training with hours upon end repeating the routines and exercises. Millman, like most



athletes, focus intensely and entirely on the physical regimen. The entire movie is about his struggle with the idea that athletic performance is as much mental as it is physical.

There are many scenes that drive home and illustrate these complicated truths about how your chatter affects performance. In one scene, Socrates says to the young athlete, “Take out the trash”. Millman’s character smarts off, “You take out the trash; it’s your trash!” Socrates replies, “No, no, the trash in your head. Over half what goes on up there is trash...you need to learn how to take out the trash in your head.”

This is your same action item in learning these mental skills. Learn to get the negative chatter out of your head, all words and mental pictures that stand in your way of optimal performance. When you let the chatter run with no awareness, no regulation, it’s just negative crap that creates what science calls “frazzle” and the classic fight, flight or freeze is your best prediction on how you will

perform when the pressure is on.

You have an intelligent brain. It's a very complicated thing. No other creature on God's green earth has it designed exactly like only you. As a human being, you have this amazing ability to learn, listen and change your thoughts.

### **11.2.1 Guiding Principle: Imagination Rules**

In your imagination you never lose; the picture is always perfect, the task execution is always excellent. In your imagination, each domino from your task falls into place with ease and execution as if to say to yourself, "Well done good and faithful warrior".

The beautiful thing about the imagination is that your mind does not know the difference between the chatter and reality. The pictures you see with your eyes and the mental pictures that appear in thought are handled in a very similar way.

This lesson can be difficult to teach but you must

seek to understand that your chatter and your reality are basically processed the same way inside your brain. When you learn the proper steps to visualization techniques you are pre-programming the mind for each task, every emotion and the words and mental pictures to support you, in advance. For now, accept this idea as we continue to move forward understanding the power of your chatter when it comes to regulating for the future.

You are going to daydream and imagine at times. It's what we do. It's the way you are built. What we are striving for in our development is to daydream and refine these ideas that mean much to you. When you daydream enough and some images repeat often you turn these hazy dreams into goals for the future. By using mental skills you then re-enforce with purpose and reason, this is what we teach as emotional intensity.

As you sit here now today in a new level of awareness to the 86,400 seconds of your day,

there are specific things you should be thinking, specific words and mental pictures given your goals and your ambitions. The things you want to achieve you must now develop mental and emotional skills and flex your chatter on demand to support you. If you're looking forward and thinking about to your next practice, your next chance the coach is going to look at you, then there is specific chatter you should be disciplining inside.

If you want to be two hundred and thirty pounds with twelve percent body fat there are specific physical-disciplines that you must do every day, throughout the day. Based on the new definition of strong there are specific mental-disciplines that you must do every day, throughout the day and it all starts with your chatter.

### **11.2.2 Guiding Principle: Vivid Images**

When you imagine and truly exercise your ability to visualize yourself taking action you must be clear and detailed in your mental pictures. Your

mind will not work well with general thoughts and casual words and casual mental pictures. You must be very clear and very specific with your inner dialogue. You must go behind the casual and drill down into your own personal “seventh-level” reasons and define specifically what mental pictures you want and your own personal motives for wanting them.

You can't just say, “Well, I'm going to make that block. I'm going make that throw or I am going to do better.” The brain doesn't do well with general words like this. You can't just tell the missile, “Just go over there and take out that target.” You have to be very specific with detailed “x” and “y” coordinates to achieve the objective. And then, as the missile takes off, it has an on-board navigation to adapt and make changes to ensure an accurate strike. You have this same ability. In your 86,400 seconds of this day, when you are specific in regulating your chatter, you can navigate disruptive thoughts and emotions on demand ensuring wise decision-making for the greater

good.

You are focused and flexing your mental skills; meaning you're feeding the chatter the words and the mental pictures day-in and day-out, knowing you're going to stray, knowing you're going to get negative. You are now going to grab the chatter, regulate it and no longer struggle with the idea or the self-discipline required.

### **11.2.3 Guiding Principle: Filters**

There was an old America On Line (AOL) commercial a few years back that really summoned it all up nicely,

*“Life needs filters; chatter needs filters”*

Your brain needs a filter 86,400 seconds of each day or your chatter will run wild. That's why these are called mental skills; they require effort and work on your behalf to filter out the trashy-talk.

The key is recovery, using your mental skills to

recover from negative chatter and an emotional highjack. This is not about preventing negative chatter. It's not about stopping the negative feelings or having negative thoughts. It's about your skill and your ability to recover from a negative thought. I've been practicing these ideas for over thirty years and I still get high jacked. It's my ability at that moment to catch the chatter and discipline it, in order to recover.

### **11.3 Exercise: Reflection #2**

We tried this exercise earlier; it's one you should practice often. Reflect back with purpose, reason and discipline, rather than reflecting back with damaging mental pictures.

Shut your eyes and rewind the game film in your mind. Think back using words and mental pictures. Pull up scenes and emotions during a moment when you made the play and surprised yourself, it was clearly a time when you were at peak optimal performance. Stop for a minute. Think back.

Everyday you must learn to celebrate your achievements by reflecting back. These are the subtle “penny” moments that nourish the path for today and tomorrow promising bigger, better and brighter moments.

Your greatest achievements are worthy of reflecting. A skilled, disciplined chatter to reflect and review each domino you performed when executing the task.

