



PENNSYLVANIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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Can Good Things Cause Stress?

By Donna D. Pinter, Ph.D.

While virtually everybody is familiar with the term “stress”, the usual association is with negative events that, understandably, cause us stress. However, relatively few people associate good things with causing us stress. Many people who experience the fulfillment of their wishes – money, fame, a great new job – find themselves experiencing physical and psychological symptoms of stress and they can’t understand why they’re feeling terrible when their lives are taking a dramatic turn for the better!

Good things place us in a new position – the unknown – where we are not quite sure of the rules and what is expected of us, and leave us left wondering if we will be able to meet these new expectations. If you find yourself in this position, it might be helpful for you first to tell yourself there’s nothing wrong with you. Address your self-doubts. You are worthy and allow yourself to accept your good fortune with comfort. On the other hand, try not to become filled with self-importance. Keep your feet planted in reality.

Initially, make only necessary changes in your life, and take time to adjust to your new role. Don’t expect that your newfound success will solve all your problems – it won’t.

Remember that some people, possibly some close to you, will exhibit their “envy factor” about your success. This may hurt, but it is their problem, not yours.

And finally, nobody’s perfect. Expect to make mistakes in your new role. Forgive yourself, and then move on.

Talk to someone who can help. If you would like the name of a qualified psychologist in your area, please try our Psychologist Locator.