



STRESS AND DISTRESS



*Badly wounded, but flying.
The weakness of each and every one is mine.*

Rumi

*Your pain is the splitting of the veil that protects your understanding.
As the stone of a fruit splits so that its heart is exposed to the sun, so must you know pain.*

Kahlil Gibran

Talma Brill

Chronic stress leads to distress. Modern psychology and medicine have repeatedly confirmed the intimate connection between the conditions of psychological stress and medical, mental, or behavioral disturbances and difficulties. Studies have shown the connection between stress and depression, addiction, premature aging, anxieties, difficulties in social adaptation, and other pathological conditions.

Health problems related to digestion and to the heart's functioning have long been known to be related to stress. The medical world is increasingly opening to the supposition that every illness—from skin problems to cancer—is, in one way or another, linked psychologically to stress and distress. Since the hand is a central crossroads of the intimate connection between the body and the psyche, it is likely to indicate the signs of accumulated stress and distress in the body and nervous system. The awareness of this, alongside the sensible guidance toward solutions, may prevent problems and preempt much suffering.

In the context of mental stress, the **Head Line** holds special significance. Either small lines crossing it, or a very fragile appearance of the line itself, or interferences along its course, may indicate stress and difficulty in coping with life's challenges. The appearance of the other major and minor lines must also be checked in this context.

A strong Health Line (chapter 9), when it stretches from the Life Line to the Heart Line and crosses the Heart Line, indicates a particularly intimate connection between the body and the psyche, as well as a strong reaction to stimulants. It can be assumed that this person functions with a chronically high level of tension.

Another sign indicating the tendency to worry and to be tense is the **small diagonal lines connecting the Head Line** with the Life Line at their commencement, near

the edge of the radial side of the hand (chapter 8). These lines begin at the Head Line and cross diagonally toward the Life Line and thumb. They may actually cross over the Life Line, but they will never cross the Head Line. When several such lines appear on a hand, and if they are strong and distinct, then this person will tend to become unduly stressful over daily events.

A general sign of restlessness and the need for change, such as the **Life Line moving outward toward the Mount of the Moon (“Travel Line”**, see chapter 8), adds to the possible need for coping with stressful conditions.

One of the signs of an excessive burden on the nervous system is a **full hand** (see chapter 15). This hand is filled with a dense web of lines going in many directions. The profusion of lines and their density, indicates a level of neural energy which is higher than normal, an accumulation of stress in the nervous system, and the difficulty of coping with it. This person tends to become stressful and anxious easily, perhaps creating situations to worry over. Of course, it is important to see the other features on the hand to assess the person’s ability to cope with such situations, as they might be likely to reach the burnout point. The source of these tensions may be physical illness. After a process of detoxification and healing, many of these lines may disappear.

An additional clear sign of tension in the nervous system is the presence of short **horizontal lines** on the upper phalanges of the fingers. These **“Frustration Lines”** (see chapter 15) may appear on some or all of the fingers. We can identify the source of the stress, frustration, difficulty, or dissatisfaction, by the finger on which these lines appear. Several Frustration Lines on the thumb indicate difficulty or dissatisfaction with the way in which the person succeeds in expressing his will in the world and attaining his needs. Frustration Lines on the first finger, which is connected with the expression of the ego, indicate frustration in this realm. On the second finger, they indicate tension related to family, the family home, or to the person’s sense of security (including his health), or to financial matters. On the third finger, they reflect tension related to creative expression and the general sense of happiness. On the pinky, the difficulties relate to personal or sexual expression.

When these lines appear on all or most of the fingers, then feelings of dissatisfaction, tension, and difficulty are present in most aspects of life. In this case, look for the finger that has the most lines in order to identify the main problem. Also, pay attention to which hand these lines are on. If they are on the left hand, they indicate problems from the past, or ongoing and deep-rooted problems. If on the right hand, they indicate current problems. When the problem is resolved, the lines gradually disappear from the right hand, and more slowly from the left hand. These lines can also appear and disappear over a relatively short period of time.

