

Stress Bytes Newsletter

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"WHEN STRESS BITES, BITE BACK!"

THE NEWSLETTER OF ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.
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Seeking Inner Guidance in Times of Stress

In times of stress and transition who doesn't want a trusted advisor or mentor? Wouldn't we all want someone to turn to who can help us with our decisions and guide us in our actions? I sure do. But what if you don't have that in your life? Or if you do have that trusted relationship with friends or a family member, but they just aren't available when and how you need them to be? That's when you need to develop your own inner guidance. Mature adults seek guidance, not reliance on someone else for their decisions. Always relying on the advice of others is a form of dependency, not self-sufficiency. It can also be very confusing. Ask six different people what to do in a situation and you'll get six different answers. Then how do you decide?

All the self-help books and psychotherapists, like me, encourage, well....self-help, which is helping someone discern their own inner wisdom and find the courage to act on it. All you need to run your life successfully lies within you. You just

need a way to become aware of it, access it, and have the courage to act on what you know is in your best interests.

So, if advice doesn't work and your outer mentors are not available, what methods can you use to access your inner guidance? There are so many ways to do this - journaling, prayer and meditation, interpreting your dreams, or just having a good listener mirror back to you what you are saying, so you can hear yourself.

I'm a big fan of journaling. Sometimes I don't know what I think or feel about something until I write about it. In my journal I'm free to express anything and everything without censoring myself. In it, I write letters to people I'm upset with as a way to work through my hurt, fear or anger -- so I can calm down and find out what I really want to do about the situation. Once I'm done expressing my feelings fully, I focus on looking for solutions, instead of blaming. I also write "letters to God," Higher Self, or Inner Advisor asking for

guidance. This is one of my favorite techniques because it calls on the innate wisdom we all have. I'll put a concern before this wiser self and discuss it thoroughly. Many times I'm surprised by the insights I get. Generally, I feel comforted because that part is kind and compassionate and reminds me that to be human is to okay, to struggle is okay, and to
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**"Success is where preparation and opportunity meet.
Failure is where they meet, but can't stand each other."**

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Seeking Inner Guidance in Times of Stress—cont'd

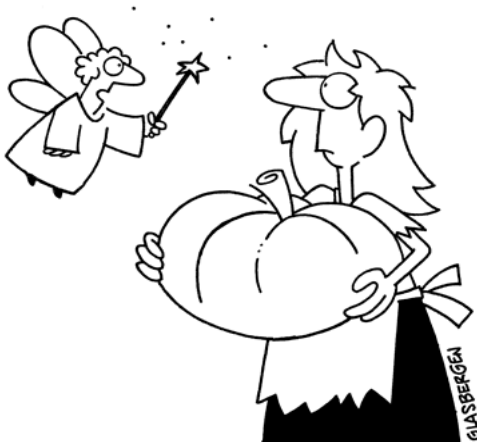
strive towards my goals takes courage.

I also like to ask my dreams for assistance in discerning what to do. One technique to do this is to ask for dreams that will address a certain problem you're having. Do this right before you go to bed. It's a good idea to keep a notepad next to your bed to write down the request before you go to sleep and record your dreams immediately upon waking. A lot of people say they don't remember their dreams, but more likely it is the case that they just forget quickly because they jump out of bed to start their day and don't take time to capture their dreams.

If you start telling your subconscious that you want a dream about a situation, but don't take time to listen to what you get, it's like any other conversation. The subconscious will clam up. If you start recording your dreams and working with them, they can become a source of inner guidance for you. If you look at dreams as metaphors, like fairy tales, full of layers of meaning, you will have a rich source of guidance. Rarely are dreams meant to be interpreted literally. Dreams images are symbolic. Get to know your dreams and ask yourself what themes keep appearing in them. For example, I often have a dream that I'm driving in a car and the brakes fail. To me this dream symbolizes that my life is going too fast and I need to find a reliable way to slow down. If you had the same dream it might mean something else.

