Conquering Stress & Burnout

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Virtually all activity involves stress.

It’s DISTRESS that causes problems.
Alvin Tofler: “Future Shock”

“With too much stress thrust upon us too quickly, we tend to resist, feel disoriented, and begin to act with dysfunctional behaviors.”
Stress is Epidemic:

• 40% say job is "very or extremely" stressful
• 25% say jobs is #1 stressor in their lives
• 26% say they are "often or very often burned out or stressed by their work"
• 29% of workers report they feel "quite a bit or extremely stressed at work"

Survey by Yale University
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You will learn:

1. To identify your stressors
2. What stress can do to you
3. How to assess your stress levels
4. How to reduce stress or its effects
Take a few moments now to decipher where stress is arising in your life – so that you can begin the stress-handling process.
Where are your greatest stresses arising from?
IDENTIFY: Your Stressors

Outside Home

Personal Life

Home Life

“Special” People
Event-Driven Stress Sources

- Death of someone close
- Divorce or Separation
- Major personal injury or illness
- Chronic health or financial problems
- Change: one major or several minor
- Deadlines/ Rushing/ Being late
Work-Related Stress Sources

• Deadlines/ Rushing/ Being late
• Communication issues
• Co-worker and supervisor disagreements
• Lack of effective delegation
• Work Load / Work Hours/ Life Balance
• Travel Schedule
**Internal Stress Precipitators**

- Pessimism
- Perfectionism
- Anger, resentment, overwhelm
- People-pleasing, care-taking
- Guilt
- Lack of Life Balance
- Past/ Future Anxiety
- Inadequate Emotional Intelligence
What else could possibly cause stress in your life??

- Relationships
- Kids
- Parents
- Finances / Investments
- Illness – Yours or Others
- Frustrations, Fears, Angers
- Predisposition to be a “Hot Reactor”
Analyzing stressors helps you to beat them.
How do you react to stress??
3 PHASES OF STRESS:

1. Alarm Reaction
2. Resistance Response
3. Exhaustion Phase
**General Adaptation Syndrome:**

1. **Alarm Reaction**

- Muscles tensed for fight or flight
- Circulation changes
- Digestion changes
- Heart rate & breathing changes
- Surge of hormones from adrenal glands
- Blood circulating adrenalin
- Blood sugar shoots up from glucose dumping
- Thymus gland contracts
General Adaptation Syndrome:  
2. Resistance Response

- Glucose depletion in liver
- Chronic over-secretion of cortisol
- Impaired immunity
- Reduction of DHEA
- Mental powers decline
- Short-term memory diminishes
- Drops in energy
- Downswings in mood with little provocation
General Adaptation Syndrome: 3. Exhaustion Phase

- Blood pressure increases
- Other organs are “drafted” to join the battle
- Most of body’s organs & systems affected, harmed
- Enlargement of the cortex of adrenal glands
- Shrinkage of thymus gland, spleen, lymph nodes
- Decrease in white blood cells
- Excess stomach acid
- Sex hormones decline
Why is stress so dangerous?  
One word: CORTISOL

Prolonged release of cortisol by the adrenals causes damage to organs, to overall health, and it kills brain cells, creating Alzheimer-like problems.
You should know that not only your heart and organs are at risk:

“Prolonged stress actually produces brain damage.”

Richard Restak, MD
Geo. Washington School of Medicine
SOME of the many Problems caused by Stress

- Chronic Fatigue
- Immune Suppression
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Ulcers / Gastritis
- High Blood Pressure
- Weight Gain
- Hair Loss
- Early Aging
- Sexual Dysfunction

- Drug and/or Alcohol Dependence
- Sleep Problems
- Loss of Mental Ability
- Memory Problems
- Inability to Focus
- Communication Issues
- Mood swings
- Depression
WHY all of these problems? Because stress causes biochemical responses in your body within microseconds.
How do you know whether you have too much stress at any one time?
Problem:
Many people don’t know that their bodies are reacting in a distressed way until a major physical issue has developed.
Examples:

- Those who have blood pressure spikes during mental stress are 6 times more likely to have a heart attack or serious cardiac event.
- People with severe increases in blood pressure were completely unable to feel the physiological change.
Do a Self-Assessment of your stress responses and levels.
The Five Over-Stress Danger Signs from the N.I.H.

