

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS SERIES

Managing Stress

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MANAGING STRESS

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Introduction

The goal of this manual is to help you manage stress.

“Why manage stress? Don’t we want to eliminate it from our lives?”

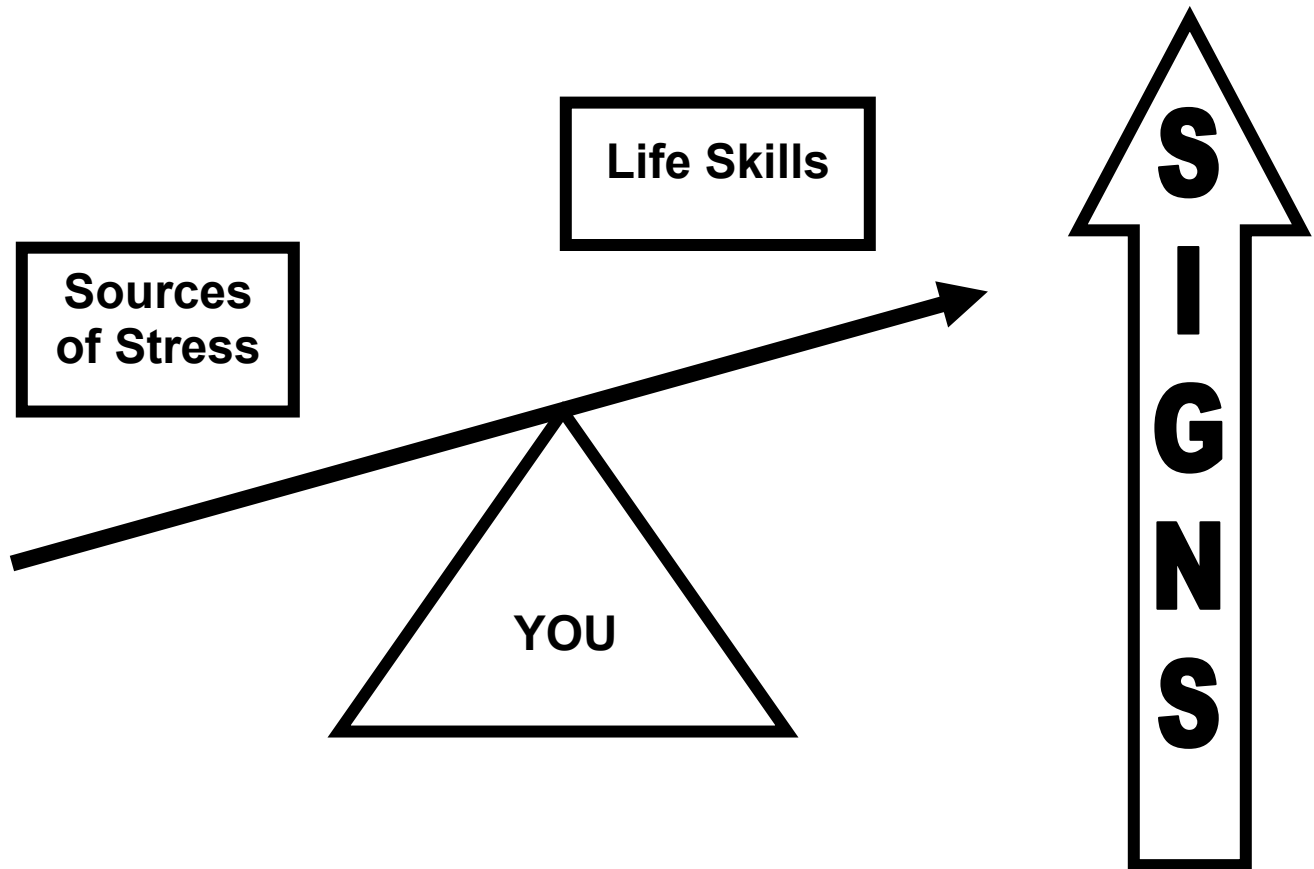
Too much stress can be a killer. We’re all familiar with the scientific studies that link high stress to medical problems, such as heart attacks, cancer, stroke, diabetes, allergies and asthma. The personal and work-related costs of too much stress can also be devastating. Broken relationships, poor job performance, emotional illnesses, physical abuse, drug and alcohol abuse and suicide are only a part of a long list of maladies linked to excessive stress. All of these affect our ability to work productively and efficiently. So given all the bad news about stress, why wouldn’t we want to eliminate it from our lives?

What is Stress?

Stress is the force that stimulates our power, which we use to meet the demands of everyday life. Many studies have demonstrated that performance actually increases as stress increases (i.e., to a point, which we’ll discuss later). Our best performance occurs when we achieve a balance between the pressures put on us (the stress that comes from inside and outside) and our ability to respond to those pressures; best performance occurs on the “knife’s edge,” where we experience a balance between demands and capabilities. Too much stress--too many demands, or inadequate capabilities--and we become unbalanced and begin to feel the negative effects of stress (see illustration below). Not enough stress--more capabilities than our job or life demands--and we become bored or disinterested and performance falls.

Managing stress therefore becomes an important managerial competency. To get the most out of ourselves and our employees we need to balance demands of the job with capabilities of our employees. We need to eliminate unnecessary stress and develop work-life proficiencies so that the stresses normally associated with work won’t be debilitating.

The Stress Model



Stress is an inevitable and even necessary part of life; but when the sources of stress outweigh the skills we have to cope, we experience an increase in the signs or symptoms of stress that can damage our health, our relationships and our work performance. Managing stress involves the twofold task of decreasing our stressors and increasing our skills for coping with stress.

Performance and Learning Objectives

The purpose of this workbook is to develop stress management as a foundational competency for all participants. It aims to achieve the performance and learning objectives that are set out below. We encourage the development of these skills through on-going training and coaching and we encourage all participants to set their own personal objectives in this area:

Performance Objectives

Participants will seek to master the following stress-related objectives:

- Live in a way that decreases unnecessary stress, including:
 - Maintaining a healthy diet
 - Getting plenty of sleep
 - Enjoying an active social life
 - Exercising at least three times a week
 - Paying attention to the spiritual side of life, whatever you deem that to be.
- Develop and maintain a challenging work environment that engenders optimal performance
- Manage time including maintaining a healthy balance between home and work
- Through training and practice develop the workplace skills necessary for high job performance
- Develop work habits that decrease unnecessary stress (e.g., delegating, time management)
- Foster a dialogical work environment, in which feelings and thoughts are valued and are freely expressed

Learning Objectives

Through this class, participants will improve their ability to:

- Understand what stress is; identify in themselves the sources and signs of stress.
- Understanding the relationship between stress and performance and manage their own work-related stress so that performance remains high.
- Practice assertiveness: stand up for their rights by making clear needs, wants, feelings and opinions.
- Control work pressures by delegating, saying “no”, and managing change.
- Understand that stress distorts rational thought and learn how to think rationally, demolish worries and solve problems under pressure.
- Understand the importance of strong relationships for managing stress and learn techniques for improving relationships.
- Understand that it’s their responsibility to manage personal and work-related stress and learn specific self-care techniques.

Personal Development Objectives

In my personal, home and work life, I recognize the following stressors:

-
-
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-
-

To manage stress, I want to be able to . . .

-
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-

Specific questions about stress I'd like answered . . .

-
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-

Attitudes and Behaviors Questionnaire

Answer the following questions as accurately and honestly as possible. You may be tempted to answer them as if a parent, teacher or boss (someone you want to impress) were looking over your shoulder. Try to get rid of the chaperone before you begin. Answer as spontaneously as you can. There are no right or wrong answers here. What feels right to you is the correct answer.

After each description you are presented with two possible responses. Choose the one that best describes how the situation might affect you or how you might behave in that circumstance (Circle either a. or b.). If neither seem to fit or if both are equally desirable, go ahead and answer anyway, choosing as best you can the single response that is more likely for you in that situation.

1. A teenager drives by my yard with the car stereo blaring rap music.
 - a. I begin to understand why teenagers can't hear.
 - b. I can feel my blood pressure starting to rise.
2. The person who cuts my hair trims off more than I wanted.
 - a. I tell him or her what a lousy job he or she did.
 - b. I figure it'll grow back, and I resolve to give my instructions more forcefully next time.
3. I am in the express checkout in the supermarket, where a sign reads NO MORE THAN TEN ITEMS PLEASE.
 - a. I pick up a magazine to pass the time.
 - b. I glance ahead to see if anyone has more than ten items.
4. Many large cities have a visible number of homeless people.
 - a. I believe that the homeless are down and out because they lack ambition.
 - b. The homeless are victims of illness or some other misfortune.
5. There have been times when I was very angry with someone.
 - a. I was always able to stop short of hitting them.
 - b. I have, on occasion, hit or shoved them.
6. The newspaper contains a prominent news story about a drug-related crime.
 - a. I wish the government had better educational/drug programs, even for pushers.
 - b. I wish we could put every drug pusher away for good.

7. The prevalence of AIDS has reached epidemic proportions.
 - a. This is largely the result of irresponsible behavior on the part of a small proportion of the population.
 - b. AIDS is a major tragedy.
8. I sometimes argue with a friend or relative.
 - a. I find profanity an effective tool.
 - b. I hardly ever use profanity.
9. I am stuck in a traffic jam.
 - a. I usually am not particularly upset.
 - b. I quickly start to feel irritated and annoyed.
10. There is a really important job to be done.
 - a. I prefer to do it myself.
 - b. I am apt to call on my friends or co-workers for help.
11. Sometimes I keep my angry feelings to myself.
 - a. Doing so can often prevent me from making a mountain out of a molehill.
 - b. Doing so is usually a bad idea.
12. Another driver butts ahead of me in traffic.
 - a. I usually flash my lights or honk my horn.
 - b. I stay farther back behind such a driver.
13. Someone treats me unfairly.
 - a. I usually forget it rather quickly.
 - b. I am apt to keep thinking about it for hours.
14. The cars ahead of me on an unfamiliar road start to slow and stop as they approach a curve.
 - a. I assume that there is a construction site ahead.
 - b. I assume that someone ahead has had a fender-bender.
15. Someone expresses an ignorant belief.
 - a. I try to correct him or her.
 - b. I am likely to let it pass.

-
16. I am caught in a slow-moving bank or supermarket line.
 - a. I usually start to fume at people who dawdle ahead of me.
 - b. I seldom notice the wait.
 17. Someone is being rude or annoying.
 - a. I am apt to avoid him or her in the future.
 - b. I might have to get rough with him or her.
 18. An election year rolls around.
 - a. I learn anew that politicians are not to be trusted.
 - b. I am caught up in the excitement of pulling for my candidate.
 19. An elevator stops too long on a floor above where I am waiting.
 - a. I soon start to feel irritated and annoyed.
 - b. I start planning the rest of my day.
 20. I am around someone I don't like.
 - a. I try to end the encounter as soon as possible.
 - b. I find it hard not to be rude to him or her.
 21. I see a very overweight person walking down the street.
 - a. I wonder why this person has such little self-control.
 - b. I think that he or she might have a metabolic defect or a psychological problem.
 22. I am riding as a passenger in the front seat of a car.
 - a. I take the opportunity to enjoy the scenery.
 - b. I try to stay alert for obstacles ahead.
 23. Someone criticizes something I have done.
 - a. I feel annoyed.
 - b. I try to decide whether the criticism is justified.
 24. I am involved in an argument.
 - a. I concentrate hard so I can get my point across.
 - b. I can feel my heart pounding and I breathe harder.
-

25. A friend or a co-worker disagrees with me.
- I try to explain my position more clearly.
 - I am apt to get into an argument with her or him.
26. Someone is speaking very slowly during a conversation.
- I am apt to finish his or her sentences.
 - I am apt to listen until he or she finishes.
27. If they were put on the honor system, more people would not sneak into a movie theater without paying.
- That's because they are afraid of being caught.
 - It's because it would be wrong.
28. I have strong beliefs about rearing children.
- I try to reward them when they behave well.
 - I make sure they know what the rules are.
29. I hear news of another terrorist act.
- I feel like lashing out.
 - I wonder how people can be so cruel.
30. I am talking with my spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend.
- I often find my thoughts racing ahead to what I plan to say next.
 - I find it easy to pay close attention to what he or she is saying.
31. There have been times in the past when I was really angry.
- I have never thrown things or slammed a door.
 - At times I have thrown something or slammed a door.
32. Life is full of little annoyances.
- They often seem to get under my skin.
 - They seem to roll off my back unnoticed.
33. I disapprove of something a friend has done.
- I usually keep such disapproval to myself.
 - I usually let her or him know about it.

34. I am requesting a seat assignment for an airline flight.
- I usually request a seat in a specific area of the plane.
 - I generally leave the seat assignment to the agent.
35. I feel a certain way nearly every day of the week.
- I feel grouchy some of the time.
 - I usually stay on an even keel.
36. Someone bumps into me in a store.
- I pass it off as an accident
 - I feel irritated at the person's clumsiness.
37. My spouse, girlfriend or boyfriend is preparing a meal.
- I keep an eye out to make sure nothing burns or cooks too long.
 - I either talk about my day or read the paper.
38. A boyfriend or a girlfriend calls at the last minute to say that he or she "is too tired to go out tonight," and I am stuck with a pair of fifty-dollar tickets.
- I try to find someone else to go with.
 - I tell my friend how inconsiderate he or she is.
39. I recall something that angered me previously.
- I feel angry all over again.
 - The memory doesn't bother me nearly as much as the actual event did.
40. I see people walking around in shopping malls.
- Many of them are either shopping or exercising.
 - Many are wasting time.
41. Someone is hogging the conversation at a party.
- I look for an opportunity to put her or him down.
 - I soon move to another group.
42. At times, I have to work with incompetent people.
- I concentrate on my part of the job.
 - Having to put up with them ticks me off.

43. My spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend is going to give me a birthday present.
- a. I prefer to pick it out myself.
 - b. I prefer to be surprised.
44. I hold a poor opinion of someone.
- a. I keep it to myself.
 - b. I let her or him know about it.
45. In most of the arguments I have, the roles are consistent.
- a. I am the angrier one.
 - b. The other person is angrier than I am.
46. Slow-moving lines can often be found in banks and supermarkets.
- a. They are an unavoidable part of modern life.
 - b. They are often due to someone's incompetence.

Interpret Your Score

Scoring: One point for each matching answer.

Cynicism: 3(b); 4(a); 7(a); 10(a); 14(b); 18(a); 21(a); 22(b); 27(a); 30(a); 34(a); 37(a); 40(b); 43(a); 46(b).

Anger: 1(b); 6(b); 9(b); 13(b); 16(a); 19(a); 23(a); 24(b); 29(a); 32(a); 35(a); 36(b); 39(a); 42(b); 45(a).

Aggression: 2(a); 5(b); 8(a); 11(b); 12(a); 15(a); 17(b); 20(b); 25(b); 26(a); 28(b); 31(b); 33(b); 38(b); 41(a); 44(b).

Cynicism: a mistrusting attitude regarding the motives of others, leading one to be constantly on guard against the misbehavior of others. Measures the degree to which you believe people are selfish and out mainly for themselves, that you cannot trust them to do the right thing most of the time, that you are really the only one you can depend on.

Anger: an emotion generated by a cynical person's expectation of unacceptable behavior on the part of others. Measures the extent to which you are likely to respond with anger, irritation or annoyance when faced with life's frustrations.

Aggression: the behavior to which people are driven by the unpleasant negative emotions of anger and irritation. Measures your tendency to express your anger or irritation overtly against other people.

Score Each Level

Score 0-3	Level very low
Score 4-6	Level high enough to be of some concern
Score 7 or above	Level very high

Add scores together. This is your Total Hostility Score. Any total score higher than 10 may place you in a group whose hostility level is high enough to increase your risk of health problems.

Ask a person close to you to take the test as if answering for you. Compare scores.

Source: Redford Williams, M.D. and Virginia Williams, Ph.D., Anger Kills (New York: New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1998), pp. 5-20.

Chapter 1

Understanding Stress

Stress and Job Performance

Stress is a force that stimulates our power. It's an assignment that we meet with a quality report. It's a challenge that we meet by learning a new skill. It's a deadline that pushes us to do more than we thought we could do in a shorter period of time. Good stress, sometimes called "eu-stress," is a tremendous motivator, a tool that competent managers use to get the most out of their employees.

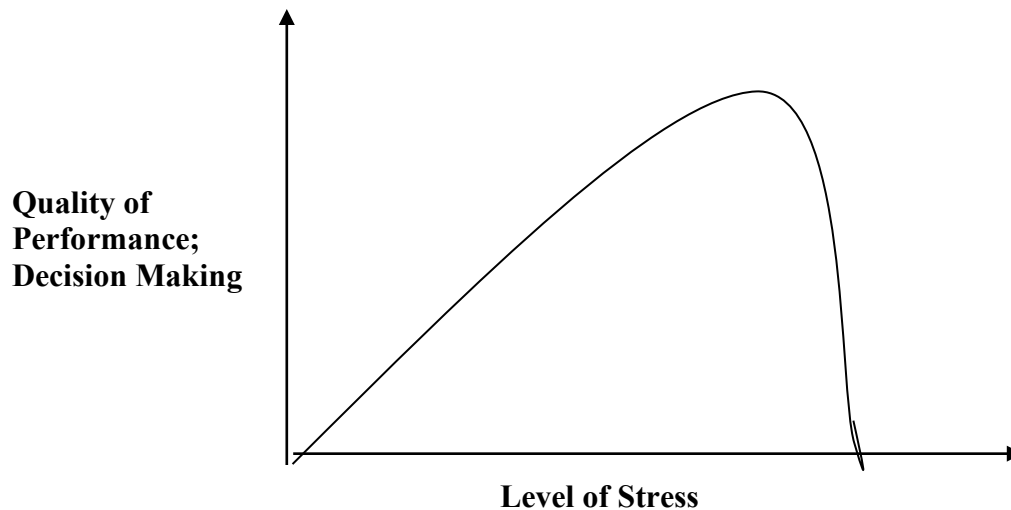
When stress exerts a force on us (pressure) that is greater than our capabilities, physical and emotional changes occur in body and soul that can be debilitating and even life-threatening ("distress"). Too much stress and performance plummets like a waterfall.

The Stress Curve (The Yorkes-Dodson Law)

The Stress Curve (see illustration below) demonstrates the unique challenge that faces every manager and employee. Like the story of the Three Bears, in relation to performance, there can be "too little" stress, "too much stress," or an amount of workplace stress that's "just right." The ongoing challenge is to manage stress in such a way as to keep employees on the "knife's edge," sharp, in a place where there's a balance between capabilities and the demands of the job.

The Stress Curve

Plot the quality of performance vs. the level of stress:



In the Yerkes-Dodson experiment, participants were asked to separate colored chips into separate bottles under the following conditions: (a) no time limit; (b) with a financial reward related to speed and accuracy; (c) with the punishment of an electric shock if you performed slowly or inaccurately.

The test demonstrated that as stress increased, performance increased. This occurred to a level of stress at which performance fell off immediately and dramatically (not gradually).

The Stress-Curve shows that:

- No stress through eu-stress: quality of performance and decision-making increases as the intensity of the stress increases. The cerebral cortex remains highly involved, thus elevating the quality of rational decision-making.
- Distress: problem-solving effectiveness shuts down as stress levels become “too high.” As behavior and emotion become influenced by the amygdala, medulla oblongata (reptilian brain), rational thought decreases and the fight-flight response is stimulated.

The Stress-Curve Changes

The experiment also showed that the level at which stress begins to negatively affect performance varies from individual to individual and within individuals themselves according to a variety of factors, including:

- Differences in Organizations
- Time of day
- Issue
- Age of children
- Rules (Is it O.K. to fight?)
- Culture
- Genetics
- Experience

What helps?

As the demands of work increase what can we do to keep performance high?

- Help employees eliminate unnecessary stress.
- Help employees develop capabilities through training, practice and on-going coaching

What suggestions do you have to help employees in these two critical areas?

The Anatomy of Stress

When we feel “stressed out,” when we reach that point in life when stress levels are too high, very specific changes take place in our brain and body that affect performance. Understanding these processes can help us learn to manage stress more effectively.

The seat of all human passion is the amygdala (from the Greek word “almond”), an almond-shaped cluster of structures that sits on top of the brain stem. This is the most primitive part of the brain, the part we share with birds and reptiles. The amygdala is the brain’s specialist for emotional matters. Sever the amygdala from the rest of the brain and there is no anger, fear, sorrow, or tears. Without the amygdala, life’s events become stripped from their personal meanings.

What happens in the brain when impulsive feelings of anger and stress override our ability to handle things rationally? When incoming signals from our senses are sent to the brain, they are initially processed by the thalamus, the brain’s “receptionist.” The thalamus translates the signal into the electronic language of the brain. Most of the message is then sent to the cerebral cortex, where it is analyzed and assessed for meaning and action. This thinking part of the brain wants one question answered immediately, “Is there in this stimulus danger, something to fear or something that might cause pain.” To answer this question, the signal is sent to the amygdala. (A smaller part of the original signal goes straight from the thalamus to the amygdala, allowing for a faster, although less precise, reaction. This is why we can sometimes feel angry or upset even before we realize what is bothering us.) The amygdala scans every experience for trouble. It asks the most primitive question of every situation: “Is this something that I hate, that hurts me or that I fear?” If the answer is “Yes,” the amygdala sends a signal to every part of the brain, telegraphing that there is a “crisis.” This whole process takes less than a second.

When the amygdala senses danger (the primary emotions of fear or pain), either real physical danger or psychological danger (a threat to our self-esteem), it triggers the secretion of the body’s fight-or-flight hormones that mobilize our centers for movement, activate the cardiovascular system, the muscles and the gut. We get angry. The face is fixed in an angry or fearful position, the heart rate and blood pressure go up and hormones from the kidneys stimulate the production of cholesterol in the liver. Importantly, the amygdala’s web of connections allows it to capture the other functions of the brain, including our ability to think rationally.

“If only I would have thought to say that then.” How often are we able to think of “just the right thing to say” only after we’ve cooled down, hours and sometimes even days after we’ve been angry. This occurs because the amygdala’s web of connections allows it to capture the other functions of the brain, including our ability to think rationally. This experience is called an “emotional hijacking,” the brain is literally incapable of thinking rationally when we’re angry because the amygdala, “fight or flight,” denies us access to the parts of the brain that analyze and solve problems. This is why taking a “time out” is often the best way to “come back to our senses” when we’re angry.

Why is our anger sometimes way out of proportion to the experience that stimulated it? When the amygdala senses danger, it stimulates the production of two hormones. One acts

immediately to get the body ready to fight or flight. The other acts much more slowly, keeping the body in a state of readiness for hours and sometimes even days after the initial stimulus is forgotten. When the constant stresses of life cause this second “slower” hormone to build up in our body, a stimulus of lesser significance can cause an intense reaction (only a few drops can cause an already full cup to overflow). If we’re already stressed out, or if we’ve had an especially rough day and the anger-causing chemicals have already been produced (the cup is almost full), an emotional hijacking can take place, with all its gross physical reactions and irrationality, even if the stimulus is small (dinner’s not ready on time, someone in front of you fails to signal their turn, etc).

Does venting help? There are two kinds of venting. *Destructive* venting involves screaming, cursing, punching and raving (the actions associated with rage). Studies of the brain have shown that this kind of venting actually stimulates the production of the hormones that keep us angry and does nothing to decrease our level of anger. *Constructive* venting, on the other hand, involves talking about our pain and fear in an honest and straightforward way. Pain and fear are the two primary emotions that underlie the expression of anger (a secondary emotion). Angry, irritable people are hurting people. When we have the opportunity to express our emotions in a constructive, honest way, the production of the hormones that lead to anger is reduced in the amygdala.

Two experiences can help reduce anger/stress:

1. **Decrease Unnecessary Stress.** Reduce stress before we experience the stimulus that makes us angry (decrease the amount of liquid in the cup, so that when the danger comes, the cup does not overflow). A good diet, sleep, exercise, a balanced social life, therapy (constructive venting) and a quality spiritual life help here.
2. **Increase Skills.** Experience with the stimuli that cause us stress (training). Other people in our community have experienced similar circumstances and have learned how to handle them effectively. Learn from them. Practice handling the situations you experience as dangerous. Familiarity and expertise gained in handling difficult situations often reduce stress. Think of astronauts, football players, and musicians, anyone who practices.

