



Path to Passion

Love, Synergy, Joy & Ecstasy at Your
Fingertips

Class 6 - The Wired Bed

With Alina Frank & Dr. Craig Weiner

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Class VI – The Wired Bed

How stress affects sex

Welcome back. I'm Alina Frank, together here with Dr Craig Weiner and we'll be addressing what we call The Wired Bed, or how stress unplugs your bedroom life force energy. There isn't anyone who doesn't feel the effects of stress; it's just that it affects each of us differently. Stress has been accepted as the one factor that affects everything from our mental health and well-being, to every aspect of our physical health, including our sexuality. While everyone tends to talk about stress as if they fully understand what it is and what it does, let's look a little deeper at what it really is, how it affects us and what we can do about it.

Nearly everyone has heard of the Fight or Flight response to stress. It is governed unconsciously by the Sympathetic nervous system. Both genders Life Made Much Easier Inc. e nervous system but they can respond differently in men and women. Until just recently, it was assumed that men and women responded to stress similarly. But new evidence shows that our responses to stress aren't that simple.

For example, a recent UCLA study found that women respond to stress with a strategy called "tend and befriend," rather than fight-or-flight. Women using this strategy are more likely to protect their children and get help from other females. This difference could be hormonal in nature. Oxytocin has a calming effect on both men and women; however, a woman's estrogen increases its effect, while male sex hormones decrease it.

Hans Selye, the father of stress research, defined stress as the body's non specific response to a demand that's placed upon it.

He said that most stressors have a neutral effect...until...by our own thinking process...we change them into a negative (Distress) or a positive stressor (or Eustress).... in other words the only difference in our reaction to the event is the way we choose to perceive it.....This morning I had one of those bumper sticker moments that said "Don't change How You Look, Change How You See Things!"....How you perceive an event is often clouded by similar occurrences in your past. These past events, which affect your future, are perfect scenarios that are useful to tap on, especially if they are repeating scenarios or patterns.

If you put this chain of events into a flow chart, it would look something like this...

Some Source of Stress....is experienced, interpreted and tweaked by the...

People's Individual Perspectives which results in:

Fear or Arousal or Fleeing or Excitement which may then produce any of the following depending on how well managed the feelings are.....

Enhanced Life Performance, Physical Symptoms or Impaired Life Performance

An even simpler way to look at the different aspects of stress could be put into 3 categories:

- 1. Things that **create stress** (or stressors), like work, illness, arguments, large credit card bills.....
- Or #2, the **negative FEELINGS caused BY stress**, such as worry about money, feeling depressed after ending a relationship, the anger after being betrayed by a friend...
- Or #3, the resulting **physical conditions** that the sense of stress can *bring about*, such as hypertension or tension headaches.

Remember that stress begins with a perception of some threat or danger. It might be an image or a thought or a feeling which then instantaneously kick in neurotransmitters that stimulate the release of hormones that alter the body's and brain's responses and tell you what you are going to think, feel or do next.

The name of the closed loop stress feedback system in the body is called the HPA Axis, referring to the Hypothalamus and Pituitary glands in the brain and the Adrenal glands. This system ultimately regulates our energy as it controls virtually all of the hormones, nervous system activity and immune system. The process is a simple....Something in your life suddenly stresses you.... whether it is real or in your imagination...you feel a sense of fear....suddenly your adrenal glands flood your body with cortisol, commonly referred to as adrenaline. This gets sent to our brain's Hypothalamus that communicates with the Pituitary which tells your adrenals to flood your system with cortisol in order to send blood flow to your legs to run, increases your heart rate, opens your pupils and allows you to quickly take action.

It's a useful system for survival from real danger, until we start to use it not as an emergency system, but we keep it engaged regularly, using it every day with our stressed out thoughts and fears. This lead to a burnout of our adrenals, resulting in fatigue, a lowered immune system and we just get sick and tired and lose our passion for life.

