

For Permanent & Positive Change

# The Exchange

**FEATURED TOPIC: HANDLING STRESS**

## How Your Body Reacts to Stress

Our bodies are created to survive stress, at least in the short run. Run is a key word. The human body is designed to run or fight under stress. If the stress is in the form of a bear or someone who is threatening bodily harm, this system of survival works well. For instance, under stress the body does the following:

- » Heart beats 5 times faster
- » Mucous membranes constrict for faster air flow to lungs
- » Subsurface blood vessels constrict and redirect blood flow to muscles & organs
- » Nutrients and fatty acids released for quick energy to muscles
- » Nervous system activated for quick and strenuous muscle activation
- » Blood clotting factors released to prepare for wound response
- » Pupils dilate for better vision
- » Perspiration increases to facilitate cooling
- » Unnecessary functions shut down (digestion, reproduction, immune systems)
- » Bowels and bladder void to reduce body weight
- » Higher thought processes bypassed

When your stress is caused because of a lost sale, an overbearing boss, or trouble at home, being able to run and punch will do you little good. On the contrary, these changes can lead to dis-ease such as heart attacks, strokes, and other ailments.

What is the solution? Motion changes emotion. When you first feel the signs of stress, such as a constriction in your chest, acid in your stomach, or a throb in your temples, move. Get out of your chair and take a brisk walk. If you have some privacy, you

## What Our Clients Are Saying

"Another aspect that was beneficial was the customized approach that TLC used to identify areas of focus for the company as a whole. The feedback that Beverly attained from her visits was invaluable. More importantly, though, was the way that she intertwined this feedback into the training by facilitating discussion with the management team to identify focus areas and action plans."

Tresa Vaudreuil

can punch air or kick box. This increased physical activity will use up the chemical changes in your body that the stress has caused.

Next, take a deep breath and close your eyes for a moment if you can. Use a Power Word such as "think-think-think" or "relax-relax-relax." These Power Words (from our textbook, Talk Is NOT Cheap) send a command to your brain that causes the body to respond.

Now that you know how your body handles stress, you can handle your body and mind. ❖

## Keep Your Shirt On

Have you ever heard someone say, "Keep your shirt on"?

This saying is usually said when a person is starting to, or already has, lost their cool. This month's Exchange topic is handling stress. But what does keeping on your shirt have to do with handling stress? Keep your shirt on, keep reading, and you'll find out.

The first origins of this saying date back to the early 1800's in the Northeastern United States. During this period, clothes were still washed in nearby rivers or in the Atlantic Ocean. Excessive washing led to the clothes eventual shrinkage. This made the clothes, especially the shirts, tighter. If a man got into a disagreement, it was common to just fight to settle the argument. When a man wanted to easily move or throw punches, he'd roll up his sleeves. If it got very serious, he'd remove his shirt to completely free his arms to move even faster.

When a man began taking off his shirt during a verbal confrontation, a levelheaded person (probably his wife) would say, "keep your shirt

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### Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on Goals.

### Looking Back

You might also be interested in our October 2007 edition: [Feedback: Compliments and Corrections](#) or read other [previous issues of The Exchange](#).

*"The average human being can deal with just about anything except uncertainty."*

Robert B. Horton

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on” meaning, avoid a fight.

Today we like to think we are more civil. There are times when we are under stress and we want to roll up our sleeves and allow our emotions to take over. About 100-200 years ago, this stress occurred under conditions where it was acceptable to cut loose and fight. Although our level of civilization has changed, we are still just as emotional. Whether in the boardroom or the living room, we still get stressed. A calming influence is helpful when it tells us to keep our shirts on.

The next time you are under stress, remember how much we’ve evolved and apply logic, reason, and a levelheaded approach to resolve differences - and keep your shirt on. ❖

### Laughter

Laughter helps to handle stress. Read something funny. Save all of those silly emails that are forwarded to you for a time when you need to belly laugh. Keep a book of jokes handy for the same purpose. Call someone who you know will lift your spirits and tell them you need to laugh.

Remember something funny that happened in times past. Call that person and relive it, or just remember and have some private chuckles. If you have the time, put in a funny DVD and lose yourself in laughter.

