

How
The **Best**
Handle **Stress**



Your First Aid Kit

Dr. Ron Rubenzer

2018

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MEN AND WOMEN AREN'T FROM DIFFERENT PLANETS BUT FROM
DIFFERENT HEMISPHERES (OF THE BRAIN)

How to Use this Book

This is your First aid kit.

Consider this book as your pocket-sized, first aid kit, allowing you to travel lightly...

“In God we trust, everyone else needs references.” So with that in mind, a bedrock of evidence based research is contained in the original book “How the Best Handle stress, by using your head and heart.” housed at Columbia University library (<C:\Users\Ron Rubenzer\Documents\FILES FROM DESKTOP\ALL RESEARCH 7-17-2013\Book CLIO Holdings Information 5-26-2013.mht>).

The book is also available on line (amazon.com).

Since work and school have surfaced as potential sources of stress, this book is devoted to work, and school. The author has worked in Cardiac Rehab, designing first-aid kits, to help cardiac patients benefit from stress management. He has also spent decades taking and giving tests, and coordinated wellness programs.

The Fort Knox of Stress-Science – The American Institute of Stress (est. 1978)

The virtual “Fort Knox” of stress-science information on stress is the - American Institute of Stress-. The American Institute of Stress was founded under the direction of the world renowned Han Seyle, who, in 1936, coined the word STRESS (American Institute of Stress 2017). From its establishment in 1978, the American Institute of Stress has provided the “Best practices advice” carefully monitored by medical and other highly qualified professionals. As there as many cures for stress as causes, go to the American Institute of Stress (stress.org) as your library of Congress for scientific information on stress science.

The Invisible Disability for 40,000,000 Americans - Now being addressed.

A barometer of concern is “key word” searches. And the survey says, almost 2,000,000 individuals are searching for a stress solution. (wordstream 2018). Anxiety disorders

affect 40,000,000 American (NIMH 2018) and are the leading mental-health issue, affecting about one in five.

The need for stress-education has reached such a tipping point that it is now a mandated part of the public school core curriculum, at all grade levels, in New York State, beginning 2018.

A 2018 study by the American Psychiatric Association revealed that Americans are even more anxious than just the previous year (2017). Women still tend to be more anxious than men (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/american-psychiatric-association/>).

Chapter One-

How DO The Best Handle Stress?

HOW THE BEST HANDLE STRESS

Tips from the top: using stress for success.

You can learn how to have success without distress.

Life in the fast lane may be the only way to stay ahead. Deadlines, lack of time, competition, difficult people, and criticism are roadblocks that are common to everyone. While these may be obstacles for some, the “best” actually use these stressors as stepping-stones rather than stumbling blocks to get where they want. What separates the whiners from the winners? Each of the following fourteen “top guns” has developed individual coping techniques to thrive on stress, rather than just survive.

Those best at handling stress included: an Emmy award-winning writer, a top Nielson-rated TV personality with an earned doctorate, an Olympic pretrial competitor, a world leader in stress management, a federal judge, a top radio personality, the Executive Director of the North Carolina Writers’ Network, a Yale educational consultant/retired interim superintendent of a 77,000 student school system, and a private-school teacher from Australia. One of their personal formulas, listed below, could just work for you.

Their winning tips are summarized below and detailed later in the “rest” of their stories.

- Enjoy all aspects of your life.
- “Stress management is thought management.”
- Meditate, exercise, enjoy and achieve.
- Have fun in all you do, and leave a legacy.
- Forget yourself by serving others.
- Keeping calm to help others under adversity.

- Using a proven technique.
- “Get physical” and focus on family.
- Making the right decision.
- Tips from our Australian neighbors: Meditate, exercise and diners.
- Providing the most good for the “cause.”
- Walking, massages and movies.

The “Rest” of Their Stories

It may be of interest to match the above stress-management techniques with the names and jobs of those who were deemed to be best at handling stress. Their most interesting stories of success over stress follow.

1. Enjoy all aspects of your life.

“I don’t practice any specific stress-reduction technique. I find that good social support from friends and family, and enjoying and being able to derive pride of accomplishment from what I do are powerful stress busters. I derive a lot of fun from my work, which I consider to be more like play. . I also have fun playing golf.

I can’t wait to get up in the morning, including weekends and holidays, to continue with any one of a number of exciting projects and assignments at work. I believe much of the satisfaction derives from the fascinating people I meet, and the opportunity to keep learning.”

*Dr. Paul J. Rosch, M.D., President of the American Institute of Stress in Yonkers, New York and Clinical Professor of Medicine and Psychiatry at New York Medical College. He is also an author and frequent contributor to publications such as **Reader’s Digest**, which is read by more than twenty-two-million people.*

2. “Stress management is thought management.”

“Stress management is thought management . . . Control is ultimately the answer to stress; the more control you have over your life the less stress you should experience. Regardless of whom we work for we should all consider ourselves “self-employed” and act and manage our lives accordingly. Move away from the stressful orbit. So you need multiple strategies.”

*Winner of the 2000-2001 Toastmaster International Award for Leadership and Communication and top Nielson-rated local TV News anchor, Dr. Lee Kinard, developed the nation’s most successful, longest-lasting local TV show in the nation. For forty years he has hosted the early dawn, “Good Morning Show.” Remarkably, he has carved time out of his busy schedule to earn a doctorate and write a book entitled, **Good Morning**, that details the development of this top-rated TV show.*

3. Meditate, exercise, enjoy and achieve.

“I have learned . . . through [daily] meditation how to better manage all the things one must manage day in and day out.” This multiple Emmy-winning writer also jogs daily. For fun he reads, goes to the movies, and visits with friends as much as possible. His major job satisfaction is “the completion of a well-written scene or script.”

Two-time Emmy award-winner, Rex Best, writes weekly TV scripts for a top-rated show. The Nielson ratings are used to assess his performance. This former teacher is under great pressure to coordinate the TV scripts with other writers under tight deadlines.

4. Have fun in all you do, and leave a legacy.

“. . . I make it my job to find fun in whatever I do. Clearly there are some limitations. Funerals, visiting the IRS, excessive dental work would all be beyond stress relief. But playfulness within the daily routines of life can be a life saver. Be on guard not to become too professional. Outright silliness can be very healthy and helpful to the bottom line.

Jobs allow the opportunity to positively touch the lives of co-workers, customers and others. To leave a human being progressed by an encounter with your company is the best of personal satisfaction.”

This is the stress-management advice of Bill Flynn, host of a long-running and highly-successful daily morning radio show on WMAG, High Point, North Carolina. Bill also writes a weekly newspaper column and recently wrote a book.

5. Forget yourself by serving others.

“I forget myself by serving others. I like to read and play with my three-year- old. My major job satisfaction is service to others. Provide service to others without concern for outcome and your stress will evaporate.”

*Dr. Sanford Danziger, M.D., and Director of TRP: Training for the Totally Responsible Person as a way of eliminating “victim mentality” in the workplace. Danziger is recipient of the highest award for training, innovation and creativity from the American Society for Training and Development. Co-author of the successful book, **Better than Money Can Buy**. Danziger practices in Winston- Salem, North Carolina.*

6. Keeping calm to help others under adversity.

“I keep myself calm in order to control any adversity. I read and watch soccer on TV My job satisfaction is helping members of the San Marino community in New York. (San Marino, Italy, holds the world record for countries with the highest life expectancy for men [77.2] and women [85.3].)”

This is the stress-management advice of Jose Riba, K.M., Honorary Consulate General of the Republic of San Marino, Italy, assigned to New York.

7. Using a proven technique.

“I use **Freeze-Framer**TM, a five-step, scientifically proven, one-minute technique to clear thinking and calm down. I play, hike in nature, dance, ‘explore the heart’ daily. My major job satisfactions are finding new ways to share Heartmath relaxation techniques with people/seeing their lives improve, seeing my staff’s lives improve and having fun staff meetings.”

Thus advises Dr. Deborah Rozman, Executive Vice-President, Heartmath, Boulder Creek, California. Heartmath programs focus on business-stress training to improve productivity, and have been featured on national TV programs and presented at the 1997 International Congress on Stress, Montreux, Switzerland.

8. “Get physical” and focus on family.

“I manage stress with physical exercise three or four times per week for forty- five minutes. I also spend time with family. What I look forward to at work is satisfactory completion of projects such as negotiation of a new contract or meeting a deadline.”

So says Roy Bixby, M.B.A., Human Resources manager; R. J. Reynolds Corporation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

9. Making the right decision.

“My major job satisfaction is simply getting the right decision made (as often as possible) and doing so expeditiously,” advises Judge Charles Biscoe, Administrative law judge, Southeast Region, Greensboro, North Carolina.

10. Tips from our Australian neighbors: Meditate, exercise and dine.

This Olympic pretrial gymnast states, “To manage stress, I practice yoga once per week, use meditation daily, and exercise three to four times per week. For fun, I have dinner with friends once a week.”

This advice is from the dynamic Rowena J. Robinson, B. Sc.Ed. PDHPE, Dip. HM, Olympic pretrial Competitor; Health and Fitness Consultant, Monte Sant’Angelo Mercy College (private school). North Sydney, Australia.

11. Providing the most good for the “cause.”

“For stress management, in addition to other exercise, I walk three times per week. On Saturdays, I unwind by cooking and baking and listening to the Metropolitan Opera on the radio. My major source of job satisfaction is advising writers on their work and the completion of a newsletter for the North Carolina Writers’ Network [NCWN] six times yearly. I also enjoy helping to organize two state conferences for NCWN,” says Dr. Linda

Hobson, professional writer and Executive Director of the North Carolina Writers' Network. She is the author of two scholarly books.

12. Walking, massages, and movies.

Yale consultant, and retired interim superintendent of a large (77,000 students, 5,000 employees) school system, Dr. Lillie M. Jones recalls that after more than thirty years of service as a teacher, she was promoted "from within" to the "top" in a North Carolina school system, which is a distinct honor. She was a very highly-regarded, unusually effective top-level administrator, who led her staff and students through positive leadership and no-fault administration.

Chapter Two -

ATTITUDES, BREATHING, CHOICES

A HEALTH CENTERED APPROACH TO STRESS MANAGEMENT

The Reader is invited to Try the ABC approach. That is, rehearse a health-centered “Attitude, Breathing technique and Choice” to groove-in your reset habit.

“Folks are usually about as happy as they make their minds up to be.”

Abraham Lincoln

ATTITUDES – FOR maximized mindset.

“A man’s mind, stretched by a new idea, can never go back to its original dimensions.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

1. Harvard Medical School’s scientific breakthrough 2002: Positive thinking proven to promote physical health and healing.

Harvard Medical School reveals that positive thinking is proven to promote physical health and healing. The boss’s bottom line for this mental-physical health link: You can take this to the bank — it’s less expensive to be more positive because of less sick-(of)-work days by employees.