More than any other factor that triggers the feeling of stress is FEAR. Fear of being seen, fear of not being seen, fear of someone else's response to how we look, fear of being unloved, fear of being rejected...stress...fear of getting caught, fear of being passed up at work, fear of being financially insecure, fear of losing someone, more stressful....fear that you won't measure up, fear that you won't be the lover that you want to be, fear that you **will** get pregnant, fear that you **won't** get pregnant...fear that you wont bring **your partner** to orgasm, fear that **you** won't orgasm, fear that you will orgasm too soon or take too long.....all these fears create stress that set off the physiological processes that make what we most fear, especially in bed, more likely to manifest right before your eyes.

Fear. It's been said that nothing exists except for love and fear. And fear is merely the absence of love. That's all very sweet and lofty but what does that really mean? For one thing, it means that if you tease apart every emotion we can experience... they all come down to fear at the core. Something that I find fascinating is that we are only born with the fear of loud noises. Every other fear is learned or conditioned.

One study on fear in the 1940s was conducted at Johns Hopkins University. Researchers went to an orphanage to choose the subject of the experiments.

They selected a little boy about 8 months old because he had such a sweet disposition. He showed very little anxiety in the midst of these strangers and in fact was rather a confident little guy. They began the process of measuring his fear response, first showing him a white rat. Little Albert would crawl towards the rat and reach out to play with it. In the next set of experiments the rat was always brought into the room immediately following a loud banging sound produced on some metal behind Albert's head. Every time they banged the metal, they brought in the white rat, and Albert would wail. They then removed the banging and Albert would still cry whenever he'd see the white rat. They then brought in similar objects such as white rabbits, white fur, a white furry mask and wouldn't you know it...Albert would cry. Fear is then just a conditioned response. Since our minds work through the law of associative memory, we can be making up all kinds of perceived threats that are not really there. Case in point are all the women and men that I work with that don't trust their current partners... even if they have no evidence whatsoever that they are going to stray. These fears are there because of past hurts, betrayals, and rejections.

What I think is most detrimental nowadays is that we have to just stifle our fear and stress to be able to function in the world. Once upon a time, we lived in a hostile environment. We were hunted by predators. Our ancestors determined within milliseconds whether to fight or flee from the saber tooth tiger. Today the saber tooth tiger is your boss, your spouse, your neighbor and you need to learn ways to reabsorb that adrenaline somehow. Your neighbor decided to have his friends over for skeet-shooting on the day that you are having your daughter's wedding outside on your lawn. You had even given him advanced notice of the event but he still holds a grudge against you for that easement you had the courts help you with last year. And so the second you hear that first gunshot, you are filled with rage and afraid your

daughter's big day is ruined. Your thought process is clouded and you wish you could shoot back or punch his lights out, set fire to his shed which is little too close to our boundary line. Have you ever heard someone say, "I am so mad I can't think straight!" Well that is what actually happens. When you use EFT to calm yourself, your higher brain functions can ease the stress and fear and allow you to reason. Then cooler heads can prevail. You become more resourceful. You might ask a friend of your neighbor's who is at the wedding, to be the intermediary or you may just come up with some other strategy that might work. This might not happen if you are in the middle of an adrenaline highjack.

Let's now get to the meat and potatoes of the bedroom. How does stress affect your sexual satisfaction?

It's well documented that conditions such as depression and anxiety can interfere physiologically with your ability to have orgasms. Stress itself can impede sexual touchdowns in 2 primary ways; first, it **reduces the desire** to have sex. The desire to have sex is strongly influenced by how stressed you are about your self and your partner, which affects your willingness to be vulnerable, your courage to be open when there's a past history of painful memories....stress does not create a safe and loving atmosphere.....and so without desire....sex is unlikely to happen frequently or joyfully.

But let's say that you were able to feel the urge and desire and express it to your lover.....the SECOND way that stress can short circuit your sexplay is by interfering during the act itself...resulting in Reduced Sexual Excitement.

