



## Stress Kills, But Here's How to Use it to Max Your Performance

Steve Sanduski:

We have another great show lined up for you today here on the CEO Coaching International Podcast. I'm your host, Steve Sanduski, and joining me today is Dr. Heidi Hanna. Dr. Hanna is a New York Times Best Selling author, the Chief Energy Officer and founder of SYNERGY, which is a consulting company that provides brain-based health and performance programs to organizations.

She's also the executive director for the American Institute of Stress, and she's the author of numerous books including *The Sharp Solution*, *Stressaholic*, and *Recharge*. Heidi, it's great to have you on the show.

Heidi Hanna:

Thank you, Steve, and I have to say I'm impressed you actually have the most recent bio. I was laughing as you got started and thought, "Oh my gosh. I feel like that thing changes all the time," so it was nice to hear, even from you, what I'm up to these days.

Steve Sanduski:

Well, as long as you keep your website updated I think we're in good shape here.

Heidi Hanna:

Right. That's right.

Steve Sanduski:

Heidi, you have an amazing background here. I know you spent a lot of time working with individuals and organizations, really helping them to basically train their brains on how to utilize energy in a way that's going to help optimize their performance, and also helping them promote health, happiness, and longevity.

Most of the folks that are listening to us today are successful entrepreneurs, CEOs. They have demanding jobs. Often times they're under great stress, so I think this is just a fantastic topic to really talk about.

How can we get control of stress? How can we utilize our energy in better ways to be more effective, and to have higher performance? Why don't you set the

stage here a little bit? Talk a little bit about the research that you do, and how we can help top achievers be more successful.

Heidi Hanna:

Yeah, that's great. Well, I know this audience well, and I always feel humbled to say that maybe I know something that others don't. I actually will just start by saying I think that what we're talking about today really is common sense in a lot of ways, but if I've learned anything in my 13 years of traveling around the world and speaking with top performers, is that common sense is not always common practice.

Even for myself, going around and speaking and working with people really on fundamental energy management, things like nutrition, and fitness, and sleep, and I've never really given people information that they weren't intuitively aware of when it comes to how to take better care of ourselves.

The challenge is that our world is just getting busier, and busier, and the demands on our time and energy are more and more. It's really, I think, how do we take those concepts and make them, number one, a priority so that we believe that investment we're making in taking care of ourselves is relevant.

I remember the co-founder of the Human Performance Institute, where I worked for eight years, Jack Groppe, used to say often, "The body is business relevant," and that really resonated with me because I think sometimes we think of our body and our health as being one part of our life, and then there's our family life, and that's separate, and then there's our work life, and that's separate.

Really I think if we were sitting, all of us together in a room, we would agree that all of those elements, obviously, affect each other and our ability to show up in the moments that matter most really comes down to our ability to have the energy we need and the time that we have. I think one of the core principles that people are already aware of is that time without energy is void of value, and yet we spend so much time kind of obsessing about time, and wishing we had more time to get things done when time is a finite resource.

Maybe not enough time or energy, really thinking about how we can optimize our personal energy with those simple strategies of things like nutrition, fitness, and sleep. Just to kind of start off with, I'm sure everybody knows this, making sure we're eating every three to four hours. Eating food that our grandparents, grandparents would recognize as food, and moving our bodies every 90 minutes, and sleeping seven to eight hours. It's like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. We know that, but how do we actually make it a priority?"

I think that's, to me, where this stress piece starts to come in because we talk so much about stress without really defining what stress is. Essentially stress, on one hand, is just a stimulus for change, so when we experience a need for

change, that causes an energy that we feel that something needs to be different.

I think the way we experience stress today comes down to this gap between demand and capacity. When we think of a negative stress response, or we think of pressure the way most people experience it, when there's a negative consequence to that, it's just feeling like we don't have enough. I would say, unfortunately when I look around the world today, most people wake up and feel like they don't have enough time, they don't have enough energy, they have too much on their plate.