“Positive thinking” movement turns seventy, making it an institution, not just a fad

As far back as 1932, the great power of positive thoughts was recognized, as expressed in Emmet Fox's pioneering book, *Power Through Constructive Thinking*. His "Fifteen Points" (p. 272 of his book) predate most positive thinking movements and exemplifies one of the best minds of the 19th century (Fox was born in 1886). Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, considered one of the ten most popular men in the world in the 1990's, carried the "positive thinking" torch to light the darkness with his best-selling classic, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, published about 20 years after Fox's groundbreaking book on positive thinking.

2. Advice from the world's "smartest" person on the power of attitude.

Marilyn vos Savant, who has the highest-measured IQ (230) in the world, believes that "...thoughts generate emotions. You may not necessarily choose your emotions, but you control the thoughts that produce them."

3. "Small thoughts vaccine" for negative thinking on the job.

"SMALL THOUGHTS VACCINE"

(Prescription — take seven times per "small thoughts" attack)

Dr. Ron Rubenzer © 2003

1. *This job is a drag; there is too much change; these computers are driving me nuts!* Work is fun, change is good: A poor workman argues with his tools, so get back in the loop of the 21st century program!
2. *I have to.* I want to. If I do what I have to now, I can do what I really want to do later.
3. *I think I can't (change).* I think I can.
4. *You are told: You will never have a perfect "score" (grade).* No monument was ever built to honor a critic. What are my LFT's, "Look forward to's"?

5. *This job is too stressful. I can't take the stress of these computer courses.* Job-stress is better than jobless stress. Choose to convert temporary stress into long-term satisfaction (e.g., taking those computer courses now for a better job life later).
6. *The only person who likes change is a wet baby.* Change is the only sure thing in life. You couldn't even eat if food didn't change form.
7. *Why am I in this job (course, etc.)? What are my LFT's, "Look forward to's"?*
8. *She is impossible to get along with.* I'll try the JLU, "Just like us" approach, by finding something in common with her (dress, food, hobbies, and interests).
9. *I give up.* "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." (Dedicated to E. Roosevelt by Adlai Stevenson upon Roosevelt's death in 1962.)
10. *I can't take this pressure anymore.* The glass is both half empty and half full. There is some balance between good and evil.

When stuck between a rock and a hard place, become a diamond. (Use the pressure to become the world's most-brilliant and strongest element, just slow the pressure down.)

THE ONLY THING YOU CAN CONTROL ABOUT THE PAST IS YOUR ATTITUDE.

YOUR ATTITUDES ARE AN INDESTRUCTIBLE SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

World-famous psychiatrist, Dr. Victor Frankl, successfully survived the ravages of a Nazi concentration camp by sheer "will of attitude. Most basically, he said if we have meaning in life we can survive anything. Three ways to find meaning in life are by doing a worthwhile deed or completing a work; encountering someone or experiencing something (love, truth, beauty, etc.); and managing our attitude toward unavoidable suffering. Dr. Frankl's secret to survival also included a sense of humor, even a grim sense of humor, toward one's own situation.

4. “Hold that thought” — bringing about an attitude adjustment in a 75% negative world. Negative thinking changes your brain chemistry in just two weeks.

People spend at least 75% of their time being negative, according to renowned stress consultant, Loretta LaRoche, of the Humor Potential. Positive people are going up the down stairwell crowded with angry, frustrated people. Without becoming preachy, it is important to give yourself a fighting chance at being positive by having reminders (carrying cards, etc.) and surrounding yourself with positive people (the other 25%). The average person has a negative thought every two and one half minutes, or about three-hundred negative thoughts a day, according to the Midwest Center for Stress and Anxiety, Inc.

The best book to help you learn and practice positive thinking is by Lucinda Bassett, founder of the Midwest Center for Stress and Anxiety, Inc. Her book, *Life Without Limits*, provides practical proven ways to change your mind to change your life.

Consider this: If you are not in control of your thoughts and actions, who or what else is?

Synchronize your mind with your watch

Get in real time, not lost in the false memories of the past or the future imaginings of things that may never be. Be “present” in the present. Living in the past breeds regret, living in the future breeds fear. Try to keep in the “here and now” making a “pleasant present” when possible. Surround yourself with the good and positive when you can. Try to keep in the “here and now” for just one minute, not letting your mind drift off into the past, future or someplace else. Taking ten deep breaths will take you about a minute.

These 12 tips, with examples, may help:

Talk yourself into positive attitudes

The key to turning your attitudes around is simply, “practice until you believe.” It has been estimated that negative attitudes are several times stronger than positive attitudes. To excel in terms of stamping in positive attitudes, remember, practice makes permanent. Just as your office has dress codes, you follow different attitude codes at work. Helpful attitude codes follow:

- Easy always does it.
- Pain is unavoidable, suffering is optional.

- TGIE (Thank God I'm employed).
- "Line by line, things are fine; page by page, I've got it made," is the "writer's mantra," useful for any type of writing.
- Your enemies will become your stepping-stones if you are patient. (Janet Harrell).
- There is no danger.
- There is enough time.
- This too, shall pass. Everything is temporary.
- Don't give up.
- Don't take it personally. Do not be like the "princess and the pea" overreacting to the smallest pet peeve. "Jerks at work" are probably not aiming to hurt you personally, but only trying to help themselves.
- Divide and conquer your problems. Divide your problems into steps that can be dealt with one at a time.
- Live your life in daylight compartments. Like the rising sun, your energy will rise for the day if you let go of yesterday and concentrate on doing well today.
- Relax. You are not the center of the universe but you are central to the universe.
- We are actually centered in the universe, midway in size between stars and atoms. Our true life cycle is from "stardust to stardust." We are composed of stars and we will return to stars.
- Instead of saying, "I hate....," say, "I pity...." Instead of saying, "I dread doing ...," say to yourself, "I dislike doing..."
- "It takes confidence to win, and it takes winning to have confidence," according to a statement credited to Andre Agassi, world-class tennis player.. In childhood many of us said the prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," which comforted us. Millions of grateful adults still say grace

before eating. Some coaches in private schools even have a team prayer before games. But again, keep your prayers to yourself.

5. Professional “attitude adjustment”: Center for Creative Leadership.

The world-renowned Center for Creative Leadership provides individualized, objective and practical assessment of attitudes and behaviors related to successful leadership. The main headquarters and training facility for CCL is in Greensboro, North Carolina, with other training facilities in San Diego, and Colorado Springs. For program information, call (336) 545-2810 or visit their website at <http://www.ccl.org/search>.

Positive thinking on the job

Scott Ventrella, in his 2001 book, lists ten do-able positive thinking steps for the job. Of course, calmness, patience and persistence are key factors. Faith in one’s self to have a positive outcome, even when times are tough, tops his list of things you can do on the job for effectiveness and success.

A very useful and visually appealing list of “**Twelve Commandments** for People Who Work With People” is offered by Ann White. Her corporation can be contacted at (864) 463-6709, or www.annwhite.com.

6. Don’t wait for perfect timing.

“When I graduate I’ll ... ; when the kids stop fighting I’ll improve my. . . ; I’ll finish that report when my desk is cleared, all my papers are filed AND all my pencils are sharpened . . . ; I’ll go to Tahiti when I can afford it . . . ; I’ll improve my romance life when I lose more weight; We’ll leave for vacation when the house is spotless and could pass “the Martha Stewart” inspection.

BREATHING EASIER

The Key to Stress Management is Right Under Your Nose!

Breathing relieves pain, relaxes and enhances concentration.

1. If controlled breathing calms during childbirth, it will work on the job.

(Unless your job is worse than childbirth).

Why does deep breathing work?

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, “People who are anxious often hyperventilate, taking rapid shallow breaths that can trigger rapid heartbeat, lightheadedness, and other symptoms.” Slow deep breathing stops unpleasant anxiety symptoms.

Your brain is very “high maintenance” in terms of its need for oxygen. It needs ten times more oxygen for its body weight compared to other parts of your body. Breathing deeply and slowly will automatically provide energy to your brain, which is the first defense against stress.

Relaxation breathing calms

Dr. Andrew Weil, M.D., Harvard-trained physician and best-selling author, strongly advocates concentrating on your breathing for five minutes per day to lower stress and blood pressure. In fact, he states that relaxation breathing is the single best treatment for anxiety disorders.

“Fill in the blank” of boredom with breathing.

During those no-brainer activities, (being stuck in traffic, listening to senseless chatter, waiting in a line at the store), do some deep breathing. It is mental housecleaning. Even a few minutes will help you combat feeling bored (or baffled) and it will help you get your breathing practice in.

2. Breathing instructions 101: Easier done than said!

Obviously if you are reading this page, you are breathing and do not really need breathing instructions. In fact, relaxation breathing, is actually easier done than said, because it is second nature. Every time you sigh, you are relaxation breathing. Just try breathing a little easier, slower and deeper. Begin your breath with your stomach first.

Try the following RELAXATION BREATHING exercise lying down.

Notice the rising of your stomach, then your chest as you slowly inhale. Your goal is belly breathing in which the belly fills with air before the upper lungs do. Notice your chest falling and then your stomach flattening as you slowly exhale. Putting your hand on your stomach will help you feel whether you are belly breathing. Practice this belly breathing when you go to bed for a few days until it is a habit.

BREATHING BY THE NUMBERS

Breathe in on odd numbers, breathe out on even numbers up to the count of ten. For example, breathe in on the count of one, breathe out on the count of two, breathe in on the count of three, breathe out on the count of four. Five in, six out, seven in, eight out, nine in, ten out. The numbers give you something to think about while you are feeling your breathing. Practice “breathing by the numbers” several times a day until you can breathe to the count of ten some of the time without thoughts interrupting.

BREATHE WITH “MEANING”

Once you can breath-count to ten, substitute a single word or short phrase for the numbers. For example, say silently to yourself on your inhalation, “In relaxation,” then as you exhale say, “Out tension.” (In relaxation [as you inhale]

- Out tension [as you exhale]). Or try, “I am — relaxed.” You may want to try saying to yourself more (on the inhalation) relaxed (on the exhalation). To review, some self-calmers are “I am [inhale] — relaxed [exhale],” “Just for now
- I’ll relax,” or if you are religious, “This too — shall pass,” “The peace that passes all understanding.” It is most useful to select and practice your single favorite self-calmer. Change in itself is stressful. Stick with your best single calmer word or phrase for at least three weeks.

Then try another for three weeks. Think of your top self-calmer, sleep on it, and start grooving it into your memory tomorrow.

To build habit strength, it is important that you pick one single phrase to practice with for at least three weeks. The phrase should be short and peaceful, not “More — money or work — faster.”

If you are trying to doze off to sleep, say as you inhale, “Deep,” and as you exhale, “Sleep.”

DOCTOR RECOMMENDED BREATHING BY THE NUMBERS

This breathing exercise can be done while standing:

Breathe in deeply to the count of five, hold at the crest of your breath, now
Breathe out slowly to the count 6- 7- 8- 9- 10.
Repeat as needed.

The Harvard Mantra.