Researchers have theorized 2 main reasons for high scores on the **Reduced Sexual Excitement Scale**: ONE; Sexual Inhibition due to the **threat of Performance Failure** and TWO; the **Fear of Performance Consequences**, such as unwanted pregnancy or of acquiring a sexually transmitted diseases.

So the desire and excitement and anticipation is there, you've gotten to the bedroom, you're naked and intertwined and things are moving along great, you're both showing all the telltale signs of physical arousal, blood flow is doing what its supposed to when the stressful sex thought balloons starting popping up above your heads... keeping you from being present during lovemaking....and being present and open is critical in reaching elevated levels of pleasure. Sexual arousal is sometimes hard to maintain from beginning to end.....the stressful fears and stressors that get played out in your head may look like...

".....last time it didn't go so well, it was soooo quick, I really hope it goes loner this time, but I'll try not to think about it...."

I hope she doesn't expect me to do go too long, I'm actually pretty tired...."

please don't climax too soon before I get to enjoy mine or then you'll turn over and fall asleep...."

maybe this time she'll let me tie just her arms up like that time on our anniversary to Puerto Vallarta...

Why won't he ever go down on me when he knows how much I like it?.....

Oh oh...did I tell her later that Friday night we are going out to dinner with that New York client?....

Oh God, I am so out of shape, please don't put your hands on my belly and can we please just keep the lights off this time...

All these stressful distracting monkey mind thoughts have an inverse relationship with sexual pleasure and they cause a drop in blood flow that decrease body fluids and blood flow to the most important parts of your anatomy that create physical pleasure.

Most people have heard of Tantric Sex...the idea of this study magically creates lofty images of sexual pleasure being taken to a spiritual level....the lovemaking of the gods.....Great.... now we all have an equal opportunity to feel anxious about having superhuman sex, as if there wasn't enough pressure already. Now it's supposed to be extraordinary and transcendental. All this stressful pressure may result in Performance Anxiety

Syndrome....While most people relate this just to men, it affects both sexes. You can simplify this syndrome into the idea...Will I Be Enough of a Lover for him or her? And how is the present sex compared to past sex? More PRESSURE! And we all know how arousing the pressure to perform is.

Then there's the **Reversed** Expectation Performance Anxiety Syndrome....this goes something like" Well, I'm not even going to really try to orgasm because I haven't been able to for years, so I really shouldn't even think about it or expect it or try too hard to have one...I may as well just skip the disappointment of having really tried but failed once again...

Marriage and birth rates go up before and after wars. The stress of such an all encompassing event will make people naturally bond to one another and sex is a natural stress reducer. After these types of catastrophic events, people tend to realize the fragility of life... and the absence what is missing in one's life is felt more acutely. I remember living in DC during the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. There was a palpable sense of fear that we could be blown up at any moment living in the capital. In the aftermath, a great majority of my acquaintances got divorces or split up. I see the same sort of thing happening now. It could be my perception, but it feels like the chaos that we are seeing in this country is being played out at a micro-level where couples are re-evaluating what's important in their lives. I strongly believe that although this might be momentarily painful, the results are going to lead to living more authentic lives.

The top ten stressors are:

- A. Death of spouse
2. Divorce
3. Marital separation
4. Jail term
5. Death of a close family member
6. Personal injury or illness
7. Marriage
8. Fired at work
9. Marital reconciliation
10. Retirement

Notice how many of these events involve your partner? And these aren't just one-time events either. A process of reconciliation, divorce, separation or marriage, take months, if not years to go through from beginning to end... and through it all, there are times of stress.

We have all heard of fight, flight, or freeze responses at times of stress but how exactly do these three coping mechanisms play themselves out in an intimate relationship?

