



Practice *Safe Stress!* **A Stress Management Session for** **Educators**

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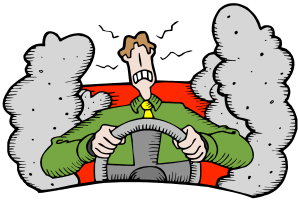
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Signs of Discouragement



Checklist:

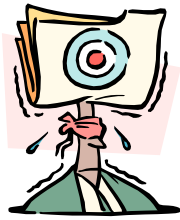
- ___ Are you procrastinating or avoiding?
- ___ Do you find yourself thinking of reasons why you shouldn't be doing your project, minimizing its importance?
- ___ Do you feel overwhelmed whenever you think of working on your project?
- ___ Is your energy level lower than normal? Little or no motivation?
- ___ Are you more moody than usual-- especially during times when you are scheduled to be working on your project?
- ___ Are you pessimistic?
- ___ Do you compare with others and end up feeling inferior?
- ___ Do you think in permanent, negative terms? e.g. "I'll never get this done!"
- ___ Has this affected your sleep or appetite (more or less for either)?
- ___ Do you worry more?
- ___ Do you think of quitting or giving up?



How To Tell If You Are A Stress-Prone Personality?

Rate yourself as to how you typically react in each of the situations listed below. There are no right or wrong answers. 4-always 3-frequently 2-sometimes 1-never

- ___ 1. Do you try to do as much as possible in the least amount of time?
- ___ 2. Do you become impatient with delays or interruptions?
- ___ 3. Do you always have to win at games to enjoy yourself?
- ___ 4. Do you find yourself speeding up in the car to get through yellow lights?
- ___ 5. Are you unlikely to indicate you need help with a problem?
- ___ 6. Do you constantly seek the respect and admiration of others?
- ___ 7. Are you overly critical of the way others do their work?
- ___ 8. Do you have the habit of looking at your watch or clock often?
- ___ 9. Do you constantly strive to better your position and achievements?
- ___ 10. Do you spread yourself "too thin" in terms of your time?
- ___ 11. Do you have the habit of doing more than one thing at a time?
- ___ 12. Do you frequently get angry or irritable?
- ___ 13. Do you have little time for hobbies or time by yourself?
- ___ 14. Do you have a tendency to talk quickly or hasten conversation?
- ___ 15. Do you consider yourself hard-driving?
- ___ 16. Do your friends or relatives consider you hard-driving?
- ___ 17. Do you have a tendency to get involved in multiple projects?
- ___ 18. Do you have a lot of deadlines in your work?
- ___ 19. Do you feel vaguely guilty if you relax and do nothing during leisure?
- ___ 20. Do you take on too many responsibilities?



How Vulnerable Are You to Stress?

(Adapted from the work of Dr. Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith,
Stress Directions; reprinted with permission)

Score each item from **1 (almost always)** to **5 (never)**, according to how much each statement means to you.

- ___ 1. I eat at least one hot balanced meal a day.
- ___ 2. I get 7 to 8 hours sleep at least four nights a week.
- ___ 3. I give and receive affection regularly.
- ___ 4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.
- ___ 5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.
- ___ 6. I refrain from smoking.
- ___ 7. I take fewer than 5 alcoholic drinks a week.
- ___ 8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.
- ___ 9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.
- ___ 10. I get strength from my religious beliefs
- ___ 11. I regularly attend club or social activities.
- ___ 12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.
- ___ 13. At work I feel capable and valued.
- ___ 14. I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, and teeth).
- ___ 15. I drink less than 3 cups of coffee, glasses of tea, or colas a day.
- ___ 16. I feel in control of my own destiny.
- ___ 17. I do something for fun at least once a week.
- ___ 18. I am able to organize my time effectively.
- ___ 19. I take quiet time for myself during the day.
- ___ 20. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.

___ TOTAL: To get your score, add the figures and subtract 20. Any number over 30 indicate a vulnerability to stress. You are seriously vulnerable if your score is between 50 and 75, and you are extremely vulnerable if it is over 75.

WONDERFUL WATER



- **75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated. (Likely applies to half the world's population)**
- **In 37% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is so weak that it is often mistaken for hunger.**
- **Even MILD dehydration will slow down one's metabolism as much as 3%.**
- **One glass of water shut down midnight hunger pangs for almost 100% of the dieters studied in a U-Washington study.**
- **Lack of water, the #1 trigger of daytime fatigue.**
- **Preliminary research indicates that 8-10 glasses of water a day could significantly ease back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers.**
- **A mere 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on the computer screen or on a printed page.**
- **Drinking 5 glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, plus it can slash the risk of breast cancer by 79%, and one is 50% less likely to develop bladder cancer.**

Are you drinking the amount of water you should every day?