The famed Dr. Herbert Benson speaks of the Harvard Mantra- as just being ONE. Focus your mind on ONE thought, one picture. Enjoy the sensation of relaxation.

Choice - Win/Lose - You Choose:

Your Freedom to CHOOSE

No statue was ever erected to honor a critic.

Choice is the C in the ABC's of Industrial-Strength Stress Control formula. Within reason, we have freedom of choice in how we handle problems. Consciously choosing how we handle hassles frees us from the involuntary stranglehold of job-stressors.

“What-to-do-tomorrow” tips are offered for you.

GAINING CONTROL OVER THE NUMBER ONE REASON FOR YOUR JOB-STRESS (The first C in the four C’s of work)

CONTROL

Three key ways to get control over your work are:

- 1. Increase your knowledge. Find a need and feed it.*
- 2. Play by the company rules.*
- 3. Plan and pace yourself with time management. Use computerized “brain extenders.”*

A large portion of this chapter will be devoted to time management because it is central to getting control over your job. Time management will help you from feeling overwhelmed while making you successful at the same time.

The specifics of these three key points to gaining control over your job are now detailed.

1. Increase your knowledge.

Knowledge is power, more than ever. The world’s most financially-powerful person is the “knowledge baron,” Bill Gates, developer of Microsoft computer software.

Find out what the company needs by finding out what people are rewarded for producing or providing. Who gets the “employee of the month” awards and why?

A NOTE ON WORKING SMART. To work smart you have to be sharp. Paul Rosch, M.D., President of the American Institute of Stress, lists six practices to sharpen your concentration, memory and decision-making. These practices are: getting enough exercise and sleep, lowering your stress, controlling caffeine, avoiding prescription drugs, and eating a balanced diet for good blood sugar.

2. Play by the company rules.

Listen and watch for what the boss expects, don't be too perfectionistic, do more than the minimum, try to solve your own problems, accept your mistakes, use common sense, do not complain, and be on time.

3. Plan and pace yourself with time management. Use computerized “brain extenders.”

One hour of planning saves you three to four hours later and achieves better results.

It is now the 21st century. Electronic markers have replaced paper and pencil. Try to use your left brain extenders — computers. Excellent time-management programs are available. Hand-held electronic calendars actually relieve you of cumbersome paper and pencil.

I've fallen behind, and I can't catch up

This is the theme song of the time-management impaired.

Hint: Corporations develop their master plan using computer calendars and planners. To give you a sense of control, get with the program, the computer program. Just as you weren't born knowing how to write long hand, you can learn to use computers.

Time management is considered one of the best job-stress managers for Type A's and for adults diagnosed as ADHD. Type A's tend to be constantly urgent individuals. Some Type A's tend to be impatient and easily agitated and angered. The angry Type A's triple their risks of heart attacks. ADHD is a medical designation that stands for attention- deficit disorder with hyperactivity.

More Freedom Of Choices

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

Reinhold Niebuhr

We will now look at three other choices we have to manage stress: Accept, Rest and Enjoy.

ACCEPTING

Experts on peak performance and stress management agree that learning “to peacefully accept and then adjust”, is critical. A nationally-recognized sports psychologist states that to perform our best we have to “accept the bad, banish it from the mind and keep on plugging away.” The next step is re-calibrating your actions and thoughts for a better outcome (plan B).

Accepting limitations expands our boundaries

Marilyn vos Savant, measured to have the world’s-highest IQ, advises that admitting to and accepting our mistakes is a true way to becoming smarter.

Blood pressure can be dangerously skyrocketed by overreacting to mistakes. People overreacting to mistakes had up to a 54-point blood pressure increase within only twenty minutes, according to a University of Western Ontario study.

Good driver/bad passenger syndrome: Most of us make better drivers than passengers because being in the driver’s seat helps us control or at least predict what is going to happen. At work you are paid to be a team player and accept decisions and workloads. It helps if you know that you can control how you react to what happens to you. It’s like being on a bus with a team, with someone else driving. You just hope the driver (your boss) knows where he’s going and is a good driver. Your stress-management skills will act like a safety belt so you don’t get knocked around emotionally when the ride gets rough.

ARE YOUR ATTITUDES HARDENING? Just as you can get hardening of the arteries from lack of exercise and poor diet, you can also get hardening of the attitudes, or intolerance of

differences, from lack of stretching exercises. Are you easily upset by young people's dress, music or behavior? Are you annoyed by people who wear studs in every part of the body? Blackbeard and his sailors wore pierced everything. Do you feel as if your country is being invaded by foreigners? Do you think our institutions are becoming like the U.N., having to serve diverse populations? Fortunately our ancestors took the brunt of being the unwelcomed foreigners. Anyone who has arrived in North America after 1492 is a foreigner, so get a grip, foreigner.

RESTING

No one has ever been too tired to leave work and go home!

Have you ever gone into work in the morning to find someone asleep at their desk claiming they were "just too tired" to go home at the end of their shift? No, I haven't, either. People always seem to find enough energy, even after the worst day at work, to get themselves home. Rest is absolutely important, but some of the fatigue we feel at work is in our heads, and that is job-stress.

Why rest? A 20-minute power-nap recharges the most powerful man on earth, President Bush. Twenty minutes of rest will reset your brain back to optimal performance. If the President can carve out 20 minutes to power-nap daily, certainly you can. A 20-minute nap can improve your memory, sharpen your alertness and reduce fatigue.

Relaxation is the oil in your mental machinery. You may want to catch twenty winks after you get home and before you eat or exercise. Twenty minutes is also considered enough time to meditate for optimal benefit. Twenty minutes of breathing meditation gives you a mini-vacation. Saying on inhalation, "I am," and on exhalation, "at peace," can center you, improving your concentration and thinking. Sit up in a chair, and set a timer in a drawer, under a towel, to muffle the ticking sound, while allowing you to hear it go off after twenty minutes. You don't want to hear the timer ticking like the one on a popular TV show that features a stopwatch as its centerpiece for advertising. It could create more stress than it's worth.

Sometimes resting or retreating is needed for coping or growth to occur. A man went to his doctor for advice and said: "Doctor, every time I move my arm like this it hurts. What should I do?" The doctor said, "Stop moving your arm like that." This old joke makes an important point: Think about what you want, not what you don't want. If you want to feel more relaxed, think relaxing thoughts. Give your worries a rest.

Scientific research shows that merely thinking negative thoughts physically triggers your emotional “fight or flight” response, which can make you irritable, sick and tired. Bringing up the past in a negative way brings up the same stressful feelings all over again and prevents healing of old wounds. You spin your wheels while getting nowhere.

Following are some tips for giving yourself a break or rest from negative thinking:

1. Avoid thinking stressful thoughts.

Realize that negative thinking is a maladaptive habit that can be broken. A mental-health specialist may be helpful in establishing more rational, healthful thought patterns that reduce stress. Without knowing it, you may well be a victim of a “negative-thinking addiction,” built-up and rewarded by a negative world.

“Negative-thinking addictions” — how to recognize and overcome them

Honestly ask yourself if you are addicted to negative thinking. If you always look for the downside, expect the worst, or find reasons why something won’t work, you may be addicted to negative thinking. If you read the obituaries first (and are relieved if your name is not included), you are probably addicted to negativity. Like any addiction, a “negative-thinking addict” is constantly looking for their next fix. The fix is to look for trouble. If there is not enough trouble in your own backyard, you will borrow trouble from someone else through gossip or the media or borrow nonexistent problems from the future.

Overcome your “negative-thinking addiction” by blocking any negative thoughts for just half a day. An effective way to block negative thinking is to have a ready-made positive thought to substitute as soon as a negative thought invades your thinking. Keep trying to block all negative thinking for just one day until you are successful. Doing this on a weekend or vacation is best.

Anger research has found that the “chronically angered” bring up past, unrelated events to fuel their anger, setting themselves up to be more easily angered in the future.

2. Avoid contagion.

You can catch another person's emotions. Emotional contagion research shows that stress can be involuntarily caught just by being in the presence of a stress carrier. Reduce or eliminate exposure to these people, or put on "attitude armor" if you have to deal with these individuals. Join pep-rallies, not pity parties.

3. Does the shoe fit? Avoid job-stress extremes.

A major source of job-stress is a mismatch between worker skills and job demands. You may have to avoid or reduce exposure to jobs you cannot adjust to.

Popular personality "typing" research suggests there are at least sixteen personality types. Seven different types of intelligence have been identified. It may be that your personality/intelligence profile conflicts with job requirements. Police work would be very stressful to a shy writer. Being a research scientist would be a very stressful job for an outgoing social director.

Finally, you may need to retreat from a chronically stressful situation. Use your "head" and "heart" in making this decision, however. Plan ahead as much as possible. Get support (professional opinions) about your situation. Do not burn your bridges as you leave.

Avoid making gut-level decisions, because your gut level is at about a five-year-old developmental level. Your gut-level responses are almost completely right brained, and impulsive, survival oriented and about as delicate as a bulldozer. As to every rule, there is an exception, even to the gut-level quitting rule. Bob, with all his "supposed wisdom" having taught human relations and leadership courses, was forced to make a literal gut-level decision to quit. The story follows below.

4. Take your breaks.

Try to take breaks around positive individuals. Walking can help relieve stress. For most adults, 50 minutes to an hour is about prime time to concentrate continuously on a project before it's time to take a break.

Concentration "errors" (daydreaming, looking around, losing one's place) start to mount the longer you delay taking a short break after this 50 minute prime time. If you use

computers or do close work you need to refocus your gaze at some distant object periodically. Muscle tension headaches and overall stiffness set in after several hours in the same position. Stretch, even for a few seconds every hour.

5. Take more or better vacations.

On the weekends, try not to “work at fun” with long-term deadlines and never-completed projects.

Break down weekend projects into small two to three hour blocks so you have a sense of completion and satisfaction even if your overall projects take several weekends. Writing each “goal block” on a three by five index card may give you visible proof that you got something done during the weekend.

It is important that you learn to disengage from work when the whistle blows. Your car may even be a good “decompression chamber,” serving as a neutral zone of music and news between work and home, both with their complicated expectations. An excellent decompression audiobook is “*Handling stress with humor*,” by Loretta LaRoche.

When you get home, really look at the pleasant things about your house and yard, make eye contact with loved ones, play with a pet, and give yourself about 15 minutes to unwind after the trip home.

Change out of your work clothes. Taking a shower or a bath can recharge you and give you a second wind. Enjoy something daily that takes your undivided attention and that you feel successful at, such as getting through the newspaper sports or comic sections. Have relaxation rituals that work for you.

6. Your job is not designed to be an endurance test or a “stress marathon.”

True quality work requires that your thinking equipment is fully charged, so learn to rest well whenever you can. In fact, in the excellent book, *Living at the Speed of Life*, the authors strongly suggest that we lower our stress tolerance. We do this by being more sensitive to stress, not less, because we may build our stress tolerance so high that we ignore dangerous stress symptoms until it's too late. We have strokes, heart attacks,

irreversible high blood pressure, serious and permanent stomach disorders. In essence we need to learn to rest before it hurts.