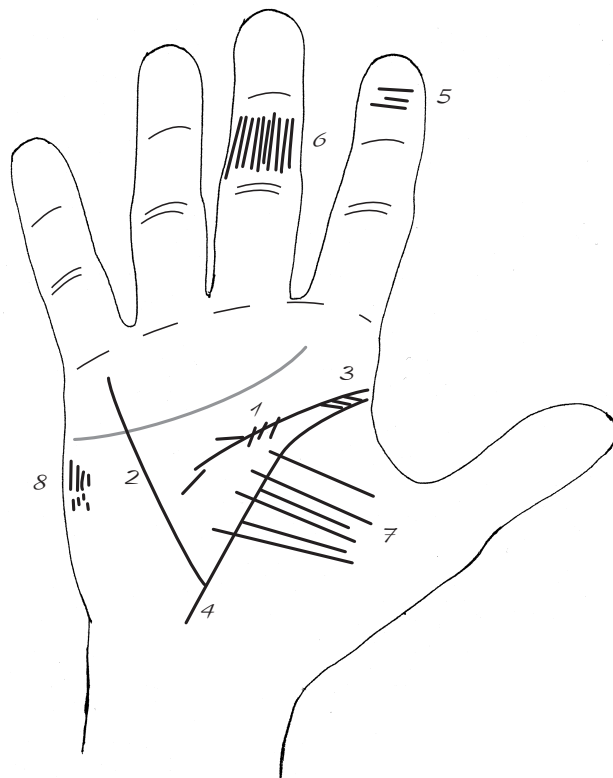


Figure 21.1: *Signs of Stress and Tension:*
1. *Head Line, interferences along its course*
2. *A strong Health Line*
3. *Diagonal lines connecting the Head Line with the Life Line*
4. *Life Line moving outward toward the Mount of the Moon*
5. *Frustration Lines*
6. *Many vertical lines*
7. *Many thin lines on the Mount of Venus*
8. *Many vertical lines on the upper part of the ulnar*

Many vertical lines on the phalanges indicate long periods of accumulated stress and a tendency to invest more energy than necessary in everything, to the point of creating chronic stress and worry.

Many thin lines on the Mount of Venus crossing the Life Line and penetrating into the center of the palm are an additional sign of nervousness and inner stress. They also indicate a strong influence of external conditions on the person's inner balance.

Many vertical lines on the upper part of the ulnar side of the hand indicate a tiredness of the adrenals due to chronic stress. These lines usually appear after a long period of excessive abuse of inner resources, whether physical or emotional, caused by frequent use of the "fight or flight" mechanism. When these lines appear on most of the ulnar area, this may indicate a high level of uric acid in the blood which is worthwhile checking.

White spots or stains on the fingernails may also be a sign of stress. These spots and stains are caused by a mineral imbalance in the body. During stress, the nervous system uses more calcium, which may influence the general calcium level, as well as other mineral levels in the body, resulting in these stains on the fingernails.

To properly assess the influence of stress on the person's functioning mechanism, one has to take into account all of these features, if and how they appear on the hand, and their degree of intensity. Attention should also be paid to other features of the personality indicating the person's ability to cope. The stronger and more balanced the personality, the more moderate and less damaging will the effects of stress be. Nevertheless, modern life is so demanding and intense that many people drive themselves to the limit of their ability for many years—be it physical, mental, or emotional, or all at once. Many pay the heavy price for this excess in the form of chronic fatigue, psychosomatic symptoms, depression, or other illnesses, all of which impact the quality of life and the ability to enjoy it. Thus, it is important to

attend to these signs, develop an awareness of the problem of stress and its effects, and offer appropriate solutions as a preventative course of action.

When we see an overload of stress on someone's hand, it is appropriate to suggest to the person to reduce the intensity of their life. I have often suggested changes in diet and rest, recommending a sufficient amount of sleep. The value of a regular regimen of breathing, relaxation, or meditation exercises for people who tend to accumulate stress cannot be overstated. Moderate and regular physical exercise is also very important. However, in some cases one should advise the person to undergo a medical examination.