

The Experts Teach: Stress Management

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The Experts Teach

Stress Management



The Experts Teach: Stress Management

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Contents

	Preface	7
1	Taming the Technostress by Eileen McDargh	8
2	Put on Your Mask First by Kevin Eikenberry	10
3	Making Room for Joyful Thinking – Melting the Snowballs in Your Mind by Kevin Stacey	13
4	Serenity in Chaos by Steve Goodier	17
5	Stress, Anxiety, and the CEO by Thomas Cox	19
6	The Emperor's Appointment by Alan Arthur	23
7	Taking Myself Too Seriously: Suggestions for Reclaiming Perspective by Judy Ringer	25

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8	Five Steps to Maximizing Your Personal Energy by Thomas Cox	27
9	Liberating Your SELF from Stress by Mike George	30
10	10 Steps to Overcoming Fear: Public Enemy #1 by Victor Antonio G.	35
11	Mental Toughness by Kevin Stacey	37
12	Just Chill by Steve Goodier	40
13	Slowing Down to the Speed of Life by Eric Garner	42
14	How Resilient Are YOU? by Mike George	44
15	You Need More Stress by Thomas Cox	48
16	Where Do YOU Get the Power to Change? by Mike George	51
17	What Is It Costing Me? by Kevin Stacey	57



18	Living Like a Turtle by Steve Goodier	59
19	So What Can We Do About Stress? by Michael Beck	61
20	Letting Your Soul Catch Up by Steve Goodier	64
21	Are You Worried? 4 Steps to Peace of Mind by Judy Ringer	66
22	Frustration by Kevin Stacey	68
23	How to Manage Stress in Relationship Communication: Keep Calm with Scientific Stress Management by Joshua Uebergang	70
24	What's the Point? by Kevin Stacey	76
25	Revenge in the End is Bitter Sweet by Victor Antonio G.	78



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Preface

Introduction to “The Experts Teach: Stress Management”

In each of “The Experts Teach” series, we’ve gathered together some of the world’s best thinkers to share their ideas with you. Their ideas offer new, refreshing, and insightful ways to look at old themes, allowing you to discover new perspectives, develop your understanding, and change the way you think.

Profile of Editor Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

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1 Taming the Technostress by Eileen McDargh

Last week, my big desktop PC crashed, my laptop got the “blue screen: of death”. The refrigerator croaked, and the toaster oven went the heaven. My iPhone decided to stop receiving email and the dashboard in my car kept erroneously sending warning messages.

It wasn't even a full moon!

As marvelous as all our technology is, chronic malfunctions and crashes and the constant demand to keep up might account for the fact that at least one in four of us will admit to physically assaulting a device. There's even a ratio for judging the attack because the chances of failure are in direct proportion to the urgency of the task they are needed for. Hence the scream heard from my assistant as she tried to get out my summer newsletter before autumn.

It doesn't get better. The 2009 March/April issue of Psychotherapy Networker says that such chronic, unalleviated stress compromises our cognitive and emotional functions as well as undermining our immune system. Nor does it when a workplace (often unknowingly) contrives urgency by leashing employees with PDAs, laptops, pagers, and anything else for instant access and response.

Well intentioned. And ultimately a timewaster and a driver of increased health care costs.

What happens is that we continually try to multitask, toggling back and forth, answering the ping of instant messages, and wind up feeling constantly “on”. Instead of concentrating on one task, we unconsciously scan for the next message or task, thus spending often 50% more time on one job before taking on another.

Ways to conquer the beast:

Manage your energy not your time. You don't run marathons every day yet we try and do the equivalent at our work. Studies of energy suggest a 90-minute rhythm. This means stopping and doing something to recovers your energy expenditure. (Coffee and chocolate don't count. Nor does smoking). Take a 4-minute relaxation break. Walk outside, deep breath, trying biofeedback. Go outside. Drink water. And when it's time-go home without work.

Program your computer to delete messages after 30 days. If no one has screamed by then, how important could it be?

Send out the equivalent of a “do not disturb” sign, telling folks you will respond from 3–4 pm daily. If it’s an emergency – call you.

Turn off rings, pings, dings, and anything that sings.

Distinguish between uninterrupted work time and answer time.

Work with your team to determine the important and urgent from the unimportant.

Cut the cord. If you continue to remain connected all the time – you have only yourself to blame with the constant barrage of requests.

At the end of the day, reset to zero. You did what you could. It’s done. Over. Finito. Do NOT plan tomorrow today. Your brain will start working on it and there goes the sleep.

Shut the door of your office. Turn off the computer. Reset to zero. Tomorrow is a new day.

Do NOT take the PDA to bed with you. Give it a rest. Give all of us a rest.

Without boundaries, Tyrannosaurus Techno will win again.

About the author:

Since 1980, professional speaker and Hall of Fame member Eileen McDargh has helped Fortune 100 companies as well as individuals create connections that count and conversations that matter. Her latest book is Gifts from the Mountain-Simple Truths for Life’s Complexities. Her other books include Talk Ain’t Cheap...It’s Priceless and Work for a Living and Still Be Free to Live, one of the first books to address the notion of balance and authentic work. Find out more about this compelling and effective professional speaker and join her free newsletter by visiting <http://www.EileenMcDargh.com>. Business Training Media

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2 Put on Your Mask First by Kevin Eikenberry

To lead effectively, to lead successfully, to lead in the long term and yes to lead selflessly, we must remember to care of our needs. Because if we aren't healthy, we can't help others. Here are a few ways to do that.

If you have flown very often, you will recognize the following...

In the event of a loss of cabin pressure, an oxygen mask will drop down in front of you. To start the flow of oxygen, pull the mask towards you. Place it firmly over your nose and mouth, secure the elastic band behind your head, and breathe normally. Although the bag does not inflate, oxygen is flowing to the mask. If you are traveling with a child or someone who requires assistance, secure your mask on first, and then assist the other person. Keep your mask on until a uniformed crew member advises you to remove it.

I've flown over two million miles so I have heard this announcement many times – so often that it seldom even registers with me. Two things about this announcement are profoundly true:

- If the oxygen mask were to show up in front of me, the situation would absolutely require my attention. – If I were traveling with someone else in this emergency situation, the best way for me to help them is to put my mask on first so I am able to help.

Let's think about leadership for a minute.

- Challenges and problems happen in our businesses and with our teams all the time – and they absolutely require our attention.- Since I am leading this team, the best way for me to help the team deal with the challenges they face is to take care of myself first, so I can best take care of them.

I hope you see the direct parallel here – as a leader you must put your mask on first.

As Oprah made a living reminding her audience, it isn't selfish to take care of your needs – if you aren't healthy, you can't help others.

It's just another way of saying that you've got to put your mask on first.

While there are some leaders who are selfish, focused solely on their needs, their purposes and their power, I know that isn't you reading this. If you are, as many of you likely are, striving to be a servant leader, you might think you must be a nurturer of others, and be selfless in helping others succeed. That is a wonderful goal, but we mustn't under-compensate.

To lead effectively, to lead successfully, to lead in the long term and yes to lead selflessly, we must still put our mask on first.

Here are a few ways to do that.

Close your door.

You have (important) work to do to support the organization. Yes, you need to be available to answer questions and help your team, but you have work to do too. Sometimes you have to close the door. (I wrote more fully about this here.)

Get your own coach/mentor.

You serve that role for your team members, because guidance, perspective, support, correction and encouragement are needed for top performance. It is just as true for you as it is for your team. In fact, when you are getting coaching you will be a better coach yourself. Whether the coach is your boss, a colleague, a peer, or an outside resource, you need a coach.

Invest in you.

Leaders look for training and learning opportunities for their teams, but you need development too. Don't put off those opportunities for yourself. Getting the learning you need is an important way of putting on your mask first.

Use your vacation.

Some of you (you know who I'm talking to) don't take your vacation, or never truly disconnect when you do. You need to disconnect, recharge and refresh. Doing this makes you stronger, healthier and fresher. It also brings you the perspective your team needs you to have.

The list is longer, and your best answers will come from your own reflection and introspection. Think about what you need, what your team needs, and what you continually put off. At the intersection of these lists you will likely find your mask moments....

About the author

Kevin Eikenberry is a leadership expert and the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group, a learning consulting company that helps Clients reach their potential through a variety of training, consulting and speaking services. You can learn more about him and a special offer on his newest book, Remarkable Leadership: Unleashing Your Leadership Potential One Skill at <http://RemarkableLeadershipBook.com/bonuses.asp>.

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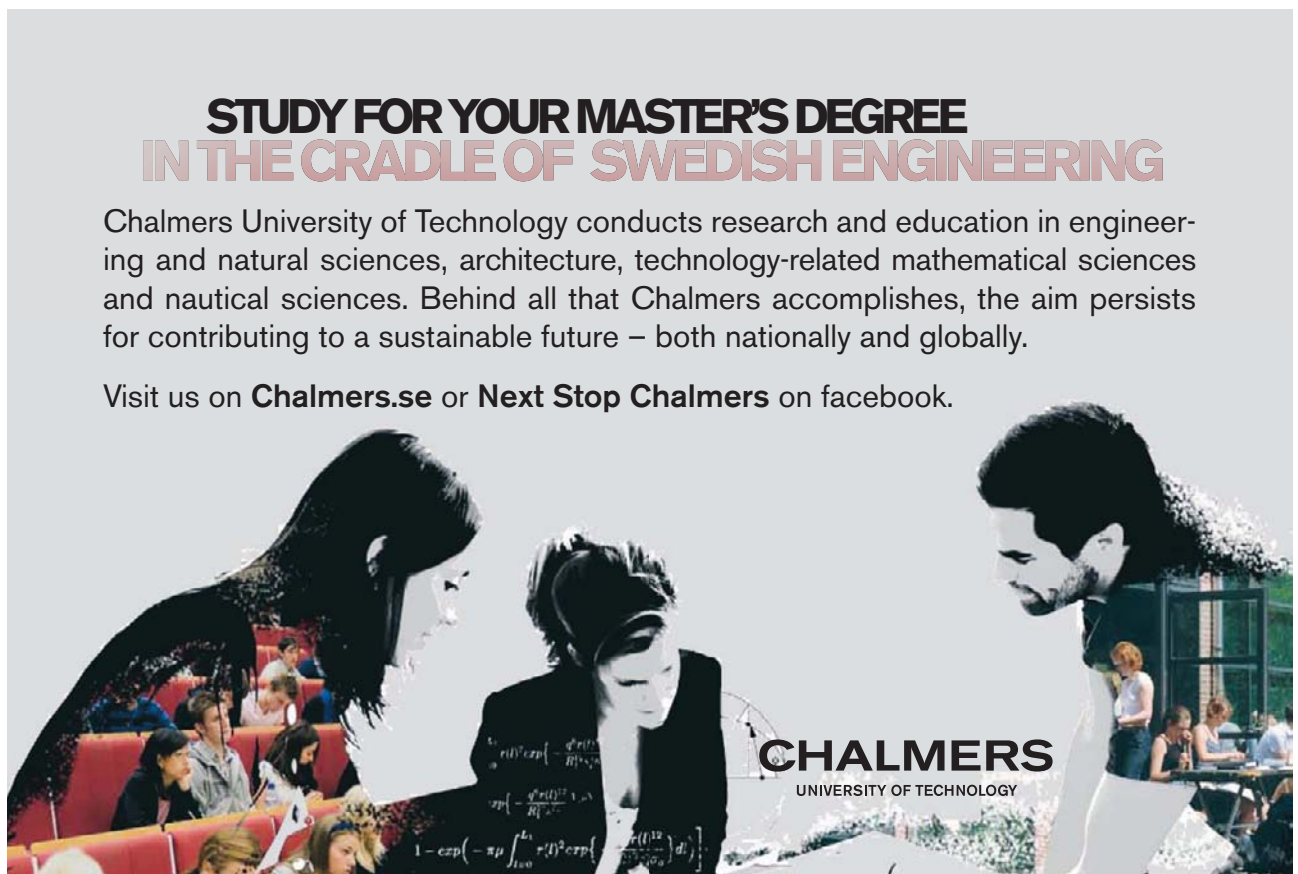
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3 Making Room for Joyful Thinking – Melting the Snowballs in Your Mind by Kevin Stacey

As a society, we seem to be “easily bothered.” Many of us are “chronically bothered” by things that are simply counter-productive for us to be focusing on. Asking yourself “what is it costing me?” is a powerful question because it gives you the wisdom to understand, on a deep level, that “it’s just not worth it.”

A mental snowball occurs whenever you allow negative thoughts to build up and race out of control. It’s the mental equivalent of your tires being stuck in the mud. The more you spin the wheels, the deeper you’re stuck. Although mental snowballs happen all year, they’re particularly present during the holidays. Once pleasant thoughts of seeing friends and family can quickly snowball into stress over shopping, cooking, cleaning, traveling, family tensions, disappointing childhood memories, and on and on. See how fast the snowball gathers momentum? This holiday season, make a decision to melt your mental snowballs and experience the holidays for what they were meant to be – a joyful time of peace, comfort and thanksgiving.

5 steps to melt any mental snowball:

1. Write it down, write it down, write it down.

When you begin to snowball, immediately grab a piece of paper and write down whatever is going on in your mind at that moment. What exactly are you thinking? What exactly are you saying to yourself? The act of writing out your thoughts and clearly defining your snowball helps you focus on and destroy the catalyst for your negative thoughts.

Just “thinking things through” is unrealistic when your mind is racing and bouncing in a million different directions.

2. Identify the thought distortion in your snowball.

Mental snowballs are generated from unrealistic and distorted thoughts, often reflecting “worst case scenario” thinking. When you write out your thoughts you expose this thinking in black and white. Take a look at what you wrote in step 1. Do you recognize any of the following thought distortions?

Jumping to conclusions – without any credible evidence, you predict things will turn out badly.

Over generalizing – you view a single negative event as an infinite pattern of defeat, using such words as “never” and “always.”

All-or-nothing thinking – if a situation falls short of your expectations of perfection, you see it as a total disaster.

Mental filtering – you pick out one negative detail and dwell on it until you can’t see anything else, discarding any positive thoughts along the way.

Mind reading – you assume without any evidence or verification that others are reacting negatively to you, are angry with you, etc.

Control delusions – you either feel that you have total responsibility for everything and everybody, or you feel that you have no control or influence and you’re a helpless victim.

Emotional reasoning – you assume that things are in reality the way you feel about them emotionally.

Disregarding the positive – you overlook any positive occurrences or actions by insisting they don’t matter. Everyone around you may see that you’ve done well, but you may tell yourself it wasn’t good enough or doesn’t count.

Self-blaming – you blame yourself for things that may not really be your fault, under your control, or your responsibility.

Labeling – you call yourself or others a global name when you or they make a mistake.

Personalizing – you assume that everything has something to do with you, and you tend to compare yourself negatively to everyone else.

3. Talk back to your distortion.

After identifying which of the distorted thoughts underlies your mental snowball, talk back to them and poke holes in the logic that appears to support the distortion. Come up with counter arguments, as if you were participating in a debate and your goal was to knock out your opponent’s position. Read your writing out loud. Respond to each assertion you wrote with one of the following questions or statements:

“How do I know for sure?”

“What evidence do I have?”

“What is the probability that is going to happen?”

“Maybe, maybe not.”

“I’ll cross that bridge when I come to it.”

“One day at a time.”

“Perhaps.”

“I’m jumping to conclusions.”

This step will help you identify whether you are accepting your thoughts as facts without first assessing reality.

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4. Exaggerate the snowball until it becomes ridiculous.

Psychologist Albert Ellis calls this technique “awfulizing.” In your mind or on paper, exaggerate your negative thinking and extend your snowball to the most ridiculous degree. The inherent humor in exaggeration counteracts the physical effects of the stress and panic that accompany mental snowballs. If you can ridicule the snowball, it won’t have power over you anymore. You can do this one on paper, but it works even better if you have the courage to say it out loud to a trusted friend.