Prayer and meditation are other great ways to access guidance. I like this saying; "prayer is talking to God. Meditation is listening to God." Both are intended to get our egos out of the way, so we can access higher wisdom. The goal of meditation is to quiet the mind, learn to detach from the ego chatter that distracts us and masquerades as Truth, and just observe the rising and falling of our thoughts, sensations, and feelings.

Once you get accustomed to seeking inner wisdom you will be able to distinguish between ego chatter and wise counsel. Ego chatter is all about our personal history and is characterized by fear masking as truth. Jack Canfield says that F.E.A.R. = "False Expectations Appearing Real." I've never found fearful thoughts to contain much wisdom. Fear tends to paralyze instead of catalyze action. Fear's message is to stay small and don't be a target, when most likely what we need to do in a new situation is to expand and grow -- step out of our comfort zones. Fear looks back on all the bad things that's ever happened in your life and projects that into the future. It warns, if something bad happened before, it WILL happen again. That is a lie. Wisdom will tell you there's no connection between the past and future, there's only the present and that you are free to think, act, and feel differently in the present. Different choices lead to different results. Wise counsel leads to self-confidence and inner resourcefulness.



"Cinderella, I'm going to rescue you by turning that pumpkin into a coach — a success coach!"

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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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Values Clarification Exercise

Values are the qualities that give your life meaning and direction. If you know what you value, you can base your decisions on that. Below is a list of values. Circle the top 10 that are most important to you—based on your gut reaction. Then, cut that list of 10 down to your top 5. Rank the remaining in order of importance.

Achievement
 Beauty
 Being generous
 Charity
 Community
 Dignity
 Family
 Growth
 Health
 Honor
 Independence
 Influence
 Intimacy
 Kindness
 Leadership
 Leaving a legacy
 Life partner
 Make a difference
 Patriotism
 Physical activity
 Retirement
 Seeing the world
 Self-reliance
 Service to others
 Strength
 Time alone
 Using my talents

Adventure
 Being Free
 Brotherhood
 Comfort
 Creativity
 Discovery
 God/Spirituality
 Happiness
 Honesty
 Humility
 Individuality
 Integrity
 Justice
 Knowledge
 Learning
 Leisure
 Love
 Parenting
 Peace
 Power
 Security
 Self-discipline
 Self-esteem
 Simplicity
 Success
 Truth
 Vitality

Add your own

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The Stress Doctor is IN!!!

“EVERY TIME YOU DON'T FOLLOW YOUR INNER GUIDANCE, YOU FEEL A LOSS OF ENERGY, LOSS OF POWER, A SENSE OF SPIRITUAL DEADNESS.”
SHAKTI GAWAIN

“I WAS ALWAYS LOOKING OUTSIDE MYSELF FOR STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE, BUT IT COMES FROM WITHIN. IT IS THERE ALL THE TIME.”
ANNA FREUD

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!
HAVE FAITH IN YOUR ABILITIES! WITHOUT A HUMBLE BUT REASONABLE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR OWN POWERS YOU CANNOT BE SUCCESSFUL OR HAPPY”
NORMAN VINCENT PEALE



“When opportunity came knocking, I couldn’t hear it because I was listening to my success tapes.”

ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.

- Gently helping individuals, couples and groups resolve personal problems, manage stress, and reach their full potential since 1990.
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WEBSITE OF THE MONTH!

www.MeetUp.com

Do Something—Learn Something

Share Something—Change Something



Meetup is the world's largest network of local groups. Meetup makes it easy for anyone to organize a local group or find one of the thousands already meeting up face-to-face. More than 2,000 groups get together in local communities each day, each one with the goal of improving themselves or their communities.

Meetup's mission is to revitalize local community and help people around the world self-organize. Meetup believes that people can change their personal world, or the whole world, by organizing themselves into groups that are powerful enough to make a difference.