Signs of Too Much Stress

<p>Body</p> <p>Increased heart rate High blood pressure Difficulty in breathing Difficulty in swallowing Feelings of nausea Hyperventilation Tense, contracted muscles Backache Immune system less efficient Hot and cold flashes Blushing Sweating Skin dryness Rashes Numbness Tingling sensations Increased blood sugar levels Dilation of pupils, dry mouth Frequent urination</p> <p>Behavior</p> <p>Difficulty in sleeping Early awakening Emotional outbursts Aggression Overeating or loss of appetite Excessive drinking Excessive smoking, drug taking Accident proneness/trembling Avoidance of particular situations Inactivity</p>	<p>Thoughts</p> <p>Difficulty in concentrating Difficulty in making decisions Frequent forgetfulness Increased sensitivity to criticism Negative self-critical thoughts Distorted ideas More rigid attitudes</p> <p>Emotions</p> <p>Anxiety (nervousness, tension, phobias, panics) Depression (sadness, lowered self-esteem, apathy, fatigue) Guilt and shame Moodiness Loneliness Jealousy</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Coronary heart disease/strokes Stomach ulcers; nausea; irritable bowel syndrome Migraine; headaches Asthma; hay fever Skin rashes Irregular menstruation Diarrhea Cancer</p>
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Which of these signs of too much stress do you experience?

Panic Attacks

“Suddenly, for no reason, your heart starts pounding.
You feel dizzy. You’re sweating and shaking.
You’re terrified that you’re going to faint or completely lose control.”

Panic attacks are a frightening symptom of stress. They are experienced in approximately one in ten adults. Imagine the feelings of fear associated with the near miss of a car accident. Your body prepares to cope with danger. Adrenaline is released making your heart beat faster, breathing speeds up to take in more oxygen and sweat cools your body. The same physical effects occur with panic attacks only now there’s no obvious danger.

Normally the trigger for the panic attack is an overload of stress, worry and life events that bounce between your conscious and unconscious mind. Physical symptoms, worrying thoughts and avoidance behavior interact to perpetuate a downward spiral of panic. Remember, panic attacks are harmless, even though they are unpleasant and frightening. Most panic attacks occur when we feel tired or rundown, less equipped to cope with the stresses of daily life.

How to cope with the panic attack:

- **Be rational.** Panic attacks are normal physical rate actions that are exaggerated. Nothing worse will happen.
- **Pay attention to the present.** Slow down, focus on the word “calm.” Pay attention to what’s happening in your body. Relax your muscles. Try to breathe deeply. Don’t think about what might happen.
- **Accept your feelings.** The attack will soon be over.
- **Measure your level of fear.** Grade your anxiety from 10 (high) to 1 (low). Watch your level go down.
- **Don’t avoid the situation.** If you run away or avoid the situation, it will be more difficult for you the next time.
- **Take slow, deep breaths.** Concentrate on breathing out.
- **Distract yourself.** Examine the details of your surroundings.
- **Talk to someone.** Tell a friend what you’re feeling.
- **Concentrate.** Think about what you were doing before the attack occurred.
-

Hyperventilation

“Your chest tightens. You feel closed-end, as if you need fresh air. Your breathing becomes faster and shallow. You worry that you can’t get your breath.”

Rapid breathing in response to danger is normal. It ensures that your body gets enough oxygen for the “fight or flight.” Prolonged hyperventilation, however, triggered by stress, and upsets the balance of gases in the lungs. Too much oxygen and too little carbon dioxide alters the acidity of the blood, causing dizziness, shaking, tension, or sweating, which may result overwhelming feelings of panic.

If you’re with someone who is hyperventilating, stay calm, and encourage them to use some of the tips listed below:

- **Recognize** that feeling stifled, fast breathing, and tightness of the chest are warning signs.
- **Relax.** Drop your shoulders.
- **Breathe** from your stomach. Breathe in and out to a slow count.
- **Learn** the “re-breathing technique.” Cup your hands together and place them over your nose and mouth. Breathe out hard from your mouth and re-breathe the air slowly through your nose. If you can use a paper bag instead of your hands, this gives even better results. Do not repeat this more than four or five times.

Stress and Illness

The following test is based on research by Holmes and Rahe, who studied the relationship between life events and stress-related health problems. Circle the life events you've experienced over the last year. Total the numbers in the right columns and compare your total score to the key on the following page.

Death of spouse or life partner	100
Divorce or separation	75
Major illness or danger	70
Loss of the job	70
Problems with the law, imprisonment	70
Death of someone close	70
Marital reconciliation	60
Retirement	60
Illness in your immediate family	50
Marriage or moving in with partner	50
Moving or major renovations	50
Gaining a new family member through adoption	50
Pregnancy	45
Increase the number of arguments or disagreements with partner	45
Large mortgage, loan, or debt	45
Changing jobs or a new job	45
An unexpected accident or trauma	45
Changes at work, increased demands	35
Outstanding personal achievement or promotion	35
Caring for an elderly or sick relative or friend	35
Problems with relatives, family, friends, or neighbors	35
Financial worries	35
Examinations, extra study, or having to speak in public	30
Changes in social activities	30
Changes in recreational activities	30
Children going or growing away	30
Premenstrual syndrome or menopause	30
Starting a relationship	30
Going on a vacation	20
Family gatherings, Christmas	20

Total Score _____

Interpreting Your Score

Over 280. High vulnerability. You have suffered an unusually high number of stressful life events over the last year, which greatly increases your risk of developing stress-related illnesses. By improving your stress management skills, you can be better prepared to cope with difficult life events.

130-280. Moderate vulnerability. You have experienced a number of stressful events over the past year, which could increase your risk of stress-related illnesses. The more you know about these life events and understand their effect the better you will be able to prepare yourself in advance for similar events in the future.

Below 130. Low vulnerability. You have experienced few stressful events over the past year. Stress in your life appears to be relatively subtle, causing little risk of stress-related illnesses.

Sources of Stress

What are your sources of stress? Stressors vary from person to person. Here's a list of experiences or events that some people find stressful:

- Change
- Committing to a partner
- Becoming a partner
- Families and children
- Adolescence
- Personality conflicts
- Premenstrual syndrome
- Living with pain
- Separation and divorce
- Stepfamilies
- Extramarital affairs
- Holiday stress
- Midlife crisis
- Bereavement and loss
- Accidents and trauma
- Exam stress
- Financial difficulties
- Caring for the elderly
- Public speaking
- Work
- Life without work

Interpersonal Conflicts

Interpersonal conflict is one of the most common and devastating sources of stress. Even at their best, people find themselves in conflict. Simple personality differences, cultural differences, a lack of communication, a misunderstanding, a difference in perspective can trigger a disagreement. What may seem to be a minor dispute—one that at first might appear not worth investing much time and effort—may actually offer the best opportunity to head off a future disaster.

Personality differences are often a prime cause of interpersonal conflict. People living together or working side-by-side may have very diverse, even conflicting preferences and views of the world. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a psychological test that describes the ways we perceive and relate to our world is a helpful tool for understanding ourselves and others. It defines personality in terms of four pairs of preference alternatives. We are either:

- **Extroverted (E) or Introverted (I).** This continuum tells us how we get our energy. The Extrovert is energized by the outer world, by multiple relationships, external events and sociability. These things exhaust the Introvert, who gets energy through reflection, introspection and solitude.
- **Sensing (S) or Intuitive (N).** This continuum plots how we gather information. Sensors are down-to-earth, present-focused, fact-oriented, practical realists. Intuitives are head-in-the-clouds, future-oriented, conceptual theoreticians.
- **Thinking (T) or Feeling (F).** This continuum describes our decision-making preferences. Thinkers are objective, firm-minded, detached and just. Feelers are subjective, fair-hearted, humane and involved.
- **Judging (J) or Perceiving (P).** This continuum describes how we create the environment around us. Judgers create an environment that is structured, scheduled, ordered, planned and controlled. Perceivers create an environment that is flexible, spontaneous, adaptive and responsive.

Sixteen personality types can be determined from these eight preferences. In their book, Type Talk: The Sixteen Personality Types that Determine How We Live, Love and Work, Kroeger and Thuesen list each type with a phrase that describes it. From just reading down the list, we can see how people at their best, living or working in close proximity, might easily find themselves in disagreement (e.g., compare ISTJ and ENFP):

- **ISTJ: Doing What Should Be Done**
- **ISFJ: A High Sense of Duty**
- **INFJ: An Inspiration to Others**
- **INTJ: Everything Has Room for Improvement**
- **ISTP: Ready to Try Anything Once**

-
- **ISFP: Sees Much But Shares Little**
 - **INFP: Performing Noble Service to Aid Society**
 - **INTP: A Love of Problem-Solving**
 - **ESTP: The Ultimate Realist**
 - **ESFP: You Only Go Around Once in Life**
 - **ENFP: Giving Life a Little Squeeze**
 - **ENTP: One Exciting Challenge After Another**
 - **ESTJ: Life's Administrators**
 - **ESFJ: Hosts and Hostesses of the World**
 - **ENFJ: Smooth Talking Persuader**
 - **ENTJ: Life's Natural Leaders**

In a helpful chapter, "Typewatching from 9 to 5," Kroeger and Thuesen show how paying attention to the personality type can help head off conflict in a wide range of organizational activities, including goal-setting, time management, hiring and firing and team-building. Here are three examples:

- **Goal Setting.** Extroverts do their thinking out loud; hence the goals they commit to are very much in the public domain. They verbalize their ideas. Extrovert-Judgers determine early on what the goals should be, make them clear to all, and impose them on everyone. Introverts may tire of the Extrovert's aggressiveness in goal setting and with the apparent redundancy of an Extrovert's verbalizing. They may feel imposed upon and would rather start meeting the goal than talk about it.
- **Time Management.** Sensors will be quite literal and precise in their descriptions of time. Intuitives will be more general and abstract. Judgers will be quite organized about time and will use it for some measurable accomplishment. Perceivers will be more open-ended about time and will want to spend their time in activities for which they will be less accountable.

Managing interpersonal relationships is a key skill for reducing stress, which we'll discuss in detail later in this workbook.

What interpersonal stressors are currently consuming your energy or challenging your capabilities to cope?

Which interpersonal relationships currently are helping you deal with the stresses of life?

Exercise: Work Related Stress

Most of us live and work under some degree of pressure. The fast pace of change, increased job complexity, increased economic pressures, reduced staff levels, less job security, heavier workloads and longer working hours, all increase stress at work. Many studies identify work as the single most important cause of stress in the developed world.

- ✚ A recent study of women in accounting indicated that working with someone of a different personality type was positively associated with increased stress.
- ✚ In another study of financial institutions, 64% of employers identified stress as the principal health threat facing the company.

The exercise on the next three pages will help you identify sources of work-related stress.

Sources of Work Stress

If you can identify the causes of your stress at work you may be able to develop skills to counteract it. For each situation described below decide how much stress it is creating for you:

High Stress 3 Moderate Stress 2 Low Stress 1 No Stress 0

1. Too much work to do		19. Too little work to do	
2. Too many different roles to play		20. Changes in the way I'm asked to work	
3. Being responsible for managing others.		21. Work politics	
4. My relationship with others at work		22. Lack of colleagues to confide in	
5. My wages/salary		23. An unpleasant physical environment	
6. Continuing work at home		24. Prioritizing between work and home	
7. Working long or unsociable hours		25. Time pressures and deadlines	
8. Unclear about what is expected of me		26. Lack of variety and stimulation	
9. Having to make decisions or plans		27. Fear of making a mistake	
10. My relationship with my manager		28. Poor training an guidelines	
11. Doing a job that does not challenge me		29. Lack of job satisfaction	
12. Difficulty switching off at home		30. My partner's attitude toward my work	
13. Too many demands on my time		31. Not having the right skills to do the job	
14. Having few clear objectives		32. Little feedback about my performance	
15. Dealing with conflict		33. Meetings/giving presentations	
16. Little encouragement and support		34. The general morale of the workplace	
17. Career and promotion prospects		35. Job insecurity or threat of layoffs	
18. The demands of work on my home life		36. Changes outside work--finances, illness	

Interpret Your Score

A	Score	B	Score	C	Score	D	Score	E	Score	F	Score
1		2		3		4		5		6	
7		8		9		10		11		12	
13		14		15		16		17		18	
19		20		21		22		23		24	
25		26		27		28		29		30	
31		32		33		34		35		36	
Total		Total		Total		Total		Total		Total	

Now apply your scores to the areas listed on the next page.

Interpreting Your Score

A: Workload

Over 8	Your workload is creating stress. Seek to change the structure of job.
5-8	Your workload is on the verge of being stressful.
Below 5	Overload may not be an issue, but a high score on question 19 may indicate that underload is a problem.

B. Role

Over 8	Your job description needs clarifying and defining. Confront your manager assertively and make changes.
5-8	Some clarification is needed regarding your role at work.
Below 5	Your role at work does not appear to be a problem.

C. Responsibility

Over 8	You appear to be uncomfortable with your present responsibilities. You may benefit by speaking with colleagues who have more experience of responsibility. Ask for more training.
5-8	You seem to have difficulties taking responsibility at work.
Below 5	You do not appear to have a problem with responsibility.

D. Relationships

Over 8	Relationships at work appear to be creating stress. Aim to improve the quality of these and seek better support from those around you.
5-8	Your relationships at work could be a source of stress.
Below 5	relationships at work do not seem to be a problem.

E. Job Satisfaction

Over 8	You appear to have a low level of job satisfaction and possibly do not feel valued at work. Are you doing the right job? Are there more satisfying areas that you could move into?
5-8	Your job could be more satisfying.
Below 5	You appear to enjoy your work.

F. Home/Work Interface

Over 8	You seem not to be keeping home and work separate. You may need to reestablish those firm boundaries.
5-8	Home and work show signs of interacting negatively
Below 5	The interaction between home and work does not appear to be stressful

Dealing with Work-Related Stress

Here are some tips and best practices for dealing with work-related stress:

1. **Express your feelings.** Don't bottle up feelings and emotions. Learn to identify and reduce the sources of stress.
2. **Make time for social activities.** Don't squeeze out hobbies, leisure or outings with friends. Get regular exercise.
3. **Don't put things off.** Do tasks now and don't avoid them.
4. **Delegate.** Don't try to do everything yourself.
5. **Learn to say no.** Don't agree to take on too much.
6. **Plan regular breaks.** Stop for coffee, lunch and evenings, as well as weekends and vacations. Eat well.
7. **Don't work too long hours.**
8. **Don't become addicted.** Try not to become reliant on alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or food. Monitor personal health
9. **Separate work from home.** Don't regularly take work home.
10. **Don't be a perfectionist.** You can't get things perfect every time. Aim for 80%.
11. **Seek support.** Openly discuss difficulties and ask for help.
12. **Keep a perspective.** It's only a job—not your life.

Do you have any other suggestions to add to this list?

Which of these suggestions might help you deal more effectively with the work-related stress you're experiencing?

Which two or three are you willing to commit to incorporating into your life?

A Stress Audit for Managers

A stress audit raises questions about the manifestations, causes and consequences of workplace stress. It can be useful to managers trying to assess the levels and impact of stress in their business or department. Judith Gordon, Organizational Behavior, provides the following short example of a corporate stress audit:

1. Do any employees demonstrate physiological symptoms?
2. Is job satisfaction low, or are job tension, turnover, absenteeism, strikes, and accident-proneness high?
3. Does the organization's design contribute to the symptoms?
4. Do interpersonal relations contribute to the symptoms?
5. Do career-development variables contribute to the symptoms?
6. What effects do personality, sociocultural influences and the nonwork environment have on the relationship between the stressors and stress?

Workplace stress is an early warning sign of potential conflict. Manager's can help employees cope with dysfunctional stress by:

- Redesigning jobs or restructuring organizations
- Encouraging employee attendance at stress management, health promotion and wellness programs
- Mediating stress-induced interpersonal disputes

General Strategies for Decreasing Stress at Home and at Work

In addition to the strategies set out above, these general strategies applied in the workplace, at home or even in our personal lives can be great stress reducers.

1. Foster a Dialogical Climate (Create a culture where people talk openly to one another)

- Prize the emotional side of life (venting, catharsis, expression).
- Be intentional about the process of inclusion (structure inclusion).
- Develop practical ways for employees/members to work on goals/objectives.

2. Structure Meetings Purposefully (Meetings that waste time are stressful)

3. Decrease Fear/Anxiety/Stress

- Deepen spirituality
- Encouragement, support
- Environment of safety
- Slow the process
- Pets
- Establish ground rules
- Improve organizational structure

4. Decrease Seriousness, Increase Playfulness (Seriousness is a symptom of chronic anxiety)

5. Discourage Secrets

6. Focus More on Process, Less on Content

7. Interrupt Dysfunctional Interaction Patterns by Making the Non-Conscious Conscious

- Triangulation: be direct.
- Gossip and rumors: problem is listening to gossip, “Have you spoken with . . .”
- No talk: let’s talk.
- Blame: look inside.
- Be nice: be proactive; ask for permission not to follow the norm.
- No anger: it’s O.K. to be angry, not O.K. to attack; acknowledge it.

8. Develop a Clear Dispute Resolution System

- Clear policies and procedures.
- Avenues to express grievances.
- Conflict resolution teams.

9. Continuously Manage Polarities

Discussion Questions:

Can you think of specific work-related instances that have occurred in the last month in which the applications of one or more of these strategies could have reduced stress at Frank's?

Prioritize the list of strategies. Which would you list as most important for this facility? Why?

Which would you list as least important? Why?

Which do we do best? Worst?

Life Skills for Managing Stress

The remainder of this manual focuses on these important life skills central to managing stress:

- **Assertiveness**
 - Giving and accepting criticism
 - Saying no
 - Dealing with anger
 - Managing change

- **Rational Thinking**
 - Use problem-solving techniques
 - Challenge distorted thinking
 - Think less rigidly
 - Demolish worries

- **Improving Relationships**
 - Effective communication
 - Stop sulking
 - Cope with jealousy
 - Enjoy sexual intimacy

- **Self-Care**
 - Learning to relax
 - Reducing environmental stress
 - Physical exercise
 - Healthy eating
 - Developing hobbies and interests
 - Spirituality
 - Pets

- **Managing Time**
 - Tackling procrastination and perfectionism
 - Delegation
 - Organizing your space and your schedule
 - Dealing with work and home time-busters

Chapter 2

Assertiveness

Story: The Wise One and The Giant (see appendix)

“Freedom is the ability to pause between the stimulus and the response and in the response to choose”

---Rollo May

All human behavior can be placed on a continuum that ranges from passive to aggressive. In the face of any challenge, in response to any perception of pressure or feeling of stress, you have three behavioral choices.

You can respond passively. You may feel victimized and weak before the challenge. You may be unable to express your feelings and thoughts, or you express yourself in such an apologetic, self-effacing manner that others can ignore you. People walk all over you. You feel that you have no control over events. Others make decisions for you.

You can respond aggressively. You stand up for your own rights and satisfy your own needs in a way that violates others and leaves them feeling devastated. Superiority is maintained by attacking and putting others down.

You can respond assertively. You can choose from a range of behaviors that may be passive or aggressive, depending on the situation. You express feelings and thoughts openly and directly in ways that are respectful of the rights of others. You recognize their needs and ask for what you want. If refused, you feel saddened, but your opinion of yourself is not shattered.

The table on the following pages describes the differences between passive, aggressive and assertive behavior.

Recognizing Passive, Aggressive and Assertive Behavior

PASSIVE BEHAVIOR	AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR	ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR
<p>GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS</p> <p>You are unable to express your feelings and thoughts, or you express yourself in such an apologetic, self-effacing manner that others can ignore you. People walk all over you. You feel that you have no control over events. Others make decisions for you.</p>	<p>GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS</p> <p>You stand up for your own rights and satisfy your own needs in a way that violates others and leaves them feeling devastated. Superiority is maintained by attacking and putting others down.</p>	<p>GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS</p> <p>You express feelings and thoughts openly and directly in ways that are respectful of the rights of others. You recognize their needs and ask for what you want. If refused, you feel saddened, but your opinion of yourself is not shattered.</p>
<p>MESSAGE COMMUNICATED</p> <p>“I don’t count. My feelings and thoughts are less important than yours. I’ll put up with anything. I’m not okay. You’re okay.”</p>	<p>MESSAGE COMMUNICATED</p> <p>“This is what I think, what I want, and how I feel. What matters to you is not important to me. I’m okay. You’re not okay.”</p>	<p>MESSAGE COMMUNICATED</p> <p>“This is how I think and feel. How about you? If our needs clash we can discuss our differences. I’m okay. You’re okay.”</p>
<p>SUBCONSCIOUS MESSAGE</p> <p>“Take care of me and look after my needs telepathically. I am a victim.”</p>	<p>SUBCONSCIOUS MESSAGE</p> <p>“I’ll get you before you have a chance to get me. I’m out for number one.”</p>	<p>SUBCONSCIOUS MESSAGE</p> <p>“I won’t let you take advantage of me and I won’t attack you for being who you are.”</p>
<p>GOAL</p> <p>To appease others and avoid conflict and unpleasantness at all costs.</p>	<p>GOAL</p> <p>To dominate, to win, to force the other person to lose. To punish.</p>	<p>GOAL</p> <p>To communicate your thoughts and feelings clearly, adult to adult.</p>
<p>PAYOFFS</p> <p>You are praised for being selfless. If things go wrong, as a passive follower, you are rarely blamed. Others protect and look after you. You avoid and postpone conflict.</p>	<p>PAYOFFS</p> <p>You make others do what you want them to do, which gives you a feeling of being in control. You are likely to secure the material things that you desire. You are less vulnerable.</p>	<p>PAYOFFS</p> <p>The more you stand up for yourself the higher your self-esteem will be. By expressing emotion directly, resentment will not build up. Anxiety is less evident. Loving others becomes easier.</p>
<p>PRICE</p> <p>Others make unreasonable demands on you. You are trapped within the image of a “nice person.” You repress anger and frustration and diminish your ability to love. Occasionally you may explode in</p>	<p>PRICE</p> <p>You make enemies and must constantly “watch your back.” This takes up valuable energy. You may be prone to fear and a sense of paranoia. Relationships may be based on negative emotions and may</p>	<p>PRICE</p> <p>If you are changing to being more assertive you may lose some old friends who prefer the “old you.” There is no guarantee that everything will work out. There is pain involved in being assertive.</p>

aggression. Internal tension leads to somatic symptoms. Low self-esteem.	be unstable, or you may become isolated as others back away.	You are risking change in becoming more true to yourself.
BODY MOVEMENTS Hand-wringing. Hunched shoulders. Covering mouth with hand.	BODY MOVEMENTS Finger-pointing, fists clenched, striding impatiently, leaning forward, crossed arms.	BODY MOVEMENTS Open hand movements. Upright and relaxed.
EYE CONTACT Looking down, evasive.	EYE CONTACT Trying to stare down and intimidate.	EYE CONTACT Firm and direct without staring.
FACIAL EXPRESSION Half smile when expressing anger or being criticized. Raised eyebrows in anticipation. Quick-changing features.	FACIAL EXPRESSION Smiling may become sneering, jaw set firm, scowling when angry.	FACIAL EXPRESSION Smiling when pleased, frowning when angry. Features relaxed. Appropriate or congruent to mood.
SPEECH Often dull and monotonous. Quiet, often dropping away. Tone may be whining or singsong.	SPEECH Very firm, often fast, abrupt, clipped. Fluent, few hesitations, often shouting, rising at the end of sentences. Tone sarcastic or cold.	SPEECH Steady and firm. Not too loud or quiet. Fluent, few hesitations. Tone in the middle range.
LANGUAGE Long rambling sentences, making use of fill-in words, such as “er,” “but,” “sort of.” Apologetic: “I’m sorry to bother you,” “I wouldn’t normally say anything but.” Self deprecating: “It’s only my opinion,” “It’s not important,” “Oh, it doesn’t matter,” “It’s only me,” “I’m useless,” “I’m hopeless.” Use of self-command statements: “I should,” “I ought to,” “I must,” “I can’t.” Defensive	LANGUAGE Excessive emphasis on “I” Opinion expressed as fact: “That’s a useless way of doing it.” Threatening questions: “Haven’t you finished yet?” “Why did you do it like that?” Threatening requests: “I want that done now,” “Do it this way.” Blame: “You made a mess of that.” Sarcasm: “You must be joking.” Heavy-handed advice: “You should,” “You ought to,” “You must,” “Why don’t you.” Defensive	LANGUAGE “I” statements that are brief, clear and to the point. “I like,” “I think,” “I feel.” Opinion expressed as opinion not fact. Suggestions without use of “should”: “How about ... ?” “Would you like ...?” Constructive criticism without blame: “I feel angry when you ignore me.” Seeking others opinions: “How does this fit with your ideas?” Willingness to explore other solutions: “How can we solve this problem?” Nondefensive

***Chart from Trevor Powell, *Free Yourself from Harmful Stress* (New York: DK, 1997), pp. 84-85

Basic Assertiveness Skills

Assertiveness, the ability to use your power to choose responses and actions all along the passive-aggressive continuum based on the appropriateness or fit of the response to the situation, is a life skill essential for managing stress. Assertiveness highlights the differences between a reaction (something we do or say spontaneously without thinking) and a response (a calculated, centered word or deed that effectively and functionally manages the situation at hand). The following list identifies six basic assertiveness skills.