5. Attack the process of snowball thinking by asking, “What is this costing me?”

If you can’t identify any distortions, focus instead on the process of snowball thinking rather than the content of your thoughts. Ask yourself the questions, “What is it costing me to engage in snowball thinking? How does a mental snowball help my situation?” Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of snowball thinking. One person shared with me that he engaged in snowball thinking whenever he thought about his wife, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer. He melted this snowball with the following thoughts: “My wife does have cancer, and I can’t change that fact, but the more I get worked up over this, the less I’m going to be able to be there for her. Also, the more she sees that I’ve lost it, the more she will lose it.” A powerful example that attacking the process itself can work in even the most difficult circumstances.

Remember, the goal is not to control every negative thought you ever have, but rather to control whether or not you focus on your negative thoughts and allow them to snowball. As one recent seminar participant told me, “There is so much snow in the world, and I’m surrounded by it, but it is so empowering and uplifting to realize I am in charge of what I let snowball.” Imagine what your life would be like if you melted just half your snowballs. What if you melted them 5 minutes faster than you used to? Give the techniques above a try and see what happens. Believe you’re in charge of it and you can do it!

About the Author

Kevin Stacey helps companies and professionals achieve maximum productivity and effectiveness through stress management and time management training. He is available to speak on these topics. For more information visit <http://www.TrainRightInc.com> or call 1-800-603-7168.

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4 Serenity in Chaos by Steve Goodier

As an airport skycap checked through a customer at curbside, he accidentally knocked over the man's luggage. He quickly collected the fallen bags and apologized for the mishap. Unappeased, the traveler burst into an angry tirade, raging and swearing at the skycap for his clumsiness.

Throughout the traveler's rant, the baggage handler calmly apologized and smiled. The livid customer continued to berate the man, even as he turned away and headed for his gate. Through it all the baggage handler smiled and remained calm.

The next customer in line witnessed the incident and marveled at the skycap's professionalism and self control. "I have never seen such restraint and humility," he said. "How do you keep your cool when somebody is attacking you so viciously?"

"It's easy," the skycap answered. "He's going to London, but his bags are going to Tokyo."

I won't recommend that we use revenge to relieve stress. But let me tell you about someone who has found a way to go through most of his life unfazed by the turbulence that affects most people.

He is one of the calmest people I've ever known and he describes how he keeps his cool no matter how turbulent a situation becomes. He says, "I look at it this way. A traffic jam has no power to make me angry. It just stops my car. And that's the way I try to look at most of what happens to me." With that philosophy, this guy goes through life with a serenity I can only envy.

My friend likes to say things like, "A rude customer has no power to make me angry; he just fusses." And, "A mistake I made has no power to make me upset; it's just a chance to do better." He shows how we can truly find calmness in the midst of chaos.

Eminent 20th Century American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote a short prayer that has been reprinted countless times. Bill Wilson, co-founder of the support group Alcoholics Anonymous, became familiar with the prayer about 1941. He edited and adapted it, and then circulated it with the title "Serenity Prayer." You are likely familiar with his version:

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference."

The prayer has been a great help to many hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people over the years. And the truth of the matter is that there is much which cannot be changed. We can't do anything about this evening's traffic. Another person's reaction is not something we can control.

Furthermore, we may have made any number of mistakes that we probably regret, but they are in the past and that is something we cannot change. Reliving the past does not help us change the future.

There's a certain power in calmness. And those who learn to accept with serenity that which they cannot change will find power to change those things they can.

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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5 Stress, Anxiety, and the CEO by Thomas Cox

When members of my CEO advisory panel ask “Am I the only one struggling with stress and anxiety?” I know it’s time to cover this topic yet again.

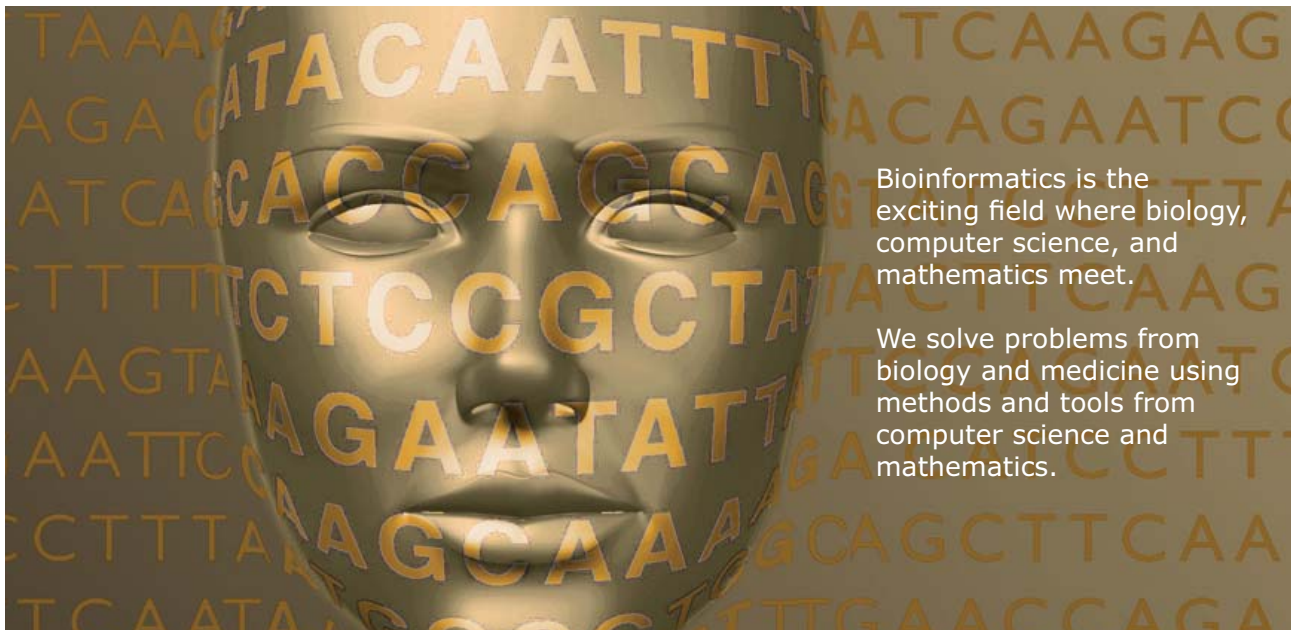
This time my guest expert is Dr. Greg Eckel, a naturopath and licensed acupuncturist with ten years’ experience treating people with moderate to severe chronic stress.

Am I Having Chronic Stress?

A lot of people are experiencing the symptoms of chronic stress, yet we have become so desensitized to these that we ignore their message



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Evidence of chronic stress includes:

- Memory issues
- Sleep
- Short temper
- Fatigue
- Digestive problems
- Headache

Yet we've become trained to see these as standalone problems, rather than as symptoms of a larger problem. And we treat these symptoms one at a time.

There's of course a lot of advertising aimed at reinforcing this view, because there's big money to be made managing the symptoms of a chronic condition – the big blockbuster drugs are those that people take daily for years. Yet these drugs don't "leave the patient at a higher state of being" after taking them.

And if you have some other chronic illness that is not caused by stress, illness itself can become a source of chronic stress.

Stress and the Body

Stress keeps us alive – it provides the fight-or-flight response that keeps saber-toothed tigers from eating us. And that sort of stress is over quickly. We do need to have this happen at least occasionally as part of our normal body balance.

Unfortunately we respond to the tiger when there's no tiger – day after day we live with such irritants as a balky computer, being stuck in traffic, destructive conflict at work or at home, etc. – and when we're in a continual state of fight-or-flight, we get further out of balance and the negative impacts of the physical stress response add up.

Chronic stress will cause weight gain, and the extra pounds then throw off the body's hormone balance.

Often, folks feel they cannot relax without "a few drinks" at the end of the day. While it's okay to have one to two drinks, it's not okay to NEED the drinks. If there is anything you need or crave in order to relax – even mint tea – then that dependency is a signal of a problem or an imbalance.

Stress causes blood to leave the gut and go to the muscles – leading to gastric upset.

Stories that Create Stress

Stress actually is a product – at least sometimes – of the stories we tell ourselves. We interpret the world as follows:

Our senses get input from the world
We interpret the input through our stories
We react to the stories emotionally
We then in response to the emotions decide how to behave

When this third step contains stressful emotions, it's time to change the stories you are telling yourself.

Carolyn Myss in her book “Why People Don’t Heal and How They Can” and Candace Pert in her book “Molecules of Emotion” both describe exactly this – how our brain processes create the chemicals that end up in our blood and affect our mood and health.

There are now two new areas of science studying the power of the mind to affect health: Psycho-Neuro-Immunology (for immune function) and Psycho-Neuro-Endocrinology (for endocrine function).

Steps and Techniques to Reduce Stress

Exercise – just 20 minutes of exercise in one day will create three days worth of anti-aging, anti-stress effect in the body. Start with 20 minutes three times a week. Find a way to work it into your normal routine, such as parking a 20-minute walk away from an appointment, and allowing 25–30 minutes.

Eliminate foods that create an immune or inflammation response.

Look for and eliminate buildups of heavy metals in the body.

Practice deep breathing exercises that are proven to lower blood pressure.

Get your hormone levels tested and visit a wellness practitioner.

Make the decision to change the stories you tell yourself, and pick the story that is the least stressful and most amusing or relaxing.

Share your anti-stress plan with at least one other person, be it a coach, life partner, or accountability partner.

Above all, get out of the office into nature – unplug from the technology – and move your body.

About the author

Tom Cox is CEO at B-Studio Business Videos, Managing Consultant at Cox Business Consulting, Inc., and CEO at GrowthMaps

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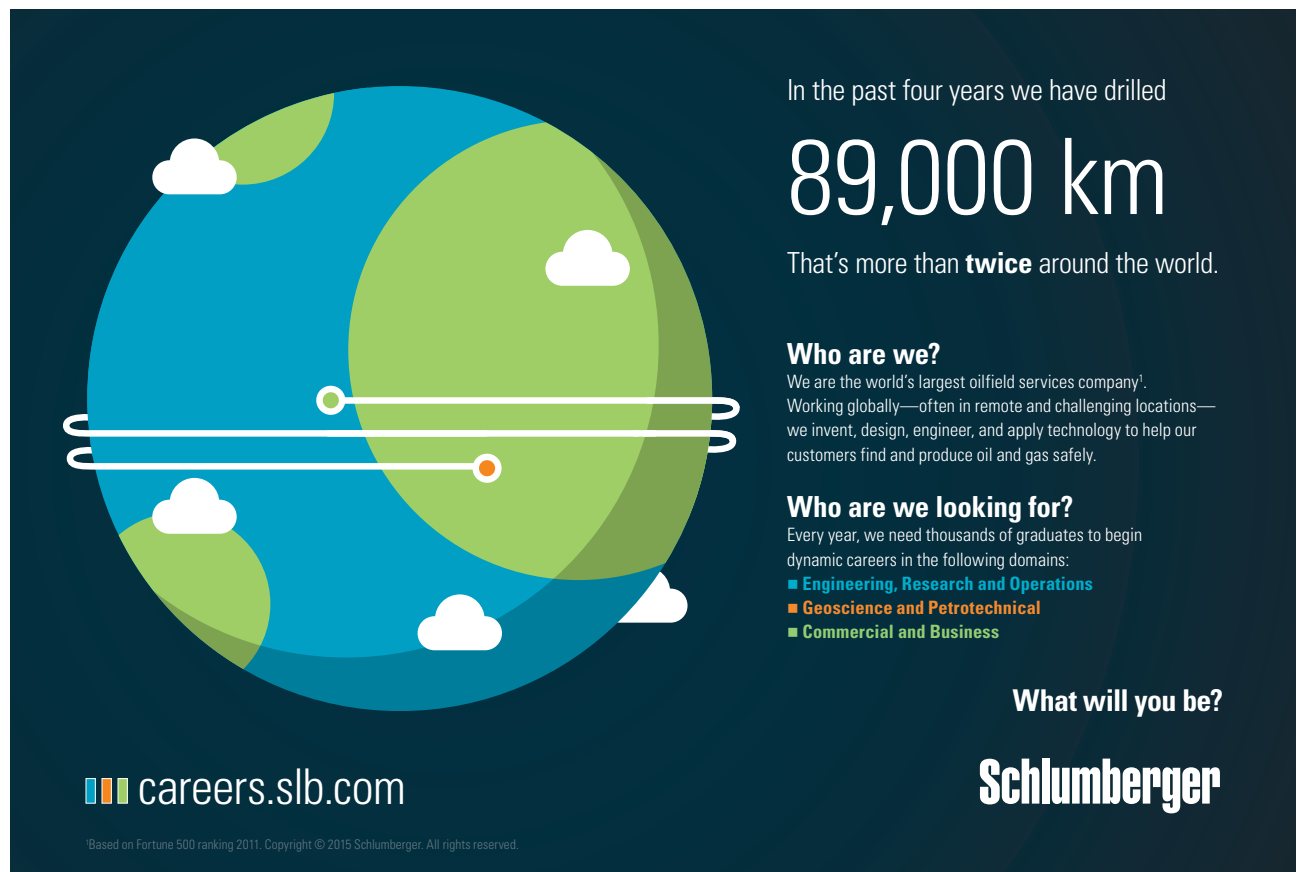
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6 The Emperor's Appointment by Alan Arthur

One of the interesting paradoxes about time management and creativity is that we can often be more productive and creative when we do nothing than when we do a lot.

Or to put it differently, when we pause in our busy, hectic, time-filled lives and let things catch up.

The story is told that when Emperor Hirohito of Japan travelled, his every day was planned down to the last minute. On one occasion, he was scheduled to meet with a delegation of monks and tour a local Buddhist temple for exactly ten minutes. The Emperor and his entourage entered the temple precisely on time, but the building was empty and the monks were nowhere to be found. The aide responsible for setting the Emperor's schedule alternated between desperately searching for the missing delegation and making panicked excuses for their absence, but the Emperor simply stood in the centre of the room and said nothing. Exactly ten minutes later, the Emperor indicated that it was now time to leave. On their way out of the temple, Hirohito turned to his aide and said "I enjoyed that appointment very much – please schedule me another one tomorrow."

When we plan every waking minute with purposeful activity, we run the risk of crowding out moments of insight, joyful "Ah-ah" moments, and the fun of playing around idly and purposelessly just to see what might come of it. In most organisations, there is nowhere in the schedule for such moments. And as a result, creativity is less than it could be.

On our ManageTrainLearn Time Management courses, we use a model of time management based on the Four Elements of Earth, Fire, Water, and Air, each one a symbol of four aspects of time and task management. We show our delegates that they are most productive when they devote roughly equal amounts of time each day to each element. And Air is the element and symbol for doing nothing.

Dr Nathaniel Branden is a psychotherapist and philosopher who has sold over 4 million books on personal development and creativity. He says, "It is generally recognized that creativity requires leisure, an absence of rush, time for the mind and imagination to float and wander and roam, time for the individual to descend into the depths of his or her psyche, to be available to barely audible signals rustling for attention. Long periods of time may pass in which nothing seems to be happening. But we know that that kind of space must be created if the mind is to leap out of its accustomed ruts, to part from the standard and generate a leap into the new."

In the coming week, why not find space in your busy day for your mind and imagination to just float and wander and roam and listen to the barely audible signals speaking to you? You might be surprised what you hear.

About the author

Alan Arthur is a contributing author for Managing Director of ManageTrainLearn, the site that will change the way you learn forever. Download free samples of the biggest range of management and personal development materials anywhere and experience learning like you always dreamed possible; <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

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7 Taking Myself Too Seriously: Suggestions for Reclaiming Perspective by Judy Ringer

We can change our circumstances by a mere change of our attitude.

~William James; 19th Century American psychologist and philosopher

I've noticed I often take my work, my life, and myself way too seriously.

I blow events out of proportion, demand perfection, and generally behave as if my needs are at the center of everything.

I agonize over small decisions, worry about personal interactions, wrestle with each word of a simple email, and wake up some nights with my heart pounding in anticipation of tomorrow's presentation or with angst about what happened today. Was that good enough? What if the technical equipment breaks down? Why did I say THAT?! The minutest detail is not too small to escape scrutiny when I'm in this frame of mind – when life becomes very, very serious.