They're getting hijacked, in a sense, because the brain is quickly shifting into this chronic stress state that is not allowing their brain to function at its best. I think for everybody listening that may be one of the important pieces is to realize that when we don't take care of those fundamental physiological needs that we just talked about, and we feel depleted, that our brain really is under performing and under serving us.

Steve Sanduski:

What's ironic about all this is that we've been hearing about how technology is advancing and the pace of technology development is accelerating, and we have all these productivity tools and productivity hacks, but yet the last time I looked, and in hearing you say, I think we all know, we all seem to be busier and more stressed out than we've ever been.

It seems like all of this technology that we have isn't exactly making our lives easier, maybe in some ways it's making our lives more complicated because it just gives us the ability to do more stuff, not necessarily to free up a lot more time.

Heidi Hanna:

Yeah, I think that's right, and I think if you just were to take a step back and kind of say, "Okay, how is the brain wired, and what do we really crave from the brain's perspective?" This is why, to me, integrative neuroscience is so fascinating, and it's been my area of research for the past 10 years is we can kind of conceptualize a lot of these things, but let's just make it really simple, right?

The brain is hard-wired to crave stimulation, and information, and connection, and technology is this beautiful tool that we have to give us access to all of the things that the brain craves, which is wonderful because in one way it gives us more resources, and that's what we want, but it's giving us more information, more content, and in some ways the illusion of connection by being hyper-connected, when it's kind of almost now clogging up the channels.

Even when you mention productivity hacks, as I was thinking about that, one of the things I find when I'm doing speaking engagements is people will say, "Okay, which one?" There's so many of them out there when it comes to meditation.

Well, which one? Which app, which technique? It's like it's overwhelming because there's just so much out there.

Unfortunately what that does now is make us feel like we just don't have a lot of control. We don't have a lot of focus. We know that we can get more done with less time if we have that extraordinary energy, but if our brain is actually becoming addicted to that stimulation and that hyper-connectivity then we're fighting ourselves. Our brain actually becomes like a frienemy to us where it's wanting more and more and more, but it's actually hijacking us from the fundamental things we know are most important.

I think that's why, in some ways, learning to turn it off completely, going on airplane mode, setting really solid boundaries around our use for technology is very important, and for those people who have kids at home to be thinking about that as well, and the analogy they use for that is that when we allow our brains to be constantly connected to technology, in a way it's like putting an IV into our bloodstream that's constantly dripping sugar.

Sugar, for our survival, is something we really need so we want it, we crave it, it's that reward pathway, but if we have that with no boundaries, with not time to stop and process and digest, we're constantly kicking out insulin, and it's too much. We end up getting diabetes and having inflammation in our brain and body, and the same thing happens when we have that unrelenting access to stimulation through technology.

I would say the same thing from just stress in general because sometimes we find ourselves kind of going into these high intense stress moments, becoming adrenaline junkies, and there's nothing wrong with seeking that in doses that are balanced with the down time, but what I find especially from peak performers is that we love the rush.

We love the adrenaline. We're passionate about our work, which is awesome, but just like everything with the human system, it has to oscillate, so what goes up must also come down in order to stay in that healthy balance. For most people taking time off, shutting down the phone, relaxing, doing things that are just not stimulating is actually really difficult, really uncomfortable.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah it is. I had to laugh internally here as you were talking about putting your phone on airplane mode because now it sounds like on planes in the future we're going to be able to be connected up in the sky. I've often times used the airplane time as kind of relax time and listen to some music, but now it's like, "Ah, you're up in the sky? No problem. You can still work."

Heidi Hanna: Yeah, and that's scary to me. I'll say it real quickly. I think it's scary number one because it's so hard to just find a moment of peace nowadays because everybody is so hyper-connected, but I think what we're doing is we're feeding

the beast. It's like because we want it so bad, we're just fueling our own addictions.

I have often said that I think someday we will look back on our hyper-connectivity with technology the same way we do smoking cigarettes, which means people may still do it, but we'll look at them and say, "Wow, you know, I wonder if they know what they're doing to themselves, or that poor person is addicted to this technology." They can't even turn it off because, in a sense, it is that chronic.

