

Understanding Mental and Emotional Stability

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By Stephanie Reck



Tranquility

Spiritual maturity and emotional maturity go hand-in-hand; you cannot have one without the other. Emotional health involves knowing your limits, and not reacting act of emotions to circumstances. Everyone has limits, and it is wise to know yours.

Have you ever began your morning and said something like this, "Today, I will not let the enemy kill the joy and peace I desire to have." Then something happens in your day and you feel emotionally drained. What happened? Reaction to circumstances. The enemy set you up by "baiting" you with people and circumstances that are difficult, stressful, and overwhelming. The enemy hopes we will react in our emotions, because this will usually lead us into sin. We are not to be led by our emotions and feelings; they are deceitful and constantly changing. We will encounter trials, stress and difficult people, and sometimes when we our "off-guard," but we must take a step back, go and pray, and be still and quiet as we wait for God's intervention.

Some key factors that you are at your limit emotionally:

1. Emotions are running high.
2. Stress and/or fatigue.
3. Short temper.
4. Lack of grace and patience.

It is important to know if you have experienced emotional trauma and stress, so that you can heal and know how to deal properly in certain situations. Emotional trauma and stress can happen once or it can be a series of stressful events. If that is something you have endured, it is likely you will have a high stress/emotional response to current stressful situations. Is it

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hopeless? No, with acknowledging your hurt, facing the truth of your limits, and totally relying on God's help and healing; there is hope.

People are more likely to be traumatized by stressful events if they are already under a heavy load. Childhood trauma can increase the risk of future trauma, and the way we deal and process stressful events. Emotional stress can be detrimental to your health and well-being. Find out what is causing your mental and emotional instability, and begin being proactive and make needed changes to your life. Your body is not able to defend itself against emotional stress, which in turn triggers mental and emotional instability.

Causes of emotional trauma and stress:

1. It happened unexpectedly.
2. You were unprepared for it.
3. You were powerless to prevent it.
4. It happened repeatedly (exposure to continued stressful situations).
5. It happened in childhood.

As Christians, we should make it a priority to have mental and emotional stability, but we may need to first understand what is causing it and what actions need to be taken to deal effectively with current and past stressors. What has occurred in the past as a stressful event can still cause us to react emotionally if we are continually exposed to that stressor. Know your triggers and past hurts, and how they could still be triggering an emotional response currently. If you experience frequent ups and downs emotionally, it is time to examine why and seek God for intervention; it is not His will for you to live unstable emotionally.

Having a better balance on your emotions will cause you to feel better physically and to have an increase in energy. It is time to ask yourself, "What am I expending my emotional energy on?" Remember, the enemy knows what will cause you to react and to get upset. Having emotional stability will enable you to peacefully and calmly go through difficult situations. Emotional stability does not mean suppressing your emotions, but controlling them.

A hallmark of a mentally and emotionally stable person is the ability to control one's emotions.

Keys to mental and emotional stability:

1. First, admit your limits. What you can and cannot handle. Be okay with that, and don't compare what other people can endure.
2. Recognize the people that deplete your energy, are unhealthy, and cause you stress. You may want to reevaluate your time and exposure to them.
3. Don't take on more than you can handle; whether at work, ministry, church, or family.
4. Learn to say, "No," when you are feeling stressed, tired, sick, or just need some alone time with yourself or God.
5. Don't take on other's issues, problems, or stress. We can pray for people, but we cannot do for others if we ourselves are depleted.
6. Do not react to your feelings or emotions. Pray first.
7. Exercise, eat healthy, and maintain a trustworthy/healthy support system.
8. Journal by processing your pent-up feelings, and talk to God about your deepest concerns.

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Understanding that if you are mentally and emotionally unstable, it is likely you have endured some emotional/psychological trauma and stress, and that you need God's help to overcome these damaged emotions. Don't be hard on yourself, if you have emotional instability, but recognize that there is hope and a way to cope effectively.

1 Peter 5:8-9, Teaches us to be well-balanced and temperate (self-controlled) to keep Satan from devouring us.

Psalm 94:13, God wants to give us power to stay calm in adversity.

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