When this happens I lose my self, my center, and my perspective. I step out of the precious present moment and into anxiety about the future or the past. I forget that there's nothing I can control except right now, right here, this moment and my availability to it.

Happily, remembering this personal truth is what shifts me back into the present. I begin to breathe again and slip seamlessly into the realization that right now, at this moment, I am okay. Sanity returns as I focus on what is at hand.

Vibrant and Joyful

I practice a martial art called Aikido, whose flowing and graceful movements belie the power behind them. Aikido is based on principles such as centered response and utilization of energy, and it has practical applications in the world of conflict resolution and self-management. Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido, called it the Art of Peace, and said that we must “always practice the Art of Peace in a vibrant and joyful manner.” Aikidoists try to remember this as we throw each other around the mat, smiling and having fun while we practice to perfect our technique.

As we push on into this new century, it is likely that life will become even more complex than it already is. Here are some suggestions that might help when you become separated from your perspective:

Acknowledge – Often all it takes to change your current stressed-out state is to notice it. As you bring your awareness back to the present moment, you regain a sense of perspective and possibility.

Center – Breathe. Smile. Be.

Call someone and talk about it, better yet laugh about it.

Read a poem.

Listen to music.

Take a walk or go for a run.

Dream up some practices of your own.

Use your growing awareness to lighten up, smile, live and love in a vibrant and joyful manner. And stop taking yourself so seriously!

About the author

Judy Ringer is the author of *Unlikely Teachers: Finding the Hidden Gifts in Daily Conflict* <http://www.unlikelyteachersbook.com> and the award-winning e-zine, *Ki Moments*, containing stories and practices on turning life's challenges into life teachers. Judy is a black belt in aikido and a nationally-known presenter, specializing in unique workshops on conflict, communication, and creating a positive work environment. She is the founder of Power & Presence Training and chief instructor of Portsmouth Aikido, Portsmouth, NH, USA. Visit <http://www.JudyRinger.com>

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8 Five Steps to Maximizing Your Personal Energy by Thomas Cox

The whole concept of “work life balance” may be completely wrong. Rather than a zero-sum game – give up work hours to gain play time – new research shows we can turbocharge our work time by investing in and prioritizing play.

“The key,” says energy expert Al Lee, is to “rhythmically create, spend, and renew energy.” The result is highly productive workdays that don’t leave you exhausted.

I first stumbled on this years ago, unknowingly, when I coached a sales manager who was overwhelmed. Erin was getting divorced, moving, selling her home, and trying to manage a salesforce that was underperforming. As part of our work, I showed her how to reduce her work hours by 40% while emphasizing a few key activities she’d been avoiding. She retained her sanity – and sales went up 50%.

Taking Energy to the Bank

A study in 2006 at Wachovia Bank that focused specifically on Energy Management showed a similar payoff: in their Harvard Business Review article “Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time,” Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy document their one-year study of a group of bankers trained on Energy Management. The study group, compared to a control group at the same bank, showed an increase in loan revenue of 13%, and their revenue from deposits went up 20%.

Other adopters of this emerging science of Energy Management include the Canadian Olympic Team. Their “Own the Podium” program spent \$200 million to maximize the number of Canadian gold medals won, and considerable emphasis was placed on teaching athletes Energy Management. “This allowed the athletes to better manage their emotions, the stress of competition, and their creativity – as well as pure physical performance,” said Al. “As I researched this – with athletes, astronauts, fighter pilots, zen archers – over and over we found people who used these techniques to get the most out of their minds and bodies.”

“What I’ve found with clients I’ve worked with,” said Al, “mostly corporate, most of them realize their employees are their most valuable resource, yet their high stress environment creates an unsustainable situation. Executives need to take care of themselves. I’ve worked with international pharmaceutical companies, sportswear firms, and on and on, to create ways for executives to renew themselves, so they don’t burn them out and have to replace them.”

To test this himself, Al Lee was meticulous in tracking his energy levels over 100 days. “I wanted to be truly objective about my results. It was amazing.”

Five Steps to Energy Management

1. Create a list of the things that give you energy – anything from playing with the kids to taking a walk. These are things that we are tempted to STOP doing when we feel overwhelmed – they feel like luxuries. Keep this list visible at your desk. Make sure you are doing these every day.
2. Stop working marathon hours, and start working in “sprints.” If you’re creating a workday of back-to-back meetings, eating lunch at your desk, and having no breaks, you’re destroying your productivity.
3. After every 90–120 minute “sprint” of work, stop and do an activity from the list of energy-creating activities, to relax and recover. Like a weight lifter who does intense work and then allows time for regeneration, you can literally build your energy reserves by pushing hard and then stopping to regenerate.
4. Take this pattern of sprint, relax, sprint, relax – and turn it into an unbreakable, sacred ritual. The more you create rituals of behaviors that are good for you, the easier it is for you to do those behaviors without having to summon your will or exercise self-control. It’ll actually be easier to be virtuous than to break the ritual.
5. Do not multitask during your sprint – stay focused on one activity that demands attention. While the brain can time-split effectively across one low-focus activity (i.e. ironing shirts) while monitoring a stream of low-density information (i.e. watching a baseball game), you literally cannot focus on two demanding tasks at one time. A teacher can help a child with her reading, while scanning the classroom for trouble. However, once the trouble breaks out, that becomes the focus. (Imagine having a crucial talk with your Significant Other about the future of your relationship...and simultaneously, one of you is also working on the company’s annual budget. One or both of those tasks is going to suffer.)

Ultimately, powerful results do not come from grinding ourselves down, burning ourselves out or using ourselves up. Our best performance comes from working in harmony with the rhythmic way our brains and bodies want to work.

About the author

Tom Cox is CEO at B-Studio Business Videos, Managing Consultant at Cox Business Consulting, Inc., and CEO at GrowthMaps

<http://tomonleadership.com/>

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9 Liberating Your SELF from Stress by Mike George

During the last decade we have all been exposed to an avalanche of insight and wisdom into how “to do” life with a greater degree of success and happiness. Books, seminars, workshops, DVDs, CDs etc. have flooded the personal growth and spiritual awareness arenas with everything from basic mental principles on how to “think your way” to happiness, to the deepest spiritual wisdom on how to create a fulfilling and purposeful life. There is, however, one habit that keeps getting in the way of our intention to apply any new and potentially life enhancing strategy, sometimes referred to as the “stress habit”. Living a stress free life is not an easy achievement. It can only start when we have realized and re-established within our consciousness three fundamental truths about stress.

Truth 1 – Stress is a form of pain or discomfort that comes to tell you there is something you need to change.

All pain, suffering and discomfort are messengers saying there is something we need to learn or more often, unlearn. For example, we are sitting on our chair and your body sends us a message that it is uncomfortable. So what do we do? We change our position in the chair. We don’t turn to the chair and start saying, “You rotten, nasty chair, it’s you that’s making me so uncomfortable”. (Although, somewhat amazingly, some do and they spend their life blaming their chairs...so to speak!). If you put your hand in the fire what do you feel? Pain, obviously. What do you learn? Never put your hand in the fire again. And you never do. A lesson is quickly learned and behavior is quickly changed. So stress is a messenger and not a companion.

Truth 2 – All our mental and emotional stress is 100% self created.

This truth flies on the face of the primary beliefs that we all seem to assimilate at an early age including the belief that other people are responsible for our stress. We easily forget that it’s not the other person or the deadline or the circumstances that stress us, it is how we respond. It’s our response that “contains” the stress. While this is easy theory it’s challenging to practice after a lifetime of projecting our suffering on to others.

For example, you are in your car on the way to an important meeting. The person in front is driving very slowly on a winding, single lane road. There is no way you can pass.

You begin to feel irritated, then frustrated, then downright angry. You are in pain, you are stressed. Who creates your pain? You do! What do you learn? Absolutely nothing. Why? Because, like many of us, you are carrying and holding on to three learned beliefs that block your ability to change how you respond. Belief One is that it's OK to feel angry, it's natural, it's a normal response in such situations. Besides, mum and dad used to get upset too! Belief Two, it's the person in the car in front, it's "them" that is making us angry! Obviously not true. Our anger is entirely created by us. Belief Three is more like an addiction. Some of us are addicted to the suffering of anger because it gives us a quick hit of adrenaline which makes us feel more alive for a short while. The car in front of us is a great excuse to generate two stimulating chemicals in our body, cortisol and adrenaline.

Truth 3 – Stress is NOT a “natural” part of life.

Having learned to believe that stress comes with the package we call “living” we simply accept our suffering and do little or nothing to liberate ourselves. We say stress is a natural part of life usually because everyone else seems to be stressed. Many even seem proud of their stress and can often be heard competing to be more stressed than others! So we don't challenge the conventional thinking that it's natural. Which is like saying the emotions that constitute our stress i.e. sadness, anger and fear are natural when, in truth, they are signals that we have lost our inner connection with our “true nature” which is peaceful, loving and contented.

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If you take a moment and reflect on a recent stress experience you will notice the presence of one or more of these emotions. If you can be aware after the experience of any anger (irritation/frustration) has passed you may notice the emotion that always precedes anger. It may last only a few seconds, maybe a few minutes, but it's always there. It's called sadness. Sadness always precedes anger. And sadness always follows from a sense of loss. When you desire something you already have the object of your desire in your mind, (including getting to that meeting on time) and when it doesn't show up in reality exactly when and how you "expect", or when it looks like something is getting in the way, (like that car in front) it is as if you have lost it. But the sadness, like all emotion, does not last as it turns, turns, turns into anger as you look for someone or something to blame for your loss. Even the anger does not last as it will eventually turn, turn, turn into fear – the fear that such an event might happen again. Hence our most frequent "stress habit" which we call "worry". Worry is simply fear of loss projected into the future. It is a misuse of our imagination. And if we fear losing something enough it will happen and we are back in sadness.

And so we create and live in a cycle of stressful emotions, an emotional rollercoaster that goes up and down and round and round. We become trapped in the Cycle of Suffering without being aware that we are trapped. There is a way to free ourselves from each emotion but it requires certain "moments of realization". While these solutions can be articulated here in words, they can't give us the power to change our stress habits, the habits of creating sadness, anger and fear, until we realize their truth for our self. The three key "possible truths" (in the form of words) are as follows and, as the old saying goes, the truth will set you free. (but only if you realize it to be true for you too)

One – Freedom from the Family of SADNESS (depression, melancholy, hopelessness)

Possible Truth – You have nothing and no one to lose because you don't actually own or possess anything or anyone.

Nothing is "mine"! Easy theory, but it is challenging to practice as we have been deeply conditioned to believe that we do own and possess things. And yet if we look at the evidence of our entire life so far, everything and everybody that comes, eventually goes. It has to because that's the way life flows. Nothing stays. When we truly realize we have nothing to lose, and that nothing and no one is mine, we will never experience sadness or sorrow again. Even the passing of a "loved one" would no longer trigger tears but restore our capacity for "retrospective gratitude" for the gift and privilege of their company. Only then do we have the ability to "move on" with our life.

Two – Freedom from the Family of ANGER (irritation, frustration, resentment, envy, rage)

Possible Truth – You cannot control or change the past or other people and they are not responsible for our happiness.

Anger is always the result of expecting others to do things that will make us happy and then trying to change the past and other people when they don't, which is to try to do the impossible. This is why whenever we get angry it means we are "clinically insane".

Apart from the fact that we are out of control (the emotion is in control) and that we are irrational, the real reason for our temporary insanity is we are attempting to do the impossible. Fortunately it is momentary as it's impossible to stay angry. Once you see this and stop resisting and trying to change a) what has already happened and b) other people, you will never get angry again.

Three – Freedom from the Family of FEAR (anxiety, tension, worry, panic, terror)

Possible Truth – Fear is often referred to as False Experience Appearing Real – which means we misuse our faculty of imagination to "imagine" some future loss and then give it the status of present reality.

It may be loss of an object, loss of health, loss of a comfort zone, loss of anything. It's simply worry. So instead of creating images of the worst possible outcome (loss) we can turn our thinking, our "imaging" around, and visualize the best, the positive, the anastrophe and not the catastrophe. But don't make it a desire; don't get attached to your vision. Just create it, let it go, and return to live in the present moment.

Yet despite the messenger of our emotional suffering coming to tell us there is something we need to change we often wonder why nothing changes! We either have a tendency ignore the messenger or to shoot messenger! And the stress that we create continues, as habits do! And every time we do we become a little better at being stressed! It becomes just a little bit harder to de-stress as the "stress habit" becomes deeper. Eventually we may even identify so strongly with our suffering that we feel uncomfortable (somewhat guilty) if we are too relaxed and not stressed! That's when we start thinking we are happy only when we are unhappy. It's a truly a bizarre way to live when it reaches that stage. And for many of us, some say most of us, it can easily become just like that.

And so in a slightly updated version of the now famous Serenity Prayer we have a reminder to help us maintain the focus our attention if we want to achieve a stress free life.

"God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know it's me."

Question: Which of the three emotions do you seem to create most? Why do you think that is?

Reflection: Emotion is the price you pay today for your attachments yesterday – what does this mean?

Action: During the coming week take a moment at the start of each day to remind your self of one of the three “possible truths” and then consciously practice it throughout that day.

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About the author

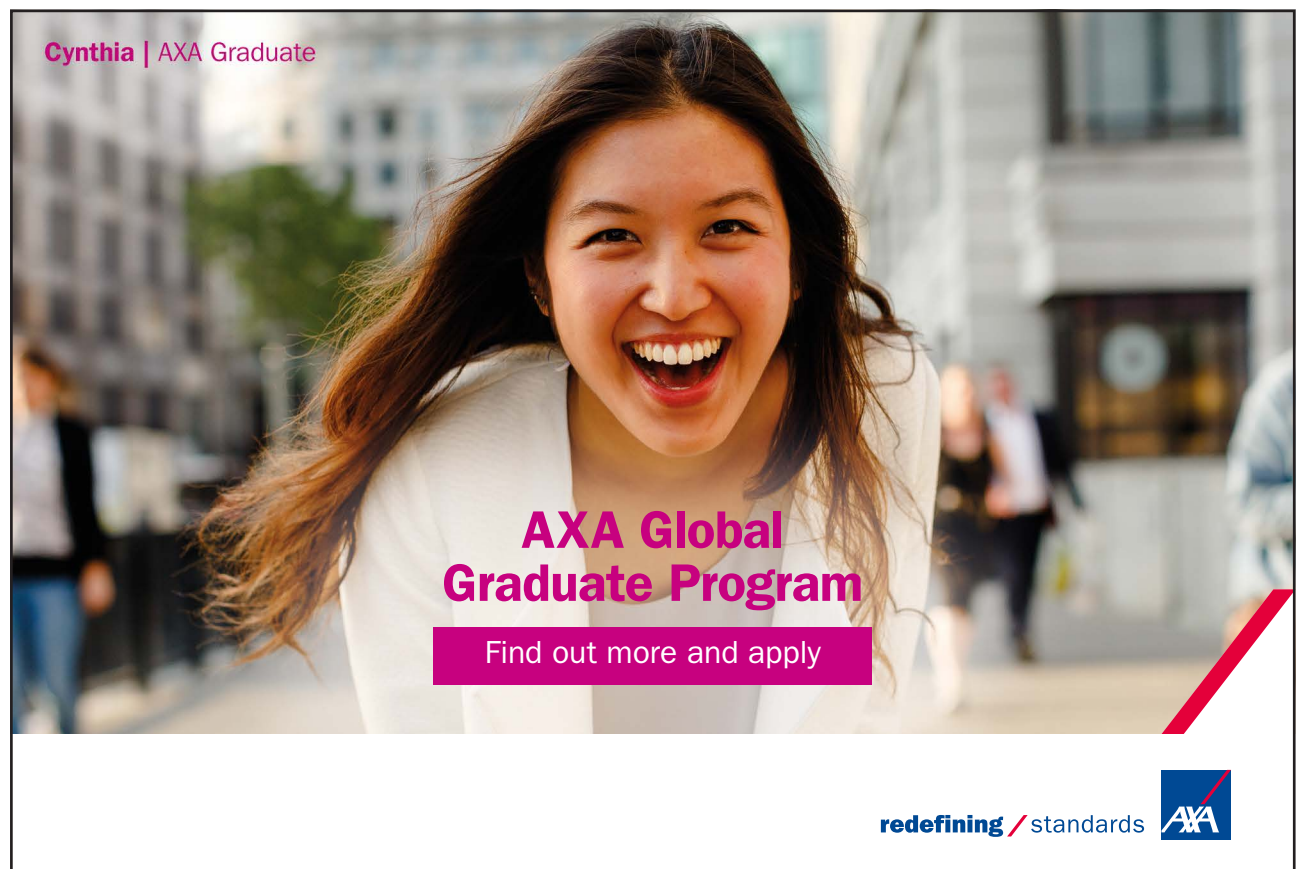
Mike George writes a column in The New Era Times called Clear Thinking. Mike George has The Relaxation Centre at <http://www.relax7.com/>, a place for insight, wisdom and practical methods to relax your mental, emotional and spiritual energies.

