



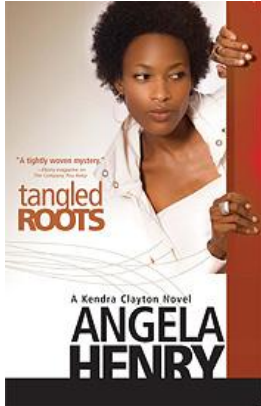
WREEL READERS

WOMEN READING TO ENHANCE AND ENRICH LIVES

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TANGLED ROOTS by Angela Henry



February 2008 Reading

For Kendra Clayton life is good—for about five minutes. Then her sweetie, lawyer Carl Brumfield, leaves town to help out his sister in Cleveland. Her soon-to-be-married best friend picks out a hideous bridesmaid dress for her to wear (a sequined Smurf-blue nightmare with a bow on the butt). The work she loves as a part-time GED instructor turns into the job from hell when a retired kindergarten teacher with the personality of a piranha becomes her new boss.

And to top it all off, Trish Harmon, aka Detective Trish Harmon of the Willow, Ohio police department, shows up at her class. To say Detective Harmon and Kendra don't see eye to eye is like saying people in hell are a little warm. And now Detective Harmon is looking for Kendra's favorite student, a troubled young man named

Timmy who has been straightening out his life.

A pretty local beautician is dead, and Timmy is suspect number one. When he later shows up at Kendra's apartment begging for help, it's only one more step before Kendra's back on the road to trouble again, trying to find out who the real killer is, stepping over the line from a nice safe life into danger. . .and getting tangled in the deadly roots of secrets and desire.

The Number One Predictor of Diet Failure — and How to Beat It

Source: *Pick Your Path to Health*

The Inside Story

The single most common emotional eating trigger and the No. 1 predictor of weight loss relapse is stress, according to obesity expert Dr. John P. Foreyt of Baylor College of Medicine.



Being "stressed out" is a common expression nowadays. You hear this phrase often and perhaps even utter it from time to time yourself. However, do you really know what being stressed out means?

It is commonly used in a "negative" sense, and when translated it usually means you are beyond your comfort or tolerance level—physically and/or psychologically.

Stress isn't necessarily a bad thing. It's a natural part of living. Life without any stress is impossible. When you're working hard, tired, hungry, emotionally charged, or sick with the flu, your body secretes hormones in response to these stressors in order to reestablish your body's stability.

That's the inside chemistry of stress. Your challenge is to try to maintain a comfortable amount of stress that you can manage.

Weight Management: Vital for long-term wellness

- Set practical short-term and long-term weight goals
- Keep a bottle of water with you all day and refill often
- When eating out, select foods that are steamed, broiled, baked or grilled
- Select a mix of colorful fruits and vegetables each day
- Have a low-fat, low-sugar snacks on hand to combat hunger and prevent overeating

Recognizing Stress

"I don't know...I start feeling anxious. My temper gets short. I feel hopeless...I know when I'm getting stressed out", says Kathy Dyer of Bowie, Maryland, mother of three ranging in age from five months to 13 years old, and full-time policy analyst and attorney for the Federal government. Kathy is ahead of the game by the mere fact that she realizes when she has stress and can take measures to handle the situation.

Research has shown that African American women have higher levels of adrenaline in their systems as they are stressed and this can result in high blood pressure and even premature death.

"People are not as aware of the unique stresses that African American women have. In addition to the day-to-day stressors we may all encounter, for example, not having enough money or taking care of your children.

African American women also have to deal with how they are viewed in this society as Black women. And that can take a toll on you," says Dr. JudyAnn Bigby, Medical Director, Office for Women, Family and Community Programs, at Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston.

The first step in managing stress is to recognize that it exists. The big stressors are easy to identify-natural disasters, illness, death, births, marriage, moving, job changes. But daily life, the low-grade, day-to-day responsibilities-and yes, even things you enjoy doing that need your constant attention-are stressors and can eventually take its toll on your health. Debra Churos of Alexandria, Virginia, mother of an eight-year-old daughter and part-time office

worker, identified some of the following symptoms when she is stressed.

- Anxiety
- short temper
- eating - anything and everything
- feeling hopeless
- crying
- irritability
- headaches
- breathing heavier, heart pounding
- more emotional/stressed around menstrual cycle

According to the American Medical Women's Association, Debra's symptoms are common. Whether you have these symptoms or not, you can be pretty sure that stress has some role and effect on your life and health, and it can play havoc with your weight-control efforts.

Strategies to deal with it

Stress happens. And when it does, you will react to it. The most common reaction is to eat. Actually, it's not a bad idea to eat when feeling stressed. But what you will probably do is to eat something that makes you feel good. You know what those feel-good-foods are: ice cream, potato chips, macaroni and cheese, peach cobbler. This is especially true if you grew up using food as a stress releaser. Instead of reaching for the ice cream, Dr. Bigby recommends coming up with alternatives to release stress.