- Increase in physical problems and illness
- More people problems and irritations
- Increased negative assumptions & thoughts
- Increase in bad habits &/or inability to keep healthy promises
- Chronic Exhaustion
Self-Assessment of Stress-Related Brain Functioning

- Misplace items, make mistakes, poor decisions
- Forget /mistrust familiar numbers & names
- Confuse facts or data relating to information
- Dissociate (on phone, in meetings, traveling)
- Sleep Problems (getting to sleep, staying there)
Self-Assessment of Your Personal Emotive Stress Factor

WHEN SUDDEN STRESS OCCURS,

Would your family consider you to be a …

- “Hot Reactor”
- “Moderate Mild”
- “Cool Observer”
Are you an Optimist or a Pessimist?
Self-Assessment of Your Optimism Factor

WHEN “BAD” HAPPENS, WHAT ARE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS?

WHEN “GOOD” HAPPENS, WHAT ARE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS?
Optimists vs Pessimists

- Are healthier
- Are more satisfied
- Have more friends
- Make more money
- Live longer

- Are more accurate about problems that have occurred
OBJECTIVE of Stress Management:

To learn to handle stress with ease by increasing your assimilation capacity and resilience in order to have the right kinds of stress at the right levels in order to be both challenged and fulfilled.
Key Concepts

• Assimilation Capacity
• Assimilation Points
• Future Shock
• Resistance to Change
Where do you spend most Assimilation Points?

- Work requirement changes
- Management changes
- Family changes
- Health challenges
- Financial issues
- Logistics issues
How can you increase your resilience and assimilation capacity and reduce the impact of stress?
First, Identify the Type of Stress
Identify “Stress Saboteurs”: 6 Types of Stress

NO CONTROL

- Sudden & Brief
- Sudden & Lasting
- Emerging & Prolonged

SOME CONTROL

- Sudden & Brief
- Sudden & Lasting
- Emerging & Prolonged
12 TOOLS YOU CAN USE:
When a stress is long-term or continuous:

**EXAMPLES:**
- Long-lasting problem
- Irritating colleague
- Family illness
- Problem child
- Parental deterioration

**Protect Body and Brain:**

1. Do something you love to do every week
2. Take natural vitamins, particularly B-complex and C, drink LOTS of water
3. Learn to meditate for shutting off worry
Care for Body, Mind & Emotions

In times of prolonged stress, protect the body, give safe outlet to emotions, and reach for the best-assessment of the situation.
When you are out of control emotionally:

**EXAMPLES:**
- Anger
- Frustration
- Rage

Back off immediately:

4. Take Time-Outs
5. Vent to a trusted friend
6. Try a dose of Humor
Become “Stress Hardy”

• What do you need to learn or add to your life to improve your “assimilation capacity”?  
• What do need to subtract from your life when you have control of it?
When you do have Some Control:

Examples:
Scheduling
Commitments
Choice of Activities

Stress-Control Choices:
7. Prioritize with well-being in mind
8. Closely manage multi-tasking
9. Be exceptionally organized
Well-Organized

- Develop structures as “glue”
- Control what can be controlled
- Respond to change from a familiar base
When you have No Control:

EXAMPLES:
Behaviors of others
Emotions of others
Illness of others
Traffic, Weather
Stock Market

Insulate Yourself for Higher Resilience
10. Deliberate breathing
11. Exercise 2-3 X/day
   5 days/week
12. Perceptual Therapy
There is no such thing as "absolute reality".

Events are *always* interpreted, judged and changed by our "Perceptual Filter".
Learn to shape and guide your own perceptions.

Take steps to improve your judgments, assumptions and internal dialogue.
TAKE ACTION!

How will you begin to do that?
Take Heightened Care When Under Stress:

- Physically
- Emotionally
- Spiritually
- Perceptually
Quick Keys:

1. Whatever you do, do it with willingness.
2. Let stress go as quickly as you can.
3. Practice emotional intelligence daily.
“The normal state of the mind is not uptight. It’s relaxed, creative, intuitive, vibrant, and intelligent. It’s almost magical. I call the fully relaxed mind the ‘magical mind’.”

from “The Relaxation Response”
Liah Kraft-Kristaine, J.D.

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- Communication Skills
- Managing Skills
- Handling Workplace Negativity
Thank You!