I want to make sure I say it because some people are like, "Wait a second. We need technology." I love technology, and it can be a great asset, but we cannot have it constantly hijacking our energy, our attention, our focus the way that it is right now. I think unfortunately it's going to get worse before it gets better.

Steve Sanduski: The couple areas I want to explore here a little deeper on what you've been talking about. One is lets start with ... Just give us a basic definition of stress. In my understanding, maybe this is wrong I don't know, is we've got good stress, and we've got bad stress. Why don't you give us kind of a definition of how you're working with stress here.

Heidi Hanna: Yeah, it's wonderful, and I love that you brought that up because I think it's good that we have this notion, for those who are familiar with eustress and distress. Eustress is spelled E-U stress. Distress is D-I-S distress. Originally when the term stress was used, it was used by a scientist named Hans Selye, who actually started the American Institute of Stress. The way he defined stress was just a stimulus for change.

He was looking at experiments on animals, and these animals were having these physical symptoms of inflammation and building up plaque in the arteries, and having ulcers. They thought it was from the substance that they were actually injecting them with, but it turned out it was just the injection, so going through that painful experience or that stressful experience was causing these physical responses.

He realized wow if you cause adaptation, if you give a stimulus where the system now needs to adapt, that is what we will call stress. What happened was it ended up becoming known as kind of a catch-all for everything that's bad, everything that's wrong, feeling overwhelmed, or all these negative consequences. He came back out and said, "Let me make this a little bit more clear. There is stimulus that is good for you and causes a good response, and then there's stimulus that's bad for you and causes a bad response."

He divided it up into these two terms. Well, the problem with that then became that we know people can have good stimulation, or good challenge, lets say, that leads to a bad outcome or a bad response and vice versa. One of the most well-known studies that looked at this actually was looking at happiness.

It looked at people who had been in an accident and become handicapped, had a physical disability as a result of the accident, and then it looked at another population that had won the lottery. It turned out that the people who won the lottery were less happy after they had this positive change. The people who had had the accident were actually happier in certain measures.

That's not to say that people who have bad things happen, or that's a great thing and we should celebrate that, but it turns out that when it comes to stress, and when it comes to things like happiness and performance, there's just so many elements to look at. I would ask anybody listening to think back on an experience that you had in your life that was really difficult, really challenging, really uncomfortable, and were there outcomes of that that were really positive?

I look back at the hardest times in my life, and I look back now and say, "Wow, I grew a lot, and learned a lot. I'm stronger." All of these positive things, and at the same time you can look at things that should have been really amazing, and weren't. I'll use the simple example of hitting the New York Times Best Seller with the book.

A friend of mine just is going through the same thing right now, and I'm watching her and kind of going, "Okay, well I'm going to be here for her when she crashes," because the expectation is that once you hit this new status point or this new bar that you've set for yourself in whatever it might be, and this is with business as well as professional athletes, a certain level of success or fame, you realize that on the day-to-day you're still the same person.

Then what adds to the, I guess, dissatisfaction is now you realize well shoot if that didn't make me happy, what will make me happy? There's this whole, kind of, questioning process that we go through on that. I say that because I think what we really want to look at is that stress is simply stimulus for change. In any situation where we're experiencing that tension, or pressure, or energy where we feel like something's just out of balance, what that's doing is trying to nudge us in a direction that's more positive.

We can take a step back and actually assess the situation. I have this really simple kind of three-step process for people to master stress. That is first to assess what's really going on. When we call something stress, we're not labeling it in a way that's helpful. It just becomes like a stress bucket that we carry around on our shoulders and wipes us out. But if we can say, "Well, I'm feeling this energy or this pressure, this tension, and it's there because I actually have more on my plate today than I can get done."

Then I need to fix that. I need to delegate or I need to get something off my plate, or I need to move something to next week, or whatever it is, or I need to get more resources. That's where that demand versus capacity comes in. Do we

need to decrease the demand or do we need to increase our capacity by getting support in whatever way that might be?

