

# YOUR LIFESTYLE AND YOUR SUSCEPTIBILITY TO STRESS

*Bad things happen to everybody How well you respond to life's troubles and catastrophes depends on several factors, including your physical constitution and how you take care of yourself. If you want to make yourself a little more resilient, you have to put in some effort.*

*Research in health psychology has linked certain behaviors and activities with improved resistance to stress. Choose to do what you can to make these healthy choices a part of your daily life.*

- 1. Eat nourishing foods.** You are what you eat. Well balanced meals and sound nutrition will bolster your resistance to stress.
- 2. Get regular rest and sleep.** Lack of sleep leads to a weakened ability to handle stress.
- 3. Give and receive affection regularly.** Research indicates that people who give and receive affection regularly live longer, are healthier, and report a higher quality of life.
- 4. Exercise regularly, at least three times a week.** Moderate exercise done consistently improves every system of the body. Physically fit people report fewer physical symptoms and less psychological distress.
- 5. Eliminate smoking and limit drinking.** (No further comments are necessary.)
- 6. Earn an adequate income to meet your basic expenses.** If your income is stable and secure, your stress levels are lower.
- 7. Relieve in something.** Having a belief about the meaning and purpose of life makes stressful events much more bearable.
- 8. Tend to your friendships.** Having a network of friends or being a member of a church, club, or organization can strengthen your tolerance for stress. As the Beatles once sang, "I'll get by with a little help from my friends."
- 9. Keep a confidante or two.** Have one or more persons with whom you can share your feelings. A lack of emotional support leaves people more vulnerable during difficult times. A research study reported that heart attack patients with no one to confide in were three times more likely to die than were those who had someone.
- 10. Speak openly about your feelings when you are irritated, angry, or worried.** Keeping everything inside may be physically or mentally damaging, and certainly decreases your tolerance for stress.
- 11. Have a hobby, passion, or practice that is enjoyable and/or restorative.** This will increase your ability to cope with the pressures and demands of Life.