

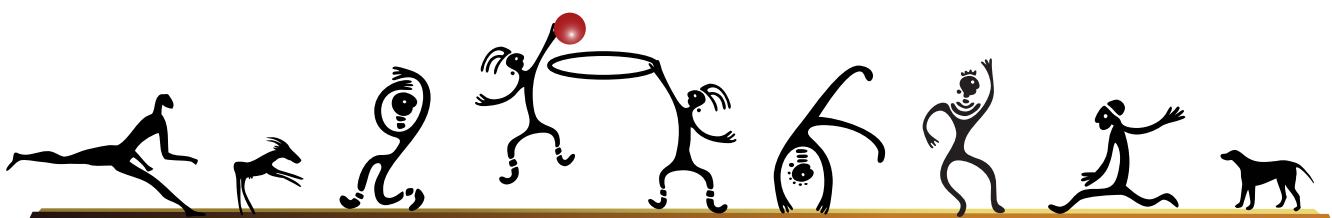
EXUBERANT ANIMAL®

THE TOP 12 WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS OVERLOAD

with thanks to Robert Sapolsky

The human stress response is a paradox. In small doses and at infrequent intervals, it enhances performance, learning and memory. But in large, chronic doses, stress hormones degrade performance and set us up for degenerative disease. In practical application, the trick lies in recognizing the subtle, early warning signs of excessive stress in oneself and others. If you see any of the following, step back and take another look at your stress environment. A correction may be in order.

1. Anhedonia (loss of pleasure)
2. Neophobia (avoidance of new things) and perseveration (repetition of established habit patterns)
3. Reduced ambiguity tolerance (black and white thinking)
4. Social withdrawal and isolation
5. Cognitive distortions, especially over-generalizing and small-picture, short-term thinking
6. Physical lethargy, poor sleep quality, decreased resilience
7. Social irritability, “mountains out of molehills”
8. Decreased sense of humor and play
9. Poor concentration and attention span
10. Impulsive behaviors, reduced self-control
11. Decision resistance and procrastination
12. Brokering and lifestyle leakage (“I’ll do it on vacation,” “I’ll do it on the airplane...”)



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