Assessing what's really going on, not necessarily labeling it good or bad, but just saying, "What is the change that needs to happen?" Then the second step is appreciating that because the fact that we have a stress response, and we feel that tension or discomfort, is a wonderful thing to have happen. It's just shining light on what needs to be fixed. The more we push that aside and try to pretend that it's not there, the bigger that problem becomes.

If we can take a breath, and take a moment, and appreciate our experience of stress, it also releases the pressure that causes the brain to get hijacked into these negative performance state. We open up to gratitude. We open up to curiosity, collaborating with people, just a positive brain state. That's going to allow us to problem solve more effectively.

Then the last step then is adjustment. What needs to be adjusted? There's usually small, simple adjustments that can be made to alleviate the pressure so that it's not feeling overwhelming. When we do that, we shift from this threat response of just, "I can't handle it. It's too much. I'm overwhelmed," to more of a challenge response.

This is what I know the people who are listening to this particular program are so great at, is seeing the opportunity in the challenge. When we see the opportunity our brain is going to really help move us in the right direction, but we just have to clear away the noise, and the chaos, and the feeling of out of control that sometimes stress causes us to feel.

Steve Sanduski:

I'm glad you really shed some light here on just this definition of stress and talking about how it's really response to stimulus. It can be good. It can be bad, and how you're actually reacting to it, and you gave us some really good ideas here on how you can manage that. From a practical standpoint, I'm sure you've talked to these people. You've heard these people say things about how they start their day, for example.

Some people have a very specific morning routine, whether that involves meditation, or exercise, or certain type of breathing patterns to really kind of prime themselves for the day. Do you have any thoughts on how you, and the top performers that you work with, do they have routines or daily habits that they go through that enable them to really handle the stress that is in their lives and use it effectively?

Heidi Hanna:

Absolutely. You nailed that one, and I would say there's a couple of things to look at. You mentioned morning rituals. I think these are the most powerful, and I know there's been a lot of books written about the ... Miracle Morning. There's a lot of different kind of trends you can use. The most important thing is that you have a go-to strategy that works for you.

I, for myself, I call this prime time. This is how you're priming your brain to be an optimal state for the work that you're going to do. In the morning your brain is really most flexible, most adaptable, most ready to take in new information. Unfortunately what most people do is they quickly check their email, watch the news, read the paper, and the majority of that information is over-stimulating and stressful.

Before we go into that, it's so important to nudge the brain into a more positive state because then you're going to receive that better, and it's not to ignore the work load that you have to be paying attention to, but it's literally like adjusting your mindset so that you're preparing yourself to work from a place of problem solving instead of that overwhelmed place.

This can look different for everybody. I do a lot of work just kind of giving people the different practical tools of things like meditation. Meditation's one of the most powerful, and there are so many ways to do it. In fact, meditation doesn't even have to be what most people think of as traditional meditation of using a mantra or listening to guided meditation, which is a great way to do it, but even listening to music, having certain songs that help lift your mood or help you think about what's most important to you.

Movement is another great one. Whether it's physical activity, exercise, intentional exercise, just going for a walk, doing some stretching. If you have pets, taking your pets out for a walk, but that gets the circulation going. It gets the blood sugar and oxygen to the brain. It also helps to give you a sense of accomplishment first thing in the morning before you've done anything else.

Another one that I really like is mirth, which is another word for humor. Finding something funny, sharing something funny with somebody else actually shifts the brain into a better state. Studies have shown that experiencing humor, whether you laugh or not, actually reduces stress hormones, improves immune functioning, improves memory and cognitive performance.

I think the most important thing with these is for everybody to know what is it that fuels you? What recharges your energy? What gives you the kind of focus that you want to have? Spending probably 15 to 20 minutes at least would be ideal for that prime time in the morning to get your brain into that state. Then that's setting the tone.

We have to realize that as you go through the day, obviously that investment is going to start to be spent on the different tasks that you have, and the different experiences that you have. Then how do you recharge that? Short three to five minute recharge breaks every hour are really important to just reset that focus. The same types of things, meditation, movement, mirth also aroma therapy could be just having a conversation with a family member.