You've had a lousy day at work – again. It's the type of situation where you feel you have no control over any decision that is made in the organization. You feel that your life is at the whim of your boss. You had a flat tire on the way home and you just got a cell phone call from the doctor's office that your physical revealed that your blood pressure and cholesterol are through the roof and they want to put you on medication immediately before anything "terrible happens" You shut off your phone not wanting to hear any more bad news as you sit in your hot car waiting for the freeway traffic to let up. You walk in the door and your spouse is all dressed up and sitting in the living room silently. You ask her what's wrong and she says you forgot that tonight you were to meet her boss for dinner at a restaurant. If you were to leave now you'd be about 90 min late. You feel defensive... your muscles tighten and you get ready for the fight. When you tell her that she should have called you she says she did. You then explain your situation but go further and tell her that blah blah blah. You know where this is heading don't you? It's that constant feedback loop – she said, he said- that same argument you've been having for the last 20 years. What to do? First apply EFT and then try to do something to scramble that well-worn groove in your neural network in your head that does the same thing over and over again. If your tendency is to fight... then ask to walk outside for a few minutes and jog a little to burn it off. If your pattern is to freeze and let your partner berate you... then speak up. If you've always slammed the door and left... stick around and see what happens. By first applying EFT and then doing something completely out of character, you will change the way you think

about your situation. Your partner will also feel the shift in strategy and may actually behave in a different way than usual. All this leads to being more present and less reactive.

So now we are going to tap on a current stressor. Pick something that is a constant source of stress in your life. Fill in the blanks, add and edit as you need in order to make this as specific to your situation as possible.

KC: Even though I feel stressed out, anxious and overwhelmed.....even though sex is the last thing on my mind....I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself

KC: Even though all my mind keeps thinking about is the stress of keeping our jobs.... paying the bills..... and figuring out how we are going to ever sell our house in this terrible market....I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself

KC Even though I am at my wits end on how to reign in the kids who are being a royal pain....., and my mother is having health issues again....., and now the furnace looks like it needs to be replaced.... and I have no desire to get naked and have sex...and despite all that, I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself

TH: All of this anxiety.

3 E: This overwhelming stress

EB: I'm overwhelmed

OE: This stress is really affecting me

UE: The stress that has taken over my mind

UN: This heavy burden of pressure

CP: This pressure I feel _____ in my body

CB: This stress that's affecting my hormone levels

UA: It affects my ability to enjoy my life

TH: I can't even think about having sex

3E: Could I possibly let go of one stressor in my life with tapping?

EB; Would this make me more resourceful and enable me to cope better

SE: Would I then be more open to connecting with my partner?

UE: Can I break this vicious cycle that has led to my low desire and low libido?

UN: It certainly seems better than the alternative.

CP: I can balance my hormone levels by addressing the underlying stress in my life

CB: I commit myself to working on one main stress producing area of my life.

UA: Tapping on it daily until I see a difference in my mind, body and spirit

TH: And I choose to have this happen easily and effortlessly.

For this week's homework, find one major stressor in your life to work on that's affecting your love life. Even if it has no apparent direct connection to it... say work, or your health, or someone else's health or finances. Watch how much more at ease you are with others as a result of your tapping on stress.

We look forward to seeing you next week when we conclude this series when we will reveal our top ten hot tips for keeping the sizzle going with who's in Your Bed Now. Bye for now and remember... keep on tapping.

TAPPING SCRIPT for the wired bed:

KC: Even though I feel stressed out, anxious and overwhelmed.....even though sex is the last thing on my mind....I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself

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KC Even though I am at my sits end on how to reign in the kids who are being a royal pain the ass and my body does not feel attractive at all cause I'm totally out of shape and I just really have no desire to get naked and have sex...and despite all that I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself

TH: All of this anxiety.

3 E: This overwhelming stress

EB: I'm overwhelmed

OE: This stress is ruining my body

UE: This stress that has taken over my mind

UN: This heavy burden of pressure

CP: This pressure I feel _____ in my body

CB: This tress that's affecting my hormone levels

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