Some Simple Suggestions For Managing Stress:



1. **TALK TO SOMEONE.** Confide your worry to some levelheaded person you can trust; spouse, parent, friend, clergyman, family doctor, teacher, school counselor. Talking things out often helps you to see things in a clearer light and helps you see what you can do about it.
2. **BE HONEST IN IDENTIFYING THE REAL SOURCE OF STRESS.** Eliminate the source if possible. At least decide on a plan to keep it from getting the best of you.
3. **ACCEPT WHAT YOU CAN'T CONTROL.** Death and taxes are just a few of the things in life you can't avoid. Try to prepare for them as much as possible.
4. **TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF.** Eat right. Get enough sleep. Exercise. Learn a relaxation technique. Schedule recreation where you do something for pleasure, something that helps you forget about your work.
5. **GO EASY ON YOUR CRITICISM.** Don't expect so much of others and you won't be disappointed. Instead, look for the good in others. You will feel better about yourself.
6. **SHUN THE "SUPERWOMAN" or "SUPERMAN" URGE.** Don't expect so much of yourself. Nobody is perfect, or capable of doing everything. Decide what you can do well and what you like to do and put your effort into those things.
7. **DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEBODY ELSE.** Then give yourself a pat on the back.
8. **TAKE ONE THING AT A TIME.** Attack the most urgent task -- one at a time. Don't overestimate the importance of what you do. Your mental and physical health are vitally important.
9. **ESCAPE FOR A WHILE.** Making yourself "stand there and suffer" is self-punishment and not a way to solve a problem. Recover your breath and balance, but be prepared to deal with your difficulty when you are composed.
10. **WORK OFF YOUR ANGER.** If you feel like lashing out at someone, try holding off that impulse for a while. Do something constructive with that energy. Cool down, then handle the problem.
11. **GIVE IN OCCASIONALLY.** No one is right all of the time. And, even if you are right, it is easier on the system to give in once in awhile.
12. **IF YOU NEED HELP, GET AN EXPERT.** These simple suggestions may not be enough to help you handle your stress. If emotional problems become so distressing that you can't cope, you need **PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT**, just as you would for any other illness.





AAA Stress Management Form

SCENARIO:

ALTER: (How could you remove the source of the stress?)

AVOID: (How could you get away from or avoid the source of stress?)

ACCEPT: (How could you live with the stress?)

Build up resistance by . . .

Change self and/or perceptions by . . .

BEST OPTION IS:

Serenity Prayer

**God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things
I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can, and
Wisdom to know the difference.**



Butterflies

author unknown

A family in my neighborhood once brought in two chrysalides that were just about to hatch. They watched as the first one began to open, and the butterfly inside squeezed very slowly and painfully through a tiny hole that it chewed in one end of the chrysalid. After lying exhausted for about ten minutes following its agonizing emergence, the butterfly finally flew out the open window on its beautiful wings.

The family decided to help the second butterfly so that it would not have to go through such an excruciating ordeal. So, as it began to emerge, they carefully sliced open the chrysalid with a razor blade, doing the equivalent of a Caesarean section. The second butterfly never did spread its wings, and in about ten minutes, instead of flying away, it quietly died.

The family asked a biologist friend to explain what had happened. The scientist said that the difficult struggle to emerge from the small hole actually pushes liquids from deep inside the butterfly's body cavity into the tiny capillaries in the wings, where they harden to complete the healthy and beautiful adult butterfly.

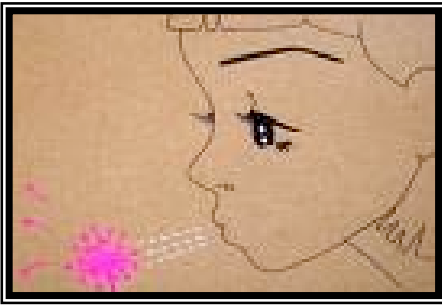
Without The Struggle, There Are No Wings

When I Loved Myself Enough . . .

- I felt compelled to slow down, way down. And that has made all the difference.
- I came to see I am not special, but I am unique.
- I redefined success and life became simple. Oh, the pleasure in that.
- I began to see I didn't have to chase after life. If I am quiet and hold still, life comes to me.
- I gave up the belief that life is hard.
- I learned to meet my own needs and not call it selfish.
- I quit exhausting myself trying so hard.
- I began leaving whatever wasn't healthy. This meant people, jobs, my own beliefs and habits – anything that kept me small. My judgment called it disloyal. Now I see it as self-loving.
- I gave up perfectionism – that killer of joy.
- I could tell the truth about my gifts and my limitations.
- I began to see my purpose and gently wean myself from distractions.
- I began listening to the wisdom of my body. It speaks so clearly through its fatigue, sensitivities, aversions, and hungers.
- I quite rehashing the past and worrying about the future which keeps me in the present where aliveness lives.



From: McMillen, Kim (1996). *When I Loved Myself Enough*. St. Martin's Press: NY, NY.
ISBN: 0-312-27124-7.



I Wish You Enough . . .

**I wish you enough sun to keep your
attitude bright.**

**I wish you enough rain to appreciate the
sun more.**

**I wish you enough happiness to keep
your spirit alive.**

**I wish you enough pain so that the
smallest joys in life appear much bigger.**

**I wish you enough gain to satisfy your
wanting.**

**I wish you enough loss to appreciate all
that you possess.**

**I wish enough "Hello's" to get you
through the final "Good-bye."**