I encourage people to just spend some time to put together your recharge tool kit. Write down the things that inspire you and help you to shift into that optimal state. I do also have, I'll just mention, a recharge tool kit that I've put together online, and we can make sure everybody can find that. You can get to it through my website, where I add different meditations. I have funny videos. I have different music that's helpful, just to help people kind of start to think about the different options and things that might work for them individually.

Steve Sanduski:

I appreciate that you really spent some time here talking about these morning routines, and just the importance of starting your day well. I've been a big fan of that as well, and just this past December I changed my morning routine, so I get up at 5, well usually I'm up before 5. The routine would typically start at 5. From 5 to 5:20 AM, it's prayer and meditation. 5:20 to 6:30 AM is reading. 6:30 to 7:00 is exercise, and then 7:00 to 8:00 is eating, getting cleaned up, getting ready for work, and then off to the office.

It's a 2 hour morning routine, which to some people may sound like an awful long time, but I found that by taking that type of preparation, not checking email. I don't check email first thing I get up in the morning, and I can't say I do this 100% of the time, but I try not to look at it until I get to the office. I think just starting the day like that is such an effective way. Let me ask you. Do you have some type of morning routine as well that you do?

Heidi Hanna:

I do, and I'm so grateful that you shared that, Steve, because when I go out and people will ask me, "Well, what do you do for your prime time?" I take about 90 minutes, and people always kind of gasp like, "Ah, I could never spend that much time. Must be nice to be her." I heard you say two hours. I'm like, "Oh, that makes me feel better, so much better." What I learned is that that is the most powerful investment that you make into your day, so my question to people who say, "Well, I don't have time to do that," is if you feel like you don't have time to do that, you need to do it even more because it is setting the tone for your capacity.

Essentially how you experience stress is all based on your belief in your capacity, so when you invest in yourself, you now have the capacity to take on whatever life throws at you. Life is not going to slow down to make this easy. You have to build it in. You have to make it a priority. As hard as it is taking care of yourself, is taking care of your business, and that's so important.

Very similar to you, I do my three Ms that I mentioned. Mine happen to be movement, meditation, and mirth. I will tend to work out for about an hour. Ideally go for a long run. I do that first because I kind of need that to then get my brain right to be able to do the rest of it.

Sometimes it flips around a little bit, but then I do about 20 minutes of meditation, and about 10 minutes of finding something funny, and sharing it with my community. I have a Facebook page called Beyond Funny where I share

little funny images, or videos, or something, and it's not just, in that case, for me to find it funny, but then we also share with the community, which adds positive bonding chemicals through oxytocin, makes you feel like you're not alone, and kind of taking on the stress of the day, and those things are really helpful.

Then throughout the day, just making sure I'm coming back to, every hour, about three to five minutes, to do some sort of strategy that's essentially just telling my brain, "Hey, we've got you. We're going to take a break, and bust back in you." A lot of times it is guided meditation because even though I teach meditation, it is very difficult to walk yourself through that, so I tend to listen to a guided meditation, or listen to music, or listen to sounds of nature for a period of time to just help me to get into that relaxed recharge state.

Steve Sanduski:

Well, a couple really important take-aways here so far, Heidi, from what you've been talking about. One is just the importance of having that morning routine, that morning ritual that really starts your day off well. Then the second is throughout the day to take three to five minutes every hour or so to just really recharge. I know in my case, my office is in a marina area.

I live here in Wisconsin so in the winter time it gets a little cold, but I try to get outside and just walk around the marina for a few minutes, and that ... just get out in nature a little bit, and it's really recharging. I think those are two important things there. What else from an energy standpoint? I know you've done a lot of work over the years in that area.

What can we do to keep our energy level high, and is it important, or is it make sense to try and keep your energy level high all day long, or I know you mentioned the world oscillate a little earlier. Should we be oscillating our energy level throughout the day? What are your thoughts there in terms of peak performance? What should we be doing with our energy level?