1. **Basic assertiveness.** Basic assertiveness involves making a straightforward statement to stand up for your rights by making clear your needs, wants, feelings, or opinions. To make an assertion stronger, make the statement short and speak slowly, emphasizing each word. Repeat the statement if necessary, placing special emphasis on key words. "I still want my book back today."
2. **Scripting.** This technique helps to express your feelings without causing resentment when a person repeatedly does something that upsets you. Before you confront the person, write a script of what you are going to say. Be polite, concise and include the following elements:
 - The nature of the problem
 - How it affects you
 - How you feel about it
 - What you want to change
 - "When you leave the dishes, it means I have to wash them. It makes me feel annoyed. I'd like you to clean up after you have eaten, please."
3. **Broken record technique.** When you need to resist the demand of persuasive individual or when you are making a request of your own use this technique to be persistent.
 - Select a statement to keep repeating it.
 - Speak softly and calmly.
 - Repeat your statement each time the other person speaks.
 - Tolerate silences rather than trying to keep talking.
 - Persist -- you need to state your case once more than the other person states her or his case.
4. **Negotiation.** Even the most basic negotiation techniques can help you cope with the difficulties of daily life. The following points are important:
 - See and acknowledge the other person's point of view.
 - Ask for clarification. Seek to understand the other person's position, interests and reasoning.
 - Keep calm and breathe slowly.
 - Prepare for the conversation.
 - State your position and interests clearly.
 - Offer compromises. Try not to be stubborn.

5. **Give praise and compliments.** The following hints are important if you have difficulty giving praise:
- Choose the right time and place.
 - Maintain eye contact.
 - Be direct and clear, don't ramble.
 - Use "I" statements: "I liked..." "I'm pleased with the way you..."
 - Be specific and give details: "I really like the meal, especially the cherry pie."
6. **Receiving praise.** Sometimes it feels boastful to accept praise. We receive praise nonassertively by making apologetic statements like, "Oh, it was nothing, really." The following are tips for receiving praise assertively:
- Listen without interrupting.
 - Keep your response short.
 - Thank the giver directly: "Thanks, Mary."
 - Do not put yourself down. Agree with or accept praise: "Thanks, Mary. I thought it was a good party, too."

Saying “No”—Best Practices

How to Say “No”

1. Be Brief. Keep your reply short and to the point.
2. Be Polite. Acknowledge the person making the request. “No, I’m sorry I can’t make it on Tuesday, but thank you for asking me.”
3. Keep Control. Remain calm and respond to the request slowly with warmth.
4. Be Honest. The simple statement, “I’m finding this difficult,” may help you express your feelings honestly and openly
5. Say No and Go. People may interpret lingering as uncertainty.
6. Practice. Act out in front of a mirror

Six Techniques for Saying “No”

1. Simple, Direct No: Say no without apologizing. A direct no is forceful and can be effective with aggressive people. “No, I prefer not to.”
2. Reflecting No. Reflect back the content and feeling of the request. “I know the letters are urgent, but I can’t go to the post office tonight.”
3. Reasoned No. Give the genuine reason for the refusal. “I can’t mail the letters tonight because I’m meeting a friend.” Use when you don’t want to offend, but have a genuine reason.
4. Raincheck No. Say no to present request without refusing it. “I can’t mail the letters tonight, but I can go in the morning.”
5. Inquiring No. Not a definitive No, but an invitation to open negotiation. “Is there any other time you would like me to go?”
6. Broken Record No. Repeat the refusal over and over. Use in the face of manipulation and persistence. “No I can’t go to the post office.” “After all I’ve done for you, please, the letters have to go out tonight.” “No I can’t go to the post office.”

Giving and Taking Criticism

When giving criticism:

1. Don't disagree
2. Accept their reality
3. Make it easy for the other person to change
4. Beware of the danger of "You're wrong." Creates defensiveness.
5. Avoid win-lose arguments: winners never learn; losers never forget.

To initiate a confrontation, follow this pattern:

1. "I have a problem and I need your help."
2. "Right now the situation is that . . ." (then describe what is actually going on).
3. "The behavior (or lack of behavior) that causes the problem is . . ."
4. Describe a tangible effect on either your body, time, possessions, objectives, responsibilities
5. Describe a value effect: how it makes you feel about them and your relationship with them.
6. "The concern I have about this is . . ."
7. "I'd like to see . . ." or "I'd like to suggest . . ."
8. My understanding is that we've agreed to . . ."

How to take criticism and profit from it

1. Three typical reasons for criticism
 - The other person sees something they envy
 - The other person doesn't understand you
 - The other person does understand you, but doesn't like what you're doing
2. The real meaning of most criticism: when people criticize, 100% of the time it's information about the person who is giving the criticism—sometimes it's information about you.
3. Try to minimize the hurt of criticism so that you can get the benefit of the information.
4. There is a danger in seeking too much approval. The more flattery you need from another person, the more you set yourself up for manipulation—be in control.
5. Seek criticism under controlled circumstances.

Guidelines for receiving a confrontive message

1. First words out of your mouth: “Thank you.” Why? First, they've just revealed something of themselves to you. Second, they didn't go to someone else with it.
2. Watch for the deny-defend reaction: “No way, you don't know what you're talking about.” Don't deny. Don't defend. Don't blame. Don't counter-attack.
3. Understanding their position needs to occur before you evaluate their position: “Hmmm, please go on . . .” “I'd like to hear more about that.”
4. Interrupt only to clarify their point and confirm your understanding of it: “Let's make sure I understand this point.”
5. Give their point validity: “I can see that's a real concern.”
6. State your objection so that it can be countered. Ask for examples. Ask whether it happens a lot: “Let's say we follow this suggestion and (your objection) happens, how could that be dealt with?”
7. Be clear about what you've agreed to do. Let them know whether you are going to change or not: “If that can happen, then I am willing to . . .”
8. Be clear about the next step. You may want to get a second-fifth opinion: “The next thing we need to do is . . .” “I will . . . and I understand that you are going to . . .”

Managing Change

Times of change can be very stressful. The following list summarizes some of the emotions and ways that you may feel during times of change:

- Sadness and a sense of loss of control, stability, security, friends, status, trust in boss and company, self-confidence, pride, self-esteem, satisfaction, authority, good working conditions, or simply the “old way of doing things.”
- Anxiousness about your ability to handle new roles and responsibilities, fit in with new co-workers, satisfy new bosses, adapt to new environments, and know about your future or the future of the company.
- Anger (bitterness) from not being given warning of the change or a chance to make suggestions.
- Confusion about your own self-worth or how to meet the new expectations and requirements
- Guilt about “surviving” when co-workers lose positions, money, or status.
- Fear that your future may not really be secure and that additional changes may be on the way.
- Disorientation and uncertainty about how to function in the new environment

Predictable stages that workers pass through in the process of assimilating change (parallels stages of grief or bereavement).

1. The first stage is shock, during which the employee typically denies that the change is occurring, pulls back from any risk-taking, and becomes timid and protective.
2. The second stage is defensive retreat, characterized by continued unwillingness to change, accompanied by anger at the change or at those promulgating it.
3. The third stage is acknowledgment, which includes the mourning of what has been and the acceptance that something new is taking its place.
4. The fourth stage is adaptation and change, in which doubt, resentment, and fear are replaced by growing enthusiasm and commitment.

The Seven Dynamics of Change

Whatever the kinds of change we encounter, certain patterns of response occur and re-occur. It is important that change leaders understand some of these patterns, since they are normal outcomes of the change process. Understanding them allows leaders to avoid over-reacting to the behaviors of people who, at times, seem to be reacting in mysterious, non-adaptive ways.

Ken Blanchard, well-known management consultant, has described seven dynamics of change designed to help managers better address employee reactions to change (*Inside Guide*, October 1992). They are summarized here.

1. People will feel awkward, ill-at-ease and self-conscious

Whenever you ask people to do things differently, you disrupt their habitual ways of doing things. This tends to make people feel awkward or uncomfortable as they struggle to eliminate the old responses and learn the new. Think back to your own experience and you will discover this theme. Whether it be learning to use a computer, the first time picking up your infant, or dealing with a new reporting relationship, recall the self-consciousness that you probably felt. People want to get it right, and fear that they will appear inadequate.

2. People initially focus on what they have to give up

Even for positive changes such as promotions, or those that result in more autonomy or authority, people will concentrate on what they will be losing. As a change leader you need to acknowledge the loss of the old ways, and not get frustrated at what may seem to be an irrational or tentative response to change.

3. People will feel alone even if everyone else is going through the same change

Everyone feels (or wants to feel) that their situation is unique and special. Unfortunately, this tends to increase the sense of isolation for people undergoing change. It is important for the change leader to be proactive and gentle in showing that the employee's situation is understood. If employees see YOU as emotionally and practically supportive during the tough times your position will be enhanced and the change will be easier.

4. People can handle only so much change

On a personal level, people who undergo too much change within too short a time will become dysfunctional, and in some cases may become physically sick. While some changes are beyond our control, it is important not to pile change upon change upon change. While changes such as downsizing bring opportunity to do other positive things, the timing of additional changes is important. If you are contemplating introducing changes (that are under your control), it may be a good idea to bounce your ideas off employees. A good question to ask is "How would you feel if . . ."

5. People are at different levels of readiness for change

Some people thrive and change. It's exciting to them. Others don't. It's threatening to them. Understand that any change will have supporters and people who have difficulty adapting. In time many people who resist initially will come onboard. Consider that those people who are ready for the change can influence others who are less ready. Open discussion allows this influence process to occur.

6. People will be concerned that they don't have enough resources

People perceive that change takes time and effort, even if it has the long-term effect of reducing workload. They are correct that there is a learning time for most change, and that this may affect their work. It is important for change leaders to acknowledge that this may occur, and to offer practical support if possible. In the downsizing scenario this will be even more crucial, since resources themselves are cut. Consider following the downsizing with a process whereby job tasks are reviewed to examine whether they are still necessary.

7. If you take the pressure off, people will revert to their old behavior

If people perceive that you are not serious about doing things the new way, they will go back to the old way. Sometimes this will be in the open, and sometimes this will be covert. Blanchard uses the word pressure; think of it also in terms of leadership role. The leader must remind people that there is a new course, and that the new course will remain. Coaching towards the new ways is also important.

Conclusion

It is important for leaders to anticipate and respond to employee concerns and feelings, whether they are expressed in terms of practical issues, or emotional responses. When planning for, and anticipating change, include a detailed reaction analysis. Try to identify the kinds of reactions and questions that employees will have, and prepare your responses. Remember that the success of any change rests with the ability of the leaders to address both the emotional and practical issues, in that order.

Managing Resistance to Change

In his article, “Managing Change,” Todd Jick identifies these strategies to help overcome resistance to change:

1. Listen, empathize, and acknowledge difficulties. Many people simply want their concerns to be legitimized and acknowledged. Although they may realize that change is needed, they struggle to accept it. Dismissing their concerns and emotions outright will likely harden their resistance. In addition, it is important to listen to see what underlies the resistance. Is it a problem of will or of skill?

2. Communicate key information. When relevant information is provided, people are less anxious, less fearful, and better able to focus on the reasons for the changes. In particular, you should address concrete questions, such as how jobs, responsibilities, and reward systems will be affected by the changes. This includes negative changes. It is far better for employees to get a straightforward report from their managers, along with practical help in dealing with the effects of change, than it is for them to depend on rumors.

3. Where possible, accommodate legitimate concerns. Provide training and support. Concerns and issues about the change content or process may emerge that should indeed be factored in. Consider doing so, where appropriate. Moreover, the concerns may be related to the individual’s confidence and capability for change. Additional training or coaching might be needed. Or, their concerns may be less with the content of the change than with gaining more of a role in the process.

4. Involve skeptics. Skeptics of change can often become supporters of the change when given a role in the process, particularly one in which they will find themselves having to be associated publicly with the change. For example, putting skeptics on steering committees can be very effective.

5. Apply pressure through politically influential persons and incentives for change. In order to create more motivation, it may be necessary to use more direct pressure tactics through influential opinion leaders or by sanctioning undesired behaviors. These hardball tactics should be used as a last attempt at “unfreezing” the individual.

6. If all the above fails, resisters should be transferred or fired, in order not to impede progress in making the change. If one has genuinely tried to increase both the readiness and the capability of an individual, and yet the individual cannot respond in one way or the other, he or she should be removed from the organization. The principle should be, “If you cannot change the person, change the person!” One who is ultimately not receptive to change must be replaced.

Discussion Questions: How Do You View Change?

- Do you see change as a challenge or something to avoid?

- What are the obvious advantages of change?

- What are the obvious disadvantages of change?

- What are the aspects of change that make you feel threatened?

- What is the worst possible outcome?

- What changes are you currently experiencing at Frank's?

- Can you foresee any long-term benefits or opportunities that may result from this change?

- How does a change affect people around you?

- What can you do now to make the change better?

Prepare Yourself for Change—Best Practices

- Develop a positive attitude. Try to see change as an opportunity and a challenge that will make you a stronger and better person.
- Learn as much as you can about a change. The more information you have, the more prepared you will be to deal with it, and therefore the less likely you will have to worry. Take time to think the whole matter over in a structured way, rather than worrying about details.
- Express your feelings. Discuss your fears and excitement about the change both with your friends and with yourself.
- Develop an action plan. Think through how you can improve the situation. Look for potential losses in gains, then look at ways of maximizing the gains and minimizing the losses. Visualize the result you want to achieve, then work out what you need to get there.
- Stay healthy. During periods of change, eat well and get plenty of exercise.
- Count on your support network. Tell your friends and family how you feel about the change.
- Don't take on too much. Delegate and say no to extra commitments. Relax. Try to get away from the situation and allow time for emotional repair.

Meetings

To make meetings less stressful . . .

- Set an agenda: Time, Length and Location
- Identify the participants: Seven or fewer
- Provide background information
- Identify goals of the meeting
- Begin the meeting on time
- Identify time constraints
- Encourage participation
- Keep discussions on track
- Keep a positive tone
- Conclude meeting on time
- Give warning shortly before conclusion to wrap up
- Summarize results and future action items
- Acknowledge contributions of group participants
- Build agenda for next meeting based on results or action items of previous meeting
- Follow-up on assignments with groups members

Chapter 3

Rational Thinking

Many stress-related problems occur as the result of distorted thinking. By understanding the relationship between thoughts and feelings, you can be better equipped to challenge the thinking that leads to stress. In this chapter we'll focus on these stress-reducing techniques:

- Challenge distorted thinking
- Use problem-solving techniques
- Think less rigidly
- Demolish worries

Principles of Rational Thinking

- The way you think affects your mood. How you interpret an event will affect how you feel.
- Information changes thinking. The more information you have about a situation, the less likely you are to be frightened by it.
- Your mood affects the way you think. A depressed mood is based on an inaccurate, filtered perception of reality.
- Everyone is prone to distorted thinking.
- Beware of distorted thinking. If you are aware that your thinking can become distorted, you can change your manner of thinking and therefore your mood.

Challenge Distorted Thinking

When we are stressed or depressed, we have a built-in selective bias to attend to negative thoughts and images from the past, which affects our perception of the present and the future. Categories of distorted thinking include the following:

All-or-Nothing Thinking. Thinking in absolutes with no middle ground. If a situation falls short of perfect, you see it as a failure.

Awfulizing or Catastrophizing. The tendency to magnify the importance of events and overestimate the possibility of disaster. “Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong.”

Personalizing. The tendency to take responsibility and blame for any unpleasant event, even if it has little or nothing to do with you. Leads to feelings of guilt, shame, inadequacy.

Negative Filter. The tendency to focus on negative details, ignoring or misinterpreting positive aspects of a situation. You put yourself down, even when you do a good job.

Jumping to Conclusions. The tendency to make a negative interpretation even when there are no facts to support your conclusion. “I saw her out with a man. She must be having an affair.”

Fixed Rules (Shouldism): The tendency to live by fixed rules and expectations, regularly using the words “should,” “ought to,” “must,” “I can’t.” Rigid rules make you feel guilty, frustrated and disappointed.

Common Irrational Beliefs

- I need to be liked
- I must be successful
- It’s a disaster when things go wrong.
- The worst is going to happen
- My moods are ruled by outside forces.
- It’s easier to avoid difficult situations.
- I cannot change the way I am.
- People should behave properly.
- I can be happy by doing nothing.

Challenge Irrational Thoughts through Emotional Sequencing

You are driving with your husband. You warn him of an oncoming car and he reacts angrily.

Irrational Thought	Thinking Distortion	Challenging Thought
I have made him angry and upset. It's all my fault.	Personalizing	He has a headache and that's what's making him irritable.
I nag him too much. I should be a better wife. I hate myself.	All or nothing thinking Fixed rules (Shouldism)	I do nag sometimes, but its not a reason for him to hate me.
He hates me.	Jumping to conclusions Awfulizing All-or-nothing thinking	I have no grounds for believing this. It's not as awful as I think. I know he loves me.
He's going to be angry with me for the rest of the day, now.	Jumping to conclusions All-or-nothing thinking	Why should he be? It wasn't serious and he's not petty.
I suppose it was better to warn him than to risk an accident	None	This was a rational thought!

Activity:

Identify an irrational thought that currently bothers you?

Identify any personal or work-related stressors that may be lurking behind that thought?

Identify a thinking distortion behind the irrational thought (e.g. all-or-nothing thinking; awfulizing, see p. 50)?

Challenge the irrational thought with a rational one. Write it down here.

Effective Problem Solving

The practice of identifying challenges as objective problems--problems to be solved, not taken personally, not worried about, but tackled using brainpower and available resources—is one of the most important stress-reducers.

What Is a Problem?

A problem exists when there is a gap or variance between what you plan (what you expect to happen) and what you get (your outcomes or results). Problems can be classified into three groups:

- **Actual Problems.** These problems have already occurred or are presently occurring.
 - Costs are running out of line
 - A valued employee has quit
 - Turnover is higher than expected
- **Future Problems.** These problems involve addressing something will take place in the immediate future.
 - How to complete a specific project on time
 - How to communicate with employees about an imminent change
- **Potential Problems.** These problems potentially could occur. You want to take preventative action now so that they never arise and never require a future solution.
 - How to provide back up electricity to a refrigeration system in case of a power failure
 - How to communicate with the media in the event of potentially damaging news

How Are Problems Solved?

Problems are solved when whatever has caused or will cause the gap between what is desired and what is real is removed.

- Problem: a goal of zero accidents is negated by three accidents in one month on a new slicing machine
- Cause: the safety guard is being bypassed
- Solution: remove the old guard, design and install a foolproof guard

A Systematic Approach to Solving Problems

1. State the problems clearly and specifically.
2. Gather information relevant to the problem. Collect data process changes, materials used, equipment functioning, design specifications, employee performance, assignments given, etc.
3. Brainstorm and list possible causes for the problem. What has occurred to cause the gap between what was expected and what actually occurred? What changed?
4. Select the cause that seems most likely. Use a process of elimination. Test a cause to see if it is probable. Try seeing what difference it would make if that factor returned to its original state.
5. Brainstorm and list as many solutions for removing causes as you can. There is rarely only one way to solve a problem. Make your list of alternatives as long as possible.
6. Determine the pros and cons for each proposed solution. To judge which is best, determine a set of criteria (less expensive, faster, more participative, more in line with policy, etc.). Base evaluation on facts gathered in Step 2.
7. Choose the best solution. Make a decision based on the relative weight of strengths and weaknesses.
8. Set out a plan of action to carry out your solution. Decisions require action and follow-up. Plan what will be done, who will do it, how, where and when. What are the resources? What is the deadline?

Steps and Common Traps of the Problem-Solving Process

Steps	Common Traps
Identifying & diagnosing the problem	Focusing on <i>symptoms</i> , not problems Assuming a knowledge of <i>causes</i>
Generating alternatives	Seizing the <i>first suggestion</i> rather than seeing a range of options Being highly <i>evaluative</i> about the ideas before they are fully understood
Evaluating options	Over-reliance on <i>subjective</i> data Number crunching <i>without judgment</i> <i>Not</i> searching for <i>integrative</i> solutions
Making a decision	<i>Closing too</i> quickly on the first attractive option <i>Smoothing over disagreements</i> <i>Not</i> getting full commitment from all members
Implementing the decision	Not agreeing on "who will do <i>what</i> by <i>when</i> " Not getting <i>support</i> from other members

Whose Responsibility Is This Problem?

Whose job is it to make sure that the problem-solving sequence is adequately handled? Too often it is seen as solely the leader's responsibility. But teams tend to be more successful when all members feel that obligation. Taking the problem-solving sequence as an example, can't the members do as much as the leader to make sure the steps are adequately handled? Following are examples of comments that any member can make to help the group deal with the various steps.

1. Defining the Problem

- "I think we are discussing more the symptom than the real problem. Isn't the core problem...?"
- "Have we really diagnosed what caused this difficulty? I think there are some other causes we need to look at."
- "I think that the two of you have defined the problem differently: Joe, it sounds as if you see it as X, while Mary, it seems that you are defining it in terms of Y."

2. Generating Alternatives

- "We seem to be debating the pros and cons of only two options. Could we hold off evaluating them and continue brainstorming more possibilities?"
- "Three of us have been doing most of the talking; before moving on to the evaluating stage, let's bear from the other members to make sure we have all ideas out."

3. Evaluating Options

- "Let's list on the board the pros and cons of each of the options; I think we are starting to argue the two sides of just one alternative and we need to evaluate all of them objectively."
- "I am hearing a lot of opinions; what we need are facts. Could we list the evidence needed to assess these options?"

4. Deciding

- "Seems to me that we are getting close to a decision; could we check to see if we have agreement?"
- "I am not sure that all of us really buy in to this decision. I think you, Harry, and Jane, have some qualms. What would have to change in order for you really to support this decision?"

5. Implementing the Decision

- "I don't know if we have agreed who is going to carry this out. And what specifically do we expect that person to do?"
- "Jim, in taking responsibility for this, what do you need from the rest of us to make our decision fly?"

Is It Your Problem or Is It the Team's Problem

Factors	Decide Alone	Consult with One Employee	Consult with Team
Whose Problem?	Yours alone	His or hers	The group's, ours
Time	None available	Some available	Much available
Expertise	Fully expert	Expert advice is needed	Expert advice is needed
Technical Know-How	Full know-how	Need to fill in gaps in technical know-how	Need to fill in gaps in technical know-how
Can others add anything to the decision?	No	Yes	Yes
Will you accept suggestions?	Not likely	Yes, from someone you respect	Yes, from an effective unit
Will it help others carry out project if they are involved in decisions?	No significance, you will carry out project yourself	Yes, helpful and essential	Yes, necessary and essential
Coordination of effort	Not needed, you will handle it all	Vertical, necessary with your boss or your employees	Horizontal, needed and necessary among your team
Learning value	No value to anyone else	Value to one employee, potentially	Value to your whole team

General Problem Solving Tips

1. Evaluate alternative solutions and select the best one based on the facts available.
2. Decisions based on hunches or intuition may work out well but are harder to defend when things go wrong. Decisions are likely to be better if goals are clearly understood.
3. When solving a problem, conduct a cost-benefit or input-output analysis. Is the cost and effort invested in solving this problem and carrying out the decision balanced out by actual or potential outputs or results? “Does the juice merit the squeeze?”
4. Once a problem has been solved, there is no use in solving it again. “Programmed” decisions are those that have been encoded in standard procedure or policy to deal with recurring problems.
5. When solving problems, pick your spots. Make decisions only where the potential for payoff is great. Often 20% of your problems account for 80% of your losses. Focus on the big problems.
6. When solving problems, maintain your perspective:
 - Don’t reach too high. Don’t set your objectives at the very top. Leave a margin of error.
 - Don’t over commit or overextend your resources. Save something for future unanticipated problems.
 - Always prepare a fallback position, a way to alter plans to achieve at least part of your objective.
7. Information is the substance out of which problems are solved:
 - The more critical and lasting effect of the decision, the more you can afford to look for the last scrap of information.
 - Don’t use the absence of information as an excuse for procrastination.
 - Rely on your management information system. A good MIS system will provide supervisors with the data they need to make effective decisions.

