



If there is a pandemic across the globe that is equally deadly to Covid-19, it is undoubtedly the 'pandemic' of STRESS. Cardiac arrest, IBS, mental breakdowns and a host of other ailments can have their roots traced to the poison known as STRESS. In fact, the damage caused by STRESS is not limited to the human body, as it even has the potential to destroy marriages, ruin friendships, end careers and turn family members against one another.

However, if we examine STRESS, then we will realize that by adopting a simple procedure, we can convert our STRESS into REST. On viewing the two words, we will notice that both contain the same letters. Hence, the only difference between them is the sequence of the letters, and the fact that STRESS contains an additional two letters – and in these two differences lie the solution.

The first step is to rearrange our lives to correct the sequence. Just as switching the letters around will convert S-T-R-E-S-S into R-E-S-T, arranging our lives according to the real priorities, and adhering to the arrangement and sequence, will cause us to find REST from our STRESS.

The second step is to cut out the extra two letters – the extra S's, as these S's stand for 'surplus' (things that are extra, unnecessary and frivolous).

For example, financial stress is a reality and a cause of countless sleepless nights for many who are burdened with debt (*may Allah Ta'ala assist them*). Such people should rearrange their finances according to priorities. On receiving the salary, a portion should first be set aside for utilities (lights and water) and monthly groceries, as these are essential needs. Any other essential requirements (rent, chronic medical treatment, etc.) should also be apportioned from the salary. Thereafter, instead of spending the rest on a shopping-spree, we should try to set aside some money as a saving.

If we do not prioritise our expenses, and in a moment of weakness, we splurge on a luxury item or expensive food, then the consequence will catch up with us. When month-end arrives, we will find ourselves cash strapped and unable to meet our financial commitments.

Likewise, with today's fast-paced lifestyle, people are always pressed for time. However, if we prioritise our time, and first attend to our responsibilities, then we will find that all our duties and responsibilities will be fulfilled. Furthermore, if we examine our lives, we will find that in most cases, a large portion of our time is consumed by surplus activities such as browsing the net, scrolling through social media pages, idly chatting on WhatsApp, etc. Through exercising control over our time, insha-Allah we will find that no duty is neglected – neither a duty owed to Allah Ta'ala, nor a duty due to our spouses, children, parents, etc.

This principle, of prioritising and doing away with the surplus, should also be taught to our children so that they learn to become responsible. The child should be taught to first finish his work and thereafter play – not the other way around, as he will then play all day and will forget to do his work until it is too late and he is in trouble.

When it comes to our relationships with people, such as spouses, parents, etc. then in many cases, the cause of the stress is that we have not prioritized correctly. The first priority, in any relationship, is to ensure that the relationship is for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and that He is obeyed at all times. If this is our priority, then we will ensure that we fulfil the rights of every person and will do away with the 'surplus' ego that causes us to expect others to fulfil our rights while we neglect their rights. On the contrary, when pleasing Allah Ta'ala is not the priority, then though we may try to please people, we will eventually be in a situation where nobody is pleased with us – neither Allah Ta'ala nor people.

Insha-Allah, through following this simple, two-step procedure, we will find a large portion of the stress in our lives dissipating. When all the primary duties, obligations and responsibilities in our lives are attended to and fulfilled, and Allah Ta'ala is pleased with us, then what basis could there be for us to stress? Instead of stress, we will find our homes and lives filled with a sense of rest, contentment and satisfaction.

May Allah Ta'ala bless us all with stress-free lives and a stress-free entry into Jannah, aameen.

Just as **switching** the letters around and **cutting out** the extra S's will convert **S-T-R-E-S-S** into **R-E-S-T**, arranging our lives according to the **real priorities**, and removing the **S's (surplus things)** will cause us to find **REST** from our **STRESS**.



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+27 72 566 4856

t.me/imi_um

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