Overcoming the Superwoman Syndrome: 
Creating Your Personal Path to Wellness 
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Margaret A. Chesney, PhD

BIOGRAPHY:
Margaret A. Chesney is a Professor in Residence in the Department of Medicine at UCSF. Margaret initially joined the School of Medicine in 1987, and served in a number of leadership positions at the University. In 2003, she was recruited to serve as the Deputy Director of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) at the NIH. In 2010, Margaret returned to UCSF as Director of the UCSF Osher Center.

Professionally, Margaret has been engaged in clinical practice and research in mind-body interactions and health. Her focus is on illness prevention and treatment, and optimal well-being across the lifespan. She is the Principal Investigator of an NIH grant to investigate mindful breathing as a pathway by which meditation affects health. She is also the Associate Editor of Psychology, Health and Medicine and an author of over 300 papers.

Margaret has been President of the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research, President of the American Psychosomatic Society and President of the Division of Health Psychology of the American Psychological Association. She received the Distinguished Scientist Award from the Society of Behavioral Medicine in 2010, the Director’s Award for work in Mind-Body Medicine from the NIH in 2005, and the President’s Award from the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research in 1987. In 2001, she was elected to the Institute of Medicine. She received an honorary doctorate from her Alma Mater, Whitman College, in 2008.

BIOBIOGRAPHY:


UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine
Mini Medical School

Overcoming the Superwoman Syndrome: Creating Your Personal Path to Wellness

Dr. Brizendine: The Female Brain
(UCTV Lecture 1)

“Nature” or Genes vs. “Nurture” or Environment

Dr. Garber: Body Image
(UCTV Lecture 2)

Why Don’t We Value Age & Wisdom?

Today’s World = Challenges

• Pressure to achieve in multiple domains
• Family
  • Children
  • Spouses
• Home
  • Food
  • Repairs
• Work

Healthy Cooking
Today's World = Challenges

Dr. Epel: Caregiving
(UCTV Lecture 5)
- Pressure to achieve in multiple domains
  - Family
  - Home
  - Work
  ➔ Caregiving

News Flash! - Good News About Multiple Roles*

- Multiple Roles do involve "role strain" but the
  can also be health enhancing!
- If women view their roles as rewarding and
  enhancing their opportunities, that can
  balance the strain
- Risk may be greatest when women are trapped

News Flash! - Good News About Multiple Roles

- Goal is for women and men to successfully
  weave together multiple threads of responsibility
- Multiple roles can offer opportunities for reward,
  resources and support that can promote
  well-being

Impact of Challenges?

Dr. Lee: Sleep
(UCTV Lecture 3)
Survey: 1000 Women
- Working mothers - Highest in
  - Complaints of insomnia (72%)
  - Caffeine use* (56%)
    * average 2.7 cups/day
  - Rate of drowsy driving (35%)
- 50+ Age Group of Women - Highest
  - Use of sleep aids (41%)

Impact of Challenges?

Dr. Whooley - Stress & Heart Disease
(UCTV Lecture 4)
"The typical heart disease patient is a
keen and ambitious man... whose engine
is always at full speed ahead."
Sir William Osler, 1897

“Type A Behavior and Your Heart”

- Friedman and Rosenman observed that many of their
  cardiac patients had Type A behavior
  (time urgency + hostility)
- Could treatment with counseling focused on
  timer urgency and hostility therapy improve cardiac
  outcomes?

Friedman & Rosenman, Knopf, 1974
Effect of Type A Therapy in 1013 Post-MI Patients Followed for 4.5 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counseling Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent with MI or CV death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type A Counseling</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>20% (p &lt; 0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiac Counseling</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usual Care - No Counseling</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Friedman et al., Am Heart J 1986

Overcoming the Superwoman Syndrome!

- Many women strive to accomplish as much as possible, in as perfect a manner as possible!
- As a result, many sacrifice themselves and their health
- Develop a plan that works for you
- Remember

Creating you Personal Path to Wellness

- Clarify values
- Manage time
- Manage negative moods
- B.R.E.A.T.H.E.

Creating you Personal Path to Wellness

- Clarify values

Clarify Values

- Answer this question: *If I had only 5 years left to live, how would I spend my time?*
- Consider:
  - Family, Friends, Work, Self
- Think about how you typically spend your time…
Manage Time

- Most people turn to “Time Management 101”
  Become an expert on hurrying

Manage Time

- Most people turn to “Time management 101”
  Become an expert on hurrying

Manage Time – Really!

- Download
- Avoid future download
- Avoid “clearing the decks”
- Schedule with the real world in mind
- Create “time outs” daily – B.R.E.A.T.H.E.

