

THE LARRY MEILLER SHOW



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To Combat Stress, Doctor Says Start With Gratitude

Even If A Situation Won't Change, Our Response Can

By Judith Siers-Poisson

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Stress is a fact of life. Whether it stems from concerns about a relationship with a spouse, children or friends, worries about money, or frustrations at work, it often crops up in relation to the key parts of human lives.

But, there are ways to look at life differently, and in the process, to relieve and reduce the toll that stress can take.

[Dr. Amit Sood](#) is a professor of medicine at Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and chair of the Mind Body Medicine Initiative at [Mayo Clinic](#). He is the author of “[The Mayo Clinic Guide to Stress-Free Living](#).”

Sood said that most situations that cause stress aren't in the power of the individual to change. And to complicate matters further, Sood said, many stressors are also what bring the most joy in life. Those include a spouse, children, a job, a home and more.

Sood shared that there are five core principles that are key to changing how a person views the stressors in his or her life: Gratitude, compassion, acceptance, higher meaning, and forgiveness are all key, and he added that if someone focuses on only one to the exclusion of the rest, “you are vulnerable.”

But the process needs to start somewhere, and Sood recommended beginning with gratitude. He said that he starts each day by practicing gratitude, and he took WPR host Judith Siers-Poisson and listeners to "The Larry Meiller Show" through a short exercise.

So let's sit with eyes closed, and I'll share with you how I try to wake up every morning.

Imagine you're waking up this morning and you become aware of yourself and the world around you.

Now think about the first person in your life that you want to be grateful for, and bring that person's face in front of your eyes. And then send your silent gratitude to that person.

Choose your second person, and go back to the first memory of when you saw this person. And then send your silent gratitude.

Think about someone who has passed away, whom you loved. Give that person a virtual hug, and then send your silent gratitude.

Go back in time and look at yourself when you were eight years old. And then send silent gratitude to your eight year old self.

And then you can open your eyes.

Sood explained that this was “a mini-version” of the larger "Mayo Clinic Guide to Stress-Free Living." He added that as this exercise demonstrates, “gratitude is really about people, people in our life. Because we live and breathe our life in the context of family and relationships.”

“We don’t feast enough on quality time,” Sood said. “We focus so much on goods and goodies that we do it at the cost of good time.”

Host:

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Guest(s):

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