*“Reflection is the school of wisdom; requiring a disciplined chatter”*

#### **11.4.1 Guiding Principle: Personal Agenda**

This is personal, after all these mental skills and the promise of the future belong to you. All of what we talk about in this book references what goes on inside of you. Only you know, only you can be responsible and only you can hold yourself accountable to these ideas and development strategies.



*“Your imagination is your own limitation.”*

If you can conceive it and think it into your chatter, then you can believe it in your emotions, creating an opportunity to achieve it.

Don't let anyone steal your chatter or your dreams. As soon as it comes in, your awareness and regulation skills “take-out-the-trash” on demand. It's your gig. Right here. Regulating the chatter. Flexing your mental muscle. You can do this.

*“I see myself beyond my current circumstances  
with new words and mental pictures”*

There are times you must use these words in your chatter. You will physically practice a task thousands and thousands of hours, over and over and over again. You have trained your body and your physical domain. Now you must train the mental and emotional domains. Your true health condition is now redefined as physical, mental and emotional. You must monitor all three on a regular

basis.

At the end of the day, here are specific “x” and “y” coordinates for you to communicate, concentrate, organize, discriminate, and innovate. Hold yourself-accountable.

At the end of the day...

- *“I am competing against my own last performance.”*
- *“Everyone else competing is only there to keep me honest.”*
- *“Others define the level of play; I must achieve these results and redefine.”*
- *“When I achieve these results, I earn the opportunity to compete.”*

## Notes & Quotes:

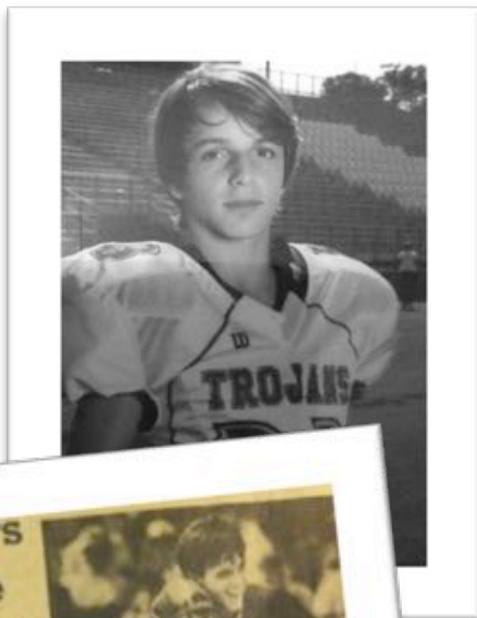
1. Dr. Daniel Goleman - Latest findings on the brain: Emotional Intelligence Webinar
  - [www.danielgoleman.info](http://www.danielgoleman.info)
2. Robert Sapolsky – Stanford University  
Professor, “Distress: The Body’s Silent Killer”  
– National Geographic Documentary
  - [http://www.thegreatcourses.com/tgc/professors/professor\\_detail.aspx?pid=124](http://www.thegreatcourses.com/tgc/professors/professor_detail.aspx?pid=124)
3. History Channel’s Documentary: “The Brain”  
2013
4. Les Brown – Author, public speaker
  - <http://lesbrown.com/>
5. Jim Rohn – Author, public speaker
  - <http://www.jimrohn.com/>
6. Dr. Jeff Garrison – Sport Medicine, Former NFL player

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- <http://mollydaniels.wordpress.com/>

To all those who have encouraged, remained patient and persevered on my behalf by continuing to stay on me. As God as my witness, your words remained in my chatter and were a critical part of making this dream become a reality.



### Mavs, Pais win openers in Lafayette Semistate

By FRED LANE  
Staff Sports Writer

McCutcheon's big-play baseball team edged Logansport, 5-3, in the second game of the opening round of the Lafayette Semistate Saturday afternoon.

The Mavericks, 24-14, advanced to the semistate title game Saturday night against Terra Haute North. The Patriots coasted in a 4-0 victory over Perry Meridian in the day's opener.

The two games were played before a crowd of about 1,500 at Losh Stadium in Columbian Park.

McCutcheon produced a pair of clutch hits and several sparkling defensive saves to eliminate three-time state champ Logansport.

With McCutcheon leading 2-1 in the top of the third inning, Steve Robinson — a senior batting .247 — lined a two-out, two-run single.

Logansport added single runs in the third and fourth innings to even the lead to 2-2. Matt Barry Taylor added an insurance run for the Mavericks in the top of the fifth.

Taylor, who finished with three hits in three at bats, found a soft spot in center field which was misplayed by Jerry Hunter. The ball sailed to the center field fence, and Robinson

McCutcheon Coach Jake Burton. "He had an excellent year last year, but has been struggling at the plate this season.

"It's easy to get frustrated with a bad season, but Steve never quit. And today, he came through with a big, big hit for us and made a super play in right field, too."

In the bottom of the sixth, Robinson dove into foul territory to catch a fly ball for the first out.

Jay House finished the Barron in the sixth, catching a foul pop near the Logansport dugout, and batting down Snider's hard-hit ground ball for an unassisted play for the third out.

And Brian Robinson — brother of Steve — added the final Maverick defensive jewel, diving to catch Tony Baldwin's line drive at third base for the second out of the seventh inning.

"We hit it where they weren't, but they got there anyhow," laughed Logansport Coach Jim Turner, whose team finished with a 23-8 record.

"Baseball is a game of inches, and those inches worked their way. Plus, McCutcheon played an outstanding game."

McCutcheon's Dan Payne allowed two earned runs on eight hits, and the senior pitched his fourth straight com-



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