ENJOY

“No pain — no gain” makes about as much sense as “Spare the rod — spoil the child.” Both principles are wrong and abusive.

Pleasure-starved people are often irritable, inefficient and unfriendly. These people brighten the room by leaving it.

The inability to enjoy simple pleasures, called anhedonia, can actually be a warning sign of depression. Always see a mental-health professional regarding questions on mental-health issues.

Why enjoy life more? You may be suffering from a “fun-deficit.” Enjoying life helps you enjoy health. A “fun-deficit” in your life will result in feelings of stress. You can correct a “fun-deficit” by paying attention to the last time you had fun, and planning for more fun. Furthermore, pleasure is important for health. You may not be able to avoid negative moods and nervousness at work, but you can cancel out the disease-promoting effects of bad events by being enthusiastic, positive and taking pride in what you do.

Chapter Three -

Make Fun of Stress & Smile

It Makes You *Look Smarter*

This chapter will look at:

- Why it is important to have workplace humor.
- How humor lifts moods and improves relationships.
- How to inject humor into your life by knowing yourself.
- Going on a humor diet (e.g., *Interfax Daily*).
- Making fun of stress — Developing your sense of humor.
- Is there a place for grim humor?
- Watching the company you keep; locking it in.
- Remembering that your sense of humor is your sense of balance.
- Humor leads people to believe you have a higher IQ or “virtual intelligence,” (Mark Lewis).
- How to introduce humor to your job.
- Getting in touch with the experts.

1. Why is it important to have workplace humor? It works.

He who laughs... lasts. Although leading a humorless life is not fatal, it can be unhealthy psychologically. Humor serves as a balance pole on the tightrope of life. Humor is a powerful force in releasing stress's stranglehold. In fact, humor is such a powerful antidote to stress that many corporations hire humor consultants to "lighten up" office environments.

What is the secret to dramatically improving the quality of your life? Increase your smiles per hour.

Laughter is a natural mood elevator, and according to a Cornell University study, it also increases creativity and flexibility of thought. Humor gives a more balanced sense of perspective.

2. How humor lifts moods/improves health and relationships.

The main mechanism of humor or laughter appears to be the release of endorphins or the brain's natural tranquilizer into the system. Laughing results in an "endorphin high." Furthermore, laughter stimulates internal organs making them work better through the increase of circulation that follows the vibrating massage that accompanies laughter and heightens resistive vitality against disease.

We smile because we are happy. Interestingly, it has been discovered that our smile also causes our feelings of happiness. The act of smiling elevates moods.

3. How to inject humor into your life.

Know yourself.

Find your "sore spots" and apply humor as you would a soothing salve. For example, if your daily encounter with a computer makes you sore, find cartoons that make fun of computers. (Whole books have been devoted to making light of irritations, such as *101 Uses for Your Discarded Computer*). You may want to put the cartoons in a file where you can pull them out.

4. Go on a humor diet.

When reading the newspaper, focus on the “funnies” first before finding out all the negative things thousands of people have done lately. Watch movies, listen to tapes or read books that are humorous. Duke University Comprehensive Cancer Center offers a very extensive list of humorous books, audiocassettes, and videocassettes. There are cable channels that feature only “light” programs. Many TV networks offer comedy serials. These can be bright spots in your weekly routine.

5. Making fun of stress.

Develop your sense of humor. Humor is an art form that can be nurtured. Jeanne Swanned Robertson, a nationally-renowned speaker and author, offers the how-to’s of honing your humor skills in her 1998 book, *Don’t Let the Funny Stuff Get Away: Turn Everyday Experiences into Stories That Audiences Will Remember*.

Robertson suggests taking “humor breaks.” Often people feel worse after listening to everyone’s complaints during breaks, so choose to be around more uplifting people. The last chapter of her book details how to collect “humor cues.” Organize a file of things that are humorous to you. Pull up these “humor cues” on a daily basis.

Children laugh at least 25 times more often per day than adults.

(Adults average only 15 laughs a day, children about 400 per day.)

6. Is there a place for grim humor?

Yes. The world-famous Viennese psychiatrist, Dr. Victor Frankl, who survived the atrocities of two Nazi concentration camps, recommended using a sense of humor to soften one’s own harsh situations. Dr. Frankl felt that even having a “grim sense of humor” helps to protectively detach ourselves from unavoidable suffering. Of course, limit your use of grim humor to yourself.

Never give up. Even a blind pig finds an occasional acorn.

7. Watch the company you keep; locking it in.

Avoid “pity parties.” Fly with eagles, don’t flounder with turkeys. Seek out and be around people known for their uplifting jokes and/or sense of humor. “Pity parties” use sarcasm to vent complaints, but using negative humor can actually intensify negative feelings, especially if the unwilling target for sarcasm is not an exceptionally “good sport.”

Stop crucifying yourself... someone else needs the wood for a picnic bench.

Treat yourself to a humor treatment on a regular basis. Don’t let a day pass without some exposure to humor. Lock in your sense of humor by habit.

8. Remember: Your sense of humor is your sense of balance.

People who need humor the most, seek it the least. When you feel you no longer have the time or mood for humor, perhaps you should slow down, relax, and smile. If you can’t smile outwardly due to the situation, imagine yourself smiling. Daydream about the most humorous memory you can (e.g., even a pet’s antics can be funny). You may not feel like “jumping for joy,” but the lift you get will empower you with an increased sense of control and a more balanced perspective.

9. Humor leads people to believe you have a higher IQ (or higher “virtual intelligence”© by Mark Lewis of Denmark).

According to Carolyn Dikeman, Education Director, Midwest Center for Stress and Anxiety, Inc. (2001), an important relationship between our IQ and humor was found. She goes on to suggest if you want people to think you are smart, start smiling.

The esteemed Reverend Mark Lewis of Denmark talks of “virtual intelligence.” VIQ (virtual IQ) is a simulated form of intelligence that seems very real. Again, having a sense of humor projects this “illusion of intelligence” called “virtual intelligence.” It does not matter if you are really that smart or not. “Virtual intelligence” is a good thing to cultivate. The bottom line is that smiling persuades people to believe you are “virtually intelligent” which is very important in any business or human relations setting. Anyone who works for a living on or with computers should make every effort to appear “virtually intelligent ” People take a mental personality “snapshot” within the first 20 seconds of meeting you, so smile for the camera.

10. How to introduce humor to your job.

Hal Lancaster, of *The Wall Street Journal*, offers four tips for workplace humor:

1. Start with a little humor.

For example, put up jokes on a bulletin board to see reactions. Don't jeopardize your career in a totally humorless office by irritating humorless executives.

2. Meaningfully connect.

Squirt gun fights are probably pushing humor too far. To mix playfulness with productivity, try role reversal. Have an executive do your job for a day with you supervising. (Use caution with this approach.)

3. Renew the humor.

To keep humor from getting old, bring in new approaches.

4. Don't offend.

One approach that does not work is to have comedy skits about other departments that attack personally. Be certain not to question anyone's value or harm anyone with attempts at humor.

11. Get in touch with the experts.

For humorous props and workshops, contact the Humor Potential, a corporate training organization who specializes in injecting fun into the workplace. The "Joy of Stress" workshop by the Humor Potential was a nationally-televised, Emmy-nominated special, looking at the lighter side of stress.

The highly-popular "Dilbert" series takes the employee's side of stress at work. This cartoon series by Scott Adams is read by millions daily. It offers potential stress relief through downward comparison. In other words, compared to this cartoon strip, your job may not seem so stressful.

A positive motivational series is “Herbert,” which specializes in producing large posters humanizing potentially tense situations. A classic film that pokes fun at stress is Mel Brooks’, *High Anxiety*. It has some content that would be more appropriate for college students, but it is generally an entertaining, yet instructional tool to learn about anxiety.

Remember, “Humor is the spoonful of sugar that helps things go down easier.”

Chapter Four -

PUBLIC SPEAKING: PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE

Private & Public Speaking are Basically the Same, You Just Need More “Wind” for the Latter

In this chapter we will try to vanquish the number one job-stress enemy — public speaking. We will address the following aspects of public speaking:

- You just need more “wind” for public speaking.
- Mastering public speaking is an art.
- To disarm the number one stressor on the job, a step-by-step guide is provided:

Doing a “Needs Assessment”

Bells and Whistles. Eight tips to prevent you from boring or baffling your audience (p. 162).

Content Development. Seven strategies to make sure you are on target, on topic, and getting audience attention

Presenter Preparation. Tips to guarantee success including, Don’t sweat, Attitude affirmation, and “Tattoo your speech on your brain”.

Heads-up skills

The four basic needs an audience wants to have met were presented by Dr. David Campbell, an award-winning speaker with the Center for Creative Leadership (Co-author of the Campbell Strong Interest Inventory). He emphasized the four basic components that successful workshop presenters need to have:

1. Credentials/accomplishments of the presenters (Degrees, Associations, Publications).

2. Content: “What to do tomorrow” activities or information.
3. Entertainment: Relevant humor and “stories.” Your presentation is competing with “popular media ” as a baseline expectation. Use graphics, visual media when possible.
4. Resourcefulness of speaker to recover in case things go wrong (e.g., equipment failure).

***Doing a “Needs Assessment”:* What is your training bull’s eye?**

Ask training “needs assessment” questions. Are the training needs process or outcome based?
Example of process goal:

Train teachers about test-taking strategies and have students learn test-taking skills as part of the curriculum. Example of outcome goal: Test scores will improve.

Find out what results (goals) are most highly rewarded in the system. What goals/results receive recognition?

Spend 20% of the workshop finding out what the participants need. Write out workshop activities as they “connect” with the identified needs the workshop is to meet.

Single-factor emphasis: Most participants will only remember one simple fact one year after the workshop. Define, highlight and emphasize the most important thing to remember from the workshop.

Bells and Whistles

Here are eight tips to use in trying not to bore or baffle your audience. You are competing with sophisticated mass media (TV, radio). Learn from these media in terms of simplicity, colorfulness and appeal of your presentation.

- Use color where possible.
- Use music where possible.
- All overheads should be legible. (You should be able to read the material from a five-foot distance without projection.)

- Handouts should match overheads (where possible).
- Limit key points from five to seven maximum.
- Give people choice in participating in simulations.
- Use banners/props where appropriate.
- Provide snacks.