Demolish Your Worries

Not everyone suffers from constant worrying, but for some, it is one of the biggest wasters of time and energy. It can put you through a great deal of suffering and stress. Most worrying is unnecessary, since the situations you fear rarely happen, and even if it is justified, worrying does not help. The only positive function of worrying is when it alerts you to danger and prompts action. If your car brakes feel strange or the red oil light comes on, it would be foolish to ignore these signals. However, if the red light's flashing spurs you to top off the oil, your reaction could be classed as problem solving rather than worrying. Unlike worrying, problem-solving involves clearly identifying the problem, examining all available options, choosing the most advantageous, and then planning a strategy for accomplishing the chosen option.

Worrying is a natural enemy of good moods and damages physical and emotional health. It can make you depressed, cause panic attacks, lead you to smoke or drink, and cause sleep problems and physical symptoms, such as headaches and irritable bowel syndrome.

Worrying tends to make you introspective and self-centered. You develop a “selective attention,” permanently searching for clues around you that confirm your worrying. If, for example, you worry that you are going to be robbed, you will notice “signs” that you would usually ignore. Worrying is also self-perpetuating - the more you worry, the worse you feel, the more you worry. If you are prone to worry, it helps to talk to other people. Their feedback often puts your thinking back into perspective and reduces the distortions, enabling you to air your feelings.

PINPOINT THE WORRYING THOUGHT. Worry is often the result of a number of half-formed thoughts chasing one another around in your conscious and sometimes unconscious mind. This vicious circle can be broken by deliberately “airing” or identifying the worrying thoughts. Write down your top five worries. Bringing these out into the open relieves pressure and gives you something to work on. Deal with one worry at a time.

LOOK FOR THE EVIDENCE. Instead of assuming that your thought is true, examine the evidence. What is the probability that it is true? Test out your thought by writing down the evidence for both sides of the argument. Rate the thought on a scale of 0 to 10 in terms of how much you actually believe it. For example, if you think “I am useless at this job,” you might rate this as only 3 in terms of how much you believe the statement.

PUT YOURSELF IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES. What alternative views are there? How would someone else view this situation? Think of two or three significant people in your life and imagine how they might view this situation. Put yourself in their shoes. What would they say to you? Talk to yourself out loud. What advice would they give?

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS. Question the effects of thinking the way you do. This question deals with your negative thoughts from the perspective of motivation rather than truth. Ask yourself, “How will holding this thought help me and how will it hurt me?” List the advantages and disadvantages of holding a particular negative thought. When the disadvantages are greater than the advantages, try to revise the thought.

EXPLORE THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOME. What is the worst thing that can happen? Imagine walking into a cave. You might be terrified. But if you switch on a flashlight your fear disappears as you see the limits of the cave. Our fantasies are usually much worse than a clearly identified worst option. By placing limits on our worries and identifying the worst possible outcome, they are easier to deal with.

VISUALIZE YOURSELF IN TEN YEARS FROM NOW. Ask yourself if your worry will matter in ten years' time. Imagine that you are ten years older and are looking back to this time in your life. How important will this concern be in the long term? You will often find that, when observed from a distance, mountains can appear as molehills.

THINK IN SHADES OF GRAY. Are you thinking in all-or-nothing, black-and-white terms? Do you see yourself as a total success or a total failure? This common style of distorted thinking misses out on the middle ground, the gray area between the black and white. Try to find the middle ground or a percentage between 0 and 100. For example, "On this project I have been 60 percent successful."

BOX IN YOUR WORRIES. If you are plagued by worries, set aside 20 minutes per day that is dedicated worry time, in which you tackle each worry as a problem you need to solve. If you find yourself worrying at other times during the day, postpone that worry until the allotted time.

TURN WORRY INTO ACTION. Ask yourself what you can do to change or improve the situation. Make a list of the things you could do. Worry is only useful when it spurs you on to solve problems - although you can solve problems without the unpleasant side effects of worry. If constructive action is feasible and beneficial, then it is worth doing.

WATCH OUT FOR DISTORTED THINKING. Examine the list of types of distorted thinking above and learn to prevent these types of thoughts. Ask yourself: "Am I thinking in all-or-nothing terms?" "Am I catastrophizing?" "Am I personalizing?" "Am I jumping to conclusions?" "Am I focusing on the negative?" "Am I living by fixed rules?"

MAINTAIN PERSPECTIVE. Compare the present problem with other important issues in your life. For example, if you are worrying because you are stuck in a traffic jam and are going to be late for a meeting, how does this compare with the time when your mother was critically ill? People often say: "It suddenly struck me that it's only a job... it's not the most important thing in my life."

DISTRACT YOURSELF. If you reach the conclusion that there is nothing you can do, stop worrying and distract yourself with an absorbing activity. Distraction can work on a macro level, where you might change jobs or take up a hobby. Distraction can also work on a micro level, where you can take your mind off worrying thoughts by playing mental games, reciting poetry, or by focusing on a detail of your environment.

Chapter 4

Improve Relationships

Conflicted or broken relationships are stressful. This chapter focuses on life skills that can help us improve our relationships at home and work.

Top Ten Factors that Make a Relationship Work

1. Faithfulness and loyalty to partner
2. Mutual respect and appreciation
3. Understanding and tolerance
4. Not wanting to change partner
5. Fulfilling sexual relationship
6. Talking openly and communicating
7. Sharing common interests
8. Expressing emotions
9. Sharing chores
10. Having independent interests

Which of these factors are particularly important at work?

Communication Spoilers

1. Judging, blaming, criticizing
2. Name calling, putting people down
3. Moralizing, ordering people around
4. Offering solutions and solving problems rather than listening
5. Excessive inappropriate questioning using closed questions
6. Interrupting, finishing sentences
7. Dismissing the other person's concerns

Can you think of a specific situation in your work experience where one or more of these communication spoilers, created a stressful work environment?

Clear Communication

- **The ability to be clear and accurate in one's statements.** Good communicators are clear and accurate in their statements. Clear communication means that when you speak, write, or otherwise communicate, your listener understands your intended message. Clear communication is listener-focused, presented in a way (language, order, level) that the listener can understand. Clear communication leads the listener from point A to point B. Clear communication requires that the speaker be explicit about her/his purpose and goals. Clear communication involves avoiding jargon, using visual aids, using short sentences and short words and having a beginning, middle and end to the overall message.
- **Active listening.** Active listening involves providing some form of feedback to a speaker that informs her/him that the message sent has been received. Feedback may simply consist of a nod of the head or a two-word acknowledgment, "I see," that lets the speaker know that their message has been heard. At higher levels of active listening (interactive listening), the amount of information that goes back to the sender is increased. Techniques may include brief restatements or parroting, summations, reflecting, reframing and paraphrasing. Asking follow-up questions is an extension of this process (see below). Active listening is important because people are interested in being heard. Good listening skills encourage the speaker to provide clear, accurate information.
- **The ability to ask quality questions.** Effective questioning is a communication skill necessary to gather information and to help identify the interests that underlie positions. Good questions clarify confusing factors or issues. A good communicator can search for broad areas of mutual agreement through open-ended questions that enable a speaker to talk. Focused-questions, either-or/yes-no questions can narrow the focus on specific issues. Effective communicators plan their questions. They ask with a purpose, tailor their questions to their listeners, follow general questions with more specific ones, keep their questions short and clear, cover only one subject at a time and give their listeners time to answer.
- **Reading non-verbal cues.** Good communicators pay attention to the non-verbal cues coming from the speaker. These involve proxemics (the spatial relationships between the parties); kinesics (the body language inherent in physical movement) and paralinguistics (the vocal portion of the message other than words—pitch, tone, pace, volume). By observing such non-verbal cues, we can gain a clearer understanding of what is being spoken, of what issues are more or less important to them, of what issues cause stress, of when people are losing interest, need a break or are turning off to our arguments. Effective communicators are also aware of their own body language, of how to use it to emphasize their points and how to avoid signals that unintentionally communicate disinterest or judgment about the speaker's comments or positions.

Exercises to Enhance Your Relationship

Every relationship is likely to suffer if either partner is under stress, whatever the cause. Too many demands can make it all too easy to neglect your relationship, often causing problems with communication, loss of sex drive, or simply taking your partner for granted.

Unless you can step back and rectify the situation, your deteriorating relationship will cause further stress until the situation comes to a head and fundamental damage is done. The following exercises have been chosen to allow you and your partner to work on developing skills that form the ingredients of a sound relationship. Take some time together to go through each of these and learn to appreciate each other. However good your relationship, there are always areas that can be spiced up, enhanced, and worked on. These exercises will teach you to understand the importance of accepting differences in each other and of communicating feelings. You must be prepared to change aspects of your behavior that your partner does not like, to be more spontaneous, and to spend spare time together. If you have neglected the habit of showing appreciation, you may need a jolt. It is often the little things in a relationship that are most important; you may need to be reminded of them.

MAKE A CONTRACT. Draw up a list of the specific behaviors that you would like your partner to increase, or do more of, and the specific behaviors you would like your partner to decrease or do less of. Then agree to exchange a behavior, of equal difficulty, and agree to make a contract. For example, “I will put the top on the toothpaste every day, and you will hang up your towel.” It is best to start on small, simple tasks that are relatively easy to achieve and gradually work up to more difficult tasks.

REDISCOVER SPONTANEITY. After a while, couples know each other so well that routines become predictable. Make a deliberate effort to do things differently, and break old familiar habits. For example, sleep on the other side of the bed, dress differently, sit in a different chair to watch television, get up very early, tell a joke, miss a meal. One variation on this exercise is to make a pact with your partner for a week to each do something slightly differently every day. At the end of each day you and your partner have to guess what the spontaneous thing was.

PINPOINT SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES. On a large sheet of paper, list all the ways that you and your partner are alike, and all the ways that you are different. Include interests, attitudes, skills, likes, dislikes, personalities, and general outlook. Do the exercise separately, and then discuss what you have written. Talk about the aspects in which you are alike, enjoy the feelings of similarity, and add to each other’s list. Now discuss areas in which you feel you are different. Identify differences that you are happy with and would like to continue, and differences that you find hard to accept and would like the other person to change.

MAKE A DATE. Coordinate your schedules and make a deliberate effort to spend some special time alone together each week. This should not be watching television but perhaps having a leisurely meal together, or sitting and talking over a drink. Once a month make one of these dates together a special occasion, when you go out to see a show, to a restaurant, or do another activity that you both enjoy. Take turns choosing where to go and organizing a babysitter for the evening.

LITTLE THINGS ARE IMPORTANT. Look down the following checklist of simple relationship-enhancing tasks and check off the ones that you do regularly:

- Kiss or touch when saying good-bye
- Bring surprise gifts, flowers or candy
- Ask about and discuss the day your partner has had
- Plan a night out in advance
- Compliment your partner on his or her appearance
- Cuddle and be affectionate without sex
- Touch hands when talking or walking
- Make your partner a drink
- Surprise your partner with a love note or a poem
- Create “quality” time alone together

DO YOU RECEIVE THE APPRECIATION YOU DESERVE? This is a useful exercise to help you learn where and how to support, develop, and please each other. For a relationship to flourish, each partner needs to give and receive small signs, or “strokes,” of appropriate appreciation. List all the things that you do, at home or at work, for which you think you deserve strokes. Then go through the list and put a plus sign next to items where you feel you receive sufficient strokes, and a minus next to the items where you feel you receive insufficient strokes. Do this separately and then exchange and discuss lists.

WRITE A STRUCTURED LETTER. If you’re feeling angry or frustrated with each other, instead of having a fight, each write a letter expressing your feelings under the following seven headings:

- “I feel angry that . . .”
- “I feel sad that . . .”
- “I feel afraid that . . .”
- “I regret that . . .”
- “I love it when . . .”
- “I would like it if . . .”
- “I am sorry . . .”

Write a few sentences about each feeling, then exchange letters and discuss your letters with your partner.

TREAT EACH OTHER. Make an agreement to take turns, each day, to ask your partner to do something for you or with you that you will enjoy. This should be a simple favor that your partner can do without feeling uncomfortable. Tasks might include watching a television program together, cooking you a meal, washing your hair for you, giving a massage, going for a walk, making you a drink, or sitting down and talking for ten minutes. Sometimes couples find it very difficult to think of favors that they would like since they have lost the habit of being together and helping each other. Take time to think about it and start with something small.

OPEN TALK. Set aside a period of time when each partner has the opportunity to talk openly and the other partner has to listen without comment or interruption. Agree on a set period between 5 and 25 minutes each. If one partner finds it difficult to talk, start with the shorter time period. Then decide who is going to go first. The first person then says whatever is on his or her mind and how he or she is feeling. The other person listens without interrupting or commenting. Then change roles. This can be a difficult but rewarding exercise, particularly if you are having trouble communicating. Make an agreement that either partner can ask for an open talk at any time.

Chapter 5

Self-Care

In this chapter we focus on self-care as a life skill essential to managing stress. Topics include:

- Learning to relax
- Reducing environmental stress
- Physical exercise
- Healthy eating
- Tips and Best Practices (Hobbies, Pets, Spirituality, Friends, Massage)

Relaxation

When you are stressed, your body goes into a state of high physical arousal. Your body systems speed up, your muscles tense, your heart beats more rapidly, and your breathing becomes quicker and shallower (remember the Fight or Flight response). Secondary symptoms include headache, backache, tightness in the chest, sweating, tiredness, which all produce worry, which spirals you down physically and emotionally. Relaxation is a technique you can use to intentionally break the vicious cycle, to slow down and turn off the tension.

The Three-Minute Relaxation Routine

1. Tune your breathing and choose an instruction, such as “Let go,” or “Calm.”
2. Repeat the word repeatedly in your mind as you breathe in and out slowly.

3. Take in one deep breath and hold it.
4. While you are holding your breath, tense up one group of muscles, such as the muscles in your face, legs or arms.
5. As you breathe out, relax the muscles and let go. Feel your tension slip away. Drop your shoulders.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Technique

1. This exercise takes about 20 minutes. It involves tightening each muscle group in your body in a sequential order, holding for five seconds and gradually relaxing and releasing for 10-15 seconds.
2. Sit or lie down quietly. Begin by thinking relaxing thoughts, any comfortable image you can imagine. Take three deep breaths and focus on the tension in your body.
3. Go through each muscle group in the suggested order. Tense the muscles as tightly as you can. Hold for five seconds then gradually release. Follow this order:
 - Hands: Clench your fists.
 - Arms: Tighten the biceps and lower arm together, by pulling toward the shoulder without clenching your fists.
 - Shoulders: Hunch your shoulders up toward your ears.
 - Forehead: Raise your eyebrows and wrinkle your forehead.
 - Eyes: Tightly screw up your eyes and then let them gradually smooth out.
 - Jaw: Bite your back teeth together.
 - Lips: Press your lips and front teeth together.
 - Face: Screw up your whole face.
 - Neck up: Stretch your chin up, pushing your neck back.
 - Neck down: Pull your chin forward onto your chest.
 - Stomach: Tightly hold in your stomach muscles
 - Bottom: Clench your buttocks together.
 - Thighs: Push your heels down hard against the floor, feel the tightness.
 - Claves: Point your toes and feet up.
 - Feet: Clench your toes.
4. As you release each muscle group, relax and feel the tension drain away. Concentrate on the feelings in the muscles as they go from tense to loose. Notice the difference between tension and relaxation. Perform the tightening and relaxation of each muscle group twice before moving on to the next group.

Relaxed Breathing

1. The most relaxed breathing is slow, stomach-centered breathing from the diaphragm. Set aside 5-10 minutes twice a day for a week until you feel familiar with this exercise.
2. Sit in a quiet place. Close your eyes. Put your left hand on your chest and your right hand on your stomach and concentrate on breathing slowly in and out.
3. When you are breathing correctly you should feel your stomach hand moving up and down. If your chest hand is moving and not your stomach hand, you are breathing thoracically, which is a sign of stress.
4. To correct thoracic breathing, focus straight ahead and breath through your nose only. Do this without making a noise. If you can hear your breathing, you are doing it too forcefully.
5. Breathe in deeply and slowly. Pause between the “in” and the “out” and mouth the word, “relax.”

Personal Commitment:

I want to take care of myself. In order to reduce stress in my life, I commit to practicing the following relaxation routine:

Reduce Environmental Stress

Light, Air Quality, Space, Noise and Color can all have a noticeable effect on your stress level.

1. When working indoors, take breaks and get out into the natural light as much as possible, or sit close to a window. Most people feel happier and healthier in bright sunlight. Natural light regulates the levels of the hormone melatonin. Insufficient light causes a buildup, which can cause lethargy and depression (SAD: seasonal affective disorder)
2. If you work in a dry, sealed centrally heated or air-conditioned space, plants, bowls of water or an ionizer may help. The air in sealed buildings is often very dry, which can make you feel drowsy, less efficient and may cause headaches, hay fever and stuffiness. Negative ions get charged positively in the presence of central air and heating, cigarette smoking, hot electrical equipment and overcrowding (40,000 per cubic cm on a mountaintop vs. 40 per ccm in an air-conditioned office full of computer equipment).
3. If you cannot escape air conditioning, set the thermostat at 68F.
4. Minimize the amount of time you are subjected to noise above 85 decibels—a conversation is about 60 db, a crying baby, 100 db.
5. Decorate your home with relaxing furniture and colors conducive to your mental well-being.

Personal Commitment:

As I look around my personal and work-related spaces, I commit to adopting the following changes that will make my environment less stressful:

Physical Exercise

Regular exercise improves the efficiency of the heart, enhances lung function, maintains good circulation, lowers blood pressure and improves the body's immune system. It is also a relaxant, easing muscle tension and reducing the symptoms of stress. During exercise the body releases hormones such as endorphins, which act as natural anti-depressants. It also allows you to distance yourself from the demands of everyday life.

Fitness involves three distinct elements: stamina, suppleness and strength. Developing all three is key to good health. Aerobic exercises, those that can be performed without a break for at least 12 minutes are the best for increasing general levels of fitness (cycling, jogging, walking, swimming, rowing). You should ideally try to do 20-30 minutes of exercise two or three times per week. Allow at least one hour after a meal before your start exercising.

Personal Commitment:

I need to take better care of myself. I commit to the following weekly exercise routine:

Healthy Eating

A balanced diet can lift your mood, give you energy, prevent illness, strengthen your immune system and make you feel better about coping with life's stresses. In general, follow these guidelines:

1. More fiber, less fat. Eat at least 30 grams of fiber a day. Stay away from saturated fats. Total fat intake should not exceed 85 grams per day.
2. Cut down on "Mood Foods":
 - Salt: too much can lead to high blood pressure, which can lead to stroke and heart disease.
 - Sugar: a high intake can give you a short-term surge of energy. Too much, over the long term can overwork the adrenal glands, depleting the body of strength and causing irritability, the lack of concentration and mood swings.
 - Alcohol: too much can reduce your body's ability to handle stress and cause long term damage to your heart and liver. Can also lead to obesity.
 - Caffeine: a stimulant that can activate your adrenal glands, increase blood pressure, stimulate the heart and mimic the stress response. Take in too much and your body becomes agitated and the side effects may be panic attacks, poor mental control, palpitations, headaches and migraine.

Tips for Healthy Eating

<p>EAT MORE HIGH-FIBER FOODS</p> <p>High-fiber foods reduce the risk of heart disease by absorbing the cholesterol in your blood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fiber ➤ Fruit ➤ Wholegrain bread, flour, and pasta ➤ Beans, peas, and lentils ➤ Baked or boiled potatoes with skins on ➤ Unsalted nuts or dried fruit instead of chips ➤ Brown rice 	<p>EAT MORE LOW-FAT FOODS</p> <p>Low-fat foods help you stay slim and healthy and keep cholesterol levels down.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ White meat, e.g., chicken ➤ Skim or low-fat milk ➤ Raw, boiled, or steamed fresh vegetables served without butter or oily dressing ➤ Low-fat spread or margarine that is high in polyunsaturates - Substitute low-fat yogurt for cream ➤ Grilled, steamed, or baked food ➤ Fish 	<p>AVOID "MOOD FOODS"</p> <p>Cut out or reduce your intake of the following foods and drinks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tea or coffee - reduce the strength, use decaffeinated or an herbal substitute ➤ Sugar, in tea and coffee, breakfast cereals, bottled drinks ➤ Puddings, desserts ➤ Salt - in cooking and in snacks <p>EAT LESS FAT</p> <p>Cut down on all fat, especially saturated fat, which raises cholesterol levels. Always choose polyunsaturated fats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fried foods ➤ Butter, saturated margarine ➤ Whole milk ➤ Red meat, e.g., beef, lamb ➤ Chips, chocolate, cakes ➤ Cream, mayonnaise, salad dressing
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Personal Commitment

I recognize that I am what I eat. To reduce stress and take better care of myself I commit to eating a healthy diet. Identify below the foods you'll try to cut out and those you'll try to eat more of.

Other Self-Care Tips

Develop Hobbies and Interests

A recent ten-year study revealed that the best guarantee to long-term happiness was “serious leisure,” a hobby or activity that involves your whole being. What it is doesn’t matter as long as you find it challenging and absorbing. Dancing ranked on the top of the list because it combines three important ingredients: music, exercise and social contact. Other high scorers were involvement with a religious group and team sports.

Get a Pet

Another branch of research shows that caring for pets gives you happiness, makes you feel wanted, and brings additional meaning to life. Simply stroking a pet or watching a fish swim in an aquarium can lower the heart rate, reduce blood pressure and lower levels of stress.

Expand Your Circle of Friends

Research has shown that an extensive social network is an effective insulator against stress. One study showed that women who had one important confiding relationship were 90% less likely to become depressed than women who had no such relationship.

Spirituality

All the great spiritual disciplines are great stress reducers: prayer, meditation, singing, reading psalms, confession and service.

Get a Massage

Massage is a great stress releaser for everyone, but particularly for those who have experienced physical abuse at any point in life.

Fountains of Youth

Multiply Your Years by Adding Up These Numbers

By Melissa Gotthardt

Here's some sweet news: American men are living longer than ever. According to figures from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the current life expectancy of the average American man is 73 years, up from 46 years at the turn of the 20th century.

Before you take that six-pack and retire to the La-Z-Boy to celebrate, however, we have more news: You can do better. Biologists estimate that the human body has the potential to last 120 years, and how you live determines 75 percent of how far you go. To help you bank an extra decade or two, we've rounded up research on dozens of ways to live longer along with how many years each fix might carry. Sorry, the gains aren't cumulative. But the more of these steps you take, the greater the chance that you'll be alive and well at the turn of the 22nd century.

CONSUME 300 MG OF VITAMIN C DAILY. Add: 5.5 years

Research from the UCLA School of Public Health indicates that men with high vitamin C intakes live longer than men with low intakes. A 35-year-old man who takes in 300 milligrams (mg) or more of C a day has a life expectancy of 5.5 years longer than a man whose daily intake is less than 50 mg. Vitamin C may not get all the credit - high intake is often a sign of healthy habits - but getting enough C from fruits, vegetables and supplements is definitely smart.

KEEP YOUR CHOLESTEROL BELOW 200. Add: 4 years

Whatever it takes - diet, exercise, drugs - drop your total cholesterol below two bills. Bringing down moderately high cholesterol (up to 239) will buy you an extra six months, according to research. And if your level is in the 300-plus range, dropping down to 200 can extend your life by more than four years.

BURN 300 EXTRA CALORIES A DAY. Add: 2 or 3 years

An impressive number of animal studies show that decreasing calorie intake by one-third can lower cholesterol levels and increase life spans by a third or more. Though researchers aren't sure whether two-thirds the food translates into 20 or 30 more years in humans, it's easy to buy yourself at least a few more healthy, active years, says registered dietitian Elizabeth Somer, author of *Age-Proof Your Body*. "If a man usually consumes 3,000 calories a day, he can either cut back to 2,700 or increase his exercise by 300 calories a day. He'll get the same calorie deficit, but see more health benefits with the exercise," Somer says.

BOWL WITH YOUR BUDDIES ONCE A WEEK. Add 4.5 years

To live long and prosper, you need friends. In fact, one study estimates that being social can gain you nearly a decade. People with very poor social connections live 4.5 years less than expected while those with very good connections live 4.5 years longer.