Heidi Hanna:

Yeah, great question. I think that we need to be thinking, again, about investing in our energy, and those investments that are so important are how we eat, how we move, and how we sleep. I know most people really struggle now to get quality sleep, and if you're not getting a good seven hours at least of quality sleep, that's going to be something you really want to take a look at because that is unfortunately going to be a chronic stresser that is going to decrease your ability to have that good energy.

It's important to think about what are you doing before you go to bed? How are you unwinding? Are you giving yourself an hour, at least, to disconnect from technology, to think about something restorative and nourishing, and not be thinking about work? Then that also comes back to those oscillation moments as well because how we sleep often is set up by how we take breaks.

If you're just going, and going, and going, the system is really amped up on stress hormones, it's going to be difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep, but if

you're building in those bricks, it's going to be much easier because you're creating that rhythm of the up and down. Thinking about it, we talked a little bit about the Human Performance Institute, but Jim Loehr in his book with Tony Schwartz, *The Powerful Engagement*, they talk about thinking about life as a series of sprints instead of a marathon.

In order to be really at that high energy level, it has to be a shorter period of time. You cannot go into a marathon and sprint. You just can't. If you're going to bring your full and best energy to the moments that matter most, you have to set clear boundaries. I think the most practical way to do that is to think about time a little differently and really set some clear boundaries around your time.

Doing 20 or 25 minute meetings, or doing 45 or 50 minute meetings where people really bring their optimal energy, they're really paying attention. You get a lot more done, but then people also know hey I've got 10 or 15 minutes now to check back in, to check my email, to go get some fresh air, to walk around, go to the bathroom. A lot of people are like, "Can we just go to the bathroom every now and then during the day?"

We tend to just cram more, and more, and more, and meeting, after meeting, after meeting, and it is just wearing people out. The other issue with that is when we aren't more mindful about the energy we bring to the time, is that people are multitasking. There's really nothing more exhausting to the brain than trying to multitask throughout the day, thinking about what else might be going on, or what I might be missing.

Really encouraging, especially if you're working with other people, set those boundaries, set those expectations, doing shorter time, higher intensity, followed by a break, and realize it's going to take you a little while to get used to that, and that the down time is going to feel really uncomfortable, so having the discipline to say, "The only way I can go back up with my energy intensity is to make sure that I stay at this low level energy for just a few moments," and find something that's going to really recharge you, inspire you, excite you to go back into that next opportunity.

Steve Sanduski: One other topic that I just want to touch on here briefly that I think really ties in with everything that you've been talking about here so far in managing your energy is the folks listening here, they will face setbacks in their careers, and in their businesses, and I think this whole idea of resilience and how do you build a resilient mindset? I know you've done a lot of work in that area as well. What thoughts do you have on how top performers can really build that resilient mindset?

Heidi Hanna: It's a great question. It's something that we're always looking at. Someone mentioned to me just the other day that they believed that resilience was kind of more of a trait than a skill. I would love to really dig into that more deeply with some of the people who I know are speaking about that. I do think it's a

skill. I think it is a mindset like you mentioned. Just like anything else, the more we practice something, the stronger that becomes, especially when it comes to those neural patterns and the way that the brain perceives what's happening to us.

An example would be a gratitude mindset. The more you spend time writing down things you feel grateful for, and noticing things in your day that you feel grateful for, the more you naturally just feel grateful. I've tested that. I've experienced that. I've done 30-day gratitude challenges where I really notice myself seeing the world differently.

I would say the same thing with resilience. I think the element that I'm now starting to move into, is curiosity and what I call the curiosity effect. That means that when we are in the midst of something that is uncomfortable or challenging, when we can look at it through a lens of curiosity and ask the important questions like, "What is this teaching me? What is the lesson in this? Who are the people I can count on? How might I grow?"

It's not asking the, "Why is this happening to me? What happens if I fail?" We shift into that threat response, but when we really kind of go into the experience instead of trying to avoid it, I have found that that gives the experience meaning and purpose. We know that when the brain is looking for meaning and purpose it just functions better. It's in a more calm, focused state.