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Please take whatever you find useful there and use in your own unique way because, like happiness, relaxation is an inside job!

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10 10 Steps to Overcoming Fear: Public Enemy #1 by Victor Antonio G.

We can't hide our failures let alone hide from them. It has been said that dentists' mistakes are pulled. Carpenters turn theirs into sawdust. Doctors bury their failures and lawyers lock them up from the public view. When we fail, it seems as though the world is staring at us and gawking at our misstep.

A friend told me a long time ago a saying that has always stuck with me and has served as a reminder about worrying about outside opinion, she said, "What you think of me, is none of my business." Every time I get the feeling others are watching and waiting for me to make an error or mistake, I remind myself of this saying. Most importantly I remind myself that I am my worst critic. And that I have the right and ability to choose what failure means to me.

Failure is determined by your chosen outlook on life. If something didn't turn out your way, you have the choice of viewing it as positive learning experience or letting a negative experience rob you of your energies to move forward.

Here are ten simple rules or guidelines for helping you deal with and accept failure as part of the success process:

- 1) Learn to appreciate the value of failure: Start believing that failure is there to help you get to your intended destination.
- 2) Don't take failure personally: Like success, failure plays no favorites. It is color-blind, gender-blind and agnostic.
- 3) Allow failure to redirect you: Failures are like road signs directing you in the direction 'you need to be going' instead of the way you headed.
- 4) Learn to laugh at yourself and failure: Don't take yourself so seriously. Learn to enjoy the process of growth and cycles of failure and success. When failure comes just smirked at it with confidence and say, "I'm gonna figure this out, just you wait."
- 5) Ask and keep asking "Why?": Always ask yourself why didn't things turn out. Self-analysis and evaluation are key to learning from your failure and achieving eventual success.
- 6) Learn from failure: If you repeat the same mistakes over and over again you do yourself a dis-service. There is a saying, "The definition of an idiot is doing something the same way over and over again yet expecting a different outcome." Growth is an iterative process of learning from our mistakes.

- 7) Don't let failure beat you down: Failure will try to convince you to give up. Failure will try to demoralize and destabilize your intent on success. Don't allow it. Think of failure as a help hand and not as a fist trying to beat your down.
- 8) Use failure to measure your growth: All steps toward success can be measure by the distance we have travel and the amount we have grown personally and economically. Remember, growth comes from action and experience, not from standing still and doing nothing.
- 9) Zoom back and put failure in perspective: We always see ourselves as the center and most important object in life. Zoom back and take the time to appreciate all the good things that are happening to you. Zoom back and be grateful for all the little things you take for granted. Zoom back and realize that the majority of people in the word do not have the opportunities we have here in the United States.
- 10) Never give up! The biggest mistake one can have and greatest failure a person can experience is that of giving up and not trying. Do not fear failure, fear giving up.

The most pathetic state of human nature is one of total submission, of body and soul. What holds us back or paralyzes us from trying is the fear of failure. But here too is an irony, if we are too fearful to act then we guarantee our failure.

The football coach Mike Ditka put it succinctly, "You never really lose until you quit trying." We must learn to view failure as a healthy process of reaching success. We must learn that failure is a guide to success not an obstruction.

About the author

Born and raised in Chicago's inner city, Victor Antonio G. has achieved a level of success few would have expected: By the age of 35 he had become Vice President in \$3B Fortune 500 company at the time and built-up an international market from \$14M to \$97M in two and half years, and went on to become President of Global Sales & Marketing to help build a \$420M company. He is currently CEO of a privately held multimillion Cable and Satellite Company.

<http://www.thelogicofsuccess.com/index.htm>

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11 Mental Toughness by Kevin Stacey

It's the mentally tough who realize that every individual is the master of his or her own mind, not the other way around. The mentally weak are thrown around by every whim of their mind. Just because a thought arises, they assume it must be valid and worthy of dwelling on or obsessing over. This regurgitation of the same counter-productive thoughts causes needless pain, anxiety and depression. The mentally tough do not allow their own thoughts to be the cause of harm to themselves and others.

Increasing our mental toughness is critical, because our success and contentment in life is determined by our mental activity. The mentally tough accept and embrace the following beliefs:

Thinking is the grand originator of our experience; we can't feel anything unless we think it first.

We become what we think about most of the time.

We are always the thinker, producer and creator of our own thoughts.

The advertisement for Linnaeus University features a bright yellow background. On the left, there is a black tree logo and a black speech bubble containing the word 'Scholarships' in white script. Below these, the text 'Open your mind to new opportunities' is written in a large, black, serif font. Underneath this, a paragraph in a smaller black font describes the university's size and international focus. At the bottom left, 'Linnæus University' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with 'Sweden' in a smaller font below it. On the right side, there is a photograph of a person in mid-air, performing a backflip in a modern, glass-walled interior. In the top right corner of the ad, 'Lnu.se' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, a black box contains white text listing bachelor and master programmes, as well as summer academy courses.

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It is easy to see how important the application of mental toughness is in the sports world. If I'm a baseball player and I struck out the last time I was at the plate, I'd better not be thinking or dwelling on that as I step into the batter's box the next time. If I do, I'm in trouble. In any case, it's just not going to help me.

In our own lives, there are an unlimited number of things that we can dwell on at any given moment that simply don't help us. Negative things. Insecure and fear-based things. Thoughts that don't get us anywhere and don't accomplish anything except to make us feel worse and sap the joy out of living.

What are some other characteristics of the mentally tough? For starters, they practice thought recognition and resistance on a daily basis. Recognition means awareness of what you're thinking about before your thoughts have a chance to build momentum. Resistance means putting the breaks on a runaway thought and slowing it down, just as you would if you had to stop a runaway train.

When I recognize a runaway thought, I practice resistance by saying, "CANCEL!" Sometimes I shout it (to myself silently- it would be a bit embarrassing if anyone heard me saying it under my breath). I say CANCEL to myself many times a day. I simply refuse to start going down a road that is going to lead me into the dumps. Why should I? At times I may also say something like this in addition to CANCEL "There is nothing I can do about the situation right now, and thinking this way and getting myself all upset is not helping things – the situation or me." At times, when I'm lying in bed just before I fall asleep, troubling thoughts will pop into my head. If I follow these thoughts and give them my attention and energy, I might as well forget about sleeping. Instead, I practice thought recognition and resistance, and I mentally lead myself to a good night's sleep.

You can find multiple examples of mental toughness in both fact and fiction. General Dwight Eisenhower, commander of the D-day invasion, was once asked what would have happened if the invading troops were beaten back at the beaches. He replied, "That would have been bad, but I never allow my mind to think that way." That's mental toughness. In *Gone With the Wind*, Scarlett O'Hara said, "I'm not going to think about that now. I'll think about that tomorrow." That's also mental toughness. These people realize that thinking is an opportunity to shape reality from the inside out, and they are discerning about which trains of thought to follow.

I'm not suggesting that recognition and resistance is denial. If a certain thought is consistently arising and you can't seem to let it go, it may be worthy of further analysis and a decisive resolution. One of the best ways to figure out if you should pursue your thoughts is to write them out and get them organized and clarified. For more information on how to do this, see this link for my previous newsletter on "Melting Mental Snowballs": <http://www.trainrightinc.com/November%202001.htm> What I'm suggesting is a very high percentage of our thoughts are just garbage and they ought to be dismissed quickly and not given any of your continued attention and limited energy.

In addition, I'm not suggesting that people who have a diagnosed chemical imbalance in their brain are mentally weak. Some folks need some extra help in the form of medication to resist their thoughts. However, just about all of us can benefit from becoming mentally tougher. Nowadays, most physicians, in addition to prescribing medication, are using similar cognitive therapy techniques to teach their patients how to help themselves long-term by resisting their negative thoughts.

Practice recognition and resistance and see for yourself how it affects your attitude and general health!

About the Author

Kevin Stacey helps companies and professionals achieve maximum productivity and effectiveness through stress management and time management training. He is available to speak on these topics. For more information visit <http://www.TrainRightInc.com> or call 1-800-603-7168.

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An advertisement for SKF. It features a woman with long dark hair smiling in the foreground. In the background, a large white wind turbine is visible against a blue sky. The text 'Brain power' is written in large white letters on the left. On the right, there is a block of text about wind energy and SKF's role. At the bottom left, it says 'Plug into The Power of Knowledge Engineering. Visit us at www.skf.com/knowledge'. The SKF logo is in the bottom right corner.

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12 Just Chill by Steve Goodier

An Appalachian folk story tells of two friends who went coon hunting. They treed a coon but could not get him down. So one decided he'd climb the tree and shake the coon loose. To his surprise, he found it wasn't a coon at all, but a wildcat.

In a little while, his friend heard an awful commotion up in the tree. Then he heard a voice screaming down at him, "Help! Help!"

"What'll I do?"

"Just shoot up here amongst us," his friend said. "One of us has got to have some relief."

Does your life ever feel like you're wrestling with a wildcat and somehow, somewhere, you have to get some relief? If so, you're not alone.

Psychologist Richard Wiseman asserts that people actually need more relief now than ever before. We are living more stressful, faster-paced lives than ever. He cites the results of an international study conducted in collaboration with the British Council to measure the speed of life.

The experiment was conducted by researchers who secretly timed how fast thousands of pedestrians walked in city centers across the globe, including London, Madrid, Singapore and New York. Granted, this is not the most scientific experiment, but it is fascinating nevertheless.

Prof. Richard Wiseman says, "This simple measurement provides a significant insight into the physical and social health of a city." Where do the fastest walkers live? In order of speed, they are found in Singapore (Singapore), Copenhagen (Denmark), Madrid (Spain), Guangzhou (China) and Dublin (Ireland).

According to this study, we live about 10% faster now than twenty years ago, when a similar experiment was conducted. The biggest changes are found in and around Asia, where the pace of life in Guangzhou (China) increased by over 20% and where Singapore showed a 30% increase.

A common American expression is, "Chill." Are you anxious and uptight? Chill. Need to de-stress? Just take it easy? Chill.

Chilling is pretty good advice, actually. Especially if the word "chill" is spelled this way:

C – Calm down. When you're anxious, frenzied or pressed, stop. Take a deep breath and ask yourself, "Why?"

H – Hold back. Set a reasonable pace. Life is a marathon, not a sprint. If you want to last, pace yourself. And take time to rest.

I – Indulge your desire for fun. Do something fun everyday and try to put fun in your usual activities.

L – Learn how to just be. You already know how to DO. Take time to BE. Don't measure your life by what you accomplish, but by who you are. Be present. Be attentive. But be.

L – Let it go. You are not responsible for everything and everybody. In the immortal words of poet Robert Browning, "God's in His Heaven; all's right with the world." You don't have to do it all yourself; you don't have to do it all right now. And some of it you may not have to do at all.

You may feel like you're wrestling with a wildcat. Or maybe you just feel as if you're living too fast. But if you need some relief, "chill" is a good word to remember. Spell it right and you just might get something you don't expect. Happiness.

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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http://stevegoodier.blogspot.co.uk/2011/12/just-chill_26.html

13 Slowing Down to the Speed of Life by Eric Garner

You may have noticed recently that these newsletters have been a bit late. If that's bothered you, I apologise.

Now you might think that the reason for my lateness is that I've been too busy.

Well, in the past, that would have undoubtedly been the case. Too much on my plate. Too many deadlines to meet. Never enough time. Other priorities. You know the score.

However, over the last couple of weeks, I've been practising a new approach to work. It's called "slowing down to the speed of life".

It all started with me reading a news article about why Finland is the top country in the world for science education. Apparently the reason is two-fold. First, Finland employs only well-skilled teachers. And secondly, they slow down to the pace of their students. Unlike other Western countries that focus on deadlines and targets, the Finnish focus on the rate at which their students pick things up. And, as we know, no two people learn at the same pace. So they go at the rate of the slowest.

Trust and responsibility

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Inés Aréizaga Esteva (Spain), 25 years old
Education: Chemical Engineer

– You have to be proactive and open-minded as a newcomer and make it clear to your colleagues what you are able to cope. The pharmaceutical field is new to me. But busy as they are, most of my colleagues find the time to teach me, and they also trust me. Even though it was a bit hard at first, I can feel over time that I am beginning to be taken seriously and that my contribution is appreciated.



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Doing things quickly is one of the sad symptoms of our global, anonymous, work-filled lives.

I recently heard about a man standing in a metro station in Washington DC playing the violin. It was a cold January morning and people were hurrying as usual to their places of work.

The man played six Bach pieces for 45 minutes. In all that time, only 6 people stopped to listen. The longest was a child of 3 who was quickly rescued by his mother to re-join the rushing stream.

At the end of the 45 minutes, the man had collected \$32. He stopped playing, packed away his violin, and left the concourse without anyone knowing.

That man was Joshua Bell, one of the most celebrated violinists in the world. Two days earlier, he had sold out a concert hall in Boston with seats costing an average of \$100 each.

If you're like I was, and find yourself caught up in the maelstrom of everyday working life, why not introduce a few minutes each day when you slow down to the speed of life? Just take your time. Tune in to the pace of things, not people. Saunter and relish each passing moment.

If you do, you might then catch a world-class musician playing for you personally. Or learn more Finnish science. Or get a newsletter finished on time.

About the author

Eric Garner is Managing Director of ManageTrainLearn, the site that will change the way you learn forever. Download free samples of the biggest range of management and personal development materials anywhere and experience learning like you always dreamed possible; <http://www.managetrainlearn.com>

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14 How Resilient Are YOU?

by Mike George

When things go “belly up”, when bad news arrives out of the blue, when adversity strikes, how well do you cope? When one of those disastrous days shows up and everything seems to “go south”, how resilient are you? Have you developed your “bouncebackability”? Are you able absorbed, with equanimity, what the world seems to want to throw at you? Or do you collapse in a heap and need days and perhaps an army of sympathizers and supporters to pull you through?

Being resilient seems to come naturally to some, but for others it’s almost impossible. In essence “resilience” is our ability to recover and regain our strength, albeit physical, mental or spiritual, following some form of “adversity”. However, everyone’s idea of adversity is different as we each have our own values, beliefs, habitual perceptions and lifestyle expectations. What is a catastrophic disaster to one person can be less than a pin-prick to another.

Our body has a natural resilience built in. Known as the “immune system” its job is to eliminate or expel foreign invaders while helping us to recover our physical strength after an illness. We can help it or hinder it with the power of our mind and the quality of our intentions.

Being mentally resilient is something we also have “built in” to our psyche. However, a lifetime of “indoctrination” may have installed many mental viruses which sabotage our ability to adapt and recover from adversity. Indeed these viruses can even serve to create our adversities without us being aware that they do so. These mental viruses include: learned perceptions which then generate negative thoughts and emotions; basing our self worth/esteem on external things like our appearance/possessions etc; believing that happiness is dependent on others/circumstances etc; expecting and wanting love in life to come from outside of our self! These and many other beliefs set us up for some form of adversity and therefore the weakening of our capacity to adapt and bounce back strongly in the face of other people’s behaviors and day-to-day events.

