

# FEBRUARY 2010 NEWSLETTER



Saskatchewan  
Association of  
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# SPECIAL FEATURE

## Staying Up in an Upside-Down World

### Darren Lang's *Under the Radar Techniques to Beat Stress and Feel Your Best*



by Leanna Korevaar

**A recent major newspaper headline reads; “Depression among public servants Canada’s biggest ‘public health crisis.’” 90% of doctor visits are for stress related health issues. Depression and anxiety just overtook heart disease for the number one cause of workplace absence.**

Darren Lang, Professional Speaker and Trainer

Darren Lang, MBA, delivered powerful knowledge and practical advice for coping with stress, and the big issues caused by stress, to a record-breaking crowd on January 20 in Regina.

“Stress has a hidden impact on the mind and body. Chronic stress over long periods of time depletes serotonin levels – the body’s ‘good mood fluid,’” said Darren.

Serotonin, a neurotransmitter, helps regulate mood, appetite, sleep, muscle contraction, and some cognitive functions including memory and learning. Understanding the role of serotonin levels in stress disorders and in our bodies is key to escaping the stress-spiral that leads to crippling health issues.

In a nutshell, negative thoughts cause stress and stress lowers serotonin levels and mood. When our serotonin levels become depleted, we:

- Get sick more often.
- Think more negatively.
- Experience emotional disconnect from all things important, such as family, friends, work, hobbies, etc.
- Become more agitated.

- Have thoughts that circle around more.
- Eventually experience bigger issues including sleep, mood, depression and anxiety disorders.

When we don’t realize that low serotonin levels are influencing our negative thoughts and feelings we go looking for answers. Often people point a finger at the big areas in their lives, like a stressful job, a conflict situation, or loved ones. What we don’t know is that our low serotonin levels can push us in the direction of blaming external factors beyond our control.

Also, it is important to remember that states of stress-related anxiety and depression can be triggered by how we think. Since we have control over our thoughts we can have control over stress.

Darren offered these practical tools and suggestions that we all have easy access to – in our minds and at the corner store:

#### #1. Shift your thoughts

To shift your thoughts, Darren suggests you do your homework. This means listing three memories from your home life that put a smile on your face. Next, list three memories from your work life that make you happy. Then list three fun memories and three things you are looking forward to. When stress and anxiety start to boil over in your life simply pull out the list, to help shift your thinking in a more positive direction and turn things around.

#### #2. Fill your body with the raw material for serotonin production

Protein is the only thing your body can use to make more serotonin and vegetables help the conversion process. Eating sufficient amounts of protein and vegetables is critical to raising and maintaining healthy levels of serotonin. Supplements including vitamin B, vitamin D,

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vitamin C and omega 3 oils (fish oil, etc.), are also critical for helping your body convert protein into mood-boosting serotonin.

### #3. Get sun and exercise

Exercise and sunlight trigger serotonin production – an easy fix **Staying Up in an Upside-Down World** (continued)

in spring and summer. Since the Saskatchewan sun loses intensity in the fall, prairie brains don't produce as much serotonin in the winter months. Some people experience mild Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) symptoms and others are devastated by resulting depression.

Simple sources for sunlight throughout the winter months are light boxes, available at local retailers. Light boxes sit on desks or counters and deliver artificial sunlight to the facial area where it is easily absorbed through the eyes. For people who aren't able to sit for the recommended time, light hats are available at [www.feelbrightlight.com](http://www.feelbrightlight.com).

Prescription medications and meat protein supplements are also available to help boost serotonin levels. Consult your family doctor or a naturopath to learn more about these options.

Darren's Staying Up in an Upside-Down World presentation was inspired by a number of sources and a lot of personal trial and error. If you feel like you are caught in a stress spiral and have been there for over a month, please do something about it. An employee family assistance program or your family doctor is a great places to start. The following resources may also be helpful:

## Books to Improve Thinking Habits, Serotonin Levels and Mood

***You Can Be Happy No Matter What*** by Richard Carlson  
***The Power of Positive Thinking*** by Norman Vincent Peale  
***Man's Search for Meaning*** by Victor Fankl

***The Secret*** by Rhonda Byrne

***The Law of Attraction*** by Esther and Jerry Hicks

***10 Days to Self-Esteem*** by David Burns, M.D.

***Self Matters*** by Dr. Phil

***The Power of Intention*** by Wayne Dyer

***The Mood Cure*** by Julia Ross

***Serotonin*** by Syd Baumel

***Change Your Brain Change Your Life*** by Daniel Amen, M.D.

## Professional Naturopathic Resources

**Saskatchewan Association of Naturopathic Physicians**

**Website:** [www.sanp.ca/members.htm](http://www.sanp.ca/members.htm)

**Canadian Association of Naturopathic Physicians**

**Website:** [www.cand.ca](http://www.cand.ca)

**Dorothy Martens, Counsellor, Regina**

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Find out how Darren can help stress-proof your group. For more information or to schedule Darren's presentation for your workplace, please contact **Darren Lang, Professional Speaker and Trainer**, by email at [info@darrenlang.com](mailto:info@darrenlang.com) or by phone at 306-569-2433.



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