Content Development: Seven strategies to make sure you are on target

1. Incentive (Remember WII-FM — What’s in it for me?) What will your participants gain personally and/or professionally from your talk?
2. E. F. Hutton statement (“Wow! I didn’t know that” statements). Make bold and truthful statements.
3. Speak their language. Use the audience’s language. People can only absorb five to seven new facts at a time. Know your audience.
4. Remember the 7-7 rule. Stick to seven major points; repeat the main points seven times (in different forms).
5. Take hourly breaks if possible. The average adult attention span is 45 minutes.
6. Did we hit the bull s eye? Or was there good R OI - Return on investment? For the investment (time/money), what measurable, positive change has been realized? Ask your participants what single change they will make as the result of the workshops. How will this change be documented? (It can be a process or outcome change.)
7. Attention-getter notes from the audience. Distribute two or three 3x5 index cards to each participant. Tell them ahead of time that you will randomly ask them to write down whatever they are thinking about at a particular moment during your talk. Have each participant do this individually, and anonymously. You may wish to delay telling them they don’t have to put their names on the cards till right before they turn in their cards. This will increase their attention span. You are testing your attention-getting ability, not their listening skills.

Have them pass in the cards (with no identification) right after you ask them to write down their predominant thought at that moment. Review these cards, and see how many bulls eyes you were hitting with your talk. Turn up the volume for points not getting through by reducing the number of points or increasing the interest level of your points.

Presenter Preparation: Tips to guarantee success

1. Don't sweat (while presenting).

Sweat while preparing. Ten to one ratio of preparation to presentation time is typical. (It takes ten hours of preparation for an hour of good presentation.) This includes needs assessment, product development and practice.

2. Attitude affirmation.

Repeat to yourself, "I know — that I know," to build your confidence. You will always know a little more than your audience (at least new jokes).

Smile and say to yourself and then to your audience, "I'm glad to be here," (whether you are or not, fake it till you make it). Smiling will make your audience think you're smart. Find one friendly face in the audience.

3. "Tattoo your speech on your brain."

Use the rule of 7. Go through your talk at least seven times. Practice once to a live audience (of one) sitting at the back of the room or tape record your speech. Make sure your practice audience feigns boredom and distraction so you are not upset when it happens in real life. Have your "guinea pig" audience sit at least twenty feet away from you so you learn to project your voice.

4. Double the amount of enthusiasm you speak with normally and slow down your pace.

5. Practice the main points of your speech right before you go to sleep. This will solidify it in your memory.

6. Drink a warm (decaffeinated) drink right before you talk.

It will relax you and your voice. Take three or four slow deep breaths, belly breathing if you can. Breathe in through your nose, exhale from your mouth.

7. Use cue cards and technology but don't depend on them entirely.

Have your major points memorized. TV personalities use kindergarten letter sized type on their notes. Probably a twenty-point font size would be helpful. Also, you can even put breathing/pause marks in your notes so you don't talk too fast under stress. A breathing mark in your notes is simply a slash. Professional speakers use breathing marks in their notes.

Remember: Practice makes permanent.

Pulling It All Together with the Step-By-Step Workshop-Worksheet Checklist

(Check items as they apply. See text for explanation of each item)

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: WHAT IS YOUR TRAINING BULL'S EYE?

Basic Needs

Credentials of presenters.

1. Content “What to do tomorrow” based on knowledge. Entertainment — Humor that is relevant.
2. Resourcefulness to recover (Plan B if Plan A doesn't work).

Other Considerations

1. Process or outcome (end point) goals of training defined. Rewarded results identified and used as goals for training. Twenty percent of workshop time used in “participant identification” of needs.
2. Workshop activities connect with identified goals/needs.
3. Single fact “to be remembered” is defined and highlighted.

Bells and Whistles

1. Color used where possible.
2. Music used where possible.
3. Overheads all legible.
4. Handouts match overheads (where appropriate). Limit key points to five to seven items.
5. Give people choice in simulations.

6. Props, posters used.
7. Edibles.

Content Development

WII-FM (What's in it for me? Incentives for participants).

E.F. Hutton, truthful statements.

Speak their language (Know your audience).

7-7 rule: (Limit to seven major points, repeat main points seven times).

- Hourly breaks (if possible).
- Was training bull's eye hit? Use an outcome measure (before/after quiz results on topic).
- Attention-getter notes. Randomly ask all participants to write down what they are thinking during the talk on three by five index cards given out earlier. No identification needed on cards submitted. Use feedback to improve your message and/or delivery.

Presenter Preparation

- Expect ten hours of preparation for one hour of initial presentation.
- Attitude affirmation to build self-confidence (I know that I know this material).
- Smile and say, "I'm glad to be here." Think of friends in audience.
- Go through talk seven times prior to speech.
- Double the amount of enthusiasm when you speak.
- Slow down your rate of speech.

- Practice speech night before with your warm-up audience “faking boredom.”
- Drink warm decaffeinated drink right before talk. Take a few deep breaths.
- Use cue cards but memorize key points.

Chapter Five - WHY KEEP COOL AT SCHOOL?

Nine-year-olds Taking College Entrance Exams!

School is “*job one.*”

Let us now focus on job-stress management for children, that is, dealing with school stress in general. Children are learning more, faster and earlier, than ever before, which can be stressful. Children under ten are under increasingly intense pressure to score better and earlier on college entrance exams!

The pressure is on. Nine-year-olds taking college entrance exams?

Children as young as nine-years-old are taking college entrance exams at a rate 20% percent higher than in 1996.

Test anxiety: a half-century later, still a problem but now younger.

Even back in 1952, Professors Mandler and Sarason recognized the problem of test anxiety and how it makes children sick and unsuccessful.

Test anxiety/poor test performance downward-spiral

There is a real downward spiral effect between test anxiety and test performance. It doesn't matter which comes first. Test anxiety makes a child sick, which causes poor test performance. Poor test performance causes even greater test anxiety-because of fear of failure, resulting in even poorer test performance. In the long run, a highly test-anxious child will avoid school at all costs. Avoiding school weakens skills, so when a child takes her next test, she will do even more poorly.

The lifetime cost of excess test anxiety? \$100,000,000!

Test anxiety can make one underachieve at a whopping negative 15 percentile points. The more complex the tests, the worse test anxiety drags down performance. One may ask, so what? Underachieving on tests can make a difference of at least a \$100,000,000 in lifetime earnings. How? Test anxiety drops one's performance from a successful college student level to a level where one may not be considered for college, even though the person has the ability.

The dropout rate for college students is unusually high at the third year of college. And they quit for emotional reasons and not intellectual reasons. Why do these bright students drop out? Because these intellectually-capable college students "won't or can't" put up with the emotional stress of college. So even at the college level, stress management is extremely important.

The rat race at school

The rat race at school is more frantic than ever because children are smarter than we were at their age. We should start by saying that IQ's have been increasing greatly through the last several generations, according to Professor Robert Sternberg of Yale University.

1. Why focus specifically on stress education for students? -Education Burnout-

Today's students need to be equipped with tools to control their stress. The incidence and impact of student stress spotlight the importance of "stress education" more than ever. Self-control is key to "Character Education."

2. Incidence of school stress.

Today's students feel achievement stress

School is "job one" for most students. Students take school as seriously as adults take their jobs. School achievement surfaced as a top stressor for 60% of students, according to a survey of 135 ninth graders. Properly harnessed, this achievement stress can fuel determination to set and meet high expectations.

Student are under more stress

Nationally 10-15% of students are under chronic stress from various causes. Excess stress robs students of enthusiasm, enjoyment and achievement in school. Unrelieved stress explodes like a time bomb on occasion.

As mentioned previously, the need for mental health education is so great that New York State, as of 2018, is requiring that all public school children (about 3 million) receive mental health education within the classroom.

The impact of school stress; includes poor test-taking, unwanted teen weight gain, shooter's stress syndrome.

Stress impairs performance

Ten-million elementary and secondary students suffer from test anxiety. Sixty- five years of research have proven that test anxiety lowers test performance.

Stress increases absenteeism

According to a survey conducted at East Carolina University, about one in six students missed an average of a week of school from stress-induced severe stomach pains. A 1993, *New England Journal of Medicine* study shows that the overstressed are twice as likely to get the flu or colds, resulting in absences.

Stress causes obesity due to stress-relief eating- even for graduate students

According to the March, 2001 issue of the *Harvard Health Letter*, stress is a leading cause of being overweight. Stress, along with food choices and eating habits, is something we can control. Genes play a significant role regarding the tendency for obesity (from 40% to 70%), but stress level plays a significant role in whether those genes produce obesity. Also, cortisol, a stress hormone, converts calories directly to fat. Sadly, when children are most sensitive about their appearance, the temptation to eat for stress relief is great. Obese children are a greater target of peer cruelty than handicapped children. This perpetuates the cycle of eating to relieve stress, gaining more weight, eating more to reduce the psychological pain, and then becoming an even

bigger target for other children's slings and arrows. Getting involved in sports during this period may be the best way to keep weight down and gain respect for acquiring athletic skill.

When gaining a degree, adults often find they are also gaining weight. Cortisol by itself can add weight.

Shooter's stress syndrome

Out of the over fifty-million students who attend our schools, even one violent death is too many. The deadly outcome of the Columbine shooting incidence at school focuses the spotlight on the extreme result of unrelieved stress. In other related events, all the school shooters were male. As stated above, males are more prone to violent acts when under extreme stress. In society in general, most, if not all "on the job" shooters have been male. This is why stress management is needed in general, and males may need stress management most of all.

3. Cures: what teachers can do?

Model "grace under pressure"

Teachers are classroom climate controllers. Stress is contagious and students easily catch adult tension. Emotional contagion research shows it takes 30 minutes to calm down after being infected by a stress carrier. A stress carrier is one who brightens the room by leaving it. A positive, relaxed teacher can actually immunize students from stress contagion, helping them perform better during tests and other stressful events (public speaking, competition).

You can telegraph relaxation by smiling, talking and moving calmly but enthusiastically.

Try doing this during your personal high-demand teaching tasks.

Try the W.A.L.K.E.R. program

Students can exit the “stress express” through following the 6-step WALKER program.

Encourage:

- Walking (briskly 20-minutes, three times weekly to burn-off stress).
- Attitude (of positive organized persistence - POP).
- Laughter (Use a humor board for students’ cartoons).
- Keeping up (with homework, studying, test preparation).
- Expressing stress (through writing, art, music, sports, stress-control coaching).
- Rewarding (Teach students to keep their “eyes on the prize” — earn praise, privileges, pride, support cards along with report cards).

Post up relaxation reminders

Motivation posters can serve as relaxation reminders and can help students remain calm during tests. Have students put stickers on their desks (just simple blue dot stickers) to remind them to relax.

The “perfect score” — just a “good day?”

A sixteen-year-old high school junior who obtained a “perfect score” on the SAT humorously quipped that he must have had a good day that day. He also enjoys playing musical instruments and concentrates on taking courses he likes rather than being overly concerned about his GPA. Nationally less than 600 students a year get perfect SAT’s.

Relaxation: the fourth “R” in education.

Your classroom may be the only place where achievement-stressed students learn to identify and control stress. The turn-of-the-century curriculum needs to incorporate relaxation as the fourth

“R” to maximize our students’ success and satisfaction when challenges rise on the horizon. (please go to stress.org for a March 2018 article in Contentment Magazine, on the fourth))

The best of “biofeedback training” products.

