

Stress Bytes Newsletter

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“WHEN STRESS BITES, BITE BACK!”

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Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes!

Some of the more stressful times in life are those of transition. A transition time may be welcomed and planned or unwelcome and unexpected.

Either way, what makes times of transition stressful are the myriad ways that we need to adapt to and navigate the changes ahead. When you are in a time of transition, you are no longer in your comfortable routine. You have to devote more time, thought and energy to get through the day with the new tasks that are part of the transition. This can be very draining and anxiety producing even if the transition is something you want and desire.

Transitions can include a change of social status, location or even health. Examples of social status transitions are marriage, becoming a parent, divorce, death of a loved one, job promotion, demotion, job loss, or retirement.. Examples of transitions of location might be moving to a new town or city to start college, or moving to a new neighborhood within the same town. Changes

in health, due to age, accident or illness also call upon our internal resources to cope. Any of these changes can tax our abilities to cope and/or adapt to the transition.

In fact, when doing a thorough history of a person who is seeking counseling, these kind of psychosocial stressors are part of the diagnostic picture. If there are multiple, severe stressors in the person's life during the previous year, it is understandable that their complaints might be attributable to those, instead of a mental illness.

The way to cope successfully with transitions of any kind is to become more resourced and resourceful. When we are resourced, we have many internal ways of coping with stress. We stay positive. We look for the bright side of things. We have a philosophy of life that provides a sense of meaning and direction. We know how to appropriately and safely release the

pressure valve of pent up emotions. We set goals and accomplish them in a timely manner. We conserve our energy. We rest and pace ourselves. We ask for help when we need it.

When we are resourceful, that means we have developed ways of coping with stress that are external to ourselves. We have saved for a rainy day, so we have money in the bank if

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“I’ve been making an effort to be less critical. If you weren’t so self-absorbed, you’d see that!”

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Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes—cont'd

we lose a job, need to buy a new house, or have a health crisis. We have developed a circle of positive and supportive friends, if we need to call upon someone to help out in a pinch. We have learned many skills that will come in handy when changes in life come along.

Let's look at one example. If you are transitioning into retirement, if you are resourceful, you have thought ahead, planned your finances, saved accordingly, talked to your family about your wants and goals, and learned new skills for leisure or a second career. That's one of the abilities we have as human beings--to look ahead and plan for the future instead of just reacting to the stress of the moment. The other nice thing is that we don't need to reinvent the wheel. Someone has gone down this path before and probably has written about it. We can talk to other retirees to learn what to expect. We can read books on starting a second career or saving for retirement. We can begin to explore new interests before retirement.

On the other hand, if you have not prepared emotionally or financially for retirement, you might be much more stressed about it. Instead of enjoying yourself, you may be reacting to every little stressor and playing "catch-up" because you've not gathered your resources together to cope with the changes.

So, my advice when looking at a transition is to plan ahead, learn what others have done to handle similar circumstances, gather your support people around you, ask for help, and keep a positive mental attitude.

Annette Vaillancourt, Ph.D. is a psychotherapist and motivational speaker with offices in Carbondale, IL and St. Louis, MO. **She offers a group for emotional eaters and yo-yo dieters called: "A Better Weigh: Change Subconscious Beliefs that Sabotage Your Success."**

<http://www.gotstressgethelp.com/EFT-and-Weight-Loss.htm>. Groups NOW Forming!

Back issues of these newsletters are available at <http://www.gotstressgethelp.com/StressBytes.htm>

Past topics include:

- I'll See It When I Believe It
- Emotional Eating: 101
- Matters of the Heart: Marital Bliss or Abyss?
- Are Parents to Blame?
- Don't Believe Everything You Think
- What's in Your Shadow?
- Success and Abundance Aren't Just for the Lucky!
- No More Excuses
- The Secret to a Productive Depression
- And many more!

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE OUR FREE NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL, PLEASE SEND AN
EMAIL TO ANNETTE@GOTSTRESSGETHELP.COM**

WITH THE WORDS

"SUBSCRIBE TO STRESS BYTES" IN THE SUBJECT LINE.

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Planning Ahead

Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans. Why not plan ahead for changes that you can anticipate? Take a few moments to reflect upon and answer the questions below.

What expected changes are coming up this week? Month? Year?

What skills will I need to have in order to deal most effectively with these changes?

What resources do I have or do I need to gather to cope with these changes?

Who do I know that has gone through a similar change? Can I ask them for their "coaching" as I go through my change?

What inner resources do I have to help me make a smooth transition through this life change?

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The Stress Doctor is IN!!!

“IF WE DON'T CHANGE DIRECTION SOON, WE'LL END UP WHERE WE'RE GOING.” - PROFESSOR IRWIN COREY

“I GET UP EVERY MORNING DETERMINED TO BOTH CHANGE THE WORLD AND HAVE ONE HELL OF A GOOD TIME. SOMETIMES THIS MAKES PLANNING MY DAY DIFFICULT.” - E. B. WHITE

“HUMAN BEINGS, BY CHANGING THE INNER ATTITUDES OF THEIR MINDS, CAN CHANGE THE OUTER ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES.” - WILLIAM JAMES

“ONLY I CAN CHANGE MY LIFE. NO ONE CAN DO IT FOR ME.” - CAROL BURNETT



**“I do not blame others for my mistakes.
I blame the same people every time!”**

ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.

- Gently helping individuals, couples and groups resolve personal problems, manage stress, and reach their full potential since 1990.
- Specializing in Women's Issues and Stress Management
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BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes by William Bridges

Whether switching jobs or moving house, leaving school or retiring, change brings both opportunities and turmoil. Most of us struggle through such periods. This classic book shows how making a successful transition lets you recognize and seize new opportunities. Transitions has helped hundreds of thousands of readers to cope with changes by providing a road map of the transition process.

With the understanding born of experience, William Bridges takes us step by step through the three stages of transition: Endings. Recognize endings as opportunities as well as losses, and even celebrate them with rituals designed to open new doors. The Neutral Zone. In this seemingly unproductive “time-out,” we feel disconnected from the past and emotionally unconnected to the present. The most frightening stage of transition, the Neutral Zone is really an important time for reorientation. The New Beginning. A successful transition requires more than persevering: it means launching new priorities. Understand the external and internal signs that point the way to your future.

To purchase this book, go to <http://www.gotstressgethelp.com/bookstore.htm>