Creating you Personal Path to Wellness

- Clarify values
- Manage time
  → Manage negative moods

Negative Mood
Anger & Hostility

The Association of Anger and Hostility With Future Coronary Heart Disease
A Meta-Analytic Review of Prospective Evidence

Yvets Clifta, MD, PhD, Andrew Stewart, MD
Leeds, United Kingdom

Anger/hostility & Coronary Heart Disease
“Greater risk”
Pooled HR 1.19 (1.05 -1.35)
**Anger/hostility & Recurrent Coronary Heart Disease**

“Greater Risk” Pooled HR 1.24 (1.08 - 1.42)

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**Negative Mood Anxiety**

**Anxiety and Risk of Incident Coronary Heart Disease**

A Meta-Analysis

Aurélie M. Roos, MSc1, Elisabeth J. Marinus, PhD1, Peter dejonge, PhD1,2, Johan Druyts, PhD1,2

Tilburg and Groningen, the Netherlands

Anxiety and Incident Coronary Heart Disease
Greater Risk Pooled HR1.26 (1.15-1.38)

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** Negative Mood Depression**

**Depression & Incident Coronary Heart Disease**

Pooled Hazard Ratio 1.6 (1.3-1.9)

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**INTERHEART STUDY**

Modifiable Risk Factors for Acute MI in 52 Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Adjusted OR (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyslipidemia</td>
<td>3.3 (2.8 – 3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>2.7 (2.2 - 3.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>2.4 (2.1 – 2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>2.0 (1.9 – 2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>1.9 (1.7 – 2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>1.6 (1.5 – 1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>0.9 (0.8 – 1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular alcohol</td>
<td>0.9 (0.8 – 1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit and vegetables</td>
<td>0.7 (0.6 – 0.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*29,972 patients, Yusuf, et al, Lancet, 2004

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**Creating your Personal Path to Wellness**

- Clarify values
- Manage time
- Manage negative moods — *HOW?*

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**First, It’s okay to get angry …**
Manage Negative Mood

- Monitor negative mood and identify triggers
- Confront the myth about moods
  - Look at “Anger and Hostility Myth”

\[ \text{MYTH} \]

\[ \text{Event} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Anger} \]

Manage Negative Mood

- Monitor negative mood and identify triggers
- Confront the myth about moods
  - Look at “Anger and Hostility Myth”
- Evaluate the benefits and costs
- Consider options
  - Express anger (“anger out”)
  - Suppress anger (“anger in”)
  - Reconsider anger ….. \textit{Let it go!}

Manage Negative Mood

- Monitor negative mood and identify triggers
- Confront the “Mood Myth”
- Look at Anger and Hostility Myth
- Evaluate the benefits and costs
- Consider options
  - Cultivate humor

Cultivate humor

- Clarify values
- Manage time
- Manage negative moods
- B.R.E.A.T.H.E.
  - First a bit of new science about stress and breathing

Creating you Personal Path to Wellness

- “Bummer of a bithmark, Huh?”
Stress ➔ Inhibited Breathing?

- Stress ➔ Fight or Flight
- ‘Freeze’

Vigilance: Adaptive response that Increases pCO₂ and Increases Cerebral Blood Flow

- Is psychological stress associated with inhibited breathing in people?

- Is perceived stress associated with inhibited breathing in people?
  
  Yes, more significantly in women than men

- Is inhibited breathing associated with increased CO₂?


"Inhibited Breathing" and CO₂

Other Findings Highlighting the Relevance of CO2 to BP in Women

- 10% of the variance in resting systolic BP in post-menopausal women can be accounted for by resting level of CO2 (Anderson DE, et al., J Hypertens, 17, 1999)
- The relationship of CO2 to systolic BP is mediated by inhibition of anger in women, but not in men (Scuteri A, et al., Psychosom Med, 63, 2001)
- The relationship of CO2 to carotid artery thickness is greater in women than in men (Anderson DE, et al., J Hypertens, 19, 2001)

Implications of Inhibited Breathing for Behavioral Interventions in Hypertension

- If inhibited breathing is a factor in some forms of hypertension, training to avoid breath-holding may be useful in the hypertension treatment and prevention
- Note: many of the traditional behavioral interventions already emphasize breathing
  - Relaxation training
  - Cognitive therapies
  - Meditation

Key for Personal Path to Wellness

“BREATHE”

Breathe: Take a deep breath, be present with yourself in the moment

“BREATHE”

Realistic Goals: Set realistic goals for this moment, this hour and this day

✓ and celebrate meeting them!

“BREATHE”

Everyday events: Notice the positive moments in everyday life,

+ sunset, flowers
+ share these events with others

+ recognize when things go right
“BREATHE”

Acts of Kindness
+ Create positive events for others

“BREATHE”

Honor strengths
+ Acknowledge your personal strengths

Humor?

“BREATHE”

End each day with gratitude
+ Note positive steps and all you are thankful for

Key for Wellness

“BREATHE”

✔ Care for yourself
➡ Build your resilience
  Clarify values
  Manage Time
  Reframe Negative Moods
  Create your personal path to wellness!

Thank you!