



Dear {{ contact.FIRSTNAME }} }

Welcome to the twenty-fourth instalment of the serialisation of my upcoming book **“The Futures Effect - Change Your Story, Change Y’our Future!”** - the second volume in the **“Futurize Yourself”** series - that is scheduled for publication later this year or early 2023.

This week I’m sharing the fourth episode of Chapter Three: But what is stress-resilience?

Be good to you, be good to y’our future, always.

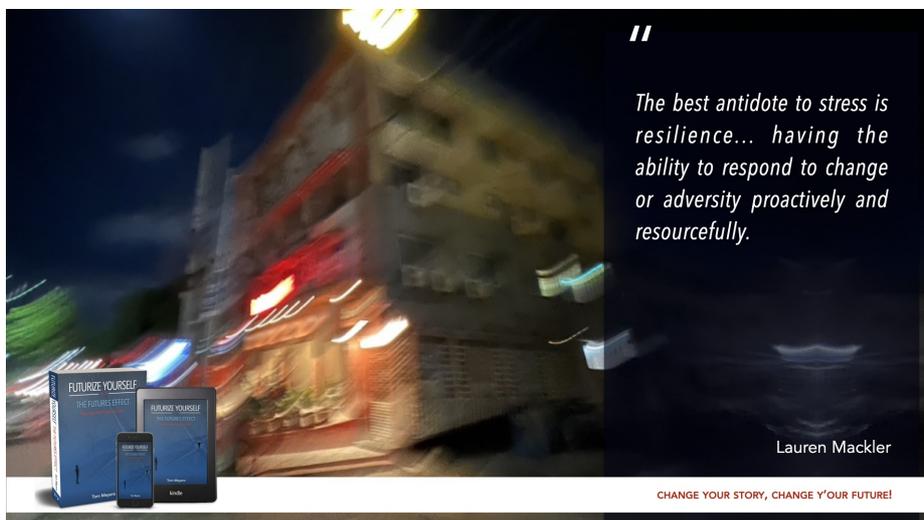
Tom

*PS: Audio and video links in this newsletter will redirect you to the respective platforms as Sendinblue doesn't support iframe embedding. My apologies for the inconvenience but I hope you will check them out.*



[PREVIOUS EPISODES](#)

## **CH3.4 But what is stress-resilience?**



As described before, resilience is y'our ability to adapt and/or bounce back from adversity and return to ease (reset). It's getting up when you fall, it's muscles that contract and then relax. On an emotional level, it is the capacity to bounce back and get over – and move on after – a conflict or a setback.

Resilience can also be seen as your ability to maintain or regain stability, despite experiencing adversity.

In my practice I have a Toroflux® to illustrate what resilience is. A Toroflux is a kinetic spring toy for children made from one ribbon of steel which is woven into a doughnut-shaped torus. When it is unfolded and you press on it lightly (stress) it will change shape and when you release the pressure on it, it will go back to its original toroidal form (resilience). However, if you keep pressing on it (chronic stress) or give it a strong push (acute stress) it will collapse, fold into itself and will not be able to go back to its original shape without help. Look it up on my website [www.osteopathbrussels.com](http://www.osteopathbrussels.com) or on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) and you'll see what I mean.



If resilience is your ability to bounce back from adversity, chronic stress occurs when these same demands outweigh your resources. Over time, chronic stress will be harmful for your health and wellbeing. It will change your time perspective, change your behaviour and shorten your lifespan.

**Resources, according to the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, are:**  
I. A stock or supply of money, materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by a person or organisation in order to function effectively. II. An action or strategy which

## may be adopted in adverse circumstances.

Stress in itself is not the problem. Stress is, after all, a natural biological and behavioural response to a real or imagined threat called a stressor (demand). Examples of stressors can be a wild animal that is chasing you or a car that is racing towards you. But a stressor can also be a loud noise, a smell, a chemical product in the air, a robot that has replaced you at work, a heatwave, changes due to climate change, a pandemic, a cyberattack or a fight with your partner. Not all stressors are negative in nature. A new job, moving house, a raise in salary, a holiday, getting married, learning a new skill and futurizing yourself can be considered as stressors. Anything that asks you to adapt can be seen as a stressor.

Stress is a physiological process to maintain stability through change. "Tom, stability through change - I think you mentioned that before." I did, didn't I, a few pages back when I spoke about allostasis.

**Sterling and Eyer (1988) defined allostasis as the set of mind-body systemic events aimed at regulating the recovery from stress.**

<https://www.nature.com/articles/1395453>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allostasis>

When you encounter a threatening or life-changing situation, your body will respond with a series of neuro-hormonal changes that help you to cope. For example, these internal changes can give you a burst of energy so you're able to fight off attackers, or increase oxygen to the brain and improve attention, focus, energy and determination when you're studying for an exam. So, some stress is healthy and helpful - as long as you are resilient and are able to bounce back when the danger, real or not, or the extra demand on you is over.