Or just laugh. You’ll feel a little silly, but that’s okay. Feeling silly may make you laugh. Say, “ha!” like you mean it. Then add two of them, “ha-ha!” Keep adding until you find yourself hooting and hollering.

Laughter is good exercise. It releases natural chemicals that cause you to feel good. It usually causes your eyes to moisten and clean, thus affording you the opportunity to see things more clearly.

Laugh every day. You need to. You have stress every day. Laughter helps to balance life. Here is a little something to make you smile:

In the 16th and 17th centuries, everything had to be transported by ship and it was also before the invention of commercial fertilizers, so large shipments of manure were common.

It was shipped dry, because in dry form it weighed a lot less than when wet, but once water (at sea) hit it, it not only became heavier, but the process of fermentation began again, of which a by-product is methane gas. As the stuff was stored below decks in bundles you can see what could (and did) happen. Methane began to build up below decks and the first time someone came below at night with a lantern, BOOOOM!

Several ships were destroyed in this manner before it was determined just what was happening. After that, the bundles of manure were always stamped with the term “Ship High In Transit” on them, which meant for the sailors to stow it high enough off the lower decks so that any water that came into the hold would not touch this volatile cargo and start the production of methane.

Thus evolved the term “S.H.I.T”, (Ship High In Transit) which has come down through the centuries and is in use to this very day. You probably did not know the true history of this word.

Neither did I. I had always thought it was a golf term. ❖

### To Be Your Best, See Your Best

Vincent Ivan Phipps

Muhammad Ali, 1st Three-Time Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the World, said, **“What man can conceive, he can achieve.”**

Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States, said, **“You have nothing to fear but fear itself.”**

Oprah Winfrey, 1st female billionaire entertainment personality, said, **“Success is not about will your opportunity come. The question is, when your opportunity comes, will you be ready?”**

What did all these and other successful industry leaders have in common? They all had a plan on how to handle stress. So what about the rest of us? What is our plan? Are we the victims and meager recipients of stress? Or do we welcome stress with the ideology of the bigger the problem, the bigger the opportunity?

As a professional speaker for over ten years, people often ask me, “Do you ever get nervous in front of large crowds?” Regardless of whether I’m speaking in front of ten or ten thousand, my answer is always the same, “Yes, but you’d never know it.”

The reason some of us seem to handle stress better than others is because we tell ourselves to keep our emotions and attitudes in check. Here are some of the tips you can do to ensure that even under stressful times, you can look, sound, and perform at your best:

**1. Focus on solutions.** Too many times, stress is nothing more than wasted energy focusing

#### Helpful Hints

- ✓ Discuss “what if” scenarios to reduce stress.
- ✓ Form an advisory council of people you respect and bounce ideas off of them.
- ✓ Have a personal stress plan for handling negativity: use yoga, walk, take bubble baths, or use TLC’s Public and Private Plans (see book Talk is NOT Cheap!)

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*“Anxiety will make a man old before his time.”*

Apocrypha, Wisdom of Ben Sira

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*“The trouble with Archie is, he don’t know how to worry without getting upset.”*

Edith Bunker

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*“No passion so effectively robs the mind of all its power of acting and reasoning as fear.”*

Edmund Burke

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on problems that never happen. Instead of replaying what could go wrong, concentrate on what it takes to make things go right.

**2. Plan for alternatives.** We get stressed when things don't work out. Expect things to go differently than your plan and have contingencies in place. Keep an extra copy of your speech in a separate location. Carry extra batteries for your important equipment. Before you have to do it alone, at night, in the rain, practice changing your tire.

**3. See your best to be your best.** Visualize performing well with all senses: feeling, smelling, hearing, tasting, and seeing. Make a mental movie, starring yourself. See yourself making successful connections. Hear yourself sounding competent. Imagine being the perfect you and keep playing it in your mind.

Some stress is good. Getting a promotion, starting a new project, getting married, going back to school, or taking a new leadership role can be positive stress. Even positive stress can have negative results. Stress is an opinion. Problems are also opinions. Your ability to effectively function in situations determines if the circumstances become stressful moments under which to crumble or joyous opportunities to demonstrate success.