For many people just one negative thought can open the floodgates to many other thoughts and a rollercoaster ride through an array of emotions that sabotage our “bouncebackability”. Our level of resilience then depends on how quickly we can change our thinking and dissolve our emotionally reactive states. Not so easy without daily practice. Some seek such practice with great enthusiasm as they recognize the priceless value of building their inner strength of character. Others seem to be forced to build that strength, simply because a series of particularly adverse events and circumstances appear to come to test and challenge them on their journey through life. Others learn quickly to enact the lyrics of that famous song as they “pick themselves up, dust themselves down, and start all over again”! While some simply collapse into utter helplessness at the first sign of something going slightly not to plan or the smallest loss of something previously deemed to be a little precious! Each person’s capacity to recover varies but it is a capacity that can be strengthened and expanded. It can even be transcended.

Freedom from Adversity

In order to expand our capacity to recover from adversity we need to find the “roots of resilience” which are prior to our physical and mental states. It’s prior to our thoughts and feelings that we can find the inner “states of being” that can eventually make even resilience a redundant and unnecessary ability. It’s when we live in and from these states that we ensure adversity never strikes. So here goes. First the theory, which although challenging in itself, is always easier than the practice.

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To transcend and free our self from adversity the primary state we need to access within our own consciousness is the state of “innate knowingness”! It is a state that could be called “beyond belief” which means prior to our beliefs. This is the inner awareness of the truths that challenge and dissolve the beliefs and perceptions that are responsible for our experience of adversity. In this state of innate knowingness we “know” (we don’t just believe) that we have nothing to lose as we have realized the truth that nothing and no one is ever “mine”. In this state of innate knowingness we “know” (we don’t just believe) that we already have what we seek as we have realized the truth that while we are motivated to find peace, love and happiness in all that we do we know that we are already our own inner source of such states of being. In this state of innate knowingness we “know” that everything around is happening, emerging, evolving, progressing, regressing exactly as it should. We have realized that the flux of continuous change in the world around us is but the backdrop to our life. We have realized and “know” the truth that life is a game that we are here to “play”, not in a childish sense (though occasionally that too!) but more in a theatrical sense. And sometimes our playfulness includes helping others who are still suffering because they have not yet “realized” that nothing is mine and that they already have what they seek and that life is a game.

From these “states of knowingness” we are able to see that nothing bad ever happens. Whatever happens just...happens. And what is adversity but the belief and perception that something has been lost because something bad has just happened and that life is a seriously serious business!

Freeing our self from the beliefs, and habitual reactions that arise from those old beliefs, is unlikely to happen instantly, especially after a lifetime of “adversity conditioning”! While we may recognize such truths, in reality we cannot live “from” such truths without daily attention and the intention to free our self from such conditioning. It takes time to translate our intellectual realizations into our thoughts, attitudes and behaviors on a moment-by-moment basis. It’s between here and there i.e. where we are now, which is our belief in loss and therefore adversity, and our ability to respond “from” truly knowing we have nothing to lose, that we can work on our resilience, on our ability to bounce back. Perhaps the middle path is the “philosophical” path as opposed to the “realized” path. The philosophical response to adversity sounds more like, “Ah well stuff happens...it’s not the end of the world...life goes on so let’s move on...you can’t change what’s already happened”.

Whatever approach we do take however, one thing is for sure, the suffering that comes when we believe in adversity is a messenger. And the message is simple. There is something we need to change within our own consciousness, there is something that needs to shift at the level of the beliefs and perceptions that we are creating and sustaining. Why, because adversity originates as a belief arises as a perception and emerges through our attitudes and behaviors. Which is why one person’s adversity is another’s celebration. Being free of adversity is to be free of any cause to mourn or to celebrate. And while some may say that that is not living, others may contend that that is only when life and living can truly begin. For them living life fully, free of suffering which means free of adversity, is in itself the only true celebration.

And yet, only by “seeing” this for our self can we “know” the truth for our self.

May you “see”...for your self!

Question: What was the most recent adversity in your life in which you were personally affected?

Reflection: Which of the above beliefs within your consciousness shaped your perception of adversity – loss, not getting what you want, life is seriously serious!

Action: How would you, could you, respond differently next time if something similar happened?

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About the author

Mike George writes a column in The New Era Times called Clear Thinking. Mike George has The Relaxation Centre at <http://www.relax7.com/>, a place for insight, wisdom and practical methods to relax your mental, emotional and spiritual energies.

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Please take whatever you find useful there and use in your own unique way because, like happiness, relaxation is an inside job!

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15 You Need More Stress

by Thomas Cox

The latest brain science makes it clear – you need more stress. The good kind, not the bad kind.

Sadly, most people seem to make one of two mistakes. Either they embrace the worst sort of toxic stress – dramatically reducing their work effectiveness and that of their people...or they mistakenly treat all stress as bad – denying themselves the growth and rewards of good stress.

CEOs fail here all the time.

Mr. Stephenson is the CEO of a multi-state firm in the construction industry. He doesn't believe in rating each project by its profitability. His story is that keeping score like that could be a source of comparisons, jealousies, or ill feeling. Or too detailed reporting might be used by some of the mathematically gifted staff to figure out everyone's salary, which could lead to bad feelings.



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...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"

Jane, Chinese architect

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Unfortunately, the downside of this behavior – not rating projects by their profitability – is worse: last year the firm made very weak profits, and by early this year they had to lay off staff just as the rest of the industry is beginning to recover and build momentum. The firm's sales force are compensated for revenue, not profitability, so they continue to bring in unprofitable projects to this day – and are praised for doing so.

Stephenson thought morale might be harmed by internal competition around being more profitable. His people are living through the even worse morale of losing money and now layoffs. (And with the recovery starting and competitors hiring, his best people will be the first to leave.)

What this CEO got wrong is to mistakenly think all stress is bad. It's not. Keeping score in an honest game is a source of good stress – it brings out our competitive drives. When you keep score in a positive environment, where a lower score is not a reason to tear somebody down, instead it's a spur to encourage them to greatness, the very fact of score-keeping drives up positive behaviors, and adds spice to our victories.

The CEOs and managers who are reluctant to demand top performance (the “Relaters” as described in Pete Friedes' book “The 2R Manager: When to Relate, When to Require, and How to Do Both Effectively”) usually do so because they value relationships very highly, and fear harming those relationships. What Relaters don't realize, Friedes points out, is that you'll have a better relationship with your staff member if you push them to grow and help them achieve. We most love those bosses who both kept us safe and helped us grow – and Relaters are too focused on safety to allow growth.

Paradoxically, these same Relaters seem frequently to experience absurdly high levels of personal stress, as they try to make up for the non-performance of their staff. For Stephenson, it is a lot more stressful running a loss-making business with layoffs, than running a profitable and growing business that keeps score. By attempting to reduce all stress, such people increase the worst kind.

Good stress is what you feel when you grapple with a problem. Even being stuck on a problem for a little while is okay, provided you handle it with brainstorming or playfully devising alternatives.

You can turn bad stress into good stress by maximizing the feeling of choice (i.e. by asking, or by noticing that you have a choice – using words like “can” and “could” and avoiding words like “need,” “should” and “have to”), by trading off one task for another (rather than just piling the new one on top), and by including at least a little preparation time.

Our example CEO, Stephenson, would be well served to try a new tack: start scoring every project on its profitability, with just a rough score – perhaps “A” for 20+% profit down to “D” for 0–5% profit, and “F” for money-losers. Combine the new scoring system with an environment where low scores are just invitations to learn. Let the project managers create the details of the scoring system themselves – maximizing their feelings of choice, while giving them trade-offs and preparation time – so they feel positive stress even as they are creating the new system.

What if you're stuck with a big load of your own toxic stress? Dr. Edward Hallowell in his book “Shine: Using Brain Science to Get the Best from Your People” suggests several techniques to turn bad stress around, including

- a 3-minute burst of exercise, like running up and down stairs
- asking a colleague for help brainstorming a new solution
- reading a joke book for 5 minutes (laughter is an anti-toxin)
- looking at pictures of people, places and animals that you love

These will “reset” your brain and allow you to tackle the problem anew.

About the author

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16 Where Do YOU Get the Power to Change? by Mike George

You're sitting in your car at the lights. Just as they turn to green someone cuts in front of you and speeds off into the distance. You are furious! What an arrogance! What an idiot...you think! You're so mad you stop fifty yards ahead to cool down. A moment later someone drives up beside you and tells you that the person that cut you up at the lights had just heard their mother was taken critically ill to hospital. In one second your anger subsides. It collapses into understanding and compassion. In effect you become peaceful and you send loving thoughts of hope to that person. One little piece of information was enough for you to change your mindset and your feelings.

You could say that this is the "power of information" but it's not. It's the power of belief. And who decided to believe?

In such situations some people believe instantly the information that they receive. And they use it to change their perception and therefore their reaction. Other people, down the more cynical end of the spectrum, have the habit of not believing anything they are told. They have probably been frequently misled many times in the past. They don't easily "trust" what others say. Perhaps the majority of us sit somewhere in the middle of such a spectrum, sometimes believing blindly and sometimes being incredulously disbelieving. But most of the time not quite sure which way to swing.

The Roots of Stress

We do seem to live in a world where more people are prepared to tell lies and mislead others in order to serve their agenda. It's a world in which creating successful strategies of misinformation is even celebrated. So how are we to sort the truth from fiction? How are we to disentangle half-truths based on others agendas and discern the accuracy of what we are told? In the above example how do we "know for sure" that there is a critically ill mum in a hospital somewhere? There is only one way and it's called "validation". The only way to truly know is to go to the hospital and see for our self. Only then does the need to believe or not believe become redundant. Now we "know" for sure.

The capacity to turn information into the power of belief and use it to change some of our thinking and perhaps some of our behaviors is something we can all do. But it can't free us from our all our stress i.e. all our mental suffering or our emotional pain. The roots are too deep and cannot be reached by information and beliefs. The seeds and roots of our stress can be found at the spiritual level deep within our being. Information and beliefs can point to the heart of our being but they cannot go there. Information and beliefs can "signpost" what lies behind our mental and emotional states but only the immediate "inspiration" of being there, can give us the power to deeply change the thought and feeling patterns that are causing our stress. Understanding why this is so also reveals why so few people seem to successfully and lastingly change the way they think, feel and act. Here is why.

Seeking Relief

After awakening in the morning most of us get up, look in the mirror, and believe that we are what we see. As we go through the day we will create stress in various emotional forms swinging between anxiety (fear) and frustration (anger) to moments of sorrow (sadness) mostly based on the belief that we are just a physical form in a physical world with no control over anything more than three feet away! We also carry the other learned beliefs that the stress is a) normal b) caused by someone else. We will look out into the world around us and see it as both a competitive and perhaps dangerous place, because that is also what many of us have been taught to believe.



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At some stage in our life we will seek some kind of relief from our physical, mental and emotional stress/suffering. As we hunt for that relief, often with the hope of finding the ultimate solutions, we will encounter a thousand methods, techniques, approaches, philosophies not to mention saviors, all offering and many promising to...fix us! We are likely to encounter what some may call the “spiritual approach”. If we do we will probably receive the following information. “They” will likely say that “in truth” you are not a mortal and finite physical form in a process of continuous decay (as seen on Channel Mirror in the morning!) but a spiritual entity that is immortal, infinite and ageless. They will say they are only reminding us that our true nature is peaceful, loving and joyfully contented and not grumpy, prone to worry or depressed. And they will probably explain that the world is essentially a benevolent space in which all life forms exist in harmonious co-operation with each other; it’s just that some species have forgotten how, including the majority of the human species!

It’s the kind of basic “spiritual information” that sounds both simple and true. You could argue with it but who would want to? Probably only those who are perhaps a little addicted to their stress/suffering. However, even when we believe it, it doesn’t change us. It doesn’t change our day-to-day state of being, our patterns of thought, our habits of behavior, our habits of “stress creation”, which have all been laid down over many years.

No matter how much we “believe” that it’s all true it doesn’t give us the power to free our self from our daily worries and our existential angst. Well maybe there is a slight lessening of the degrees or depth of our stress/suffering as the balm of such ideas provides a kind of consolatory comfort that all is really well within both our inner and outer worlds. But it’s only as good as an ointment for a rash. It only covers the surface and provides a little temporary relief.

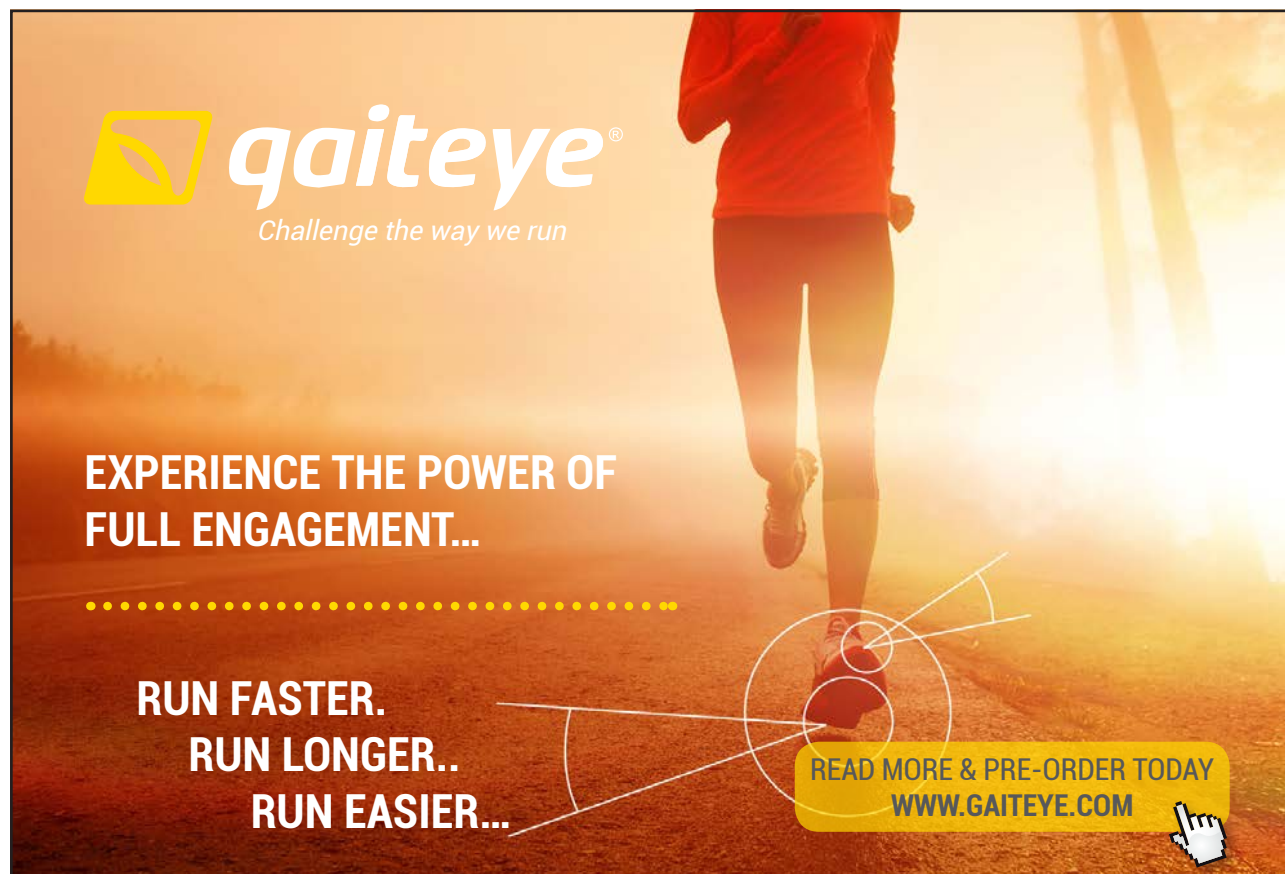
Belief is Not Enough

We may also recognize that such insights are also not new or exclusive to any particular school of thought, religious philosophy or spiritual understanding. They’ve been around for donkey’s years and they’ve been translated into hundreds of languages in a thousand ways. But still the stress levels rise, the suffering continues, the conflicts deepen, the angst expands. Why? The lack of “validation”. Very few people will give both the time and attention to validating such insights regardless of how right or true they may sound. Regardless of how much even our intuition resonates with the “information” about who and what we really are, regardless of how much we may “believe”, it doesn’t give us the power to perceive, think and behave so that we no longer create our own mental and emotional stress/suffering. The belief that other people and situations are responsible for our stress is so deeply rooted it takes more than just another belief to overcome it. Belief is not enough. Validation means we have to see and know for our self. Just as we may actually go to the hospital see and know the mother is there and is critically ill we need to go to the heart our being to see and know who and what we are and how we work from inside out. Only then can we “know” our self as a spiritual entity, only then can we “know” if our nature really is peaceful and loving. And only then can we see if life really is always a bowl of cherries, sweet and filled with goodness, despite what others may be doing around us “out there”.