HIRE A GUY TO CLEAN YOUR GUTTERS. Add: 2.5 months

Before you go climbing ladders or fiddling with electrical appliances, think again. According to University of Pittsburgh calculations, falls at home decrease average life expectancy by 13 days; fires and bums take off more than two weeks. Altogether, accidents in your own home can shave nearly three months off your life.

RUN TWO MILES FOUR TIMES A WEEK. Add: 8.7 years

A recent study of 18,000 men found that those who maintained the highest levels of aerobic fitness lived 8.7 years longer than the least-fit guys did. “We've always said that exercise can help you live longer, but this gives us the data to prove it,” says Dr. Ken Cooper, founder and director of the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research, which conducted the study. To attain that top fitness category, he recommends, run your two miles in 20 minutes or less.

CHANGE YOUR NAME. Add: 4.5 years

Check your monogram. A study conducted at the University of California at San Diego found that people with “positive” initials, they spelled out things like J.O.Y. or W.O.W., lived nearly 4.5 years longer than people with neutral initials. D.U.D.'s and A.S.S.'s lived nearly three years fewer. Other initials that may shorten your life: I.L.L. and D.E.D.

HAVE YOUR COLON CHECKED. Add: 2 to 3 years

The male tendency to avoid doctors may be one reason women live longer. Keeping that doctor's appointment can be key to preventing death from a variety of causes, including colon cancer. A recent study tabulated that getting screened for the disease can help you live two to three years longer. Your screening should include an annual fecal occult blood test starting at age 50 (earlier if you have a family history of colon cancer) and a flexible sigmoidoscopy and a digital rectal exam every five years. (You're probably already getting a yearly DRE for prostate cancer.)

CUT BACK ON CAR-PHONE CALLS. Add: 45 seconds for each call you don't make

Every day, 99 years of life are lost because of people who blab on their cell phones while driving and crash, according to Dr. Donald A. Redelmeier of the University of Toronto. “A one-minute cellular telephone call, on average, yields a 45-second reduction in life expectancy for the individual.” Most calls don't lead to fatal collisions, he says, but “some do, and that can lead to an enormous loss for an otherwise healthy person.”

TREAT YOUR ULCER. Add: 2.3 years

If you have stomach pain, having it checked could be an excellent life-extending strategy. According to a study published in the American Journal of Gastroenterology, curing your ulcer adds 2.3 years to the right-hand number on your tombstone. A regimen of antibiotics, which kill the H. pylori bacteria that cause many ulcers, and acid-blockers can handle the problem.

CHANGE YOUR KIDS DIAPERS... Add: about 1,000 days, if you're an owl monkey

According to Caltech researchers, the female tendency to take care of their young may be one reason females live longer. There's primate proof of this theory, the researchers say: It turns out that male chimpanzees and orangutans, the deadbeat dads of the monkey world, live only 60 percent to 80 percent as long as the females. But certain male simians, such as owl monkeys, which carry their kids around and are involved in their day-to-day rearing, outlive their mates, says Caltech biologist John Allman, author of *Evolving Brains*.

TELL HIM TO GET LOST. Add: 4 years

Sure, get involved when he's younger, but once your boy has grown up, get a life. German researchers found that male senior citizens whose lives revolved around the success or social support of their children died four years sooner than those who had friends and interests reaching beyond their children.

KEEP YOUR BP BOTTOM NUMBER BELOW 90. Add: 5 years

Taking steps to lower your blood pressure can add one to five years to your life, depending on how high you've let it balloon before taking those steps. If your diastolic (bottom number) reading is 90 to 94, reducing it to 88 can gain you 13 months. If your pressure's over 105, hitting the 88 mark buys you 5.3 years.

BUY A DOG. Add: 5 years

But only if you plan on taking him for a walk every day. Research from the Cooper Institute shows that men who walked briskly for just 30 minutes at least five times a week improved their physical fitness to a level linked with a life expectancy five years longer than that of unfit men.

EAT MEAT NO MORE THAN THREE TIMES A WEEK. Add: up to 9 years

Replacing some of the meat in your diet with soy, other legumes and beans can increase your life expectancy by up to 13 percent. "You don't necessarily have to give up meat entirely to see a benefit," says Somer. "Just increase your intake of beans and legumes, then limit your meat intake to 3 or 4 ounces, two or three times a week."

HAVE SEX AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. Add: Uh, does it really matter?

There seems to be a “dose-response” relationship between orgasms and heart problems - the more sex you have, the less heart disease you'll suffer. Researchers who studied sexual activity and mortality in a group of 918 men found that those who had the most sex had half the risk of death from heart disease of their less-stimulated counterparts.

GO TO CHURCH TWICE A WEEK. Add: 7 to 14 years

A study recently reported in *Demography* found that whites who attended religious services more than once a week lived an average of seven years longer than whites who didn't attend services at all; among blacks, the figure was 14 years. The churchgoers' lower rates of smoking and drinking certainly account for some of this gain, but their strong social ties and other behavioral factors may also play a role.

DON'T SMOKE. Add: 5 years

You've been lectured enough about the dangers of smoking, but just for the record, understand this: If you're 35 and puffing, you'll live five years longer if you quit now. Right now.

IF YOU SMOKE, DON'T DO IT SITTING DOWN. Add: 1 good year

If you refuse to put down the butts, at least move your own butt. A study that examined the effects of smoking and physical activity on active life expectancy found that men who smoked but were still (somehow) or moderately active warded off life-ending disability a year longer than smoking couch potatoes did. Of course, nonsmoking, moderately active men lived five years longer.

MOVE TO THE COUNTRY. Add: 1 to 8 months

If more educated, active, wealthy people live longer, you'd think suburbanites and city dwellers would have an advantage. Not so, say researchers from Penn State University. Your country cousin can expect to live one to eight months longer than you. One reason: There's less of a “class distinction” in rural areas. Health and social resources are more limited but more equally distributed. Another likely reason, according to University of Pittsburgh researchers: Pollution costs the average city dweller an estimated 23 days of life.

END YOUR MCDONALD'S ADDICTION. Cut your risk of dying in the next 20 years by 13 percent

Eat a high-fiber diet that's 10 percent to 15 percent protein, 60 percent carbohydrates, and less than 30 percent fat, in case you needed a reminder. A study that followed more than 3,000 men found that those with the best diets were 13 percent less likely to die during a 20-year period than men with the worst eating habits.

STOP BEING SO HARD ON YOURSELF. Add: 2 years

University of Michigan researchers found that men who saw every personal setback as a catastrophe had a 25 percent greater risk of death and died an average of two years earlier than men who addressed their failures more positively.

GET YOUR OLD BODY BACK. Add: up to 1.7 years

According to a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, a 35-year-old who's up to 30 percent heavier than his healthy weight can live eight months longer simply by slimming down to normal proportions. If you're more than 30 percent heavier than you should be, dropping the whole Buick translates into an additional 20 months.

EAT THREE CANDY BARS PER MONTH. Add: 1 year

Harvard researchers who studied 7,841 male alumni found that those who ate candy bars regularly lived one year longer than guys who never touched the stuff. Men who ate three or more sweets a week, however, had a 30 percent higher risk of early death than men with more moderate habits, one to three candy bars per month. One theory in support of chocolate as health food: It contains phenols, antioxidants that help prevent fats in the blood from clogging arteries.

BUY A BIGGER CAR. Add: 5 months

University of Pittsburgh researchers estimate that a car accident will cost you seven months. But size matters here: Crash behind the wheel of a small car and you lose nearly 10 months; behind a big sedan, you lose only half that. An insurance-industry study that measured auto fatalities from 1992 to 1996 found that drivers of Camaros and Firebirds had 2.5 times the average fatality rate in traffic accidents.

ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS. Add: up to 5 years

A study funded by the National Institute on Aging followed 1,100 seniors for five years and discovered that the most curious of the seniors had a 30 percent better chance of living beyond the five-year mark than the less inquisitive subjects. According to Dr. David Larson of the National Institute for Healthcare Research, "Higher curiosity levels may mean better adaptation to changes, stress or challenges."

NEVER WEAR PANTS. Add: 5 to 10 years

A Scottish neuropsychologist who has studied more than 1,000 eccentrics, including a man who rappels from buildings while dressed as a pink elephant, found they live five to 10 years longer than more normal people. One reason: They're unencumbered by the usual stupid worries that socially normal people obsess over.

STOP WHINING ABOUT YOUR DESK JOB. Add: 2.6 years

That spring water delivery dude may be turning female heads in the office, but don't envy him if you're a white-collar guy. According to one analysis, professional men live up to 2.6 years longer than average while unskilled laborers live 4.6 years less than average.

CUT BACK TO A SIX-PACK A WEEK. Add: 2 to 3 years

In 1993, government researchers estimated that moderate drinking, one to two drinks per day, could increase an individual's life expectancy by 3 percent. For most guys that's two to three years. Since then, evidence of alcohol's ability to extend life has mounted. More recently, Harvard researchers reported that men who had two to six drinks per week had a 21 to 28 percent lower risk of death from all causes than did abstainers.

PLAY THE RIGHT SPORTS. Add: 25 days

An analysis of sports participation and its less fortunate outcomes makes a clear case for terrestrial pursuits. Though boxing professionally costs you more than a week of life - not to mention half an ear - and playing college football cuts half a day, parachuting or hang gliding can send you soaring heavenward a full 25 days sooner than expected.

HAVE ANOTHER BIRTHDAY. Add: months every year

Every year you live helps you live longer. Because life expectancies are tabulated every year, they take into account all the babies born during your year of birth. But people of all ages die every day, so every day you don't die you're beating the odds, and your life expectancy is getting longer. A man who's 50 years old today had a life expectancy of about 66 on the day he was born; by simply surviving 50 years he has increased that by 17 percent, and he can now expect to make it to his 77th birthday.

Chapter 6

Manage Your Time

Introduction: Master the Big Things

KNOW YOUR GOALS IN LIFE. Identify the activities you value most and your main goals at work and at home. These goals are the map you need to direct your life and schedule your time. Break down your main goals into smaller, more manageable tasks.

WORK OUT A SYSTEM. Disorganization makes work and wastes time. Organize your environment so that everything has its place. Keep a note pad and calendar by the phone, and set up a filing system for bills. Establish a daily routine.

ONE THING AT A TIME. You may have many things to do, but you cannot do them all at once, especially since important tasks usually require energy and concentration. You will find it less stressful if you can finish one task before starting another.

RANK PRIORITIES. Ask yourself how important a particular task is to you. Activities can be ranked according to their importance. Try identifying the activities that produce the greatest reward. Give these activities priority over others.

DO IT NOW NOT LATER. By putting off today's tasks until tomorrow you are simply storing up work for yourself. Ask yourself, "Why am I putting it off?" Set realistic deadlines for each day and then do your best to keep to them.

KNOW YOUR PRIME TIME. Identify when you work best and plan that time for your most important or demanding tasks. For most people this is early in the morning. Allocate undemanding tasks to times when your energy may be low.

WRITE DOWN PLANS. A written plan enables you to take a more detached view of your commitments. Keep a diary of important dates and tasks to be done. A daily "to do" list can give direction and a sense of achievement once tasks have been accomplished.

ALLOW SLACK IN TIMETABLE. Never overfill your timetable. Always allow some slack. Then, if there is an emergency, you can accommodate it. If you know that your time is not stretched to the limit you will feel less stressed. Plan time for rest and relaxation.

DELEGATE TASKS. Trying to do everything yourself is often a major cause of stress. Take a look at your schedule and work out what you can hand to somebody else to do. You can still monitor other people's progress and maintain a level of control.

LEARN TO SAY NO. If you cannot say no to the demands of others, you will end up being a servant to their priorities, never able to say or do what you want. Stay in control of your own time, and say no to time-wasting and unnecessary activities.

YOU ARE NOT PERFECT. If you are a perfectionist you may become bogged down in detail and find it difficult to vary your speed according to priorities. Learn to assess the situation in advance, so you can work within set time limits.

KEEP A BALANCE. Planning time for work, rest, and play will help maintain your health and enthusiasm and allow you to keep a balanced perspective. Break your routine and plan time to relax during the day. Take regular vacations.

Setting Goals

FREE YOUR THINKING

Find out what you value most in your life by answering the following questions within the allotted times.

What do you value most in your life? List and prioritize the five things you value most. (2 minutes).

On which of these values do you spend the most time. List your five values in “time spent on” order, the first being the one you spend the most on, down to the one you spend the least time on. (1 minute).

What are the three most important goals in your life? (45 seconds)

How would you spend your time if you had only six months to live? (30 seconds)

What would you change about your life if you suddenly became a millionaire? (30 seconds)

What would you choose as an epitaph to sum up your life? (60 seconds)

What activities give you the greatest feelings of fulfillment? (60 seconds)

What have you always wanted to do but not dared to try? (30 seconds)

Eight Steps toward Reaching Your Goals

BRAINSTORM. Write down all the things you want out of life in the next year and five years, however unrealistic these may seem. Include your dreams as well as goals. Make three separate lists for work, home, and your leisure time.

WRITE AN ACTION PLAN. For each goal draw up a list of the steps that you need to take to achieve it. Thus, to write a short story the action plan may be: to enroll in a course, buy equipment, create a work space, set aside regular time to write, etc.

RECONSIDER. Check your list of goals for incompatibility or unattainability. Don't plan to study for a degree in your spare time as well as spend more time at home. Aim to win your local golf championship, but don't plan to win an Olympic gold medal.

IDENTIFY OBSTACLES. Decide what may get in the way and look for solutions. If, for example, you feel that people will make too many demands on your time, resolve this by setting aside specific time in your calendar and meshing it with family and work.

ORDER YOUR LIST. Look at your list and decide which are the most important goals in each of the three categories. Rank them in terms of priority. Then decide which of all the goals is the most important for you to achieve.

REWARD YOURSELF. Rewards will boost your motivation. Think of something you really want, and promise to treat yourself if you achieve a difficult goal: "If I finish the story by Christmas, I will treat myself to some new software."

BE SPECIFIC. Rewrite the goals in specific, measurable language, preferably observing a time limit. "I want to write a story" will become "By the end of December I will have finished writing a 5,000-word short story."

VISUALIZE THE END RESULT. Create a clear picture in your mind of the situation when you have finally achieved your goal. "I will get bound copies of the finished story, and my friends and family will be able to read it."

Overcoming Procrastination

Procrastination means putting something off that you know you need to do. We are all guilty of saying ‘I’ll do it later,’ or ‘I must get around to that.’ But some people put things off to such an extent that they never do much at all, causing stress and anxiety to build up.

People who procrastinate are deliberately avoiding confronting their fears. Procrastination flourishes under two conditions: (1) When a task is not urgent and there is plenty of time to do it in the future; (2) if there is something you would rather be doing now. Behind these conditions are several factors:

FEAR OF FAILURE. You may leave it until the very last minute and then say, ‘I didn’t have enough time to do it.’ By doing this, you are giving yourself an excuse, and you may be protecting yourself from the reality that your best might not have been good enough.

FEAR OF SUCCESS. If you are too successful, people might expect more next time.

FEAR OF REJECTION OR INTIMACY. By never getting around to inviting your friends to dinner, you manage to keep a safe emotional distance between yourself and others.

LACK OF COMMITMENT. You may simply not consider the task important enough.

Eight Ways to Tackle Procrastination

MAKE A LIST. List the tasks that you put off in all areas of your life. Select one and note down your excuses for putting it off. Go through the following steps and carry it out now.

SLICE IT UP. If the task is overwhelming, do it a piece at a time. Mix the task up with more pleasurable activities and carry it out bit by bit, regularly, and often until it is completed.

LIST THE PRO AND CONS. Draw up two columns on a sheet of paper and list the advantages and disadvantages of putting off the task.

THINK POSITIVELY. Write down and challenge any negative thoughts you have about the task you are putting off. Lower your expectations. Don't aim to be perfect.

JUST DO IT. Your expectations are usually worse than reality. Like getting into a cold swimming pool, tackling unpleasant situations slowly is much more painful than just jumping straight in.

PLAN REWARDS. Reward yourself once you have achieved your goal. Make yourself a hot drink, watch your favorite television program, or treat yourself to a little present.

PLAN IT. Put the task in your calendar or on your "to do" list. Make it part of your routine so you do not have to think about it. If you start the day with the least pleasant task, the day gets better.

WORK TO DEADLINES. Say to yourself, "I will have this done by. . ." Make yourself accountable by announcing your deadlines to family, friends, or colleagues.

Controlling Perfectionism

BENEFITS OF BEING “IMPERFECT”

You learn from your mistakes. By doing something wrong, you can learn from the experience and get it right next time.

Most people find that they are more comfortable with “imperfect,” vulnerable people than with “perfect” saints.

If you are afraid that you might make a mistake, you run the risk of becoming paralyzed into inaction, frightened to attempt anything new.

FOUR WAYS OF OVERCOMING PERFECTIONISM

LIST THE PROS AND CONS. Show that perfectionism does not in fact help you, by listing the advantages and disadvantages of perfectionism and how they affect your life.

SET DEADLINES. Identify a task and set a time limit for it. Instead of saying, “I am going to write a letter,” say, “I’ve got 15 minutes to write this letter, so I’ll keep it short.”

DISCUSS YOUR WEAKNESSES. Confide in close friends or family and tell them if you feel inadequate or nervous in a situation. Treat this as a challenge. Dare to be average and admit it.

SAVOR THE MOMENT. Try to focus more on the process rather than its outcome. Stop and enjoy the here and now, rather than concentrating on the end result.

Delegation

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF AND SOLUTIONS TO POOR DELEGATION. If you have problems delegating, the following points may help you think more rationally:

- “If she’s better than me I will become dispensable.” Be grateful. Nobody can be good at everything.
- “She is already busy. I mustn’t overload her.” Have an overview of her priorities.
- “What if she fails? It will make me look bad.” Train her. Anticipate her mistakes. She will benefit in the long term.
- “I could do the job better myself.” Don’t try to be a perfectionist; let things go.
- “I do not want to look like a tyrant, or lazy.” Explain why you are delegating.
- “She might refuse to do what I ask.” You can ask and she can refuse.
- “I’ll do it. I prefer ‘doing things’ to managing.” Fine, but think how this will affect your limited time.
- “It would be quicker to do it myself.” At the moment, but consider the longer term.
- “I’ll do it myself. It makes me feel virtuous.” Beware of becoming resentful and manipulatively instilling guilt in others.

How to Delegate Effectively

GIVE CLEAR, INSTRUCTIONS. This does not mean telling the person exactly how to do something, but it does mean outlining what needs doing, explaining why it needs doing, and setting standards. It is also important to set firm deadlines.

MONITOR PROGRESS. Arrange regular updates. Supervise and support, but do not keep looking over the person's shoulder. Give advice without interfering. It is good to give praise in public, but if you have to criticize, do so in private.

PASS ON AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY. Delegate the entire task to one person, not half a task. Provide the necessary resources. Do not relinquish complete control. Be careful not to abandon the person to the task. Stay in touch and give support.

ALLOW AUTONOMY AND CREATIVITY. Give the person to whom you are delegating enough space and responsibility to take his or her own decisions. This makes doing the job easier and more pleasant.

MAKE SURE THE TASK IS UNDERSTOOD. Discuss the task with the person you want to delegate to. Make sure that he or she has the right skills and is happy about taking it on. It is important that he or she does not feel "put upon."

GIVE FEEDBACK AND PRAISE. When the task is completed, go over it with the person, giving specific comments and praise, so that the person can learn from it. Grant the delegate full credit for his or her accomplishments.

Managing “Hurry Sickness”: Type A Behavior

SLOWDOWN. Be aware of your obsessive time-directed lifestyle and slow down. Deliberately walk and eat more slowly. Make sure you sit down to eat your meals. Try to schedule fewer activities each day and discipline yourself to allow time to get to places without rushing.

SET ASIDE TIME FOR YOURSELF. Build into your daily and weekly schedule stress-free periods when you deliberately try to relax. This might include a 20-minute walk in the park at lunchtime or a five-minute break in the morning when you do a quick relaxation exercise.

ONE THING AT A TIME. Instead of trying to do many different things at once, concentrate on one task at a time and complete it before moving on to the next. Do not take on too much work. Know your limit and say no. Don't be a perfectionist.

DON'T WATCH THE CLOCK. Give yourself short time-breaks when you use no clocks and make an effort to lose your sense of time. Take your watch off for part of the day or the weekend. Allow yourself to break the habit of always being on time. Miss a few deadlines.

TAKE UP HOBBIES. Commit yourself to absorbing active hobbies such as gardening, sailing, and walking, to broaden your horizons. Also try to engage in uncompetitive, unimportant trivial pursuits just for fun.

EXPRESS HOW YOU FEEL. Talk to others about your feelings rather than bottling them up. Take time to have a chat to somebody about nothing in particular. Thank others and show your appreciation when somebody has done something for you.

MANAGE YOUR HOSTILITY. Keep a diary of situations that make you angry, such as thwarted goals, insults, or threats. This will help you identify provocative situations in advance. Challenge your “should” thoughts. Replace them with calmer thoughts.

UNDERSTAND THE REASONS. Ask yourself why you constantly need to achieve and prove yourself to feel good. Think back to your childhood. Was your parents' approval linked to how successful you were? What do you now value most in life?

Organize Your Space

Take Charge of Your Space

- Look at the space in which you work through the eyes of a stranger and discover what changes immediately come to mind

Eliminate Non-Useful Items

- Decide what objects are no longer contributing to your effectiveness in your work area.
- Remove niceties that don't really make a difference either personally or professionally and replace them with more helpful necessities.

Start with a Fresh Desktop.

- Clear your desktop of everything.
- Rearrange this primary workspace by replacing only those items that you need to use everyday, such as your phone and calendar. Remember that the most important thing on your desktop is the project at hand.
 - Phone
 - Computer
 - Basket for pens, pencils, highlighter, etc.
 - Minimal number of personal items that are important to you: photos, egg-timer to help you to remember to keep phone calls short.

Clean Up Your Desk Drawers

- Place only frequently used items in your desk drawers, grouping like items together in each drawer.
- Keep a litter drawer for collecting miscellaneous things that accumulate during the course of your work.
- Dump your litter drawer once a month, moving those items that have future value to an appropriate place and tossing the rest.

Find a Home for Equipment and Supplies

- Determine where equipment will be placed by the frequency of its use.
- Store needed supplies close to the equipment they belong with--for example, a supply of paper should be right next to your printer while floppy disks will be readily accessible next to your computer.
- Use utility shelves, pegboards, extra tables, Lucite boxes, or whatever else you find useful, as places to organize the excess materials that you want to be able to access quickly but not necessarily daily or even weekly.

Make Your Environment Comfortable

- Decide what personal items are important to you in making the space in which you spend much of your day comfortable and productive.
- Choose items that enhance your well-being but do not distract from your work.
 - A good quality ergonomically-designed chair
 - A lamp that provides good lighting and ambiance
 - Photographs
 - Art
 - Meaningful memorabilia (not the refrigerator variety)
 - An armoire or credenza
 - A magazine rack
 - Bookcases

Come to Grips with Paperwork

- Personalize a system that works for you, but remember to keep it simple.
- Add an extra hour to your day, dedicated to cleaning up a neglected backlog of paperwork until you are on track.

Categorize Your Mail

- Incoming Mail
 - Have your mail screened
 - Set up mail files for sorting (four files: for immediate response; to go over later; to file; to throw away).
 - Make a decision about what to do with it on your first reading.
 - For immediate response items, jot an answer on the letter, reply with a quick memo, email or phone call.

- Compose form letters that you can personalize for a number of situations.
- Outgoing Mail
 - Send less-is-more memos: brief messages are more likely to be read.
 - Authorize an assistant to compose answers and reply to as much mail as possible.
 - Use a tape recorder or dictating device.
 - Organize thought before dictating.
 - Consolidate your correspondence and dispose with as much as possible at one sitting.

Organize Your Files

- Throw away anything that you really don't need to keep.
- File often-daily if you can-and clearly label folders for quick retrieval.
- Purge your files regularly, archiving inactive information that may be needed at a much later date.
- Consider the use of a day-by-day tickler file matched to your "musts," "shoulds," and "want-to-dos" as a way of keeping needed information close at hand as well as serving as a daily reminder of important actions that need to be taken.
- Remove work-in-progress files from your desk and store them in portable containers, such as stackable crates, limiting one project to one container.
- Color-code project files so that you can quickly pull out just what you need to work on from your work-in-progress file.

