

## INTRODUCTION: THE 'JUGGLE & STRUGGLE'

"The real word for stress is fear. Whatever you are stressed about – anything at all – it is usually what you are frightened of"

- Dr. Libby Weaver, Women's Wellness Wisdom -

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I debated for a while on what to name this guide and after some thought I decided to use the word I hear most from my client sessions with women and that is the word 'Stress.'

I find myself resonating with these incredible women. I hear their pain, the 'juggle and struggle' and the overwhelm we all have felt at some point. Trying to do it all and suffering in silence until our body has finally forced us to stop.

I feel like they share my story; some years back when I was in my early twenties I suffered a major burnout. I was in a corporate job that I loathed along with a demanding boss, a high-pressured environment, long hours and a toxicity of people.

During that period of me burning out my dad was diagnosed with terminal cancer, and I had broken up with my high school sweetheart after 14 years, I felt broken! I had to accept what was happening and to listen to the cries of my body.

So, I packed in my life; I left my job to spend precious time with my father by reconciling our differences and I made the heart-breaking decision to break it off with my partner after a lot of back and forth.

Upon reflection, the biggest lesson I learnt from that period of my life and why I needed to experience the burnout was to accept the stillness by listening to myself. I had to trust myself in making life changing decisions on my own and I simply had to slow down. By doing less I allowed myself to honour my body, my mind and my spirit, by listening to myself and resting I started to embrace love, love for myself, love for my family and slowly with the fulfilment on self-love and care I started to make wiser choices for my life.

**With all the fight I had left, I finally had to honor and listen to my bodies whispers. I decided to show up for myself and choose to give my life a direction, activate my internal compass and give this one time show the very best I had!**

Let me share with you a shocking statement; 'stress isn't real!' Our bodies symptoms and effects of stress are incredibly real but stress only occurs when our body responds to the demands when you sense danger whether it's real or not - our perception is projection, think of it as our fight or flight activation; what you perceive to be a stressful event becomes, well...stressful.

We are all living in complex and challenging times as we are working longer hours often at the disposal of others. Technology allows us to be available 24/7, we don't switch off mentally or emotionally, which is detrimental for our nervous system and well-being.

We are taking care of many affairs from each compartment of our life such as work, relationships, family, finances, lifestyle, friends, social media interferences and life has just become busy, busy, busy for everyone. But when does that busyness start to become overwhelm, unproductive and simply unhealthy?

I understand that being busy can be good for you as well, it helps you be productive; it helps you reach your goals and gives you a sense of purpose and accomplishment. But sometimes, our to do list can turn the corner so it's more like an obstacle list that puts our mind into a spin.

This can happen when we move away from ourselves by leaving our true purpose behind; our '*WHY*' so to speak. As human beings, we have a way to stay in the pain and avoiding the pleasure because the fear of uncertainty is way too intense so human beings end up sitting in the fear manifesto and then may find themselves stuck and burnt out.

In her book 'Women's Wellness Wisdom' Dr Libby Weaver explains that 'When the nervous system perceives that we are under 'threat' – which in modern times can be due to caffeine consumption and/or our perception of pressure and urgency – the sympathetic (SNS -nervous system) raises our heart rate, increases our respiratory rate, releases stress hormones (adrenalin and cortisol) and shunts blood away from our digestive tract to the muscles so that we can run away from or fight, whatever is threatening us.

If your body is always in stress (SNS activation or let's say 'Fight' mode), how can your immune and nervous system ever produce a healthy functioning immune system?! If anything, it has the opposite effect of a weak immune system which can attract illnesses and diseases.

When you embrace in stillness and honour your body and her whispers, start to let go of things that no longer serve you, you start to think with clarity, self-love and direction.

Think 'less is more', by not over committing to people pleasing or overloading your workload to overwhelm you can avoid feeling the effects of stress like fatigue, anxiety, loneliness or depression.

Let's agree that stress can be the cause of 'physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension on the body and mind' and no one is ready to be at the mercy of this kind of lifestyle.