Biofeedback is considered to be the most effective way of stress-self-management in terms of how quickly and measurably relaxation is learned. An excellent way to work relaxation training into the curriculum would be through a unit in P.E., health, biology, psychology, or test-taking skills. A general principle is that once we can get “live” feedback on any of our systems, we can learn to control that system.

The best biofeedback device appears to be the Freeze-Framer™ emotional management enhancer. This state-of-the-art, biofeedback stress-management system provides colorful, entertaining stress-reduction exercises which are appealing to most children and adults. This program teaches the pupil or teacher to use heart-rate self-regulation to consistently bring about deep states of relaxation. Call Heartmath, 1-800-372-3100 or email: info@heartmath.com.

This biofeedback product makes relaxation training fun and effective in almost any setting, (business, school, stress-control coaching setting or home.) This device was seen by twenty-two-million viewers when featured on the *ABC Nightly News* with Peter Jennings on February 7, 2001. The great effectiveness of the *Freeze-Framer™* made news when used in the classroom and even by police to remain calm under pressure. In May of 2001, CNN featured how using *Freeze-Framer™* actually helped students to concentrate better on testing. Dr. Jeff Goelitz of Heartmath was featured in the CNN report, and said that *Freeze-Framer™* can provide students with lifelong emotional-management skills.

Tools and toys for “stress education.”

Using these tools and toys of stress management may be useful in health/science units on the physical aspects of stress. Stress management should only be taught by qualified professionals. For classroom use try “Biodots”. Biodots are adhesive, heat-sensitive 1/4 inch dots that convert your stress into differing colors. Includes a teacher lesson guide. Call 1-800-272-2340.

Chapter Six -

SCORING BEST ON ALL LIFE'S TESTS BY USING YOUR "WHOLE BRAIN"

If stress is sand in the machinery of thought then relaxation is the oil.

Advice from the world's-highest IQ holder: repetition and relaxation (R & R)

Scoring best on tests — from one who has scored best on tests: In line with Dr. Richerson's tip to repeat what has to be learned, (see side story), Marilyn vos Savant, who possesses the highest-recorded **IQ of 228** (average is 100) echoes this advice, that repetition is the best way to learn. Repetition even helps improve understanding, just like seeing a movie more than once, helps us pick up more details and remember what happened better.

1. Why do well on tests?

Tests are here to stay.

One-hundred-million standardized tests are administered for elementary and middle school children yearly, according to Dr. Peter Cookson, Director of the Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation. Doing well on tests is an area of increasing concern both for students and educators. Since tests (which are better than guessing what a person might know) are obviously here to stay, we might as well learn how to master them. Other important reasons to do well on tests follow.

Enjoying a successful 12-year career

Tests are "success benchmarks" during everyone's 12-year academic career. Used correctly, tests actually serve as "success stepping-stones" rather than as stumbling blocks. Enjoying "test success" both satisfies basic self-concept/ achievement needs and motivates a student to strive for personal excellence.

Triumphing over fear of failure

Fear of academic failure was the leading “most difficult problem” American teenagers faced, according to a 1994 Gallup Poll. Equipping students with proven “test-taking tools” results in real success experiences to triumph over imaginary fears. The confidence built from doing well on tests can then be carried into life’s arena with its many other challenges.

“Proving your knowledge” is power to succeed.

The ladder of success is built with small but measurable steps. A famous scientist once said nothing is really that hard, there are just a lot of little parts. Tests can help measure readiness for the next step toward goals. Also, knowing someone has “proven her knowledge” through testing raises the level of trust in her. The days of self-proclaimed experts are gone. Who would trust a “self-proclaimed” surgeon?

A 100-point SAT score increase: the bottom line for reducing test anxiety.

According to a Columbia University study conducted by Dr. C. H. Faigel, a 100-point gain in taking the SAT (Scholastic Achievement Test) was realized by students whose test anxiety level was clinically reduced. Numerous other studies demonstrate score gains as test anxiety is reduced. As stated above, Ms. Savant lists anxiety as the leading cause of doing poorly on tests even when you have the knowledge.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a great resource for keeping a calm and cool classroom climate is *Inspiring Tranquility: Stress Management and Learning Styles in the Inclusive Classroom*, by Rebecca Nunn and Janet Gallaher. The National Education Association, (NEA), the major clearinghouse for educational materials, endorses this book which can be ordered at www.nea.org/books or 1-800-229-4200.

(“Stress-smartness” — keeping your whole brain working smoothly by relaxing.)

TIPS FOR HELPING STUDENTS AND ADULTS TO BECOME “FACT-SMART”

(Mastering what needs to be known, a left brain skill.)

- 1. Make meaningful memories by connecting to students’ current interests (e.g., teach how percentages work for predicting rain/snow days).** Let them know why they are learning something. (Learning to take tests will help them pass their driver’s license test.)
- 2. Teach memory mechanics.** The basic rule is repetition, repetition. Teach students that understanding a fact is not the same as mastering a fact, (e.g., one can understand how to shoot baskets without being able to do it). If you want to remember someone’s name, repeat it to yourself several times and then write it down.
- 3. Play tricks on your mind with games.** Make liberal use of word games, crossword puzzles. If you have the time, take courses having nothing to do with your main course work or job.
- 4. Require students to develop their own flashcards and stack the deck with only the memorized facts.** Have them submit flashcards as an assignment immediately before the test.
- 5. Encourage note-taking while students are reading or listening, especially if the test requires written responses.** Teach them “The palest ink is better than the best memory.” Use “post-its.” Develop as many helpful routines as possible, and even leave yourself notes or voice-mail. Regarding routines, always put your car keys in the same place.
- 6. Divide and conquer information overload by encouraging students to study several short sessions over several days/weeks rather than cramming the night before.** Suggest a study calendar and weekly “progress check points” for students. Provide positive feedback on study progress.

TIPS ON IMPROVING “TEST-SMARTNESS”

Facts are necessary but not enough for top performance. Approved practice on such tests as the SAT can improve performance by 500 points. This 500-point improvement was realized by a young man who took the SAT over nine times since the age of twelve, finally achieving a nearly perfect SAT score of 1530.

Developing “test-specific” skills improves test performance by drawing attention to small but important details. Multiple-choice tests all vary greatly on how learned facts and skills are to be used. If you are unsure about the design of tests to be given this year, see your test coordinator. Some general guidelines are:

- 1. Answer the question.** Answer the core question, without being tripped up by “word traps” (irrelevant details) or generalizations (always, never, everywhere).
- 2. Teach students to “pace not race ” through test items.** Encourage students to answer those questions they feel they know, marking those difficult questions to return to later.
- 3. Emphasize that multiple-choice tests are not multiple-guess tests.** Teach students to choose, not to guess on multiple choices. This requires mastering problem-solving skills. When offered multiple choices, anticipate the most correct answer before reading available choices. Then look for the best answer among those provided. If all the choices appear to be correct, select the most correct answer by eliminating wrong answers. Develop reasons why the other answers are wrong. Again, students should mark and return to these most difficult questions after answering the more obvious questions. Teachers might effectively demonstrate or model this technique using examples.

An excellent resource is the book dedicated to all aspects of test-taking entitled, *Teaching Test Taking Skills: Helping Students Show What They Know*, by Scruggs and Mastropieri.

- 4. Be clerically correct.** Develop the habit of having students build in enough time to check for wrong answers simply due to marking the wrong answers or misreading the questions the first time through.
- 5. Provide “test rehearsals” if appropriate.** All great performances start with rehearsal. Practice any and only those approved practice tests weeks before the actual test takes place.

See your test coordinator for approved pre-test activities. As stated above Kaplan, Inc. now provides actual practice test sessions for the GRE and LSAT.

- 6. Study groups.** There is some evidence that hard-working study groups actually work in helping high school students improve test scores. At the high-school level, conscientious study-group students will study harder to contribute to the group, and will be exposed to more questioning than they might have thought of on their own.

Advanced Placement students have found study groups to be most helpful. Be sure, however, to avoid having students develop “test-banks” by not allowing previous examinees to provide questions they had memorized from actual exams.

TIPS TO BUILDING “STRESS-SMARTNESS”

(An emotional, right brain skill)

Relaxation is oil in the machinery of thought.

Just like your car engine, your brain will soon “freeze-up” or “burnout” without the oil of relaxation. Strong emotions affect clear thinking. Calm, clear thinking is the key to “best test performance.” Over a half-century of test-anxiety research reveals that excessive stress impairs test performance. Relaxation is a “must” for test-score improvement according to a test-preparation corporation that guarantees results (up to seventeen-percentile point increase). This is the difference between high average performance and gifted performance.

Herbert Benson, M.D., Harvard researcher who coined the term, “relaxation response,” states that students inducing the “relaxation response” immediately before exams do better. He also found that professionals who relax immediately before brainstorming generate more solutions to problems than those who do not relax. As said before, scared students can’t be smart students.

Preparation for the “big day.”

Also, allow children to wear their favorite school outfit to the test. Have them eat fruit right before the test (Sugar is food for thought). Have them drink a bit of water to speed up the breakdown of the fruit to fructose, which is food for thought. Honey is an excellent source of fructose. Have your child eat toast with honey before they leave for the test site. Caffeine is at

best a double-edged sword. Only if you are already a “caffeinist” (Caffeine is the most popular drug in the U.S.) will caffeine help your mental performance. While it can sharpen your thinking (no more than two cups of coffee), you pay for it with caffeine jitters. If you don’t use caffeine, don’t start. Avoid having children drink sugary drinks or eat candy bars right before testing because of the unsteady flow of sugar provided by these foods.

The following suggestions may be useful to reduce excessive stress:

Weeks before the test:

- 1. Conduct a “reality checklist” of what the student can expect in the testing situation.** This will reduce stressful “surprise or shock reactions.” (Always follow pre-test restrictions on what can be shared with students prior to testing.)
- 2. Prior to the testing situation, provide a “relaxed exposure ” to these “test reality conditions ” as much as possible.** That is, see your test coordinator on legitimate practice materials, and have students relax just before and during the “test warm-up” sessions.
- 3. Accentuate the positive: Expect your best but respect the test.** Think of the test as a reward to show off your hard work and knowledge. It is important for the student to have a positive attitude but this attitude must be combined with positive action, (i.e., thorough study beforehand).
- 4. Positive peer pressure: Use the power of peer pressure to develop a “pregame ” winning spirit toward an upcoming test.** Students could create posters on the rewards for doing well on tests. Have students bring in appropriate cartoons about test-taking.
- 5. Good modeling by all adults: Students will catch adults' anxiety about tests and this “secondary stress” can hamper their peak performance.** Even the tone of voice used in reading pre-test and test instructions will raise or lower test anxiety. Modeling “grace under pressure” in front of students will show it is possible to stay calm and succeed under stressful conditions.
- 6. Relaxation training: See your mental-health professional on relaxation training tips or methods to identify children at risk for excessive test anxiety.** It typically takes several weeks to learn how to relax under testing conditions.