Manage your Contacts

- Use a program or app to organize your business card and transfer them into your Contacts.
- Use the back of cards to remind yourself of useful information connected with the person on the front.

Track Your Finances

- Keep track of business expenses as they accrue to speed up preparing your monthly expense report.
- Maintain monthly tax records to be halfway there at tax time.
- Put bills to pay on a spindle or in an envelop or on your computer so you won't lose time hunting for them.
- Use automatic bill-paying arrangements.
- Regularly submit medical bills for reimbursement.
- Use health insurance plans and providers that minimize paperwork.
- Keep photocopies of your credit cards and the contents of your wallet in a secure place.
- Keep abreast of your investments, insurance coverage and overall financial planning.

Learn to Speed Read

- Limit your professional reading to publications that give you the most value for your time.
- Highlight items of interest while you read-don't put yourself in the position of having to reread to mark important information.
- Tote material that you need to read around with you-moments can be found while waiting for meetings, waiting for trains, or while you commute on public transportation.
- Listen to reading material on tape, when it's available

Clean Up Your Hard Drive

Organize Your Schedule

Try to Get Up One Hour Early

- **Think of what you could do with an extra 365 hours a year—that's over 9 forty-hour weeks extra!**
- Set for yourself an upbeat wake-up call. Turn on some great music. Think of three pleasurable things that are going to happen that day.

Arrive at Work on Time or Early

- Decide to do the most essential things first and put them on the most prominent place on your desk
- Put together all the information you'll need for important incoming or outgoing phone calls.
- Set up similar plan-aheads for meetings, conferences and appointments

Keep Track of Daily Work by Creating a Master List. A master list is an orderly way to stay on top of all your unfinished work, tasks, projects and correspondence.

- Use a large, lined piece of paper (at least 25 lines).
- Don't skip lines.
- Write down everything, all the to-do items on your calendar for a given day.
- When you've used up all the lines, start a second page.
- Cross off completed tasks.
- Transfer unfinished items and consolidate item from older to newer pages (General rule: when 50% of items have been crossed out start a new page).
- Review your master list before you go home to determine which items are the most important, plan to do them first thing in the morning.
- Don't rewrite your list everyday.
- Remember that you're not going to get everything done.

Prioritize Your List

- Determine what is most important to get done during the day or the week.
- Assess all the activities on your list to see if all the tasks and projects really must be done.
- Ruthlessly weed out or cut back on unnecessary tasks that don't contribute to what you want to accomplish
- Review the activities that remain and identify the specific actions you need to take to get going on them.
- Don't waste time or energy on tasks you rule out.
- Expect that your prioritization may change during the day or the week. Be prepared for some crisis management.
- Assign a value to new tasks as they come up during the week.
- Know your limits and be practical about how much you can really expect to get done.

Integrate Your Master List with Your Planner

- Transfer your to-do items to your daily planner
- Schedule to-do items on future days.
- As new items of business come up during the day, add them to your planning calendar.
- Move unfinished work from one day to another.
- Use a pencil to schedule appointments
- Write your to-do and call items with a pen.
- Write phone numbers in your Rolodex or address book.
- Block out vacation time.
- Add birthdays and anniversaries.
- Make your calendar an all-purpose planner for both work and personal commitments.

Make a Weekly Plan

- Make a preliminary assessment of your goals for the week and the actions needed to accomplish them.
- Prioritize your list by assessing value and degree of importance to what you need and want to do.
- Allow for flexibility in your approach, assigning new values to activities when unforeseen problems arise or new responsibilities are introduced.
- Create a weekly master list based on your plan.
- Attach a time-estimate to each activity on your list.

Know Your Computer and Other Hi-Tech Options

- Become familiar with the range of technological tools available to you to help you manage your time.
- Ask yourself what benefits you expect and need from each piece of hardware and software that you consider incorporating into your time-gaining strategy.
- Weigh the time-wasting vs. time-saving features of all technological innovations.

Contact Managers

- Contact managers are computerized programs that organize your calendar, to-do list and name and address book in one place.
- Is your computer the best tool for reminding you to make important phone calls or keep appointments?
- The value of this tool is only as good as the careful input and maintenance of information that you provide and type in.
- Remember to back up all your files.

Portable Electronic Organizers

- Effectiveness is minimized if not used in tandem with computer.
- Transfer data from notes, memos, and to-do lists to your desktop on a regular basis.

More Technological Time-Saving Tips

- Record your thoughts as they occur to you with a small, hand-held tape recorder. This is a great way to get a jump start on time-consuming letters and memos.
- Use a headset when on long telephone calls, to free your hands to do small tasks while you talk.
- Organize your financial records with a financial management program on your computer.
- Regularly back up your hard drive.
- Keep an extra set of floppies with your back-up work at a site away from the office—just in case.

Common Work Time Busters

Situation 1: The Rush Job

You're already overwhelmed with work and along comes another rush job. This time, it's your boss who announces a speaking engagement at a sales conference and needs to include sales figures for the past five years. Your boss demands that you do an analysis for the conference before you do anything else.

Situation 2: Deadbeat Co-worker

You need a report from a coworker to continue a deadline job. You've anticipated receiving it, but now the coworker disappoints you by not coming through. This traps you in a time crunch. You're at a loss about what to do.

Situation 3: Lunchtime No-Show

You have a 12 p.m. lunch appointment to go over a joint project with a colleague from a branch office. By 12:30, he's a no-show, and you're cooling your heels in the restaurant wasting time you can't afford to lose.

Situation 4: Revised Job Description Crunch

Your work is ballooning because your company is downsizing and not hiring replacements when employees leave. As the work is divided among the remaining employees, you've been given so many additional jobs you don't have time to do your own work as adequately as you'd like to.

Situation 5: "You'll have to work late."

You're asked to work late or take a client to dinner, and there's no way you can do this on that particular day.

Work Time Busters: What to Do

Situation 1: The Rush Job

- With an ultimatum like this from your boss, you have little choice but to say good-bye to your planned time schedule and, then, go back and re-create another plan for your day.
- Before you acquiesce, however, you might spell out your boss all that you have to get done that day that he or she has already assigned and ask what should be eliminated so you can do the additional work. Sometimes when bosses see how much you're already doing for them they may say the rush job can wait a day-and you will buy yourself time.
- If this doesn't work, the next best thing is to accept the need to shift your time management around without getting stressed out about it.
- Address the unanticipated setback and work through that (and your other work) in the most effective, efficient way you can, given the time constrictions in which you have to work.
- On the other hand, if a coworker rather than the boss is pushing the panic button, stand firm. Instead of being too quick to shift your time schedule, try something like, "I'm interested in this project, and I'll give you the input. But I can't do it today."

Situation 2: Deadbeat Co-worker

- The right way to make the best use of your time in this kind of situation is to get to work with the material you already have and leave empty spaces for the information you still need from your coworker.
- While you do this, make your disappointment clear and emphasize that getting the material now is critical.
- Monitor the person from whom you need the input to be sure it's in the works.
- Anticipate crises and have ready-to-go contingency plans. Naturally, you can't have contingency plans for everything. But you should have them for critical situations so you'll be able to act quickly without losing time having to think about it.
- Avoid the common crisis of not receiving material from a supplier on the day it was promised by dealing only with reliable suppliers that have a track record of making deliveries on time. If you don't get a delivery when promised, lose no time in being assertive about your need for an immediate priority delivery. Make it clear you have no time to waste and that it's the supplier's responsibility to get the material to you no matter what it takes.

Situation 3: Lunchtime No-Show

- Make a phone call to find out where the colleague is. If there's no answer (or an answer that he's on his way) allow yourself just so much more time to wait.
- If he still doesn't show, order a quick lunch and get on your way and on schedule for whatever your next commitment is.
- Leave word for him that you've gone in case he shows, and make a mental note to have him come to your office for future appointments so there'll be no waiting time to waste.

Situation 4: Revised Job Description Crunch

- When top echelon starts distributing duties, speak up right away in a non-complaining manner with such phrases as "I feel I should mention upfront that I'm already bogged down with other urgent jobs right now. Here's what I'm doing." Then in a very specific way-and in writing--make the company aware of your current responsibilities and the time it takes to do each job in the way it should be done.
- This probably won't get you completely home free from all additional duties. But it may get rid of some of them and, as you work accordingly, it will help cut down on some of the frustration of not being able to balance your time exactly as you want to.

Situation 5: "You'll have to work late."

- Offer to take the work home and point out you'll be only a telephone call away.
- Another potential is to say you'll come in early the next morning and work on whatever needs to be done first thing.
- If the issue involves taking a client to dinner, explain why you can't do it and suggest someone else who might play host. Most clients will understand-even if your boss is disenchanted.

General Strategies for Work Time Busters

- Discuss the daily work already on your plate before agreeing to an emergency job-and together with your boss, place a value on the new work before redoing your schedule.
- Help team members get and stay on track when their work is essential to the completion of your project.
- Schedule one-on-one meetings in your office so you can move quickly on to other tasks in the eventuality of late or no-show appointments.

- Keep your higher-ups regularly informed in writing about the number, complexity, and status of projects you are currently working on so they can effectively evaluate the benefits or risks of giving you new assignments.
- Offer alternative solutions for completing tasks for which you simply must say “no.”

Home Time Busters

Situation 1: A Childcare Emergency

You're have a child-care emergency. The school is unexpectedly closed. The nanny calls in sick. Your son wakes up with a fever. You're held up at work and your daycare closes at 6 p.m.

Situation 2: An Older Parent Emergency

You get a call from your elderly mother's neighbor who, when she stopped for a visit, discovered your mother had fallen. The neighbor thinks she broke her arm and they're both hysterical. The neighbor doesn't know what doctor to call and, since she doesn't drive, she can't take your mother to the hospital emergency room. She needs you to tell her what to do-and both she and your mother want you to come to your mother's house right away.

Situation 3: A Long-term Family Crisis

You're confronted with an all-consuming family crisis (rather than a short term one like the broken arm). This time it may be a chronic accident or injury, a long-term illness, or the death of a loved one. These misfortunes take their toll on you, and it's hard to control your time as you ordinarily do.

Situation 4: A Personal Crisis

You may have a personal crisis, as opposed to a family crisis, and you're not managing your time very well because of a health problem, extreme fatigue, relationship turning point, or other misfortune. You know you've back-tracked' handling your time, but you seem to have no spirit to do anything right now.

Home Time Busters: What to Do

Situation 1: Childcare Emergency

- Always have alternative child-care arrangements ready to be set up at a moment's notice.
- Compile an on-call support list with phone numbers of family members, teenage or older sitters, and neighbors or friends who will come to your rescue.
- Also make arrangements with your spouse or mate to take over for each other in emergencies.

Situation 2: Older Parent Emergency

- Though you'll probably have to leave work and go to your mother's immediately this time, you won't have to drop everything in the future and leave before you can turn around if you plan ahead with a clear what-to-do for these family circle emergencies.
- You can save time and get things started without you when emergencies happen-if, as part of your what-to-do list, you post by the phone in your home, at work, and at the home of any family member or friend for whom you're responsible: (1) your work number, (2) doctors' numbers, (3) your spouse or mate's work number, (4) a number or numbers for other family members, (5) the police department's number (an officer will call the paramedics, ambulance, or fire department if necessary).
- It's also a good idea to see that all of your children's schools have this list, too. With this kind of preparation, time can be saved and help can be set in motion before you're in a position to take over yourself.

Situation 3: Long-term Family Crisis

- No one is immune to these out-of-control times when life and time are out of balance. It's hard to continue as usual, too, so you may have to modify some aspects of the way you manage your time and, due to your circumstances, temporarily change the manner in which you do some things.
- It helps in these times of misfortune to live by the attitude and philosophy that nothing is forever, while you do the best you can. But if, when you are in control of your time, you give your all to managing it well, most of the people with whom you work will be supportive of the times when you can't.

Situation 4: A Personal Crisis

- You're human, so there will be back-track times when you don't feel like managing your time because of bad things in your personal life. But your dampened spirits concerning time management and the problem that's absorbing you will eventually pass-as everything does.
- In the meantime, give yourself a break and refuse to add discouragement about time management to the other problem you're experiencing. Once your life comes together, your time management motivation will improve, too.

General Home Time Buster Strategies

- Preplan for child care emergencies by enlisting the support of your spouse, family, friends, and sitters who can fill in for you until you can readjust your schedule.
- Prepare what-to-do lists for your family, friends, or neighbors in case of emergencies such as illness, accidents, fire, and so on, including all relevant phone numbers, so that quick action can be taken even while you are enroute to deal with the crisis yourself.
- Ease the tension of out-of-control times, such as a death in your family, by understanding that coworkers will be supportive and that, although you may be out of sync for a while, you will be able to return to normal patterns.
- Don't compound the problems of emotionally draining periods in your personal life by beating up on yourself for missing the mark on time management.

Equipment Time Busters

Situation 1: The Paper Jam

You have 15 minutes to print a report in order to meet your deadline. But when you turn on your printer, you get a paper jam. You're successful in getting the paper released, but then the printer won't print.

Situation 2: The Presentation Burnout

You're scheduled to give a presentation and the video tape or projector doesn't start up when you're ready to begin. While you SOS the IT department, you lose time getting your show on the road (and maybe the audience's attention, too.)

Situation 3: The Three-Minute Gap

Your tape recorder didn't pick up everything you expected it would while you took notes at a meeting. When you played it back, there were lapses, and now you're without important information you need to complete a conference report.

Equipment Time Busters: What to Do

Situation 1: The Paper Jam

- Computers, software, printers, copiers, and fax machines are notorious for acting up and holding you back just when you need them most. Sometimes the problem is a minimal one and needn't be a time-waster if you learn how to change a printer or copier cartridge and work around software glitches that happen periodically.
- In addition to saving time by knowing how to fix minor problems yourself, do preventive maintenance on your equipment to avoid foul-ups at critical times.

Situation 2: The Presentation Burnout

- Be like the Boy Scouts-be prepared. Always have on hand two sets of audiovisual items plus extra bulbs, extension cords, and wall plugs.
- Carry extra batteries for tape recorders and wireless microphones with you.

Situation 3: The Three-Minute Gap

- Stop depending exclusively on your tape recorder. Take sketchy notes as a backup.
- While your recorder is on and you're jotting down your backup notes, see that the timer on your recorder is set at zero when the tape begins.
- When something you want to be sure to include in a report is said, write in the margin of your notes where your timer is. Then, when you're writing your report or whatever, you can go back to that spot quickly. This saves you the time of listening to the whole tape and transcribing material you may not need.

General Strategies for Equipment Time Busters

- Learn how to correct common printer, computer hardware and software, and copier problems.
- Anticipate the possibility of breakdowns and keep duplicate items at the ready, such as tape recorders, batteries, and extension cords, whenever possible.
- Have a backup plan that does not involve equipment, such as a flip chart for a presentation when the overhead projector doesn't arrive, to make sure that you can follow through on your objectives, no matter what.

Excessive Interruptions Time Busters

Dr. Donald R. Gallagher, a time management authority, identifies the following types of coworkers as the most common cause of office interruptions:

Social butterflies. They go from one place to another, updating and gabbing.

Office politicians. They think you can help them or they're "buttering you up."

Advice seekers. They say, "What would you do in my position?"

Gossipers. They play on a weakness in human nature.

I-don't-have-enough-to-doers. They tell you how much they are overworked.

You-should-be-as-sick-as-I-am interrupters. They've had-or are sure they are getting-whatever physical malady is featured in the popular press.

Complainers. They love to tell you what's wrong with the world, humanity, the economy, the in-laws, and the office.

Excessive Interruptions Time Busters: What to Do

Evaluate the importance of interruptions:

- Consider whether they must be dealt with immediately, no matter what your schedule is
- Determine when and how they can be scheduled for another time
- Plan ahead on how they can be eliminated or diverted to someone else

Strategies:

- Discourage spur-of-the-moment visitors by encouraging people to make appointments with you to save their time and yours.
- Place your desk in an area where people can't see you through the door. If you can do this, interrupters will be less likely to come in.
- Close your door (if you have one) when your sixth sense tells you an unnecessary interruption is on the way.
- Remove extra chairs from your office (or put papers on the chairs) if your door is open. People won't stay as long if they come in and have to stand.
- Avoid people coming in, whenever possible, by meeting interrupters at the door (and appearing to be leaving your office) when you see them coming.
- Tell interrupters you're busy and that, except for a real urgency, you can't talk at the moment.
- Glance at your watch every few minutes if people don't move on.
- Suggest your time frame for handling staff questions and other interruptions if they are an urgency. Say something like, "I'll be free at 11:30." Then arrange to meet people at their workplace. In that way, you can keep the interruption short and control when to leave.
- Get back to the task you were doing as soon as possible after interruptions.

Excessive Meeting Time Busters

Meetings are expensive in terms of time, and when you're trapped in extraneous ones, you're destined to trash a good deal of your day sitting through repetitive discussions. Unfortunately, meetings your boss sets up may be command performances and, regardless of how unnecessary they are, you may have to say good-bye to the time you could use to better advantage. Fortunately, though, you have better control when a colleague arranges a meeting or when you yourself are responsible for getting people together.

In the case of a colleague calling the meeting, you can frequently control whether or not to attend by finding out what the purpose of the meeting is and asking for specifics on the agenda. If you see your attendance isn't at stake, bow out of as many of these meetings as you can. On the other hand, when you're in charge (either because you want to set up a meeting or are asked to organize one), there are time-saving, controlling measures you can take.

Obviously, the first one is to answer the question "Is this meeting necessary?" If the answer is "no," forget it. If it's "yes," consider alternatives to taking your own and other people's time for an in-house meeting. Here are four alternatives.

- Send e-mail requests to prospective attendees providing information and asking for input on what would be covered at the meeting
- Prepare a memo to pass on the information after you obtain and compile it
- Set up a telephone conference call
- Arrange a breakfast or lunch get-together to discuss the issue during nonworking time

If you have to have an in-house meeting, invite only people who have (1) hands-on knowledge of the topic at hand, (2) essential input to contribute, and (3) the authority to make decisions and take responsible actions. Limit the number of attendees because the meeting will take less time with fewer people engaged in discussions.

When possible, group meetings together-either all in the morning or all in the afternoon. To avoid breaking up primary work hours, aim for 8 A.M. meetings, before-lunch meetings, and end-of-the-day meetings when, rather than stretching out a meeting, people will be concerned with leaving for the day. Finally, if you're in a position to do it, encourage your place of business to set up a policy where at least one day a week is free of meetings.

Meetings: What to Do to Keep from Wasting Time

If You're Running a Meeting:

- Hold your meeting in a conference room or somewhere other than your office. When it's not in your office, you can leave as soon as the meeting is over. When it's at your place, however, you can be stuck with people who want to stay on and take extra time talking to you about the meeting.
- Let attendees know the purpose of the meeting prior to the meeting.
- Start on time.
- Evaluate the worth of each item on your agenda and set a time frame and limit for each item, depending on its importance.
- Stick to your important points (preferably no more than three or four) and don't get sidetracked.
- Refrain from wasting time hassling over an item that comes up on which no one has adequate information. Instead, appoint an ad hoc committee to find out more about it.
- Let attendees know they have just so much time to cover the agenda.
- Wear an alarm wrist watch set to go off at the time the meeting should end. Use it as a signal for everyone to move on.
- Pass out copies of your meeting agenda ahead of time. In addition to noting the topics to be covered, frame the topics as questions. For example, if "House and Grounds Maintenance" is on the agenda, ask the question, "What steps do we need to take to improve the system? When attendees come prepared with specific answers to specific questions, meetings move faster.
- Follow up on meetings. Get minutes out promptly to all attendees and detail concisely (1) what actions were taken, (2) who was given the responsibility to action, and (3) when a progress report on the actions is due.

If You're Attending a Meeting:

- Plan to arrive when you know the meeting will be actually starting and not one minute before. This will avoid wasting minutes waiting to begin or sitting through time-consuming preliminaries.
- Stay at a meeting only as long as you're needed.
- Schedule an appointment or incoming phone call for the ending time of the meeting so you'll have a good excuse to leave, should the meeting drag on.

Phone Call Time Busters

1. Three primary ways to cut down on all kinds of time-taking phone calls is to do the following:
 - Establish times when you make or take phone calls
 - Use voice mail or an answering machine to record messages, screen calls, and help reduce calls you don't need or want to take
 - Master the art of ending conversations quickly and graciously
2. Be selective about who gets the number for your mobile or car phones so the phones won't get jammed with calls. Be equally discriminating about the way you use these phones. You don't have to use them all the time just because you have an available phone. Relax a few moments at the health club (or wherever) without thinking you should get on the telephone.
3. Keep escape phrases to stop excessive calls before they start on the tip of your tongue. Try "I only have three minutes," "I'm on my way out," "I have someone in my office right now," "I have to get started on a project right away," and "I'm on a tight deadline and can't talk."
4. Let people to whom you leave messages on an answering machine know the best time to return your call so you won't be interrupted while you're busy. Similarly, ask callers to leave the number where they can be reached and the best time for you to call them back on your answering machine.
5. Ignore the ringing of the phone completely if you're really involved in a task that needs your full, uninterrupted attention. This will be okay sometimes.
6. Excessive Phone Call Time Busters: General Strategies
 - Use an answering machine or voice mail to screen calls or take messages.
 - Respond to messages left for you as promptly as possible—don't be one of those whose credibility is hurt because you are always apologizing for taking so long to get back in touch.
 - Encourage family and friends to minimize or eliminate their calls to you during your working hours.
 - Know what you want a phone call to accomplish before you make one. Then get right to the point. Tell a caller up front just how much time you have to speak and, if necessary, reschedule the call for a convenient time for both of you.
 - Develop the skill of ending phone conversations quickly and graciously.

Being a Good Parent in Your Time-Locked Life

1. Compare weekly schedules with your partner or mate to make sure one of you is responsible and accessible for child care arrangements, the dinner hour, bedtime, bedtime talk, and backup childcare when no other help is available.
2. Try to have at least one parent home with the children every weeknight.
3. Take the children places on some weekends. But on others stay home and play, have a special Saturday morning breakfast, watch a TV program or video as a family, and do something alone with each child to make each child feel special.
4. Remember that spending time with your family is more important than the routine drudgery of housework, when it's a choice between chores and children during your limited hours at home.
5. Make sure your children learn what responsibility means by teaching them, through example, how to be accountable for time and actions.
6. Train them to respect your work responsibilities and the contribution your work makes toward the home and family life you share.
7. Have a short family meeting on Sunday nights to confirm who is going where and when throughout the week and who is car-pooling and driving the children around. Share car-pooling with other families when you can.
8. Similarly have a family night once a month. This will be different from the Sunday night planning meeting because this will deal with special interests the family can share. Start it when your children are young, since teens, being teens, may want no part of it.
9. A possible special interest might be studying family genealogy together. Show pictures, arrange them in scrap books, and tell family stories you've heard about ancestors. End the family time with a special treat or dessert, something that's everyone's favorite.
10. Establish a "kids choice night" for meals once a week. Professional organizer Sunny Schlenger, who, as part of her consulting practice, runs Happiness Seminars, has found it works out well to give children a chance to choose what they'd like for one night. For the other nights, make it a rule that the children are not allowed to complain about whatever is served. This is an excellent way to teach them how everyone's needs can and should be met.
11. Encourage your children to help each other rather than depend on you for everything. Help with homework as necessary but refrain from making too much of your children's homework your homework. Research has shown that homework can teach a child responsibility, independence, perseverance, initiative, self-reliance, and resourcefulness. It can also teach time management, so save your time and help your children learn how to manage their time by not overdoing homework help.
12. Above all, talk to and listen to your children and, in a manner they'll understand, give them a firm foundation on principles and values.

Morning and Evening Strategies

Three Good Things to Do for Yourself in the Morning

1. **Get up an hour earlier** than the rest of the household and before your real day begins, take care of: (a) one of the responsibilities that has been hanging over your head, (b) a pleasure you want to pursue but have had no time to follow, (c) the need to fill up your spiritual fuel tank. The benefits will be substantial, no matter how difficult it is to get yourself out of bed.
2. **Exercise**, if you possibly can, since morning exercise gets your blood flowing.
3. **Eat a healthy breakfast**, even if you have to eat yours in the car on the way to work.

Evening Tactics

Your evenings are your last stop on your trip through the day--ideally the sign at the end of the track should read "Rest and Relax." But busy people generally find there is always more to do as you wrestle with the work/home balance and your other non-work-related roles. Here are user-friendly tips to help you with that balance.