So how do we validate the information that points at “the spiritual”, how do we validate what we and many others “believe” to be true? Only by entering “spiritual” territory, which isn’t a place but a state of being. In such a territory or state there are no words, no ideas, no memories. There are no longer any concepts of self or the world. There no attachments or beliefs and definitely no attachments to beliefs. These are all the stuff of the mental territory or our mental states.

Journey to the Centre

Validation of self as a spiritual being and the validation of the true nature of our being requires us to leave both physical and mental states of consciousness behind for a few moments at least. And yet our primary habits of attachment and identification are with the mental and the physical. So just as a vehicle can propel us to the hospital to see for our self, what can propel our consciousness out of physical and mental awareness and into a spiritual state of awareness? Enter the vehicle know as meditation, the vintage car of all spiritual awakening. Meditation is the ability to move through and beyond lower states of conscious awareness and into the highest or deepest state of awareness. Most meditation teachers and practitioners will affirm that the practice itself takes us beyond the awareness of time and change (i.e. awareness of the physical and the mental) and into the timeless and thoughtless dimension of being... just being. Only there can we be aware of and know our true self, for our self...so to speak!



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That's probably why the "spiritual elders", the sages and saints, and the ones who have created a legacy of spiritual wisdom down through the ages both practiced and taught some form of meditation. They knew that only in a meditative state can we "see through" all the learned identities based on a) physical images (form/shape/appearance/fashion etc.) and b) mental ideas (profession/nationality/personal history etc.) and reveal our true authentic self based on "no thing" i.e. no image and no idea. They knew that once memories were silent and the mind was still the "self" was found to be beyond i.e. prior to, any awareness of the physical and mental dimensions of change. In such a state time collapses into the moment called "now" where there is no "then". The ultimate peace of this state of being is then known to be the power of our life itself. From the power of that state of being comes the capacity to "consciously create" all that follows i.e. our thoughts, feelings actions etc. Instead of reacting emotionally to the world around us it's that "inner power" of being that restores our ability to respond with calm consideration and focused determination.

"They" also returned from this "validatory" journey in their meditative vehicle to tell us of the deep spiritual insights into the nature of the self and the world that awaits us all. Including the realization that life itself, despite all its varied textures and turmoils, is just a game, an amazing playful game, happening through us and around us, in which we all have the opportunity to create our own life and play any role that we choose. And that when we "live out" that awareness, as we bring that awareness through our mind and through our behaviors into the world around us, then the world itself, which is itself just a dance of many energies, will rush to line up with us and serve the energy of our being.

Rumi captured both the idea and necessity to go beyond the physical and the mental in order to "be in" and validate our own truth, our own spiritual power, when he said:

Out beyond ideas of wrong doing and right doing there is a field. I'll meet you there. – Rumi

He was reminding us that "prior to" our mental and physical awareness, prior to our intellectual judgments and evaluations, there is a state of being that restores our awareness of the truth and power of our life. But that truth cannot be known, its power cannot change the way we live our life, until we go there and "validate" its reality for our self. Only then can we know the peace that "I am/you are", only then can we know that love is what "I am/you are", only then can we know pure joy is what "I am/you are". Such validation changes...everything!

Some prefer not to attempt to see if they can validate such "spiritual insights/possibilities" about the self. Perhaps because of the fear of change, perhaps because of doubt. They prefer to live in the world of beliefs. They prefer a belief based faith, never quite knowing if what they believe is actually true, never quite knowing why they still feel occasionally peaceless, sometimes a little loveless and the odd moments of joylessness. That too, like everything else, is as it is meant to be...they said!

Question: Why do we find it so hard to take time out for our self to explore beyond the "known" territories of mind and body and into the unknown territory of our own spiritual being?

Reflection: Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. – Rumi

Action: Learn, experiment with and integrate some meditative practice in to your days over the next couple of weeks.

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About the author

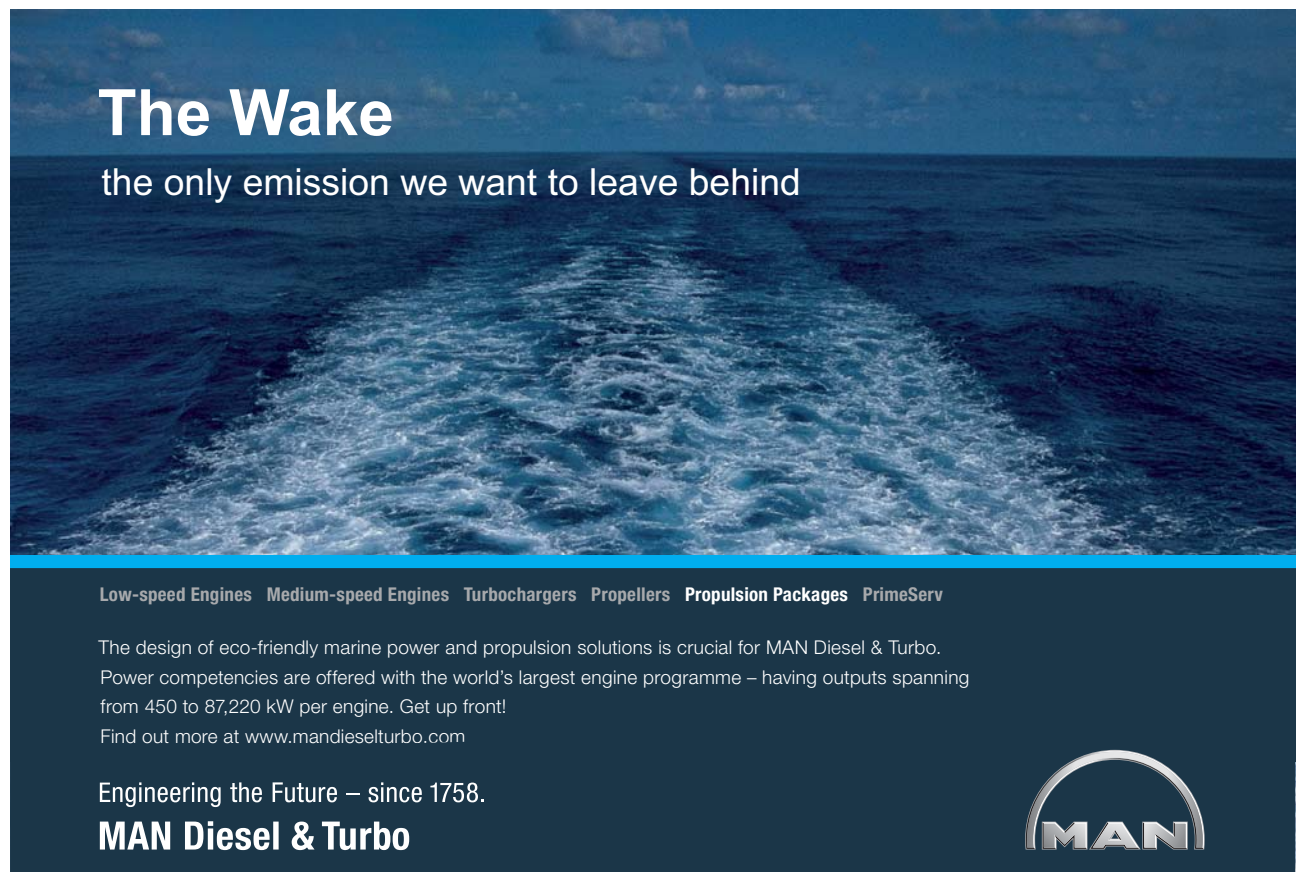
Mike George writes a column in The New Era Times called Clear Thinking. Mike George has The Relaxation Centre at <http://www.relax7.com/>, a place for insight, wisdom and practical methods to relax your mental, emotional and spiritual energies.

Reprint information

Please take whatever you find useful there and use in your own unique way because, like happiness, relaxation is an inside job!

Article source

<http://www.tnetimes.com/article/365-where-do-you-get-power-change-mike-george-stress-relief/>




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17 What Is It Costing Me?

by Kevin Stacey

As a society, we seem to be “easily bothered.” Many of us are “chronically bothered” by things that are simply counter-productive for us to be focusing on. Asking yourself “what is it costing me?” is a powerful question because it gives you the wisdom to understand, on a deep level, that “it’s just not worth it.”

Most people who haven’t yet come to the conclusion that “it’s just not worth it” simply haven’t done a cost/benefit analysis of the way they’re feeling towards a particular situation. You have the right to feel any way you want to feel, but a better question is: “Is this how I’d like to feel? Or, “Is this working for me?” If you actually write out a 2 column list with one heading being the advantages of being upset and bothered by person or situation X, and the other heading being the disadvantages or the costs of being upset or bothered by situation X, it will be eye-opening for you. You’ll then be motivated to not only stop expending your limited energy on the situation, but to take responsibility for it.

The above link gives you the how, but before you get to the how, many need the why. So, what could it be costing you?

For starters, there is a medically proven mind, body, spirit connection, and every thought that we have has a physical reaction in our body. Health researchers say that simply recalling one 5-minute episode of anger suppresses our immune system for up to seven hours. That’s pretty interesting considering how many times the average person gets upset in a typical day. If you have something that’s bothering you that’s not resolved, your body is essentially reliving that experience every time you think about it. Your body doesn’t know the difference if it’s actually happening now in this moment or if it happened 10 years ago. There are several emotions that contribute to producing disease in human beings. Anger, frustration, rage, hatred, fear, anxiety, being chronically, bothered, etc. Needless to say, it’s not good for us physically.

When we start to view our problems this way it lowers our tolerance for them and causes us to refuse to immerse ourselves in harmful reactions. It makes us say to ourselves, “I’m just not going to participate in this any more, because when I do, it only harms me.”

Other ways to think about this:

“What does it cost me when I let this get to me?”

“What does it cost me when I take work home with me?”

“What does it cost me when I don’t sleep as much as I need to?”

“What does it cost me when I am physically with my loved ones,
but mentally I’m somewhere else, at work perhaps?”

“What is this costing me physically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually?”

“What is this costing my relationships?”

This is a subtle shift, but an important one. We need to be reminded over and over again that it’s always a choice, and for many of the situations that chronically bother us there are no victims, only volunteers.

Just about everybody at some time in his or her life comes to the conclusion that “it’s just not worth it.” Unfortunately, some people come to this conclusion too late, or not as soon as they would of liked to. I hope that you’re able to use this perspective shift to speed up the process and not have to wait for a “sudden wake up call” to enter to your life.

About the Author

Kevin Stacey helps companies and professionals achieve maximum productivity and effectiveness through stress management and time management training. He is available to speak on these topics. For more information visit <http://www.TrainRightInc.com> or call 1-800-603-7168.

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Article source

http://www.time-stressmanagement-training.com/what_is_it_costing_me.html

18 Living Like a Turtle by Steve Goodier

A high-powered corporate executive came into a doctor's office for a checkup. He showed signs of overwork and stress. The doc warned him to slow down, to take up a hobby – perhaps painting – to relax. He agreed and started right away.

The next day the high-achieving businessman phoned and announced enthusiastically, “Doc, this painting is wonderful. I’ve already done ten!”

We don’t need to be CEO’s or high achievers to suffer from too much negative stress. It’s easy to feel overwhelmed. In fact, you may be wondering this very minute whether you have time to read this page.

When I feel all-too-busy, I sometimes envy the turtle. The turtle lives as if time is no obstacle; a turtle seems to have all the time in the world and then some.

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I think we have something to learn from turtles. Point in fact: turtles live an exceptionally long life. Humorist E.B. White tells us that scientists are searching their blood for some clues to their longevity. He speculates that perhaps the turtles' blood vessels stay in such nice shape because of the way they conduct their lives. They rarely miss an opportunity to swim and relax in the sun. No two turtles ever lunched together with the idea of promoting something.

I think he is right about this. Turtles do not attend meetings and conferences. No turtle ever texted while driving, tweeted while eating or complained about too much email. They never use words and phrases like "implementation," "multi-tasking," or "thinking out of the box."

Some days the life of a turtle sounds just about right. Non-anxious and calm.

But in truth I suspect that merely slowing down is not a very satisfying answer. What I need has less to do with my pace of life than my peace of life. At any speed, I crave a deep and lasting inner peace. And if it's solace I'm after, I don't need to pace myself like a turtle, change jobs or set up house on a quiet island. It is usually frenetic living, not high energy, that robs my peace of mind.

I actually feel my best when I am energized and enthusiastic about the next thing ahead. I feel fully alive when I am busy, sometimes even too busy, doing what I love the most. It's not about slowing down or living like a turtle – it's about enjoying my life and finding meaning in it.

I believe we can stay active and engaged and still come from a deep and peaceful place within. We can live in the excitement of the moment without undue stress about the future. And at any pace of life, we can come from the calmness of love rather than anxiety and fear.

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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19 So What Can We Do About Stress? by Michael Beck

In my workshops, I'll ask participants for examples of stress-causing situations or events. They're always eager to offer real-life examples of stressful events. (Some examples may have already popped into your head as you read this.) But the reality is that there are no stressful situations! It's how we react to events and circumstances that cause us stress. I guarantee that I can find someone who will not be stressed out by a situation that causes you to feel stress. This is an important point...

It's not what happens to you that creates stress, it's how you react to what happens to you that causes stress. It only stands to reason then, that we have the ability to reduce or eliminate our feelings of stress. They're not a "given". You're not obligated to feel stress, even if everyone around you feels stress. You are free to choose to experience your circumstances in any way you want. The question then, is how to affect how we experience the events in our life.

Here is a list of things that can help change the way you are able to deal with the challenges in your life and to minimize or eliminate the feelings of stress.

1. Exercise
2. Meditation
3. Diet & Nutrition
4. Sleep
5. Perspective
6. Attitude
7. Play

1. Exercise: OK, OK, we've all heard about the benefits of exercise, but not always as it relates to the feelings of stress. When we work our muscles and our heart, we release the tensions held in our bodies. When we store tension, it causes fatigue, headaches, pains, and makes it hard to concentrate.
2. Meditation: Meditating allows us to gain intuitive insights and helps us gain new perspectives. Meditation does not have to mean sitting quietly and chanting (unless you want to). Meditation is about quieting the mind and eliminating the "chatter" we have running in our heads. There are a number of ways to accomplish this. It can be through classic seated meditation or through active methods. One of the classic forms of meditation is archery! For you, it may mean walking in nature, immersing yourself in a hobby, quietly listening to classical or new age music, or meditating in some other way that works for you – your own approach to meditating.