The best way to learn relaxation is through biofeedback. Biofeedback works like training wheels to help you keep your balance when you are first starting. Biofeedback gives you live, scientific feedback on whether you are “centered” in terms of relaxation. HeartMath, in Boulder Creek, California, provides the best personnel, training and tools to teach and learn biofeedback. Other forms of relaxation training, such as progressive relaxation, breathing relaxation, autogenic training, systematic desensitization, visualization and other techniques are available from appropriately trained mental-health personnel. It usually takes several weeks for your muscle memory to learn to relax, so if a test is given in October, start teaching relaxation in September. Think of relaxation training as learning an athletic skill. Just because you understand the concept doesn’t mean you have mastered the skill.

7. Pre-test checklist.

GENERAL TIPS FOR HELPING STUDENTS TO BECOME “FACT-SMART”

- Make these tips part of each student’s study habits by introducing them at the beginning.
- Get the “big picture” (Overview first, read end of chapter questions first).
- “Seeing is believing” for most students. “Teach smart” (visually). See “Anti- Boredom ‘Whole-Brain’ Balanced Approach to Curriculum, (p. 207).
- Make meaningful memories.
- Teach memory mechanics. Repeat info at least seven times.
- Students develop flashcards. Submit flashcards as an assignment immediately before the test.
- Encourage note-taking while students are reading or listening.
- Divide and conquer information using more frequent, shorter, study periods spread over time.
- If appropriate, provide a test-specific diagnostic survey.

- As a reward, have students play “not-so-trivial pursuit” by making up their own questions about material.
- Celebrate “sticking to their test-prep schedule.”

TIPS FOR IMPROVING “TEST-SMARTNESS”

- Answer the questions (Multiple-choice tests are not multiple-guess tests, but use creative problem solving if needed).
- Be clerically correct.
- Provide practice sessions (with time limits) if appropriate.

BUILDING “STRESS-SMARTNESS”

Weeks before the test:

- Conduct a “reality checklist” of what the student can expect to avoid shock on test day.
- Prior to the testing situation, provide a “relaxed exposure” to these “test reality conditions.”
- Positive attitude: Expect the best but respect the test. The test is the reward to prove your knowledge. “Inch by inch anything’s a cinch.” “Yard by yard, life is hard.”
- Use positive peer pressure: Bring in cartoons about testing stress — I took an IQ test and the results were negative.*
- Good modeling by all adults.
- Relaxation training (See your mental-health professional. Clear this with administration first).

Chapter Seven -

The “Rules”

Men and Women aren't from Different Planets, but from Different Hemispheres (of the Brain)

The sole purpose of the body is to support the life of the brain.

Thomas Edison

“At home it is better to be happy than right;
At work it is better to be right than happy.”

Take the five-minute Brain Scan.

Since about every other person you meet on earth will be of the opposite sex, it would be good to be aware of the real anatomical and functional gender differences in our brains. Each person's brain is as different as his or her individual facial features. “Can the brain understand itself?” is an age old question. In order not to create too much stress in “thinking about thinking,” we will take a lighthearted look at some possible thinking-style differences. Since it is hard to get volunteers for an anatomical study of brain differences between males and females, a five-minute paper and pencil Brain Scan has been provided in this chapter. Take a Brain Scan yourself, then give it to your significant other. The gap between your thinking styles may be as wide as the Grand Canyon, which could be stressful when you're trying to see eye-to-eye.

Your thoughts imprint your brain.

A major brain research discovery is that maintaining anxious/depressed thoughts for as little as two weeks depresses the production of our major natural antidepressant, serotonin. The use of antidepressant medication merely “jump starts” the brain's production of serotonin again. As

stated earlier, always see your doctor first when experiencing unusual emotional discomfort. It could be another gland that's not working correctly (e.g., thyroid). A 2002, *Scientific American* special publication on how the mind makes the brain examines how your thoughts form your physical brain, and how your physical brain shapes your meta-physical (beyond the physical) mind.

Some research suggests that females use both right and left brain hemispheres when thinking because they allegedly have a thicker neural bridge (corpus collasum) between the left and right brain. They are more adept at talking to several people at once, and are more sensitive to subtle emotional cues. This supposed ability to switch between left and right brains may result in better intuitive thinking. It is believed that males are more single-minded, making it easier to make decisions (which may or may not be wrong, we just make them faster). Hormone differences, jokingly referred to by many women as "testosterone poisoning," may also affect the force with which we deal with things and ideas. It is also held that the brain doesn't totally integrate until about 40 years-old. Therefore, it may be that the other person can't see things your way, rather than refusing to see things your way.

The "so what" bottom line of all this brain/hormone research is that there may be unchangeable brain-based or gender-linked differences in how we view and interact with the world. Differences often create sparks and tension. Just knowing that the other person's view may actually be valid, even though it is not the way we look at things, may provide some understanding in becoming stress- intelligent. It should be noted that you can reroute your brain's physical operation in as little as two weeks by being negative and depressed.

The "Rules for the sexes." Thanks to Bill Flynn, prominent radio personality, hundreds of thousands of listeners know about the survival manual, *Rules for husbands*. Written by comedian Jim Dale, this manual takes some of the mystery out of trying to figure out what women want. Mr. Dale, also wrote a companion book, *Rules for wives*.

- The related topics that may help you learn your brain-base of operation and how to cope with others' styles follow:
- Brain Scan (Five-minute).
- Change your mind to change your life.
- Male aggression-Female expression: Possibly different brain styles.
- Brain-based communication gaps. Won't versus can't remember.

- Seeing eye-to-eye: Making it work. A woman's work is never done.
- Correctivitis (over-correcting compulsion), or anything you can do, I can do better.
- Unplanned, unexpected but "on-target" gifts to show good intent, including in-home "room service," with a smile, and "I owe you a favor" coupons. Surprise her with a gift of manners.
- Rules for husbands and Rules for wives. The unwritten laws are now written.

BRAIN SCAN: A FIVE-MINUTE EXERCISE

I have half a mind to . . .

This is a no-brainer . . .

He is so scatter-brained . . .

If I only had a brain . . .

1. Brain Scan.

Some of the characteristics that correspond to left-right brain thinking styles are listed in the table below. Of course, we always use more than “half a brain” when thinking, just as we actually use more than one hand [even back muscles] when we pick up a soda to drink. For the overly left brained, a set of serious resources is provided in the text for follow-up.

One-Minute BRAIN SCAN

How to see “Eye to Eye”?

Dr. Ron Rubenzer

From the *How the Best Handle Stress by Using your Head and Heart*

www.drrubenzer.com

All brains are created equal (on average) - with the inborn capacity to learn any one of 6909 languages on earth. After a quarter century, your brain is so individually matured and sculpted, it is as unique as your facial features, or your finger prints. This can be a Good-Thing-Bad Thing. Your personalized 25 year old Brain, is delicately fine-tuned to help you navigate life’s many challenges. The down side is that the 25 year old level of brain maturity is THE ceiling for some (who stop cultivating their)

Your brain is the most important organ in your body. Thomas Edison is credited with saying the only purpose of your body is- to support the life of your brain. You have a hardwired ‘Brain-bias’. Everyone thinks that “the way they think “MUST BE THE CORRECT way- because the thought came from their very-own brain. But “Don’t believe everything you THINK.”

Not seeing eye to eye? Sometimes when we don’t see “eye to eye” it may be that the other person CAN’T Think like you. Why – because of possible brain wiring differences

related to gender, age and sometimes handedness. Remember it's not that the other person WON'T think like you, perhaps they CAN'T. It has also been suggested the brain doesn't even finish its wiring until a person is about twenty five years! So give the benefit of the doubt to others -if they- just "don't get it."

Seek Balance to avoid "lopsided" mental development. Imagine if you will a champion-bowler, with his bowling arm twice as muscular as his non-bowling arm. Likewise "lopsided brain" development results from over-use of one brain style, to the neglect of the opposite -brain style- (Left Brain [unfeeling knowledge] or all Right Brain- [mindless arousal]).

How to do your own Brain Scan – (For amusement only.) The only intent of this quick brain scan- is to provide a launching point for discussion about everyone's uniqueness and the need accept other's differences.

- Casually read each left brain/right brain style choice column: (They are not prioritized).
- Circle the one that seems *more* like you.
- It is all right to circle corresponding opposites if both describe you.
- Add the column totals (Write L= [for left brain column total]; R = [right brain]).
- The column (left or right) with more items circled suggests your thinking/feeling bias (left or right brain).

Of course we think with our whole brain, just like picking up a glass of water involves a complex coordination of hundreds of actions, far beyond your hand wrapping around and picking up the cup.

- For Lopsided bias (nearly all LB or RB) - tips are provided in each column to counterbalance underdeveloped talents.

LEFT BRAIN	RIGHT BRAIN
1. Emotionally positive (Hope)	1. <i>Emotionally Negative (Despair)</i>
2. Early Bird	2. <i>Night Owl</i>
3. Consistent	3. <i>Creative</i>
4. Demands "Response Correctness"	4. <i>Pushes for "Speed" of responses/ideas</i>
5. Doer	5. <i>Dreamer</i>
6. "Bottom-Liner" (summarizes)	6. <i>"Whatever" comes to mind</i>
7. Forced	7. <i>Fluid</i>
8. Intellectual	8. <i>Artistic</i>
9. Logical	9. <i>Intuitive "feeling"</i>
10. Single-Tasker ("Rush-hour" driving)	10. <i>Multi-tasker (Children's Field Trip- chaperone)</i>
11. Motivated by grades, income, security	11. <i>Motivated by satisfaction, recognition, fame</i>
12. Evidence seeking-- factual questions --(what, when, who, how, where?)	12. Open-ended-speculative questions --(What if, why not, what's my life's purpose?)
<p>For Your Left Brain score Please add this LB Column Total = ____/12 WHAT DOES YOUR SCORE SUGGEST?</p> <p>-----</p> <p>If this LB is MUCH higher (8L/4R) than RB column-- Be Alert to below:</p>	<p>For Your Right-Brain score Please add this RB Column Total=____/12 WHAT DOES YOUR SCORE SUGGEST?</p> <p>-----</p> <p>If this RB is MUCH higher (8R/4L) than LB column-- Be Alert to below:</p>
<p>Over-correct-ness (always trying to provide more precise details) Interrupts/corrects. Impatiently saying - And the POINT IS? While person is talking this person is thinking- what clever thing - he'll say next.</p>	<p><i>Drifting into Senseless Chatter (Stream of consciousness-stories with no "bottom line"). Engages in Parallel talk when several talking at once, but no one listening.</i></p>
<p>– To Improve try to Remember-</p>	<p>To improve- Keep in mind-</p>
<p>It's better to be HAPPY than right (at home)</p>	<p>The faintest ink is better than the best memory</p>
<p>Watch for Rigidity (my way or highway)</p>	<p>Watch for <i>Chaos</i> . "Why be normal?"</p>
<p>Watch for HARDENING OF THE ATTITUDES</p>	<p>WATCH FOR -It's ALL Relative- (i.e. nothing is good or bad, but the mind makes it so!?)</p>

2. Change your mind to change your life.

“At home it is better to be happy than right;
At work it is better to be right than happy.”