1. Avoid bringing home work with you as much as possible.

- If you used your time well in your workday, you've done that work for the day. Besides, tomorrow is another day!

2. Arrange everything for the morning. Specifically, the following:

- Take care of any necessary lunch preparations. If children take, rather than buy, lunches make the lunches at night unless you've made and frozen a week's worth on weekends. When children are old enough, consider having them make their sandwiches themselves.
- See that all knapsacks are packed and that homework, plus any other needed paperwork, is by the door through which the children leave.
- Put everything else both you and the rest of the family need to take with you by the door, too. As previously mentioned, all hats, mittens, scarves, boots, and umbrellas should be there.
- Lay out your children's clothes for the morning (or have them do it) so there will be no last-minute searches for clothes that aren't ready to wear. Listen to weather reports so you know what clothes will be appropriate.

- Review who's going where and when the next day and confirm transportation arrangements if necessary.
- Set the breakfast table and make the coffee (preferably in a coffeemaker with an A.M. timer).

3. Do one extra home and family job some evenings.

- Since there are so many household tasks you could do at night give yourself a break and schedule just one necessary extra task beyond your regular routine for some of your evenings.
- Don't frustrate yourself by trying to do everything you think you need to do.

4. Use discretion in taking on too many outside activities.

- Limit your outside activities on Monday through Friday nights so you won't be running from meeting to meeting or taking on other time-consuming activities. It's usually good time management to limit your work nights' outside activities to one or two times a week.
- You may want to do some community and volunteer work since this increases your community contacts and relationships. But instead of dabbling in a lot of different things, pick one or two that mean the most to you and concentrate on them. Don't spread yourself, your energy, and your time too thin. For a change of pace, it's also smart to make your volunteer work different from your on-the-job work.

5. Have bedtime rituals for your children.

- Set a fixed hour for bedtime and stick to it--except for the occasional nights when you may want to keep children up a little later to have some extra time with them.
- Make bath time a special fun-and-play interlude, no matter how tired you are. This rite will last for just a few minutes (and for just a few years), so make those minutes matter.
- Allow sufficient time after the bath for a story and bedtime talk. Then end your parenting time for the day with snuggling, hugging, and I love yous.
- Turn out the light and be firm that this is lights-off time.

6. Set aside time for your spouse or mate.

- Talk about the ups and downs of your day. Listen to the same about his or hers. Discuss any important plans or concerns regarding children.
- Remember that the special relationship that you have with the one you share your life with needs regular renewal and attention to remain healthy and happy. Don't jeopardize

this important part of your life by skimping on time devoted just to one another, no matter how many other time demands you each face.

7. Give yourself some time.

- Leave your calendar vacant for one or two hours a couple of nights a week to do something just for you. Don't try to catch up on anything. Simply be for those hours. Say, "Tonight I'm going to read my book," "Tonight I'm going to soak in the tub," "Tonight I'm going to (fill in for yourself whatever appeals to you)."
- Make your friends and contacts aware that on certain nights you don't make or take phone calls. Rely on your answering machine again.

8. Go to bed.

- Retire half an hour after everyone else goes to bed to have still more of an end-of-the-day breather for yourself.
- Lay out your clothes and accessories' after examining them for stains, missing buttons, loose hems, and the like to eliminate unwelcome morning delays.
- When you do get in bed don't take a head full of problems and obsessions about work with you.
- Finally, take as much pride in managing your time for these hours as you do for handling your work. That's total time management!

Food Shopping, Meal Preparation, and Errands

How often have you been shopping and heard a harried shopper say, “If only we didn’t have to eat!” You’ve probably thought the same yourself as you’ve pushed your way from aisle to aisle filling up your cart. But it’s a given that we have to eat, so here are ways to lighten that chore.

Food Shopping

- Go to supermarkets in off hours.
- If you shop on weekends, be there when the store opens to avoid subsequent crowded lines.
- Buy in bulk whenever you can.
- Prepare a master shopping list according to the way products are arranged in the store in which you shop.
- Use the master list to make your weekly list and menus.
- Add to your weekly list any to-get items from the list on your refrigerator if the items are not standards on your master list.
- When you need to do any small food shopping over and above your weekly shopping, pick up the items on your way home from work to sidestep the need for an extra shopping trip.

Meal Preparation and Cleanup

- Make and freeze a whole week’s worth of Monday-through-Friday lunch sandwiches on Sundays.
- Have one drawer in your kitchen set up with everything you need for those lunch preparations: sandwich bags, spreaders, plastic cutlery, plastic containers, paper napkins, and single serving packages of chips and snacks.
- Scale down your idea of what makes an adequate week night dinner. Prepare favorite entrees in double or triple amounts and freeze the extras. Later, an entree can be pulled from the freezer and heated while vegetables are steaming. This system provides enough nutrients and minimizes pots and pans.
- Add to your prepared-ahead meals one eat-out night and one take-out night during the week and you’re set for work night dinners. For the non-eat-out and take-out meals, make it a house rule that the first adult or grown child to get home sets the table and gets dinner underway.
- Clean up as you go while preparing meals. Put pots in the sink to soak while you’re having your meal. They’ll be easier to scrub or ready for the dishwasher afterward. When clearing the table, have everyone, including children, put their dishes in the dishwasher immediately.

Errands

- Hang a large canvas tote bag on a sturdy hook and use the bag to toss in such things as library books to be returned; items to be returned or repaired; banking to take care of (along with a batch of deposit and withdrawal slips); and lists of (a) clothes to go to the cleaners or laundry, (b) purchases to make, and (c) general errands to do. In this way, your errands will be bundled together in one place.
- As much as possible, do all errands at one time so you are not constantly wasting your time running around on one or two errands.
- Do your business with stores, banks, cleaners, and gas stations that are close together so you can make fewer stops and save the time of going from one location to another.
- Take advantage of delivery services.
- Use automatic teller machines instead of standing in lines at banks.
- Try not to do errands at peak hours.
- Similarly, avoid the heaviest traffic times in your errand area.

Doing Chores Includes Everyone

1. Start your children early with helping with the chores. Begin with putting toys away. Then move on to making beds, setting and clearing the table, and helping put dishes in the dishwasher
2. Be firm about the rule that as soon as they are able, children clean up after themselves when they make a mess. As a source unknown to me once suggested so aptly, “If children are old enough to make a mess they’re old enough to clean it “
3. Make a list of the weekly chores that need to be done and split the workload so styles fit the personalities of the people who live in your home. For example, he cooks, she sets the table and does the dishes. Or she loves gardening; and he hates it-but he’s open to running errands which she abhors.
4. While having people do the jobs they prefer (at least as much as possible), still alternate and rotate jobs occasionally so everyone gets a crack at the most preferred jobs and so that one person is not stuck with all the undesirables.
5. Lower your standards when other people share the workload, even if they don’t do the job as well or as thoroughly as you think it should be done.
6. Don’t repeatedly tell people how to do things--including children. After you describe what’s expected and train children how to do chores, stay off their backs while they’re doing their share. Save your time for something else.
7. Have an understanding that in periods of crises and non-normal periods, you’ll shoulder each other’s responsibilities.
8. Appreciate everyone’s contributions and efforts.
9. Supplement the in-house sharing the must home chores plan by hiring outside help when necessary.

Refreshing Yourself with Leisure and Play

1. Block off space for free time and fun, no matter how limited the time has to be. It's a terrible thing to forget how to play, so keep yourself open to it.
2. Set up a fun list of things to do. Include recommended movies, videos, books, compact disks, records, tapes, and places to go. When you've seen the movie, read the book, or gone to the suggested place, cross that off the list and add new things so the list is ongoing.
3. Similarly, maintain a list of favorite restaurants on your Rolodex. Note their addresses, phone numbers, where you like to sit, and directions for getting to them.
4. Use some of your 48 hours of weekend time for free time and fun rather than treating Saturdays and Sundays as catch-up rounds of nonstop cleaning, cooking, laundry, and errands. Obviously, different weekends will have different needs depending on the circumstances. But if you've kept up with many of your home-chore tasks during the week, you won't need as much time for this nitty-gritty on weekends.
5. Select one weekend a month and set aside time for musts that have accumulated despite your best planning, if you absolutely have to do them. Then get them done as fast as you can so that for the rest of the weekend you can reward yourself with time for what you want to do.
6. See that your weekend pursuits provide a mental and physical change from your work week activities. Often, you're more productive during the week if you've had a restful, relaxing, and change-of-pace weekend.
7. Start the weekend by doing something nice for yourself
8. Do things with your family during the weekend, too, but when you're planning fun things for all, make sure they're fun for everyone.
9. Take a mini-vacation on a weekend if your busy life prevents a longer one at certain times.
10. Keep your mind off business. Don't mind the store mentally.

Nurture Your Soul

1. Seek active spiritual growth by believing in a reaching out for guidance from whatever higher power confirms your personal beliefs.
2. Simultaneously reach deep inside yourself to soul-search and solidify your values so you can stay in control of them-even in the presence of pressure.
3. Invest in the power of prayer. Pray for yourself and others and give thanks for all you've received.

Appendix: Meditations and Stories

Perspectives on Managing Your Lifetime

1. Weariness with Time

We live life within the dimensions of space and time. We have a world to know and explore—a “space”; and we have a season—a “time” in which to experience it. From birth, we develop an awareness of space. We see it, hear it, and touch it. We learn to be comfortable in it. But time is subtler. We’re less familiar with time and more ill at ease. We find ourselves fighting time, pressed by time, surprised by how quickly time passes.

How can we live meaningfully throughout a lifespan governed by days, months and years, regulated by the cycle of the seasons, by the rhythms of life? Instead of fighting time, how can we put time on our side?

One of our great struggles with time is the weariness of spirit caused by our bondage to time.

Recently a friend, Carl, stopped at a convenience store to buy a lottery ticket. As Carl filled out his ticket, he noticed a woman looking over his shoulder. It appeared as if she were trying to copy his numbers. Well, she was embarrassed and said to Carl, “I’m really sorry. Honestly, I’m not trying to cheat. I just can’t figure this out.” Carl said, “I didn’t think you were cheating, but it wouldn’t really matter to me if you were. I wouldn’t mind a bit if we both won!” The woman started to shake her head, her face saddened and she said, “If only I could win, I could quit my stupid job.”

Many of us today experience a great dissatisfaction, not just with work, but also with life in general—at work, at home or at play. As the pace of life grows faster and faster, as we pile up one activity on another, we end up feeling that how we spend our time has little to do with who we are or what we want out of life. In the morning, the alarm goes off and our first thought is to wonder, “How much time is there to get up, to get the kids ready and get out the door?” After a frenetic workday, every hour of the evening is scheduled. We cook the dinner, clean up, go to a meeting, help the kids with their homework, go shopping, or go to the gym. Finally, we collapse into bed and check the clock to see how much time we have before the same cycle begins again. Weary, we live in bondage to time.

A young man was heading off to the dentist. His wife, who loves him, knows how much he dreads going to the dentist, and was feeling his anxiety, said to him, “Honey, I would gladly trade places with you, if I could.” The husband then watched as his wife picked up their new baby in her left arm and a package of diapers with her left hand. She then hung a tote bag and her purse over her right shoulder, took hold of their two-year-old with her right hand and groped around for the car key which the two-year-old had hidden someplace. Seeing all this the husband

shook his head and said, “Thanks for the offer to take my place, but I think I’d rather do it myself. At least where I’m going, they give you anesthesia.”

Our weariness with time, our feeling that we need to be anesthetized against the ravages of our frantic pace of life, is a symptom of our ignorance of time—the price we pay for failing to live within the bounds of time. Physiologically, we simply are not made to live like this. Our fast pace of life, our battle with time, creates a chasm between our thoughts and emotions. We now know that our thoughts and emotions operate at different speeds. Thoughts are processed electrically, they communicate quickly, they’re able to keep up with a busy schedule. But emotions respond to the events of life slower than thoughts because they’re hormonal and chemical. When the demands of life require us to function quickly, intellectually we may do well, but our emotions can’t keep up. So we stuff them down.

When we finally stop, like the cars of a freight train, our emotions come crashing into one another and we’re unable to rest or be renewed. About this, psychiatrist Dr. Stephan Rechtschaffen writes: “The moment we begin to slow down, our emotions come flooding back. Unfortunately, many people report that when they try to relax, what comes up are uncomfortable emotions—anger or anxiety over unresolved encounters. So we get busy again, and repress once more those feelings that allow us fully to experience our lives.” This vicious cycle creates weariness with time—a failure to experience the events or relationships of our lives in a meaningful way, as whole persons, with our head and with our heart.

If we want to put time on our side, if we want to overcome our weariness in the battle with time and come alive, we need to broaden our concept of the present—to take the time to experience each moment, each event, each encounter with both our head and our heart.

Something curious happens when we increase the pace of life. Our perception of the present grows shorter and shorter, our awareness of time narrows into tinier and tinier increments. Each day is crammed so full of events that we leave ourselves no time to actually experience these events in any meaningful way. We live the “now” so that we can get to the “next.” We finish this so we can get to that. We rush through lunch so we can get back to our desks. We work today so we can get to the weekend.

When our lives are dominated by the future, we lose the present. But it is only in the present, only in the “now” that we learn, that we love, that we laugh, that we are fully alive. If we want to overcome our weariness in time, we need to come fully into the present moment—to expand the present by slowing down the rhythm of life, by bracketing more time out of the past and the future, so that the “now” can be experienced as the “now,” and not as a prelude to “the next.”

This involves developing a sense of mindfulness about the present, cultivating a way of being that puts us fully in the present, with our head and with our heart, without anxiety or pressure about staying on schedule.

There’s now a present, now a season for us to attend to—an important moment in time, packed with significance and opportunity. We can ignore it, we can continue our frantic pace, running

away from the now on our way to the next; or we can pay full attention to the now and experience the present fully.

We may think that we are trapped wearily and helplessly in an unending circle of tasks, burdened with problems and annoyances; that in every moment we have a dozen different things to do, a dozen problems to solve, a dozen pressures to endure; but this picture is false.

What is true is that the crowded hours of life come to us one moment at a time. Each of these moments is significant. Imagine an hourglass on your desk. Connecting the bowl at the top with the bowl at the bottom is a tube so thin that only one grain of sand can pass through at a time. Our days may bring many tasks, but invariably they come single file.

Weariness results when the present is ignored, when the present is perceived and treated as irrelevant and meaningless. To come fully alive, come fully into the present with your mind and with your heart: experience the “now” as the “now” and not as a prelude to the “next.” Come alive by slowing down the rhythm of life. Develop mindfulness about the present by understanding that every moment is potentially meaningful.

Questions for thought:

Sometimes, how we spend out time has little to do with who we are or what we want out of life. Think about who you are and what you want. If you could, how would you spend your time differently? List some activities, you’d spend more time on if you had more time.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Life comes to us one moment at a time. List some of the pressures in your life that keep you in bondage to time and keep you from living in the present.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What practical things could you do to slow down the rhythm of your life?

2. Time and Play

Do you feel you have more free time than people did thirty years ago or less? Dr. John Robinson, a sociologist at the University of Maryland heads up a study that has continued for over three decades. It's called the "Americans' Use of Time Project." Each year the study measures how much time people, who are between the ages of 18 and 64, spend on leisure activities. Believe it or not, according to these experts on time use, Americans today generally have more free time than they had thirty years ago—about five hours more per week, to be exact.

Why then might some of us feel we have less?

One answer is, of course, television. According to the University of Maryland study, the average American dissipates about 40% of his or her free time watching TV. We may feel we have less time for reading, visiting, playing, or preparing meals because TV absorbs much of our time.

Added to this is another important factor that causes the perception of less leisure time. It's that the free time we do have doesn't renew us.

We are a people who take a goal-oriented approach to time. Our work-ethic spills over into our "spare" time. This competitiveness in play is nothing new. It's been around for a long time in traditional sports like football, baseball or basketball; but now the competitive urge is encroaching into leisure activities normally intended for pure pleasure or intrinsic beauty. A friend of mine puts it this way, "Leisure no longer rhymes with pleasure, either in language or reality."

Recently a group of bird watchers gathered in Central Park, New York for a competition to see who could identify the most species of birds over a specific period. Imagine going bird-watching and coming home a loser! We now have fishing contests, televised weekly, to see who can catch the most, the longest and the heaviest fish. We watch the Olympics and are more concerned about the performance of the judges at the ice skating competition that we are impressed by the artistry and athletic ability of the skaters, no matter what their nationality.

In music, our kids compete to be in middle and high school bands and orchestras, and then the bands, even normally laid back, cool, jazz bands, compete to see who's the best. We go on a vacation and judge its success by how much we did and whether we made good time getting there and back. We fill up our off-work hours with leisure time obligations—responsibilities that are easy to get into and difficult to escape—obligations to school and to the little league, to our church, and to our community.

The problem with this goal-oriented, accomplishment-driven approach to play is that it's counter-productive. It does not give us what we need. Our recreation does not re-create us in body or in soul. In the end, what we do is exchange one form of stress for another. We get away from stressful jobs only to take up stressful leisure and then, at the end of the weekend, we wonder why we're not refreshed, why we feel we need more time before we go back to work.

If we want to be re-created by our recreation in body and in soul, if we want to be renewed in our free time, we need to balance our goal-oriented approach to leisure with another use of time.

What we need is to build into our lives “nests” in time. Let me tell you what I mean. What is a nest in time?

From the time I was about ten years old, each summer, I spent two weeks away from home in Connecticut at Oak Ridge Camp. One day in the summer before I entered the sixth grade, I wandered off away from the camp into the woods. For a long time I followed a creek, finally to a small clearing where the water tumbled over some rocks down into a little pool. Each day that summer and on many warm days in the summers that followed I returned to that spot wherever I wanted to be alone. There I'd climb trees and chase frogs, and sometimes, silent and motionless, enjoy being isolated from the rest of the world. Now and then I'd bring with me a special friend: at first, only boys, but then as I grew older, my first girlfriends. I took Gloria Balog there for my first kiss. It never happened. She was more interested in the frogs. There I would think my most profound thoughts; there were always the best conversations.

We're all familiar with nests like these, nests in space—spatial havens like vacation homes where the furniture is old and familiar, comfortable places to which we can return again and again to start a new and secret life, intimate with those we love, removed from the world.

What we do in space, we need to learn to do in time. A nest in time is a period we set aside to do something we love without interruption. It's a regular time, long enough for the activity it includes, so we can complete it without feeling rushed. It's a time walled off from other experience, uninterrupted by the doorbell or the telephone. It may be ten minutes. It may be a day. It may be experienced alone or in the company of those we love. But just as a nest in space is a specific place, a nest in time is a discrete, distinct environment, away from all other demands of time.

We need to create nests in time out of our free time because all the great spiritual disciplines intended to renew us, to give us energy and to help us get ready for the challenges of life, demand time like this. Whether it's prayer, meditation, friendship, physical or emotional intimacy, all these require regular, temporal havens, nests in time away from distraction, where we can seek meaning, gain a sense of purpose, deepen our love and renew our sense of being loved.

Time spent trying to renew ourselves outside these nests in time is time wasted. A goal-oriented approach to life, a lifestyle driven solely by the pursuit of accomplishments can never renew us because it can't help us escape the common human weaknesses that wear us down.

The author Robert Grudin describes well the pitfalls of such an accomplishment-driven lifestyle with these words: “If we fail, we will pine for success; when we're successful we'll regret what we gave up in order to succeed. We'll envy those above us and should we reach the top, we'll fear those climbing up to take our place. We'll worry about our children and complain about their errors even if they're doing quite well. We'll be stung by criticism or neglect even when it comes from fools. We'll worry about money, no matter how much we have. If we acquire fame, we'll nonetheless drop names like a sycophant. We'll feel pain and shame at the signs of age, and yet, to our dying day, we'll make mouths in the mirror. And if we manage with great effort to subdue one of these vices, we'll be decidedly proud of ourselves.”

In nests of time, however, we discover something different, something life-giving and renewing. In these cozy, secluded moments, we find a refreshment of body, soul and spirit, we discover meaning from within ourselves through the experience of our faith, through the expression of our passions and our purpose. We rediscover forgiveness, we rekindle intimacy, we learn self-acceptance.

The Bible tells us about a prodigal son who has all the money and time he needs to do all the things he can do to find happiness and joy--but his lifestyle just about kills him. He ends up ruined, having lost everything. In telling the story, Jesus uses a wonderful expression to describe the turning point for this young man. He says it happened “when he came to himself.” What a wonderful description of a nest in time. Out away from all distractions and demands, apart from all his failed attempts to define his identity, he walls off a time; he brackets a moment out of the past and the future, to center himself, to remember what’s important. In that nest of time, in that time of coming to himself, his spirit is reborn, he starts down the road to renewal, he remembers who he is and that he’s loved, he grounds himself in what’s important and he commits himself to action. He goes home and finds life.

Come to yourself. Bracket moments in your day to do something you love without interruption: a nest in time to center yourself; a nest in time to renew yourself from within. In your free time, in a time of play, put time on your side.

Questions for thought:

List four or five things you like to do for fun. How much time in the last three months have you spend doing them?

When you take a day off, or go on vacation, or engage in an activity that you normally enjoy are you finding these days that you are renewed by these activities or have they become just another thing to do that tires you out?

What do you think about the concept of a “nest in time,” and what would it take to schedule such regular breaks into your daily life? Is this concept practically feasible for you? If you could create a temporal nest for yourself (perhaps half an hour per day), what would you do?

3. Time and Waiting

One day two big turtles and one little turtle decided to have a picnic on the river bank. So they packed a lunch basket with sandwiches and headed for the river. When they arrived it began to rain, and the two big turtles ordered the little turtle to return home for an umbrella. The little turtle agreed on the one condition that the other turtles would not begin eating the sandwiches until he returned. Then the little turtle left and the two big turtles began to wait. A day passed, then a week, then a month, then a year. Still there was no sign of the little turtle. Finally, one day, one of the big turtles said to the other, “He’s not coming back, I think we should start eating without him.” Immediately, the little turtle stuck his head out from a nearby rock and said, “Touch that sandwich, and I won’t go a step farther!”

That little turtle hadn’t even left and those big ones hadn’t even begun to wait.

In the landscape of time, few places are less comfortable than the time of waiting—the time we mark waiting for some person or event to arrive at some undetermined moment in the future. Periods of waiting are stress-producing. We stake our identity, our sense of security and well-being on the future, on concerns outside our control. Hooked, we dangle helplessly on lines of doubt and anxiety. Think about waiting while a loved one is undergoing serious surgery; waiting to find out the results of a biopsy; waiting for healing through a time of illness; waiting for a college admissions committee or an employer to answer an application; waiting for a letter from a distant loved one; waiting for someone to finish something we need to do our work; waiting for the dentist; waiting in line; waiting in traffic. Periods of waiting are stress-producing. We wait for love, we wait for work, we wait for news—spending our time distracted by what might or might not happen in the future.

There was a man named Willie who had an uncle who was a rich oil baron. Willie was one of the baron’s few surviving relatives and so he spent year after year concerned about how much money his uncle was going to leave him and waiting for him to die so he could find out. Every once in a while, he’d drop a hint around his uncle about being remembered in the will, but most of the time Willie just wiled away the time wondering about how much he’d get and worrying that the amount wouldn’t be enough to do what he wanted to do.

Well, finally the oil baron died and Willie gathered with the rest of the family to hear the attorney set out the bequests. The will was opened and the lawyer began to read: “To my cousin Nancy, I leave my ranch. To my brother George, I leave my bank. To my neighbor and good friend Oscar, I leave my oil stocks. To my sister, Ellen, I leave an office building in Dallas. And to my nephew Willie, who always wanted to be remembered in my will, ‘Hi, Willie!’”

In reality, Willie’s no worse off now than he was before. All he’s really lost is time—the time he spent waiting anxiously for the future, the time he spent imagining what he might be with his uncle’s money, the lost present he could have spent becoming somebody.

How can we live well in a time of waiting? Here’s the key. To get past our anxiety about the future we need to learn to extend our identity in time. Here’s what I mean.

Our personal identity cannot be finally determined by observing ourselves at any single moment in time, whether that moment be past, present or future. We are not solely the product of some of experience, good or bad. Nor is our identity finally defined by any single event or accomplishment in the future. In the end who we are does not depend on whether we get a certain job, or marry a certain person, or get into a certain school, on whether we fail or succeed. There is nothing in the future, nothing for which we wait, that is definitive for determining who we are or who we will become. Rather, we are works in process. To extend our identity through time is to remember that who we are is an on-going story—a story which develops through time, beginning in the past and continuing into the future.

