

# Grace Punder Pressure

by Nancy Ho

Tips to manage stressful thoughts

**IT IS A** fact: stress can shorten our lifespan. Aside from giving you emotional and psychological discomfort, stress – whether caused by financial, marital, professional or sudden unexpected events – takes a toll on our health. Heart diseases, asthma, diabetes, obesity, depression and gastrointestinal problems are some of the health problems related to stress.

On 19th June, the haze had already started a few days ago with a PSI reading of 155, I chilled and relaxed at home with a good book and a glass of wine. I heard a beep and it was a message from my dear friend, May, saying, “PSI is now 290!” I replied, “No way. An hour ago it was only 150. Do you mean 190?” To which, she replied, “No, it’s from the NEA website, PSI 290!”

I then switched on the TV and there it was, showing the PSI has gone up to 290. The next hour it went up to 350 and by 10:00pm, PSI was 371. The entire Singapore went into a panic mode. The order of the next day was monitoring the PSI level and tuning into the news. Emotions went high, especially when it hit PSI 401 at noon. The quality of life seemed to come to a stop; everyone living in Singapore was stressed out by the high PSI index at 401, the highest recorded in the country’s history.

## Stress Caused by Unexpected Events

Stress is best defined as one of bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an existent equilibrium. It is a physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental disorder. This kind of stress can even cause panic or anxiety attack compared to the stress caused by deadlines or pressure because the brain goes into a confusion mode.

I am not focusing on the haze problem; rather, it’s an illustration because many can relate to it as it is still fresh in our minds how stressed and panicky we have become due to this unexpected event. While we

cannot avoid unexpected events such as this, however, we can better prepare our state of mind to deal with it and emerge as a winner rather than as a victim.

The underlying factor to this stress is “FEAR”. This fear comes from our thoughts, especially the “What ifs”. These kinds of thoughts create feelings and negative emotions.

These negative emotions trigger



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subconscious information from our past, and it is magnified a thousand times.

Therefore, one becomes overwhelmed if one allows this stress or fear to persist. It will definitely have negative consequences, resulting in physical health ailments. Some people even develop psychosomatic illnesses.

Therefore, when feeling the stress or fear, do not allow these feelings to stay inside your body instead, deal with it!

## Tips to Manage Stressful Thoughts

**Take control of your thoughts by asking relevant questions.**

- What am I focusing on, the big fear or the information?
- What am I really afraid of?
- What purpose does it serve by worrying about the problem?
- What good comes out of it?
- What are some empowering thoughts that I can programme for my mind?
- What are the solutions that I can apply?
- What can I do to bring joy into my life?

### **Live in the now.**

- Listen to the similar message that runs over and over again.
- Don't judge it but stay detached and watch for its intention.
- Be aware of this intention.
- Be penetrative.
- You'll experience an awakening, and a sense of peace will surface beyond the subconscious mind – your super-conscious mind.

### **Practise doing what is working and do less or none of what is not.**

- List the top five things that currently work for you (those that give you joy).
- Increase the frequency or intensity of doing them.
- Take 100% responsibility of your own happiness and success by focusing on the doable.

By cultivating the above suggestions and committing yourself to it even when crisis comes, you will not experience the overwhelming stress. You can live a stress-free life, or at least you can control stress in your life. Happiness is thus guaranteed. eh



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