3. Diet & Nutrition: When our energy is low, our patience and our creativity drop, and our stress level rises. When nutrition is lacking, it affects our blood sugar level, which in turn, causes us to deprive our brain and our muscles of necessary energy. Eating balanced meals (protein, carbohydrates & fats) maximizes energy levels and therefore productivity. Cut out fast foods and junk foods, and don't skip meals. Additionally, since the nutrient value of the foods we eat is nowhere near what it used to be years ago (that's a whole other discussion...), it's important to take a high-quality vitamin-mineral supplement or eat SuperFoods. Think of it as Health Insurance instead of needing Health Insurance!
4. Sleep: Besides the obvious requirement for sleep in order to have a good energy level, I've noticed that when I don't get enough sleep over a few nights, my outlook on the future and on the possibilities for success drop noticeably, which causes the feelings of stress to rise. I have found this to be true with other people as well and maybe you're one of them. Getting sufficient sleep is critical for high productivity, high energy, positive attitude, and high creativity.
5. Perspective: A smart way to manage your level of stress is to keep those stress-causing events in perspective. Very few incidents put our life or our health in jeopardy. Give yourself credit for having the ability to figure out a solution if things don't go as planned and let your feelings of stress drop. And by the way...learn from your mistakes.



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6. Attitude: A major factor in determining the level of stress we feel from a situation depends on one's attitude. We live in a world where we're literally bombarded by messages day and night. Unfortunately many, if not most, of those messages are negative. Therefore, in order to protect our attitude we need to regulate what we see and hear as much as possible. First off, cut out the negatives. Stop watching and listening to the news, stop reading the newspaper cover to cover, and avoid negative people who are pessimistic or who belittle your goals, dreams, or abilities. Then, add positives. Read personal growth books – books that help you adopt new success attitudes and habits, or books about people you admire. Listen to tapes or CD's which do the same. (Two of my favorite sources for these programs are: www.nightingale.com and www.success.com) Protecting your attitude is one of the best things you can do to lower stress and ensure your success.
7. Play: Sometimes the best way to break out of the cycle of stress is to stop working and start playing. Take a break and do something fun. (Don't confuse "fun" with "pleasurable". They're not always the same. Make sure that what you do isn't self-destructive.) Whether it's a hobby, a sport, a get-away, or a simple diversion, taking a break and taking your mind off your circumstances can really help you get things under control.

Working to effectively minimize or even eliminate stress will have a significant impact not only on your health, but on your creativity, energy levels, people skills and relationships. The most productive people I know have learned to deal with events in their lives in such a way as not to feel much stress. It's not that they are indifferent, thick-skinned, or robots. Instead, they've developed "rituals" to deal with situations that might cause others to feel stress. They carefully guard their attitude and their energy levels, along with having a clear sense of priorities.

If you want to be at the top of your game, spend the time to determine which "rituals" help you to alleviate stressful feelings and be committed to taking care of yourself. I have a Zen Buddhist saying on the wall of my office which says, "Live half for yourself, and half for others." It's a good philosophy to live by.

About the author

Michael Beck, Executive Strategist, is president of Michael Beck International, Inc. – a firm specializing in executive development, leadership effectiveness, and executive strategy. Connect on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/mjbeck and visit www.michaeljbeck.com to learn more. Permission to reprint with full attribution. © 2012 Michael Beck International, Inc.

Article source

<http://www.evancarmichael.com/Leadership/2036/So-what-can-we-do-about-Stress.html>

20 Letting Your Soul Catch Up by Steve Goodier

Did you know that practicing some form of relaxation is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself? Taking time each day to quiet your mind and breathe deeply, can make a big difference in how you feel throughout your day and into the night. And dedicating a day every week for mental and spiritual renewal is equally important.

We're told that the word "relax" has its origin in the Latin word "relaxare," which means "to loosen." When we relax, we are in effect loosening tension, releasing tightly held energy and letting go. From the state of relaxation we can experience calm peacefulness.

Another great word is the Hebrew word "Shabbat" which, of course, is a day of rest. But it quite literally means to "quit; stop; take a break." Whatever you are doing, stop it. Whatever you are saying, be quiet. Sit down and take a look around. Don't do anything. Don't say anything. Fold your hands. Take a deep breath....

Extended periods of rest are a biological necessity. The human body is like an old-fashioned wind-up clock. If it is not rewound by rest, ultimately it will run itself down.

A group of Americans made a trip with Brazilian natives down the Amazon River. The first day they rushed. The second day they rushed. The next day they rushed. One day, anxious to continue the trek, they were surprised to find the natives seated together in a circle.

When asked the reason for the delay, a guide answered, "They are waiting. They cannot move further until their souls have caught up with their bodies."

Do you owe yourself time to let your soul catch up with your body?

About the author

Steve Goodier holds a B.A. in anthropology and sociology (New Mexico State University) and an M.Div. degree from Emory University. He is an ordained United Methodist minister, district superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference UMC, and the author of numerous books about personal development, motivation, inspiration, and making needed life changes.

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21 Are You Worried? 4 Steps to Peace of Mind by Judy Ringer

My friend Tom has this quotation on his office wall: “I know worry works because nothing I worry about ever happens.”

I think I must believe that, because I worry a lot – and about the most insignificant things. I worry about the big things, of course, like health, relationships, and finances. But I’m also liable to fret about anything and everything that finds its way into my consciousness.

Because I spend so much time on worry, I’ve decided to embrace it with a personal research project. Maybe you’d like to join me.

Here are some avenues I’m exploring:

1. I practice catching myself at it. “Hey, I’m worrying again.” During a recent morning swim, I caught myself worrying 10 times during one lap! I’m not kidding. On rare days when I don’t have anything to worry about, I find something. What I’ve learned is that worry is a mental habit. I can change habits; I’ve done it before. There’s hope.
2. My second approach is to practice presence. By this I mean stopping my thoughts. In my workshops, I ring a bell to help participants practice centering. The quieter we are, the longer we hear the bell. There’s a lovely moment when we all listen...until the ring is barely audible... then just a memory. I relish that moment of quiet before my thoughts re-engage. There is no future or past, just Now. No worrying thoughts – no thoughts at all. It’s a peaceful place, which is why I stretch the moment. I want to strengthen the connection to something greater than my worries.
3. When I told my friend Rosie about my worry project, she told me about her approach, which is to do one of three things:

decide to address the issue right then;
if you can’t do anything about it right then, make an appointment with yourself to address it later;
decide that it is not important and let it go.

In other words, act on it, file it or throw it away.

4. Finally, one of Rosie’s favorite worry stoppers (and mine) is to sing. Connect with your joy, your creativity, and the place where everything really is okay.

Awareness and acknowledgment are the keys to changing our habits.

Perhaps my research project on worry will help me to lighten up, smile, and live each day with joy, creativity, and gratitude.

Are you worrying? Stop your thoughts for a moment. Listen to the sounds around you, pay attention, and be present to this ki moment. And smile...for no reason. You may find that's the best reason of all.

About the author

Judy Ringer is the author of *Unlikely Teachers: Finding the Hidden Gifts in Daily Conflict* <http://www.unlikelyteachersbook.com> and the award-winning e-zine, *Ki Moments*, containing stories and practices on turning life's challenges into life teachers. Judy is a black belt in aikido and a nationally-known presenter, specializing in unique workshops on conflict, communication, and creating a positive work environment. She is the founder of Power & Presence Training and chief instructor of Portsmouth Aikido, Portsmouth, NH, USA. Visit <http://www.JudyRinger.com>

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22 Frustration by Kevin Stacey

“Life is not the way it’s supposed to be, it is the way it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference.” -Virginia Satir

Virginia Satir reminds us that there are always two things in life: the way you think it ought to be, and the way that it is. Frustration is what happens when there is an incongruence between our expectations and reality.

The biggest thing we do to perpetuate our own frustration is fight the current reality and insist that things should be different from the way they are right now. You’ll notice you’re doing this when you find yourself saying the words, “I can’t believe,” as in, “I can’t believe this, I can’t believe this place, I can’t believe him, I can’t believe her. This is just unbelievable!” This mindset keeps regurgitating the same junk over and over again in your head and keeps you stuck in the problem rather than focused on the solution.

What can you do?

- Face the situation head on and call it what it is. Realize that what you resist persists. When you deny it or fight it you’re not taking responsibility for it. If you can’t give yourself a reality check, ask a trusted friend. Yes, life can be difficult and things happen to us. Remind yourself that the most important thing is how you respond to life’s events and that you are always 100% responsible for and totally in control of your response.
- Ask yourself, “Is there anything I can do about this?” If the answer is no, then why get all frustrated over it? What does it cost you when you allow it to frustrate you?
- If the answer is yes, then why get all frustrated over it? Why not just do something and ask yourself, “What is the next BEST thing that I can do?” There is almost always something that you can do to make the situation better or to help yourself cope. This could include:
 - Writing things out. Writing helps you to organize your thoughts and gain clarity either on what action needs to be taken or what you need to stop doing that is making it worse.
 - Making a phone call to vent, ask for advice, seek help or just to be heard.
 - Writing someone a letter that you either intend or don’t intend to send.
 - Exercising or doing something physical to release tension from your body. Many times, hitting a punching bag for a few minutes has helped me move past my frustration.

Frustration is an epidemic. As a society, we seem to be easily bothered. However, we don't know when our last day on this journey we call life is going to be. Think about it. What percentage of people do you think, on the morning of their last day of their life, know it's going to be their last day? So, is it really worth it? Perhaps the best antidote for frustration is one of my favorite sayings, "I finally got a grip when I learned to let go."

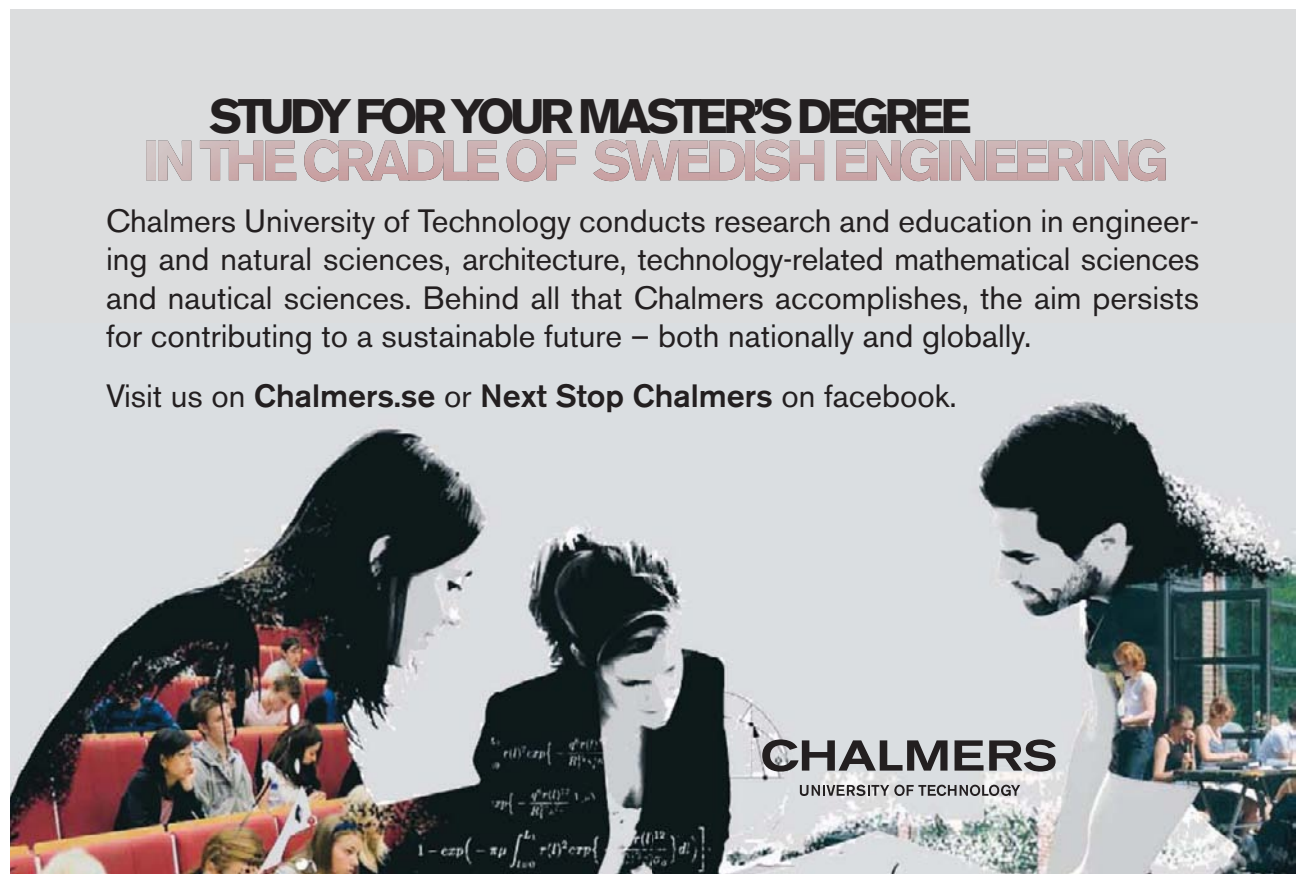
About the Author

Kevin Stacey helps companies and professionals achieve maximum productivity and effectiveness through stress management and time management training. He is available to speak on these topics. For more information visit <http://www.TrainRightInc.com> or call 1-800-603-7168.

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23 How to Manage Stress in Relationship Communication: Keep Calm with Scientific Stress Management by Joshua Uebergang

Not enough time to exercise, boss pushing for work to be completed, children are loud, bills to pay, shopping to be done, housework to do, partner asking for your help. To top it all off you're suppose to be nice to people by communicating effectively with them in a confrontation? Yeah right!

Why Stress Makes Communication Difficult

You find it hard to communicate in stressful moments. So do I. There's a reason why it is hard to listen and not yell in tough situations that all relationships face. Science proves it is near impossible for you to communicate well when under stress.

The body experiences a primal response that agitates people in conflict. A stressed guy will tense his face, breathe shallowly, raise his voice, respond faster, and not think clearly. If you controlled these body responses, you would not be stressed. Not only does tension hurt your communication, it creates a viral effect. Your stress infects those around you.

Conflict is probably synonymous for you with stress. To be in conflict with someone is to be stressed. For me, I must have my mental and physical tension under control so I can communicate effectively to improve my relationships. If I do not manage my stress, it inevitably gets the better of me, as it will to you.

Stress makes us mentally ill. A psychiatrist could diagnose you with depression, mania, psychosis, bipolar disorder, or another mental illness when you are stressed. The difference between you and someone diagnosed with one of these mental health problems is the time you and they spend in those states. A person diagnosed with depression feels down for most of the day while you may temporarily be depressed only when you are under loads of stress. No wonder it's difficult to communicate well when stressed.

Fight, Flight, or Freeze Responses in Conversation

Stress in conflict evokes the fight, flight, or freeze responses. An argument, disagreement, or confrontation elevates tension as you yell, withdraw, stand confused. You do things you later regret.

Aggressive behavior towards another person temporarily feels okay, but then reality kicks in as you feel even more stressed from hurting the person. When you try your best to hide tension, your suppressed emotions eat at you to later hurt your relationships.

A psychiatrist could diagnose you with a series of mental illness when stressed. No wonder it's difficult to communicate well when stressed.

When under stress, your communication style will change in response to the situation. You can go from a cool, collected person one moment, yet when a stressful situation impinges your tolerable threshold your calm style can quickly shift to aggressive or submissive behaviors. The behavior you fall back on in stressful situations is the one you found comfortable in the past that offered momentary protection.

When someone surpasses their tolerable degree of tension, telling them to get their act together or to communicate better, does not work. It won't work for you either. It's human extinct to block external factors, such as other people's feelings, and listen to internal ones as your interpersonal communication skills decline. Better communication in intense conflict is a matter of managing stress otherwise it is next to impossible to deal with conflict.

“What Did I Say?” – Memory Loss and Other Dangers of Stress

Stress motivates us to take action, but it too often works against us. We yell, withdraw, or shut-down in tense communication. Our bodies produce cortisol, known as the “stress hormone”, to compel us into action. Without this double-edged hormone, we would accomplish little. If you are completely relaxed in conflict and untrained in good communication skills, you could overlook the problematic issue or give an unsympathetic response.

