

# Stress Bytes Newsletter

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2009

**"WHEN STRESS BITES, BITE BACK!"**

THE NEWSLETTER OF ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.

LICENSED CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR AND MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER

## Resiliency and the Human Spirit

I want to write about resiliency and the human spirit because that's what I witness every day in my work as a therapist. Nobody taught me about this in graduate school. Nobody talks about spirit at all in graduate school, but I tell you, it's the thing that gets us through tough times and what helps people endure unbelievable suffering and live to tell about it. It's what lifts people up. It's what makes us strive. It's what gives hope wings. It's the source of all optimism. It's the mysterious strength we all have - the ability to endure anything, dream anything and accomplish great things.

In the face of the human spirit, I am left with more questions than answers. Where does it come from? Is it

nature or nurture? Are we born with it or is it something we learn and develop? Is it a gift given to us from above or from another human being?

It appears to me that some people are just "old souls" born with inherent wisdom and strength of spirit. Others among us are going to "the school of hard knocks" on the way to wisdom. Hopefully, in the school of hard knocks we have loving mentors, friends, parents, and teachers who will guide, support and challenge us to make the learning stick and point the way.

Life is difficult enough, but if you experienced abuse, neglect, life threatening illness, early death of a parent, or were a victim of a crime, I

hope you had at least one genuinely loving person in your life to show you that not all people hurt you, not everyone will abandon you, to witness your tears, and who explained to you that illness and death are not punishments, but just life making room for

**Cont'd on Page 2**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Resiliency and the Human Spirit              | 1 |
| Resiliency and the Human Spirit....continued | 2 |
| Quiz: How Resilient are You?                 | 3 |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |



**"I'll be home late tonight. My boss is taking everyone out for motivation tape karaoke."**

**Annette Vaillancourt, Ph.D.**  
**Psychotherapist & Motivational Speaker**  
**Phone: 1-877-949-5935**  
**www.GotStressGetHelp.com**  
**E-mail: Annette@GotStressGetHelp.com**

## Resiliency and the Human Spirit

new people to have their turn. Love makes you resilient. Love mends the ruptures of life. Love infuses your spirit with the strength it needs to survive, sail and soar.

Often, but not always, the people who shows up in my office have had some pretty awful things happen to them in the past. Well intending friends and family will advise them to forget the past. "What's done is done. Forget about it and move on," they hear. They come to me wondering what's wrong with them that they can't forget the past. What they need is some loving attention while they grieve and a place to tell what it was really like to have their experiences.

Sometimes, I ask them "what's right with you that you can't forget the past? What's trying to complete itself?" What's not done is the grief work that allows the human spirit to heal, accept and embrace life with new interest. The classic grief cycle needs to be completed. To deny the emotional impact of the past or a loss is to live stuck in denial.

Being in denial is awful. Being in denial is not resiliency. Being stuck in denial about the effects of past hurts is like living in a time warp. You react and respond to the present from the template of the past. You are not present or in the present. I like to say about life, "You must be present to win." To get into the present and truly release the past, you have to grieve. For the resilience to return to the human spirit, the path it takes is grief.

Grieving isn't alot of fun; but denial takes you out of the game of life and makes you sit on the sidelines of life. The early stage of "bargaining," i.e. "If I could have \_\_\_ back, I would be good" is denial gasping its last breath. When denial breaks, tears cleanse and anger revives the self-esteem. Acceptance and forgiveness come at the end of grief, not at the beginning, and give birth to hope. At the end of grief, life renews itself. When grief is finished, you have the opportunity to see how awe-full and awe filled life can be!



**“Can you give me something to make my hot flashes hotter? Hot enough to melt fat, burn calories and ignite passion!”**

## How Resilient are You?

Rate yourself from 1 to 5 on the following statements: (1 = very little, 5 = very strong)

- \_\_\_\_\_ In a crisis or chaotic situation, I calm myself and focus on taking useful actions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm good at bouncing back from difficulties.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm playful. I find the humor in rough situations, and can laugh at myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm able to recover emotionally from losses and setbacks. I have friends I can talk with. I can express my feelings to others and ask for help. Feelings of anger, loss and discouragement don't last long.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I feel self-confident, appreciate myself, and have a healthy concept of who I am.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm curious. I ask questions. I want to know how things work. I like to try new ways of doing things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm good at solving problems. I can use analytical logic, be creative, or use practical common sense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm good at making things work well. I'm often asked to lead groups and projects.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm very flexible. I feel comfortable with my paradoxical complexity. I'm optimistic and pessimistic, trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, and so forth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm always myself, but I've noticed that I'm different in different situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I prefer to work without a written job description. I'm more effective when I'm free to do what I think is best in each situation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I "read" people well and trust my intuition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm a good listener. I have good empathy skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm non-judgmental about others and adapt to people's different personality styles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'm very durable. I hold up well during tough times. I have an independent spirit underneath my cooperative way of working with others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I've been made stronger and better by difficult experiences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.

**(Quiz by Al Siebert, Ph.D.) Add up your points and go to page 4 for your results and to learn more.**

**Annette Vaillancourt, Ph.D.**  
**Psychotherapist & Motivational Speaker**

Schwartz Building  
231 W. Main, 2W  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
Phone: 618-549-5935

And  
PO Box 220034  
Kirkwood, MO 63122  
1-877-949-5935

Annette@GotStressGetHelp.com



***The Stress Doctor is IN!!!***

“NO PESSIMIST EVER DISCOVERED THE SECRET OF THE STARS OR SAILED AN UNCHARTED LAND, OR OPENED A NEW DOORWAY FOR THE HUMAN SPIRIT.”

HELEN KELLER

“THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT IS TO LIVE UP TO ONE'S OPPORTUNITIES AND MAKE THE MOST OF ONE'S RESOURCES.”

VAUVENARGUES

“DIFFICULTIES ARE MEANT TO ROUSE, NOT DISCOURAGE. THE HUMAN SPIRIT IS TO GROW STRONG BY CONFLICT”.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING



**“We can ask our people to work eight days a week, but we’ll have to pay a royalty to The Beatles.”**

**ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.**

- Gently helping individuals, couples and groups resolve personal problems, manage stress, and reach their full potential since 1990.
- Specializing in Peak Performance and Stress Management
- Emotional Freedom Technique, PSYCH-K®, EMDR
- Call **1-877-949-5935** to set up an appointment
- Visit our website at [www.GotStressGetHelp.com](http://www.GotStressGetHelp.com)
- Available for Motivational Speaking and Wellness Presentations

### **Scoring: How Resilient are You?**

Scoring:

80 or higher very resilient!

65-80 better than most

50-65 slow, but adequate

40-50 you're struggling

40 or under seek help!

To learn more go to: <http://www.resiliencycenter.com/index.shtml>

**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.**

COPYRIGHT © 2009. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.