Follow the three tips above to put stress to rest and to be your best! ❖

## Happy Birthday!

Happy Birthday to TLC clients celebrating in November and December:

### November

- » Margaret Carton
- » Debbie Franke
- » Tommy Beckler
- » Brian Korkus
- » Wilson Harvey
- » Vincent Russo
- » Marian Adamson
- » Eric Norden
- » Paul Veraart
- » Jeff Hathcock
- » Sheila Nelson
- » Robert L. Henry
- » Tom Sutter
- » Randy Crowder

### December

- » Brian Baker
- » Khadir Paden
- » Lachon Graybill
- » Charles Pelcher
- » Steve Walker
- » Ricky Francis
- » Daniel Sklar
- » Bob Lehmann
- » Rick Rowell
- » Rebecca Quigley
- » Lori Taylor (Varner)
- » Doug Manggrum
- » Andriette Turner
- » Jayanth Manay
- » Bruce Hulse
- » Robert Thomas
- » Robert Max
- » Susan Hopper

## Dear TLC,

I am regional manager for a large product distribution center. With millions being transacted weekly, the stress of keeping up with my employees, ensuring clients are happy, and maintaining the quality of the products, can become overwhelming.

I love my job but the stress is starting to affect my work performance. My unease at work is causing me to be more stressed at home. What can I do to slow down my world and prevent this stress cycle from becoming worse?

Signed  
-Stress Cycle

## Dear Cycle,

Two things you can do to get a hold of your demanding world:

**1. At work, delegate.** It sounds like you are taking on the weight of the industry. Remember, it is not your job to do everything. It is your job to ensure everything gets done. Forward some of your tasks to your other supervisors and have them manage the work staff. For example, instead of you having to manage 100 employees, you have your supervisors do it and you manage your 5 supervisors.

**2. At home, talk then release.** Some of the stress can be alleviated if you just talk about your day. Get permission from a friend not associated at work to just vent. Let it rip! Complain, nag, whine, and moan. Just getting it out will help you feel better. But don't complain too long. When you've had your pity party, drop it! At home, leave work at work. At home talk with your family, go to movies, play a game, or just listen to what's going on in your family's life.

You'll be surprised at how much better you feel after listening to someone else's day.

### Remember To

- ✓ See yourself at your best to be your best.
- ✓ Focus on what it takes to make a stressful situation right.
- ✓ Ask for suggestions and assistance from others.

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*"Humor is just another defense against the universe."*

Mel Brooks

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*"You can have the best systems in the world, but if your people aren't fresh, if they're burned out, it won't matter. They won't provide the kind of service that customers expect."*

Bob Daniels

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*"Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath."*

New Testament, Book of Ephesians 4:26

## For Permanent & Positive Change

### Cumulative Stress

Therese Padgett

"Well, Ms. Padgett. You've had a heart attack!" said my doctor after a week of grueling tests. "What kind of stress have you been under?"

"None that I couldn't handle," I piped back. "During the past year," I continued without skipping a beat, "I went through an ugly divorce, went through a mid-life crisis and became homeless for a while. But since then I have relocated, changed careers and bought a new home. So, see, I have handled everything and am now under absolutely NO stress!"

An abstracted period of silence followed the above exchange while my doctor stared at his shoes. At long last, he looked me straight in the eyes and said very softly but emphatically, "Stress is cumulative."

This brings to mind all of our supper heroes: Supper Moms, Energy Bunnies, Johnnies on the Spot, Mister Moms, Perfect Dads, Jet Setters in Five Continents, even overscheduled youngsters. We are deluded into thinking, just because we can juggle all our commitments and solve all our problems, that we are handling stress and, therefore, all is well.

All is not well. Many tips are offered in this issue of The Exchange, all of which may help you to cope with stress. Please remember what my doctor said: "STRESS IS CUMULATIVE." The only proven ways to deal with stress are to eliminate or to counter.

Elimination of stress is just that: re-prioritize your life and get rid of those situations/things/people that are bringing stress into your life. Some describe this as "simplifying your life." Unfortunately, simplification is not always that simple!

How do we counter stress? When we cannot eliminate the stressors in our lives, are there activities

we can engage in that bring us balance? When we suffer from stress, something has to change. Because we are all different, there are different activities that bring each one of us back into balance. I encourage you to make a list of the activities that work for you.