It's not relaxed, but it's focused, and it's problem-solving, and it's looking for the opportunity in the challenge. I think that's the piece that I would say for every body is to think about how you can grow your curiosity mindset by asking those important questions every day. When you wake up in the morning, "Who do I want to be today? How do I want to show up? What's most important to me?"

The more you ask yourself those types of questions, then when adversity hits, without minimizing maybe the stress or the struggle, you just ask the questions. "What can I take out of this? What can I learn from this? What might I do different?" Then I find that even in the most difficult circumstances it gives you hope that there is going to be a great return, and also the confidence of looking back and saying, "You know, you've done this before. You've been through challenges before."

Certainly this audience of leaders and extraordinary entrepreneurs and CEOs, they've been there. They've done it. They've been through challenges before. They have the strength. If you can just, I think, stay curious about what this particular lesson is, it will help you to get through that.

Also, since we did talk about energy, make sure in those moments, you're investing even more in yourself because it tends to be when we're experiencing challenges that we stop taking care of ourselves, and that is not the time to do

it. It's actually in those times that you need to invest even more in self-care and doing the things that you just enjoy doing, enjoying what it's all about.

Steve Sanduski: Well, I am excited to read that new book coming up here, *The Curiosity Effect*. I view myself as a curious person, and I find that a lot of the really successful people out there are curious. I also tie curiosity with continuous learning. That people who go throughout their lifetime curious about things and wanting to continue to learn about new things, and embrace new things, I think, is awesome.

Gosh I'm excited to look forward to reading that new book. Heidi, why don't we go ahead and just wrap up here with a handful of some rapid fire questions. The first one is who has had the greatest impact on you as a leader? I know you've mentioned a few folks here in the conversation, but who would you kind of single out as a leader that's really had a big impact on you?

Heidi Hanna: I would say there's a couple that come to mind, but I'm going to say Warren Rustand who your listeners may or may not know of. He and I have worked together for the past, I guess this will be five years now, teaching Leadership Academy for Entrepreneurs Organization, their Global Leadership Academy.

What it was with Warren when I first met him was his full engagement. It was that he makes you feel like the most important person in the world. Not just in the room, but in the world. I've watched him mentor other entrepreneurs and leaders in YPO and other organizations, and I often think ... He is getting up there in wisdom, age/wisdom, but I look at him and I think that the way he makes people feel is something that I really want to emulate in my life, and I'm grateful that he's become a very dear friend of mine as well.

Steve Sanduski: Well, and the second question here, since you are writing a new book called *The Curiosity Effect*, and I know you meet a lot of people in your travel over the years. What would be a favorite question that you like to ask when you meet someone new?

Heidi Hanna: Wow. Oh my gosh, what a good question. What would I want to know? You know, oh my gosh, my brain is jumping in so many directions because I am curious. I've got this monkey mind thing going right now with all the different things I want to ask because I always want to know more. You know what I think it would be? There's something about childhood. I want to know something about like what made their hearts sing as a child, or what were they most excited by as a child, or what were they most curious about as a child?

I feel like so many of us lose sight of that when we get into the workplace, and I think in my own journey, it was kind of going back to that. What really lit me up as a child, and that's still in me? When I can tap into that, I find that I really ... That just brings me the greatest joy and the greatest energy, so I'd want to know something about that. When were they kind of at their best and just

having the time of their life as a child? Then I'd be wanting to explore if they ever tap into that now as an adult.

Steve Sanduski: Yeah. Yeah, and often times we find that as people do get older, they do find ways to kind of tap into those things that excited them as a young child so yeah, great question there. A final one here is what is your strangest daily habit that you're willing to share in front of people?

Heidi Hanna: Oh goodness. What is my strangest daily habit?

Steve Sanduski: Do you like put butter in your coffee?

Heidi Hanna: No, not yet. I'm still thinking about it though. I'll be honest. You know, I don't think it's that strange necessarily, but probably something that most people don't do. I'm very sensitive and so I get overstimulated easily, and I'm learning a lot more about kind of the nervous system so I will do binaural beats or listen to music that's been adjusted to kind of shift the state into different rhythms and waves.