The only adult’s mind you can really change is your own. If you are constantly in a state of agitation because everyone else seems scatterbrained, you might consider consciously trying to change your mind. Using the Brain Scan below, you may wish to take a couple of the items that you feel you can’t give up (which you are “urgently addicted” to) and try to change them.

An excellent way to start to change your mind is to read pages 58 to 65 in Chapter 3, “Getting Back to the Moment,” of the excellent book, *Living at the Speed of Life*. Solid reasons and methods are provided to help you shift your thinking into a more balanced, productive, satisfying and sociable gear.

Two different worlds; like oil and water. Brain styles separate eventually.

Brain styles differ. In real life, brain style differences can cause real problems.

A person who plays house, will never understand a person who plays at writing.

Opposite brain styles are like trying to mix lightweight oil and water. No matter how you stir them up, they always separate.

If you are really interested in an educational analysis of four basic thinking styles, please see the book and materials in the 4Mat series. (Just ask your local media specialist).

Also see the 2000 edition of an *Annotated Bibliography: Brain Research* by Marny Sorgen. It is an excellent review of over forty books and articles on the brain.

3. Male aggression — Female expression: possibly different brain styles.

Here’s another example of the different styles

Seeing eye-to-eye is difficult

There is some research that suggests that the male brain is more designed for aggression. The female brain may be better designed for expression.

One brain style wants to aggressively get to the bottom line, the other wants to talk in a free-flowing stream of words.

An excellent guide to helping us navigate through the opposite sex's thinking style is a book by Dr. Deborah Tannen, a communications expert. Her book, *You Just Don't Understand* (Ballentine Books, 1990), will not only smooth the way across the gender gap, but also helps in bridging the age gap between parents and their children.

It may be biological: brain-based communication gaps

Men may only be “half-listening” when women are trying to communicate. A November, 2000, brain study conducted at Indiana University School of Medicine by Dr. Joseph T. Lurito, shows that men may only be half-brained listeners. When listening to a story, men used only the left side of their brain, whereas women used the left side and the right side of the brain (associated with more abstract reasoning). There seems to be a biological brain-based difference between the sexes in information processing. Other related studies suggest that women are better at listening to two conversations at once, which may be overwhelming for men. In phone conversations, it would probably be annoying to most males if you try to talk to them while they're talking on the phone, since they devote one brain to one conversation at a time. Also, don't try to talk to a male while expecting him to navigate onto complex highway exits. He will have to make a choice of either listening to you and missing the exit, or getting the exit and giving the speaker surface attention (what, huh, oh yes). Since listening differences are probably hard-wired in the brain, don't get stressed out over communication glitches. It is not a matter that the opposite sex won't think like you do, it's that they can't think like you do.

To narrow the communication gap and reduce the stress between the sexes when communicating, simplify the amount and details of the message, and have the receiver rephrase the message to make sure it just didn't go in only one brain, and out the other.

Since the right side of the brain, which women also use to communicate, is more sensitive to the tone of voice, make sure your tone of voice matches the intent of your message. The right brain is also responsible for reading facial expressions, so once again, try to make your facial

expression match your verbal expression. In other words, if you are communicating with someone who uses both sides of their brain, then you have to speak to both sides of the brain through words, tone and gesture.

4. Seeing eye-to-eye: making it work. A woman's work is never done.

On the home front, remember it is better to be happy than right.

Don't fight battles you won't win. It is not "stress-smart."

Seeing eye-to-eye may require holding back on what seems natural. Of course, until we know better, we think everyone thinks as we do. Nothing could be further from the truth. Trusting the value of the other person's thinking style and realizing that he or she did make it this far using that style, it may be necessary to show a little respect, back off and listen to the other person. This may reduce a lot of stress from unchangeable brain-based communication gaps.

A woman's work is never done. You better believe it.

In some cultures there is the belief, "A woman's work is never done." This is the "mantra" that some grow up with. If you are going to help someone who has this belief, then understand that "your work will never be done." It's not a good or bad belief, it's just if you expect closure on helping out, you probably need help yourself (which this book aims to do). So get ready for "work without end," and get a grip.

5. ORDER-COLLIES-Overly correctness (correctivitis) or anything you can do I can do better.

"And always is heard a discouraging word and the skies are cloudy all day." (*The theme song of victims of correctivitis, sung to "Home on the Range."*). Some adults are natural-born ORDER-COLLIES. Although well-meaning, the Order-obsessed people are always nipping at the heels of those around them.

Correctivitis is the obsession with being right, having the last word and dominating. This common malady is highly stressful to surrounding people. Every single time you try to make a point they always counterpoint, to the point that you don't even try to talk around them. Get the point? In our parents' day, there was a song, "Anything you can do I can do better," which is a good example of two people dueling it out through one-upmanship. People with correctivitis just

have to be a little more “righteous.” Those who need to be correct are left brained to a fault. Being a target of someone with correctivitis is like jarring over unnecessary speed bumps when you are trying to talk.

People with correctivitis are always interrupting and correcting you, whether they know what they’re talking about or not. They look for any loophole to unravel your thread of thought until you completely lose your train of thought. These are the people you hear say, “I don’t need to read —just ask me.” They are the first to say, “I don’t need stress-control coaching, more education, etc.” In the old days these people were the bossy “know-it-all’s.” Since we can practically access the Library of Congress with our computers, it is unlikely that anyone will “know-it-all” and get away with it. But that has never dawned on those afflicted with correctivitis.

If you feel you can’t even open your mouth without being criticized, you should try the book, *I Only Say This Because I Love You*, by Deborah Tannen, who was mentioned previously as an expert in communication.

I was looking for “Mr. Right.” Once we hooked up, he turned into “Mr. Always-Right”

Annoying “know-it-alls” somehow remember minute details of events that often didn’t even happen, confident in their enlightened knowledge. If you try to talk with someone inflicted with correctivitis, they’ll always punctuate what you say with “Yes, but did you know” or “No, it really wasn’t that way or “That’s not what I heard.” They even say, “What she means to say is.” These people don’t waste time gathering facts. They are planning ahead as you speak, just waiting for you to inhale so they can talk again. As if we are completely lacking direction without their guidance, they fill our day with often pointless and endless lists of tasks. On top of everything else, these people are often loud and annoying. If you ask how these people are, they’ll always answer with an IT (It’s too . . .) It’s too hot, cold, slow, expensive here, etc. You usually don’t want to take these people out to dinner (service is too slow), a movie (it’s too cold in here), or on a picnic (it’s too sunny out here).

Sometimes, people with chronic correctivitis are well-meaning, hoping to save you from yourself by protecting you with valuable (and endless) lessons from their lives. However, they may “cry wolf” so much that when they do hit the nail on the head with an important suggestion or warning, no one listens to them. Sometimes, however, people with correctivitis are the human relations equivalent of “fingernails being scratched across a chalkboard.” They never feel good and are always negative. You say, “It’s going to be a great day,” They’ll say, “What makes you think that? You obviously have not heard about the latest.”

You will never please these people. So often, people start avoiding the “overly correct.” It is draining being around these “emotional vampires” who suck all the joy out of your life because you know what’s coming next, some criticism or unpleasantness.

An excellent book for those afflicted with correctivitis is *Living at the Speed of Life*, by Richard Carlson, author of the best-selling series, *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff In Living at the Speed of Life*, he and his co-author, Joseph Bailey, talk about shifting from the analytical (critical) thinking mode to the free-flowing processing mode to actually reduce your stress and get along better. This book would make a great anonymous contribution to your work library.

Try tolerance for a change. When you are tempted to correct someone’s life (overeating, overindulgence, sloppiness, poor grammar, senseless chatter, driving, the list could go on forever), say this to yourself:

My love for them is not affected by their self-abuse.

William Joyce, 2001.

If you are courageous enough to look at yourself under the “Miss Martha S. Manners” microscope, just change this saying to:

My love for myself is not affected by my self-abuse.

After forgiving yourself, concentrate on improving that behavior (e.g., being overly critical, overspending, looking for faults, not listening).

6. Unplanned, but “on target” gifts. “Room service,” and “I owe you a favor” coupons.

“On target” gifts.

Folks who use their right brains actually like pleasant surprises more than a left brained person would ever imagine. Right brainers love surprises; left brainers loathe surprises (even good ones). It never dawns on a Mr. Datum type “left brainer” that a person who has access to both sides of thinking (left and right brain) may really enjoy a surprise. Providing unplanned gifts will actually force the overly left brained person to pay attention to his or her significant other. The flip side of the coin is if you forget to give a gift to this person when they expect it (e.g., birthday) this person will be very upset. It’s a great idea to have a “gift/card drawer for any

occasion,” which you can use to pull gifts and cards from if you should ever accidentally forget that special occasion. If this idea has never occurred to you, you are probably a strong left brainer, which is good for running the world’s military campaigns but not your family.

“Room service” — at home, with a smile.

Provide your partner with “room service” for a predetermined time. This includes the amenities you’d find at a nice hotel (breakfast in bed, massages, baths, getting the newspaper, slippers, good movies, flowers, pleasing conversation). People consider these amenities so important they are willing to pay a lot for them. Hotels have spent millions on research about what makes people happy. Take advantage of the research they have already done for you.

“I owe you a favor” coupons.

For the person who has everything, you could give her a “I owe you a favor” coupon. A “favor coupon” is a coupon that can be redeemed anytime, anywhere, for you to do her a favor (without whining or questioning).

7. Rules for men, and Rules for women — “Rules for the sexes.”

The unwritten laws are now written. Top radio personality, Mr. Bill Flynn, brought these survival manuals to light for hundreds of thousands of listeners on December 5, 2001, in the North Carolina area. This author had to pull his car over (safely) to the side of the road to fully enjoy Mr. Flynn’s revelations from the books, *Rules for husbands*, and *Rules for wives*. These companion books, written by comedian Jim Dale, are the true relationship-survival manuals, which should be part of every pre-nuptial, pre-house sharing agreement. The abbreviated list below paraphrases Mr. Bill Flynn’s “read” on Mr. Dale’s books.

Rules for Men:

- Apologize — even though you don’t know what you’ve done wrong.
- Don’t count her shoes. Pointy toes, square toes, round toes, no toes. It will never make sense to you.
- Don’t burp and then laugh about it. Only men and their sons think that burping is funny.

- Don't make fun of Oprah.

Rules for Women:

- No trick, "Am I fat?" questions.
- Beer is to men what flowers are to women.

Thank you, Mr. Bill Flynn. Sometimes it takes more than a lifetime of trial and error, especially for men, to learn these tried and true rules for pleasing the opposite sex. And men, if you think you know the rules, think again. Even Einstein did not know the "Rules for the sexes" as testified to by his far less than ideal marriage.

**Folks are usually about as happy as they make
their minds up to be.”**

Abraham Lincoln

About the Author

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