Signs of Stress

- Irritability
- Depression
- Poor judgment
- Frequent worrying
- Exhaustion
- Ineffectiveness
- Aches and pains
- Inconsistent eating or sleeping

Research has shown cortisol to improve cognitive functioning. Too much cortisol, however, causes impairment. If you have ever forgotten what you said in a verbal fight, cortisol has literally shut off short-term memory. Cortisol obtrudes neurotransmitters that are chemicals responsible for communication between neurons and other cells. That is why you can memorize a speech 50 times and forget it when you present it. A stressful crisis temporarily results in a blank mind.

Stanford neuroscience professor Robert Sapolsky found that cortisol also causes long-term memory loss. When the receptors for cortisol located in the hippocampus (the part of the brain responsible for long-term memory) gets flooded overtime, it melts like microwaved Swiss cheese.

The affects of stress are too numerous to list here. From rapid aging of the body and heart disease, to poor sleep and skin conditions, the effects are real. You need techniques to manage your stress; not just for your communication, but also for your health.

Stress Reduction Tips: 9 Key Lessons for Intelligent Stress Management

We need to attack stress deep within our neurology where it originates. Thinking positively or talking yourself through stress isn't going to reduce tension. I have developed nine effective ways and techniques to manage stress you can use to keep calm in stressful moments so you can communicate better and live a happier life:

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1. Prevention is the best cure. The best technique to deal with stress is to stop it before it begins. Create the appropriate measures, boundaries, and strategies to interrupt rising tensions. If the tension between two people rises beyond a safe level, one strategy is to pause, walk away, punch a pillow, and take slow deep breathes before commencing the conversation. You can incorporate other stress management techniques listed below into your plan to be more calm in conflict.
2. Accept your feelings. Never tell yourself you shouldn't feel what you do. Do not say, "I shouldn't be feeling stressed right now." You must accept your feelings otherwise they will persist or repress into forms that severely affect your mental health and ability to effectively communicate. When you accept your stress, you move forward to taking personal responsibility.
3. Accept responsibility for how you feel. It is tempting and easy to release stress on other people. Do not treat people inappropriately. If you treat people in a way they don't want to be treated, you make them tense, which they will be happy to put back on you.

Blame makes you more stressed because anxiety is related to events within your control. What is beyond your reach makes you anxious. If you blame your shouting spouse for making you angry, your anxiety and stress will remain because you have little influence over your spouse's voice.

When you accept responsibility, you eliminate blame. You live in truth. You do not become a victim of others. You take control of your feelings. Your new levels of responsibility cause you to do something about how you feel.

If someone causes you stress, address the person about the problem. Explain to them how you feel, why you feel that way, and what can be done to fix the problem. Be problem-oriented; not person-oriented.

4. Breathe. When tension in your body rises, you automatically take shallow breathes. This is one of the first stages prior to full fight, flight, or freeze responses that hurt effective communication. When your stress levels rise, take several deep, slow breathes and you will instantly reduce your stress levels.

Accept stress. Never tell yourself you shouldn't feel what you do.

5. Take time out. A walk away is guaranteed to refresh your mind. Don't call for the travel agent to book a Caribbean cruise though, because a temporary break is all you need. Go for a walk or workout at the gym. Be active to release hormones that counter stress. Exercise is the body's emotional reset button.

Absence from the situation that created the tension takes your mind off the problem. It gives you clearer thoughts to attack the problem. Be sure to address the problem after your time out otherwise you will only temporarily avoid the real issue.

6. Be flexible. Stress is like the sunrise and sunset. It is inevitable. It is a part of your human body. Therefore, the best way to deal with it is to change your behavior and communication.

Be soft; not brittle. Recognize signals of stress by reading people's verbal and nonverbal language, then adjust yourself accordingly. Be flexible by going a bit out of your way for them to assist their temporary needs and wants. Don't run around the world for them, but do be more aware and respondent of them. This can lead you to less stress.

7. Discuss the problem afterwards. Combine this tip with the prior tip of remaining flexible and you have two keys to manage tense people. You need to address the problem following the stressful moment otherwise destructive, repetitious behavior occurs. Also, if there is someone you know that finds it difficult to manage their stress in communication, you can refer them to this article.

Chemical Stress

Eliminate these four common substances that stress the body to give your body the best chance of relaxation in difficult times:

Alcohol: In the short-term alcohol may relax; in the long-term, it can damage the body. Excessive amounts disrupt sleep.

Nicotine: Another temporary fix that causes long-term damage. Though a smoke may relax you, it raises your heart rate, creates shallow breathes, and causes additional harm that far outweighs its quick benefits.

Caffeine: Stay away from this stimulant. Substitute coffee for a drink containing less or zero caffeine like tea.

Sugar: Foods high in sugar spike glucose levels. Eat low GI foods like wholegrain breads instead of white bread.

8. Ask others about your responses in stressful moments. You are to do this because you cannot provide an accurate self-assessment when stressed. Your short-term memory loss makes it impossible to recall information.

Awareness of your behavior can trigger a pattern interrupt. If the person says you consistently yell when stressed, raising your voice can trigger self-awareness that your stress needs to reduce before the conversation continues.

9. Listen to binaural beats. Discovered by Heinrich Wilhelm Dove in 1839, binaural beats describes the low-frequency pulsations in the brain created by different frequencies played into each ear. The brain integrates the two sounds to form a third sound that relaxes the mind.

In terms of stress, binaural beats is a miracle. A correctly made binaural beat will scientifically make your brain produce alpha waves, which is the same brain wave you have when resting. That wonderful feeling you have when lying in bed almost asleep can be replicated by binaural beats. Imagine how better your life would be by simply putting on a headphone the next time you feel stressed as you enter a relaxed state at will!

If you are after binaural beats, Paul Kleinmeulman has a good program that includes a series of binaural beats for different purposes. You can check out his program [here](#), where you will learn more about the proven science behind binaural beats, which can make you motivated, sleep better, intensify your focus, learn efficiently, and keep relaxed.

Conflict does not need to be synonymous with stress. Neither has to make you miserable. Stress can be a good thing when managed with the above tips.

Your body experiences stress because it is threatened in conflict. Do something about it. You don't want to feel the same way in a fight as you do when watching the Simpsons. Harness this primal response and you will be communicating more effectively in your next confrontation.

About the author

Joshua Uebergang, known as the "Tower of Power", is a social skills coach, author, and owner of Australian company Tower of Power where shy guys discover how to win friends and influence people. Visit his blog and sign-up free to get conversation techniques, confidence-boosting strategies, and people-magnetic tips by email, along with blog updates, and more! Go now to TowerOfPower.com.au

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24 What's the Point? by Kevin Stacey

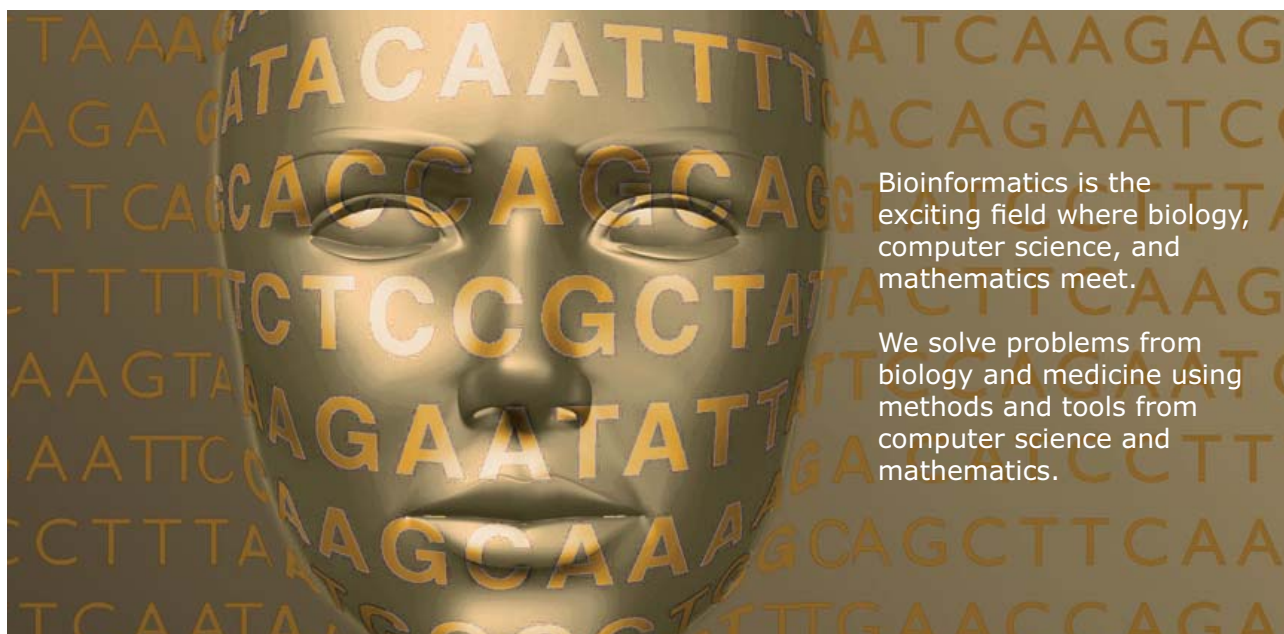
On a recent weekend I was making a list of all the projects that needed to be done to set up my new house. Add shelves in the garage. Paint the kitchen. Organize closets. It was endless. Feeling overwhelmed, I took a break and realized I was expending all of my energy on what I had to “do.” Do this. Do that. Do. Do. Do. And this was supposed to be my weekend?

Halfway through the list, I stopped myself. As I thought about what I was doing, I wondered how I would feel if the house was in perfect shape and everything was done. Would I relax at that point? Would I sit back and admire what had I done and feel a sense of satisfaction? Or would I just move onto the next project? Knowing myself well, I realized I would probably just move onto the next project, and I couldn't help but wonder, “What exactly is the point of all this?”

As I thought longer, it seemed to me the point wasn't to get to the end, but to enjoy the journey. We've all heard the expression, “Life is a journey, not a destination.” Yet, somehow, most of us live each day like we're driving to a destination at 100 mph and have to get there before the stroke of midnight. But where, exactly, are we trying to get?



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I am a strong believer in setting goals. I think goals give us focus, help us measure our progress and help us achieve success quicker than we could without goals. Where I have trouble at times is remembering that not everything has to be a goal. And making everything a goal can sometimes rob us of the joy of the process.

When you find yourself feeling overwhelmed with all you have to do, ask yourself, "What is the point?" I believe the point of life is to enjoy the journey and have as many positive experiences as you can. The point is not to finish everything you think you need to in order to be "done" and only then enjoy your life. Bring yourself back to this point as often as you can. With the upcoming holidays and all the attendant stress, it's the perfect time to remind yourself of the point. Is the point to be exhausted, broke, and resentful of all the work you have to do, or is the point to enjoy family and friends and create lasting memories? Is the point to get to the New Year so you can breathe a sigh of relief that it's all over with, or is the point to enjoy the moments that come only once a year?

When you ask yourself the question, "What is the point?" you might be surprised by the answer. The answer might cause you to change course and do something that is initially uncomfortable. But you'll be better off for having asked the question. Bring yourself back to the point as often as you can, because you can never get back the time you lose.

About the Author

Kevin Stacey helps companies and professionals achieve maximum productivity and effectiveness through stress management and time management training. He is available to speak on these topics. For more information visit <http://www.TrainRightInc.com> or call 1-800-603-7168.

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25 Revenge in the End is Bitter Sweet by Victor Antonio G.

We ALL think or have thought about it at one time or another. Revenge! Yes, we plan, we let our minds conjure up ways to get back at someone who we believe has wronged us (at this point you should hear the Austin Power-Dr. Evil maniacal laugh in your head, muh-ha-ha-ha).

I've yet to hear a speaker on success really discuss revenge so I thought I take a stab at it (no pun intended) by sharing a recent incident that happened to me.

Let me step back for a moment and tell you that during high school I sprouted over night to my current height of 6'2" and was skinny as a rail. In school I was never one of the cool guys. I was always one who hung out on the periphery hoping to absorb the coolness from my fellow classmates.

I was invited to play on a local YMCA team. I was sucked in by my friends telling me, "Victor, you'd be good at it." (See the video on my website to see how this turned out). I don't know what possessed me to say yes since I had the grace of dizzy duck and the coordination of an inebriated flamingo. I was all fowled up! (Sorry, bad joke) I had grown so quickly that I wasn't use to my height.

On our team there was a guy, we'll call him John, who was constantly belittling me and took pleasure in finding any opportunity to make fun of my: height, weight or lack of basketball ability. He was shorter, stealthier and could play the game. Given his scoring ability, he was always going at me and wouldn't let up when it came to ridiculing. I wouldn't classify him a bully because there was never a physical threat, but he rode me every moment he could.

Every time I thought of John my mind would race with all the bad things I'd like to see happen to him. I wanted to exact some type of revenge or satisfaction. But in the end, both never came. I graduated from high school, mentally intact, and went about creating my success. From what I heard, John couldn't wait to get out of High School and didn't go on to college.

Let me now fast forward almost 23 years later.

I was invited back to do a keynote speech at my High School in Chicago. I gotta tell ya'...going back after so many years was chilling (in a good way). I had so many good memories and enjoyed walking the halls and peeking into the classrooms where I use to sit.


By 10 a.m. the auditorium was filled to the brim with students. As I approached the stage door which led to the stage, coming from the other direction was a familiar face wearing a dark green jumpsuit. Yep, you guessed it, it was John.

John looked at me, paused, looked at me again and said with a sense of amazement, “Are you the speaker?”

I nodded my head as he continued to look at me in disbelief; as if a ghost of Christmas past had come to pay him a visit.

It’s funny how we wait for a moment where we’ve replayed in our mind everything we want to say to a person. But guess what happened? Nothing came out. My thoughts, anger and resentment dissipated the moment I started talking to John. I treated him as I would any stranger I’d meet on my speaking tour.

I went on to ask him how he was doing, about family and so on. Before I excused myself to go speak, he mentioned that he was married, had kids and that he was the school janitor. My mind yelled, “Huh! The school Janitor?!” as I stepped inside.



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The host introduced me and I took the stage to speak to an auditorium packed with students with A.D.D. (attention deficit disorder). Corporate crowds are tough, but nothing is tougher than speaking to High School students. As I looked into the audience while speaking, I saw John off to the side smiling as he seemed to be enjoying my talk on success.

After my speech, John came by to shake my hand and congratulate me. He said, "Victor, that was great. I was telling some of the students that I went to school with you." We talked a little longer before saying our pleasant goodbyes.

For the rest of the day, my mind was whipping from the past to the present and how much John and I had changed. I no longer had ill feelings towards John. I no longer wished him harm. I began to reflect on how time changes us all, but yet in our minds, we hold onto the relics of the past.

Many of us carry some sort of angst towards someone who has wronged us in the past. And yes, some of us may very well fantasize about revenge. Seeing John again reminded me once more that revenge is often bitter sweet. It's never as SWEET as you planned or imagined it would be. And BITTER when you think about how foolish it was to have wasted all that mental energy on thoughts of getting even one day.

People change over time but our memories don't take that into account. On that day the 'old John' died and a new updated memory of him took its place; a more pleasant one at that. I decided to bury the memory and put a R.I.P. tombstone on it. It was no longer relevant to me.

As we grow older, so does our appreciation for life and humanity. None of us with a true sense of decency can possibly wish any harm or misfortune to befall a fellow human being. We should therefore stop torturing ourselves by exhuming the past. Stop it! Cut it out!

Maybe, just maybe, the best way to get even is to simply ignore the past, and focus your time on building a new YOU. Maybe, you should focus your energy on building or rebuilding your success. And if destiny is kind enough to smile in your direction, you may just run across one those old memories on the road to your greatness and create a more pleasant one.

About the author

Born and raised in Chicago's inner city, Victor Antonio G. has achieved a level of success few would have expected: By the age of 35 he had become Vice President in \$3B Fortune 500 company at the time and built-up an international market from \$14M to \$97M in two and half years, and went on to become President of Global Sales & Marketing to help build a \$420M company. He is currently CEO of a privately held multimillion Cable and Satellite Company.

<http://www.thelogicofsuccess.com/index.htm>

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