Try healthy comfort-food alternatives: Low-fat proteins (yogurt, turkey), vegetables, and fruit. If you have a refrigerator at the office, keep some of these at the office for when you get hungry. If that's not an option, have some fruit

or cut-up raw vegetables in a plastic bag in your purse or at your desk.

Don't sweat the small stuff: Manage your time better. Make a list of what needs to be done and prioritize them. As Debra says, "I ask myself what's the most important thing to accomplish and what can wait."

Find time to relax and unwind: Go to a place just for yourself (bathroom, the park, a special place in your home). Find 10-20 minutes each day to relax and to just give your mind a break.

Pray, meditate, yoga: It works for many people.

Exercise: Walk, endorphins, feel good...dance, endorphins, feel good...

Establish a support system: Join a woman's group of any kind where you will get support and a chance to relate to others.

Reduce environmental stressors: Dislike your job? Find another one. Noisy neighbors getting on your nerves? Move. Sometimes we can't control our environment, but when we can, it can make all the difference.

Ask for help when you need it: Ask and you shall receive. As you pick your path to a more stress-manageable and healthy life, keep in mind, you may be as Chaka Khan and Whitney Houston profess--"Every Woman", but, every woman still needs a break.

Eating Right — A Simple Approach

Eating right is simple enough. It means choosing a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol, and high in vegetables, fruit and calcium. It means staying away from beverages and foods that are high in sugar or salt. And it means, if you do drink alcoholic beverages, to do so in moderation.

It's not all that complicated, and the health benefits are plenty. Still one in five Americans chooses a not-so-healthy meal at a fast-food restaurant every day, according to the National Women's Health Information Web site, and more than one-half of Americans are overweight.

Whether you are 5 or 95, at an ideal weight or in need of significant weight loss, eating right is one of the most important steps you can take to improve your overall health and reduce the likelihood for disease.

What should I be eating?

According to the food pyramid, developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the basis of a healthy diet is the consumption of grains, fruits, and vegetables. Rice, pasta, tortillas, or whole grain bread are great places to start. From there, add plenty of fruits (at least two servings each day) and vegetables (at least three servings each day) and some low-fat foods from the milk, meat, and beans group. Fish, lean poultry, other lean meats, and beans are healthy alternatives to red meat or fried or fatty meats. Of course, low-fat or no-fat milk and cheese always take the prize over their higher fat substitutes.

Remember to keep food portions small. Celia Maxwell, M.D., Assistant Vice President for Health Affairs at Howard University, recommends that people eat meals from a salad plate, as opposed to the traditional dinner plate. "You can trick your mind into seeing a lot more food when it's on a salad plate," Maxwell advises.



Also be sure to read labels-many items sold as single portions (e.g., a bag of potato chips, a 12-ounce steak, or a 20-ounce container of soft drink) actually provide two servings or more. And when you eat out, choose small portion sizes, share a large entrée with a friend, or take home a portion of the meal. Don't be afraid to leave food on your plate!

Three Meals At-A-Glance

"I tell my patients that breakfast is the most important meal of the day," says Maxwell. "It's important because it sets the tone for the rest of the day."

"If the breakfast includes a lot of fiber and grain," Maxwell continues, "the person will be less hungry through the rest of the day. He or she will tend to snack less and perform better."

People need to reverse their approaches to lunch and dinner, Maxwell emphasizes. "For lunch, the person should have the equivalent to what would normally be thought of as a dinner. Lunch should include protein, maybe in the form of a meat. It should also include vegetables and maybe even a dessert."

Maxwell explains that you want to eat most of your calories when you're more likely to be active-and since lunchtime is the middle of the day, this is a great place to indulge. "If you eat all those calories at dinner, spend the next couple of hours in front of the TV, and then go to bed, it's a formula for gaining weight," Maxwell says.

Dinner, in contrast, should be a lighter meal, like that of a traditional "lunch," Maxwell explains.

What about donuts?

When you are trying to muster the resistance you need to pass up a chocolate donut in favor of a piece of fruit, remember these facts:

- A good diet reduces your risk for chronic diseases such as heart disease, certain types of cancer, diabetes, stroke, and osteoporosis.
- Eating right can help reduce the risk for developing obesity, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol (major risk factors that can lead to the chronic diseases listed above).
- Your energy level and overall sense of well being are tied to healthy eating.
- Say no to at least one food temptation each day, and you will soon be happier about the way you look and feel.

Women's Needs

Women's nutritional needs are unique and vary during different stages of life. Women need more calcium, iron, and folic acid, than do men, and as women age their metabolism slows down, requiring them to eat fewer empty calories and exercise more regularly.

Women who are planning a pregnancy must be particularly attuned to the need for folic acid, which protects fetuses from serious birth defects. (Green, leafy vegetables, citrus fruits, and folic acid-fortified bread and cereal are good sources of this "must have" nutrient.)

Eating well is one of the most basic steps you can take to improve your health. The food we eat affects everything from our risk for disease to our energy level and overall strength and well being. And remember if you're pregnant, or thinking about becoming pregnant, what you eat affects you and baby. The benefits of eating well last a lifetime, so start now. Grab an apple and start on the path to better health.