One of the things that work for me is a visit to Spring Creek Retreat. Tucked away on the edge of the Cherokee National Forrest, this 20-acre paradise is cut off from the rest of the world by a fifty-foot wide mountain creek, which surrounds the property. The rush of running water filters out the clutter of nagging reminders about all the business I left unfinished. My senses are opened to the voices of birds and the aromas of wooded ridges. The moss covered trails become cushions under my feet and they counter the strain of the uphill climb on my muscles, so long unused. At night, in the extreme darkness only found away from city lights, I lie on the deck, stare up at countless stars and pay attention to the courting croaks of bullfrogs. About this time my best friend tells a tale that makes us both laugh and hoot 'til tears run down our faces.

Other visitors to Spring Creek Retreat come for family reunions. Others come to enjoy the nearby fishing or rafting in the Hiwassee and Ocoee rivers. Corporate teams come to combine encounter sessions with rest and recreation.

Sometimes, just getting out of the way of stress in a place like our Spring Creek Retreat can be just what the doctor ordered. Especially the one who reminded us that, "Stress is Cumulative."

Visit [www.springcreekretreat.com](http://www.springcreekretreat.com) for more information on this great stress buster. ❖

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*"Time deals gently only  
with those who take it  
gently."*

Anatole France

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*"Drive thy business; let it  
not drive thee."*

Benjamin Franklin

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*"Learn calm to face what's  
pressing."*

Horace

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*"If someone insults you,  
Endure him lightheartedly:  
And if all slander you,  
Give no heed to them:  
'Tis nothing new To hear  
such frequent talk: It will  
all vanish into thin air  
[Autant en emporte le  
vent]."*

Margaret of Anjoulême

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## For Permanent & Positive Change

### CEO Corner

Beverly Inman-Ebel

#### “Just Desserts”

I gave up desserts on August 1, 2007. I lost weight and started feeling better. It was easier than I expected. Okay, I experienced a few slips around Halloween and Christmas will provide its own set of challenges. Overall, I have stopped having my life dominated by desserts.

Upon reflection, it was relatively pain free because I focused on what I would get in return for what I was giving up, rather than fixating on the lack of chocolate in my life. I also allowed myself to occasionally have a small amount. This balanced approach allowed my palate to soon appreciate the subtle sweetness of fruits and almonds.

Being stressed has much in common with desserts. In fact, the word “desserts” spelled backwards is “stressed”. We are usually prepared for the toll that negative stress plays on us, yet it is often the positive stress that spoils the event. Just like the delicious chocolate pie that tastes so good going down has a detrimental effect later.

I remember one of my clients who was a finalist in the Miss USA pageant. She was the first deaf woman to make it this far in a national competition. At a time when her beauty was being judged along with her talent and mind, her lips broke out into huge fever blisters. It’s challenging to feel beautiful when your lips are swollen and aching.

In Vincent’s article, he mentioned that getting married can be stressful. Perhaps you didn’t even notice. It was just a phrase included in a list of positive stresses. Vincent was married on October 27th of this year, and trust me, I noticed his stress. About a week before the wedding, he left his car trunk open in a rainstorm and most of our equipment from an expo got soaked. He would make a cup of tea and leave the stove on high. His articles for the November issue of The Exchange were filled with errors. He loved his wedding. He couldn’t wait for it to get here. He was a lovable basket case for weeks. At least he was not a “Groomzilla.”

The holidays are around the corner. Christmas is a very special time for me. I love wrapping the gifts that I bought or made throughout the year, decorating, having time off with family, and reflecting upon the reason for the season. I also realize that the hustle and bustle, as fun as it is, brings stress into my life. I will treat the stress just like desserts. A little bit is sweet, and too much does damage. I will laugh often, give margins to my schedule, remind myself that most of the stress is small stuff, and find moments of solitude to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. It’s Christmas! Get excited! Hustle! Relax. Breathe. Live your dreams! ❖

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*“Illegitimi non carborundum. (Don’t let the bastards wear you down.)”*

Latin proverb

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*“Recreation is a second creation, when weariness hath almost annihilated one’s spirit. It is the breathing of the soul, which otherwise would be stifled with continual business.”*

Thomas Fuller

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*“It is better to bend than to break.”*

Aesop

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