Our ability to extend our identity through time can inform our fears, ease our anxiety about the future, and strengthen us to make something meaningful and life-giving out of whatever the future holds. Our extended story will include good days and bad. There will be times of elation when, as the prophet Isaiah said, we will mount up with wings as eagles. There will be times of energy and activity when we will run and not be weary. But there will also be times of suffering, when all we can do is walk and not faint, barely putting one foot in front of another to make it through the day.

I recently bought a new watch. For a long time now I've worn a digital watch, the kind that shows the hours, minutes, and seconds by light emitting diodes that flash illuminated numerals. When we look at a watch like this we see only a particular time of day, 11:37:40 or 9:13:32, a single bit of time, precise to the second, divorced from its context in the broader picture of the day. But the watch I've just bought is like one of those older watches with the round face. The numbers 1 to 12 go around in a circle and the three hands point to the hours, minutes and seconds. When we look at a watch like this, it speaks to us not only of the present, but also of the past and the future. We can see when we woke up, when we will work or play or rest, where we have been and where we wish to be or must be. Digital watches flash only the exact time; they demarcate only that particular island of time in which we happen to be stranded. But the old watches persistently remind us of our existence in a continuum—of our existence in the story of the day and so extend our identity in time.

We are not just what we are at any particular time, stranded in the past, present, or future, whether we love that time or hate it, whether we enjoy that time or fear it. Rather, we are a story, a story that extends from the past through the present into the future, a continuing story formed in the conversation between our experiences, whether they have been easy or difficult, and the voice of our own soul.

Questions for thought:

Is there something that you're waiting for that's causing you stress?

What might make it difficult to think of your life as a story?

Has there ever been something that you wanted, that you've waited for, that you didn't get, and then later thanked your lucky stars that you didn't get it?

What level of confidence do you have in your own ability to create your life? What experiences do you have in recovering from a set back or learning from your mistakes?

What could you do now to create a better life for yourself and your family?

What's stopping you?

4. Time and Love

Early in the 16th Century, Maximilian I, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, was so busy, he didn't have time to attend his own wedding. He sent an ambassador to the ceremony in his place. After the service, the ambassador effected a proxy consummation of the marriage by briefly placing his naked foot, duly manicured, bathed and anointed, in the bed where Maximilian's bride lay. For all its pomp, the ritual proved quite ineffectual. The young bride was not impressed. Within a few weeks, she formed a new relationship with a more enthusiastic and accessible lover.

To this day, this story stands as an example of the fruitlessness of love taken for granted, of love abstractly proclaimed, love unsupported by action, love unrenewed by care. Love takes time because love requires the full attention of all that we are. Love calls us to focus the energies our heart, our soul, our mind and our strength on the one loved, whether the beloved be family or friend, our neighbor, or our self.

Love requires this kind of total commitment because love is a mystery. Love cannot be understood with the same kind of mechanical thinking we've used to create our technological world. In the world of technology, we speak of telecommunications-communications that are distant, fast, impersonal, intellectual and programmed. But the communication that makes for love is different: it's close, slow, personal, passionate and imaginative. The things we associate with love—beginnings and endings, crises, turning points, our need for closeness and distance, intimacy and solitude, make love unpredictable and mysterious. Because love is mysterious, we can be married to someone for fifty years and still be learning about them.

One elderly couple was celebrating their golden wedding anniversary. The husband was so moved by the occasion that there, in front of all their family and friends, he wanted to tell his wife just how he felt about her. And so he called for a toast. "To my dear wife," he said, "after fifty years I've found you tried and true." Everyone smiled, except his wife who was a little hard of hearing. "What did he say?" she asked. So he repeated himself, louder this time, "AFTER FIFTY YEARS I'VE FOUND YOU TRIED AND TRUE." "Well, let me tell you something," she shot back, "after fifty years, I'm tired of you, too!"

Because love is mysterious, an understanding of our loving relationships can be achieved only through time, through an on-going commitment of all that we are to the loved one. Two skills are necessary to deepen love through time.

1. The first is patience. Patience is the acceptance of others and ourselves through time; the on-going ability to bear the complexities of love; the resolute will to suffer the ambiguities and imperfections of our partner and ourselves.

Agatha Christie once wrote, "An archeologist is the best husband any woman can have. The older she gets the more interested he is in her." She has a point. Think about an archeologist's slow attention to detail, his joy in finding only fragments, her ability through only bits of information to imagine the glory of the whole picture, their total commitment to the process of discovery, no matter how long it takes. Love requires that kind of patience.

Sometimes we set impossible expectations for our relationships. We're supposed to be clear and honest in expressing our feelings. We're supposed to be good communicators, expert listeners, full of empathy. We live with the illusion that it's actually possible to understand ourselves and others. And so, we surf from one pop psychology book to another looking for the answer to who we are and what we need to do to make our relationships better.

The truth is that most of us are a thick soup, a tangled web of memories, fears, confusions and intricacies. Rarely do we have a comprehensive understanding of all the social, genetic, biological, emotional and spiritual factors that exist behind our words and deeds.

Love requires the patience to accept the complexity and irrationality of ourselves and others through time. The patience to consider beautiful the multicolored kaleidoscope that makes up the personality of the one we love and the patience to consider it our mission to spend time appreciating and learning about it.

I have a niece whose name is Erin. When Erin was a little girl she had her share of dolls and stuffed animals. Today, through modern technology, children don't have to be satisfied with dull, lifeless dolls, but can experience the thrill of owning a lifelike replica of a baby that can walk and talk, slurp and burp, cry, sigh, and laugh, wet itself and get diaper rash. Well, Erin had her share of these mechanical marvels; but one day, when my sister Lynn asked her which of her dolls was her favorite, without hesitation, Erin said it was a little rag doll Lynn had made for her when Erin was two years old. The doll had won her heart, not by doing anything spectacular, but simply by being itself.

This is love. We may try to develop a skill, or an appearance, or talents, or an education to impress others so they'll love us. But we know we are loved when someone looks beyond all that, sees our imperfections, sees our complexities, sees our simultaneous need for intimacy and for solitude, takes all that mystery and says, "I accept you. I will stand by you, and I will love you forever."

When we walk on the beach and watch a sunset we don't call out, "A little more orange over to the right please," or "Would you mind giving us a little less purple in the back?" No, we enjoy the different sunsets as they are, as we patiently accept the souls of the people we love. Love is patient.

2. Now a second skill helps us love through time. The skill is kindness. Kindness is love in action. Kindness means taking the time to use our human power back up our loving emotions with words and deeds.

Kindness may be confrontational. It's kind to bring into conflict one whose behavior is destructive for oneself or others. But most often kindness is the positive, active expression of our affections and hopes for the one we love.

In his autobiography, Up from Slavery, Booker T. Washington writes about how he experienced love in the kindness of his older brother. The shirts worn on the plantation by the slaves were made of a rough, bristly flax fiber. As a young boy the shirt was so abrasive to Booker's tender,

sensitive skin that sores opened on his shoulders and back that caused him a lot of pain. Seeing this, his older brother started to wear Booker's new shirts until they were broken in and smooth to the touch. While no words were spoken, Booker experienced love in his brother's kindness.

The role of kindness in loving is central because feelings, our emotions, follow behavior. When we are treated in a loving way we feel loved. Imagine one day, sitting down with your husband or wife and identifying one thing he or she could do for you that would make you feel loved. One way he could touch you, one way she could help you overcome a bad habit, one activity you could share together that would make you feel loved. Now suppose your partner took the time to do what you asked, and suppose you had this conversation not just on one day, but one day each week for a year. At the end of a year you'd have learned over fifty behaviors, fifty acts of kindness. Together, you'd have a repertoire of kindnesses, a group of actions all on target for making you and your loved one feel loved. Imagine the intimacy in a relationship where people treat one another like this. Feelings follow behavior. Acts of kindness practiced over time deepen intimacy. Love is kind.

There was a little boy whose six-year sister girl was near death, a victim of a disease from which he himself had made a miraculous recovery two years earlier. Her only chance of recovery was a blood transfusion from someone who had had the disease. Since the two children had the same rare blood type the boy was the ideal donor.

When he was brought to the doctor's office, the doctor asked, "Johnny would you like to give your blood for Mary?" The little boy hesitated. His lower lip started to quiver, but then he straightened himself, smiled and said, "Sure, Doc, I'll give my blood to my sister."

The transfusion took place, and as Johnny's blood siphoned into his sister, you could almost see new life come into her. The procedure was almost over when Johnny's little voice broke the silence, "Doc," he said, "when do I die?"

Only then did the doctor realize that earlier, when Johnny had hesitated, when his lower lip had trembled, he had believed that in giving his blood to his sister he was giving up his own life! Yet in that moment he had still made his decision.

Love is patient. Love is kind.

So may we also love.

Questions for thought:

Do your family relationships suffer for lack of time?

Do you find the disruptions caused by problems at home affecting your work?

Why is it difficult to be patient with the weaknesses of your spouse? What do you need that makes it difficult to be patient with the weaknesses of your spouse?

If your spouse could do one thing for you this week that would make you feel loved, what would it be?

If you could do one thing for your spouse that would make her/him feel loved what would it be?

How much time would it take for you to do one act of kindness for your spouse today?

5. Time and Suffering

The power and creativity we exercise over life is finite, but through the experience of suffering we can be transformed.

The power and creativity we exercise over life is finite. We're all aware of this.

I recently read a story about a woman with cancer who returned home from the hospital in the weeks before her death. She had an eight year-old daughter, who one afternoon, listened quietly outside her mother's bedroom as the doctor and her father spoke. She heard the doctor say, "The time is now not too far off. Before the last leaves have fallen from the trees she will die."

The next morning the father came to the breakfast table to find that his daughter was not there as he had expected. His heart broke when he finally found her out in the front yard, picking up leaves that had begun to fall and using a thread to sew them back onto the limbs of the tree, hoping to prolong her mother's life.

Despite our best efforts, our most valiant, loving and creative acts, in this life our ability to ward off the reality of pain and loss is finite. There's the inevitability of death, our own and that of our loved ones. There are other endings: the loss of good health, broken or ambiguous relationships, lost opportunities, changes that make us leave what is familiar and comfortable, uncertainties that bewilder us, failures that haunt us, bullies who abuse us, weariness that overtakes us, social realities that both anger and frighten us. It's a universal reality that the power and creativity we exercise over life is finite. In this life, we will all experience some form of pain.

But it is also the fundamental affirmation of life that through the experience of suffering we can be transformed.

To understand this we must first unlearn our most common definition of the word "suffering." Suffering is not the same as experiencing pain. Sometimes when someone dies quickly and peacefully, we hear it said, "At least he didn't suffer," meaning his death was painless and quiet. This is not the definition of "suffering" I'm using here.

The word "suffering" comes from two Latin words: "fero," which means "to carry" or "to bear," and "suf," which is a form of "sub," which means "from beneath" or "below." To suffer means that we come up under something and bear it, that we carry it to the point of understanding. Suffering is not the same as pain, it's something active that we do with our pain.

We have options for dealing with pain: we can interpret pain as a contradiction, a denial of life, an ending of all that matters for us and so, hopelessly, we can despair before it. We can anesthetize ourselves against pain, with drugs or alcohol, or any number of diversions. We can

ignore pain, stoically denying that we're hurting. We can use our pain as an excuse for feeling victimized, for blaming others for our predicament.

But to grow through pain, to be transformed by it, we must suffer it: we must bear it courageously; keeping it in our awareness, using it as an opportunity for an honest exploration of our own soul; we can share it with those who love us, who will bear our burdens with us, and so deepen our intimacy; we can carry it intentionally, while it carves in us a place for a new self-understanding.

What we learn in the movement of time is that the way of suffering can be for us an initiation through pain to a new reality, to a new identity.

In his book, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, the great historian of religion Mircea Eliade describes a tribal ritual in which a twelve-year old boy is taken into the bush and covered with blood. His skin is pierced. During the night he's taken into the forest where he hears for the first time the sacred songs of the tribe. The next day his eyes are bandaged and his ears plugged and he is led by an adult wherever he goes. Through all this the clan mourns the boy as if he had died. But at the end of the ritual the boy is given a new name and returns to the clan as an adult. Eliade writes "The boy dies to childhood—that is to ignorance and irresponsibility. That is why his family laments and weeps for him. For when he comes back from the forest, he will be another; he will no longer be the child he was. He will have undergone a series of initiatory ordeals which compel him to confront fear, pain and torture, but which compel him above all to assume a new mode of being, that which is proper to an adult."

Suffering, this process of bearing pain to the point of understanding, is a profound form of initiation. It is an initiation to a new identity, to a new self-awareness, less secular, less ego-centered, and now more open to new levels of feeling, to new love, to deeper joy, and to a more genuine, a more spiritual way of living in the world of space and time. Beginnings and endings enfold into one another in a mysterious way. The pain of an ending is of one piece with the exhilaration of a beginning. The reality of this mystery raises in us a sensitivity to and appreciation for the sacred dimension of ordinary life. Pain is not just an ending. Throughout the length of our days, through suffering, life emerges out of death.

One day, a man made a long pilgrimage to a holy city. As he neared the city he saw, looming above the streets and smaller buildings, the walls of a great and beautiful cathedral, the ultimate destination of his journey. But when he finally arrived in the city, as he searched through the dark, narrow alleyways and busy marketplaces, he could find no entrance to the sanctuary. Time and again he asked directions from the townspeople, but they, being schooled in a newer faith, seemed neither to know or to care about his concern. Finally, he was directed to an older man, schooled in the old faith, who told him that the cathedral had for a long time ceased to have a formal entrance, but could be entered in many ways, through any of the tiny shops or narrow houses that surrounded it. But in the end this revelation gave the pilgrim no help. For each house or shop he entered seemed so dark and squalid, so alien, its occupants so forbidding and deprived, that this way of entry seemed incapable of opening to the grandeur and freedom of the sanctuary vault. In bitterness, the man left the city and sought an easier faith.

The power and creativity we exercise over life is finite. We will know pain and loss, we will confront things that make us uncomfortable, realities that seem like dead ends. It will appear as if the way toward freedom, toward life, is blocked. But through the experience of suffering, through the choice to suffer, to carry our pain, our weariness, our frustration, our illness, our loneliness, our anger, or our grief, through our choice to carry it to the point of understanding, we can be transformed.

It's not an easy path. We might long for an easier truth. But for those of us who seek peace, love, joy and genuine life, it's a truth on which we can depend.

Questions for thought:

Do you think that times of grieving or loss are productive or destructive? What might make the difference?

What does it mean "to carry something to the point of understanding?" How do you do this?

Have you personally experienced positive changes in your own life as the result of having to suffer the loss of someone close, or as the result of having to face a difficult situation or illness?

What practically and specifically has helped you turn a tragedy into a victory? Have you helped someone else through something like this?

Stories

1. The Wise One and the Giant

Once upon a time, long, long, ago, there lived in the village of Canifloria an old, old man. The man was so old that no one remembered exactly how old he was. He was so old that no one even remembered his name. So everyone referred to him simply as the “Wise One.”

One day a traveler went out from the village of Canifloria along the road to the city of Trade. On his way, when he was only about half way there, he met a giant standing in the middle of the road.

The giant shouted in a big, deep voice, “Stop where you are. You shall not pass until you fight me. Choose any weapon and I will more than match you.” Well, the traveler was so frightened that he ran back to the city and told the president of Canifloria about what had happened.

Now the President was very concerned because it was an election year and free travel between his village and the city of Trade was very important to the Caniflorians, so immediately he summoned his three most trusted advisors.

After he told them what had happened, the first advisor spoke, “Mr. President, we must do something about this at once. I advise you to send the Master of Clubs to go out and fight the giant.”

So the Master of Clubs was summoned and sent out along the road to the city of Trade. Sure enough the giant appeared again and said in his big, deep voice, “Stop where you are. You shall not pass until you fight me. Choose any weapon and I will more than match you.” The Master of Clubs pulled out his biggest oaken club and began to swing it at the giant. But immediately the giant pulled out an even bigger oaken club and soon the Master of Clubs was defeated.

When the word got back to the President, he was greatly distressed and summoned his advisors again. This time the second advisor spoke up. “Mr. President,” he said, “we cannot stand for this. I suggest that we send the Master of Swords.”

So the Master of Swords was summoned and sent out along the road to the city of Trade. Sure enough the giant appeared again and said, “Stop where you are. You shall not pass until you fight me. Choose any weapon and I will more than match you.” The Master of Swords pulled

out his biggest and sharpest sword and began to attack the giant. But immediately the giant pulled out an even bigger sword and soon the Master of Swords was utterly defeated.

When the word got back to the President, he was very concerned and summoned his advisors again. This time the third advisor spoke up. “Mr. President,” he said, “we cannot stand for this. I suggest that we send the Master of Fire, our fiercest, most powerful warrior.”

So the Master of Fire was summoned and sent out along the road to the city of Trade. Sure enough the giant appeared again and said, “Stop where you are. You shall not pass until you fight me. Choose any weapon and I will more than match you.” The Master of Fire produced great balls of fire and began to throw them at the giant. But immediately the giant produced even bigger balls of fire and soon the Master of Fire was utterly defeated.

When the word got back to the President, he was very, very distressed, for he had tried all he knew. His wife saw him looking so sad and so she suggested that, since all his best warriors had failed, perhaps the Wise One who lived on the edge of the village might have an idea. The President thought it was worth a try. So he summoned the Wise One and told him about the giant.

And so the Wise One went out along the road to the city of Trade. He took with him only his cart and his cow to pull it. Suddenly, halfway to the city of Trade, he met the giant. Again the giant said, “Stop where you are. You shall not pass until you fight me. Choose any weapon and I will more than match you.” “Well,” said the Wise One, “I shall have to think about this.” The giant said, “Then I will have to think about this too, and I will think about this more than you.” So the giant sat down beside the Wise One and began to think.

Soon it was time for the Wise One to milk his cow. When he finished he said to the giant, “I am thirsty. I think I will have a drink.” The giant said, “I am thirsty too.” The Wise One said, “Would you like a drink of milk from my cow? Please accept this simple gift,” and he held out a cup of milk. “Oh, no,” said the giant, “I know what you’re up to. Wait here.” The giant ran away like the wind and in a second returned with a huge meal for the Wise One. There was yogurt, and nuts, and bread and tofu and prune juice. All things that an old man might want to eat. “Please accept my simple gift,” said the giant.

As the old man began to eat, he said to the giant, “I should like to tell you about myself,” and he began to tell him about where he lived and how he got his name. But after a minute the giant interrupted him and said, “I should like to tell you more about myself than you have told me about yourself.” And so the giant told him about where he had come from. He said, “I was born of the juncture of the wind and a curved mirror. I have only the power that people give to me.”

Then the Wise One said to the giant: “Please, won’t you climb into my cart and let me take you to the city of Trade.” But the giant said: “Oh no. Please let me take you to the city of Trade.” And immediately the giant picked up the Wise One, his cow and his cart, and running as fast as the wind, carried them all the way to the city of Trade.

When they arrived the Wise One said, “Thank you, very much.” And the giant answered, “No, thank you, very, very much.”

When the wise one returned to the village of Canifloria, he reported what had happened to the President and the President was very pleased.

And from that day on, anyone who traveled from the village of Canifloria to the city of Trade would only have to travel half way, for the giant would carry them the rest.

Learnings:

1. Curved mirror: bigger or smaller than you actually are.
2. Power of humbling yourself before an adversary.
3. In order to be humble you have to have something to be humble about.
4. Freedom is the ability to pause between the stimulus and the response and in the pause to choose.

The Meaning of Life by Robert Fulghum

"Are there any questions?" An offer that comes at the end of college lectures and long meetings. Said when an audience is not only overdosed with information, but when there is no time left anyhow. At times like that you sure do have questions. Like, "Can we leave now?" and "What the hell was this meeting for?" and "Where can I get a drink?"

The gesture is supposed to indicate openness on the part of the speaker, I suppose, but if in fact you do ask a question, both the speaker and the audience will give you drop-dead looks. And some fool-some earnest idiot-always asks. And the speaker always answers. By repeating most of what he has already said.

But if there is a little time left and there is a little silence in response to the invitation, I usually ask the most important question of all: "What is the Meaning of Life?"

You never know, somebody may have the answer, and I'd really hate to miss it because I was too socially inhibited to ask. But when I ask, it's usually taken as a kind of absurdist move-people laugh and nod and gather up their stuff and the meeting is dismissed on that ridiculous note.

Once, and only once, I asked that question and got a serious answer. One that is with me still.

First, I must tell you where this happened, because the place has a power of its own. In Greece again. Near the village of Gonia, on a rocky bay of the island of Crete, sits a Greek Orthodox monastery. Alongside it, on land donated by the monastery, is an institute dedicated to human understanding and peace, and especially to rapprochement between Germans and Cretans. An improbable task, given the bitter residue of wartime.

This site is important, because it overlooks the small airstrip at Maleme where Nazi paratroopers invaded Crete and were attacked by peasants wielding kitchen knives and hay scythes. The retribution was terrible. The populations of whole villages were lined up and shot for assaulting Hitler's finest troops. High above the institute is a cemetery with a single cross marking the mass grave of Cretan partisans. And across the bay on yet another hill is the regimented burial ground of the Nazi paratroopers. The memorials are so placed that all might see and never forget Hate was the only weapon the Cretans had at the end and it was a weapon many vowed never to give up. Never ever.

Against this heavy curtain of history, in this place where the stone of hatred is hard and thick, the existence of an institute devoted to healing the wounds of war is a fragile paradox. How has it come to be here? The answer is a man. Alexander Papaderos.

A doctor of philosophy, teacher, politician, resident of Athens but a son of this soil. At war's end he came to believe that the Germans and the Cretans had much to give one another- much to learn from one another. That they had an example to set. For if they could forgive each other and construct a creative relationship, then any people could.

'From *It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), pp. 170-175. Reprint permission requested.

To make a lovely story short, Papaderos succeeded. The institute became a reality-a conference ground on the site of horror-and it was in fact a source of productive interaction between the two countries. Books have been written on the dreams that were realized by what people gave to people in this place.

By the time I came to the institute for a summer session, Alexander Papaderos had become a living legend. One look at him and you saw his strength and intensity--energy, physical power, courage, intelligence, passion, and vivacity radiated from his person. And to speak to him, to shake his hand, to be in a room with him when he spoke, was to experience his extraordinary electric humanity. Few men live up to their reputations when you get close. Alexander Papaderos was an exception.

At the last session on the last morning of a two-week seminar on Greek culture, led by intellectuals and experts in their fields who were recruited by Papaderos from across Greece, Papaderos rose from his chair at the back of the room and walked to the front, where he stood in the bright Greek sunlight of an open window and looked out. We followed his gaze across the bay to the iron cross marking the German cemetery.

He turned and made the ritual gesture: "Are there any questions?"

Quiet quilted the room. These two weeks had generated enough questions for a lifetime, but for now there was only silence.

"No questions?" Papaderos swept the room with his eyes. So, I asked.

"Dr. Papaderos, what is the meaning of life?"

The usual laughter followed, and people stirred to go.

Papaderos held up his hand and stilled the room and looked at me for a long time, asking with his eyes if I was serious and seeing from my eyes that I was. "I will answer your question."

Taking his wallet out of his hip pocket, he fished into a leather billfold and brought out a very small round mirror, about the size of a quarter. And what he said went like this:

"When I was a small child, during the war, we were very poor and we lived in a remote village. One day, on the road, I found the broken pieces of a mirror. A German motorcycle had been wrecked in that place.

"I tried to find all the pieces and put them together, but it was not possible, so I kept only the largest piece. This one, and by scratching it on a stone I made it round. I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated by the fact that I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine-in deep holes and crevices and dark closets. It became a game for me to get light into the most inaccessible places I could find.

"I kept the little mirror, and as I went about my growing up, I would take it out in idle moments and continue the challenge of the game. As I became a man, I grew to understand that this was not just a child's game but a metaphor for what I might do with my life. I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of light. But light-truth, understanding, knowledge-is there, and it will only shine in many dark places if I reflect it.

"I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world-into the black places in the hearts of men-and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. This is what I am about. This is the meaning of my life."

And then he took his small mirror and, holding it carefully, caught the bright rays of daylight streaming through the window and reflected them onto my face and onto my hands folded on the desk.

Much of what I experienced in the way of information about Greek culture and history that summer is gone from memory. But in the wallet of my mind I carry a small round mirror still.

Are there any questions?

Bibliography

This training manual, including many of the charts and lists, was developed from the great books and articles on stress and time management listed below:

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