However, chronic or excessive stress can lead to allostatic load. This occurs when your stress response can't reset because the demands on your body were higher than its resources to bounce back and dysautonomia (the dysregulation of the autonomic nervous system) sets in.

**Stress-related dysautonomia is the dysregulation of the autonomic nervous system and occurs when the body is essentially in a sympathetic state constantly. This is a state of the body where the stress response is constantly firing and is unable to return to ease and activate the rest and digest response.**

More information about dysautonomia:

<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/dysautonomia>

Over time this can lead to you having a combination of different symptoms like neck, shoulder and back pain, cardiovascular and digestive problems, immune deficiency, behavioural changes, insomnia, memory problems, and it can even change the structure of your brain. Ouch! These in turn can lead to or aggravate other health problems like cancer, Alzheimer's or Crohn's disease, diabetes, anxiety, depression and burnout.

**According to the Polyvagal Theory (Stephen Porges), the common thread and rationale behind dysautonomia is that chronic or excessive stress leads to a surge in the activity of the dorsal branch and the shutdown of the activity of the ventral branch of the vagus nerve (evolutionarily newer part) and you regress to an earlier, more primitive evolutionary response of either spinal sympathetic activity (flight/fight) or depressive behaviour (withdrawal).**

Rosenberg, S. (2017). *Accessing the Healing Power of the Vagus Nerve: Self-Help Exercises for Anxiety, Depression, Trauma, and Autism*.

As you can probably imagine by now, stress – although essential to help you get away quickly from an oncoming car – can, in the long term, actually become a stressor in itself! This ain't what you want when you are trying to envisage a good life and a GREAT future.

A fast-changing world will mean lots of change, which means lots of stress. How you cope with the increased levels of stress will define your future.

#### **SIDELINE REFLECTION:**

Isn't it interesting that all the aforementioned multi-system chronic stress related symptoms are experienced by people suffering from long COVID?! My experience working with patients who have chronic stress or long COVID is that, so far, all have benefited nearly instantly from the osteopathy-based Reaset Approach that I developed.

#### **Info from the NHS and CDC on long COVID**

For some people, coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause symptoms that last weeks or months after the infection has gone. This is sometimes called post-COVID-19 syndrome or "long COVID".

#### **About long COVID**

How long it takes to recover from COVID-19 is different for everybody. Many people feel better in a few days or weeks, and most will make a full recovery within 12 weeks. But for some people, symptoms can last longer. The chances of having long-term symptoms does not seem to be linked to how ill you are when you first get COVID-19. People who had mild symptoms at first can still have long-term problems.

#### **Common chronic stress and long COVID symptoms include:**

- Joint or muscle pain
- Extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- Difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- Headaches, back pains, stomach problems and diarrhoea
- Heart palpitations
- Problems with memory and concentration
- Depression and anxiety
- Dizziness
- Changes in breath rate
- Chest pain or tightness
- Tinnitus, earaches

#### **Other long COVID symptoms**

- Post-exertional malaise
- Brain fog
- Pins and needles

- Feeling sick, stomach aches, loss of appetite
- Changes to sense of smell or taste

## To be continued next week with:

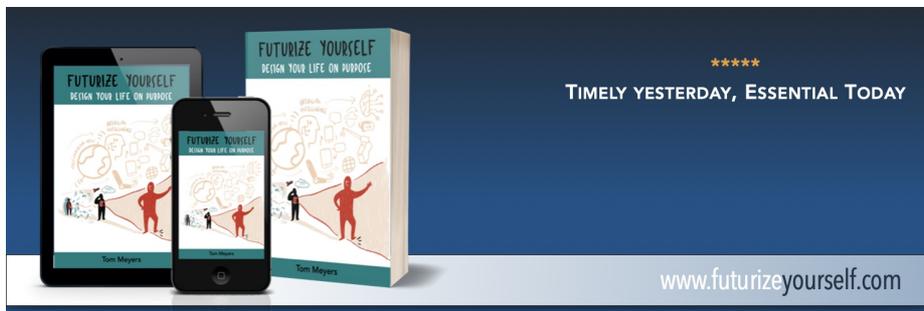
CH3.5 Not all challenges are signs to change



### About the author

Tom Meyers, also known as “TomTom the Health Navigator”, is an osteopath D.O., body-centred stress coach, the founder of the “Reset Approach”, a wellbeing futurist, space enthusiast, TEDx organiser and author of “Futurize Yourself - Design your life on purpose.”

His mission is to empower you to flourish and thrive in this fast-changing, uncertain and challenging world full of opportunities.



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