The reason I'm thinking that is because I see myself now. "What would I do during the day that's a ritual." I actually go find a place to lay down, either out in nature or depending where I am, I'll lay down and put my headphones on, and I'll listen to this. I'll just let myself really calm down, like at my core. Get into that real deep relaxed state, and I just find it so important to me, and I'm sure it probably looks a little weird if you happen to be walking by.

I think so much about that and how important it is for us to have those things that we can do to just realign. Realign our energy, and just get into that really calm, grounded state. When we're traveling a lot, and we're on the go all of the time I think it's just really easy to get kind of hijacked by the world. Anything we can do to really soothe our nervous system.

The other thing I would say that's kind along the same lines would be like a hot tub, going in a hot tub. I know I've heard people say taking baths or showers, anything we can do like that, that's really nurturing to our nervous system I think is really helpful.

Steve Sanduski: And massage too.

Heidi Hanna: Well, I do get a massage once a week, but most people know that. It doesn't sound that weird. I really commit to that because massage is one of those things that absolutely, it's so proactive, and healthy, and calming, but you also have to make sure that your mind is able to be present in the moment and relaxing, otherwise you could be getting a massage and still totally stressed out about all of the things that you could or should be doing with your day.

Steve Sanduski: Excellent. Well, Heidi, I know you also have an event coming up here called The Global Stress Summit, and for those folks listening to this, you're going to have to jump quickly on this. Why don't you just briefly tell us about what that is?

Heidi Hanna: Yeah I'd love to. One of the things I did last year going through a difficult time, and felt really burnt out was I wanted to explore this idea of Stress More because it just ... It's become a buzz word, but no one really seems to know what it is. I started having conversations from that curious place and realized that there's just ...I just feel like we need to talk about this more. What is stress? How can we change it? How can we really change our culture to be more resilient as the world continues to get kind of more chaotic.

I put together this Global Stress Summit with 35 experts talking about different things from the biology of stress, but also nutrition, fitness. We look at relationships, raising resilient kids, having resilient relationships, humor, neurofeedback, all sorts of really cool stuff. It's happening the last week of April. April 24th through May 1st. It's totally free and online so anyone can access that.

You can go to [globalstresssummit.com](http://globalstresssummit.com) to get more information, and lots of freebie sources. Our goal really is to start having this conversation. What is stress? How do we take more control over the things we can control, knowing that obviously there's things that we need to learn to let go of at the same time. The experience has been absolutely amazing. I've got to talk to some of my heroes like Herbert Benson and Robert Sapolsky, and it was really incredible. I hope that everybody gets a chance to listen to some of those sessions.

Steve Sanduski: For those who might not be able to make the event, or listening to this after the event is over, is there still going to be some things that people can access from the summit after the event is over?

Heidi Hanna: Yeah absolutely. There's a couple of things. One is that the entire summit is available to download. You can actually purchase the entire thing if you want to just watch it at your own convenience. It's a low fee. I think it's \$59. It may go up to \$99 by the time it's all done, but then you have 35 hours of content to watch anytime you want.

The other thing too though is that we do have the free brain recharge tool kit, which is available on my website where you can get guided meditations. I have a lot of different courses that I'm putting together for free because I just want to build this community.

Not only then does it help the people that I'm trying to serve, but it helps me as well because community, and connection, and believing that we're not alone in the challenges of our life is the most fundamental to really shifting stress. I want to provide as many of those resources as I can. People can get more information on all of those items by going to [heidihanna.com](http://heidihanna.com).

Steve Sanduski: Well, we will definitely link to all of that in the show notes page that you can access at [ceocoachinginternational.com](http://ceocoachinginternational.com). Heidi, I think that's a great way to wrap up the show here, just talking about community and connection. I think those are two things that are as important today as they've ever been. Thank you. This has been amazing. The ideas, and content, and practical actions that you've shared with us have been phenomenal. I know they'll be a big help to all of our listeners so thank you for spending some time with us today.

Heidi Hanna: Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

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