

Stress Bytes Newsletter

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"WHEN STRESS BITES, BITE BACK!"

THE NEWSLETTER OF ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.

LICENSED CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR AND MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER

Signs and Symptoms of Stress Overload

Learning how to manage stress starts with becoming aware that you are under too much stress. You need to know the signs and symptoms of stress overload in the following areas of life: emotional, social, physical and cognitive. Too much stress can affect any or all of these areas of life.

Once you are aware of how stress overload shows up in your life, you can make a plan to keep your stress within a manageable range. The elimination of all stress is not the goal. Since both negative and positive events in life can be stressful, without any stress life would be boring and you wouldn't have anything to look forward to. The goal is to keep your stress in a range that is motivating and not let it spill over into a debilitating range.

So what are the common signs and symptoms of stress in each of these four areas? Emotionally, stress can manifest as anxiety, panic, depression, irritability, moodiness, and feelings of being

overwhelmed and burned out.

Physically, stress can manifest as headaches, tension, unusual aches and pains, increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, chest pains, unexplained rashes, sweaty palms, jitteriness, clumsiness and an increase susceptibility to infections (because chronic stress weakens the immune system). Further, stress contributes to the onset or worsening of the following diseases: ulcers, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, hypertension, irritable bowel syndrome, fibromyalgia and alcoholism. In fact, it is estimated that between 60 - 90% of all doctor's visits are due to stress.

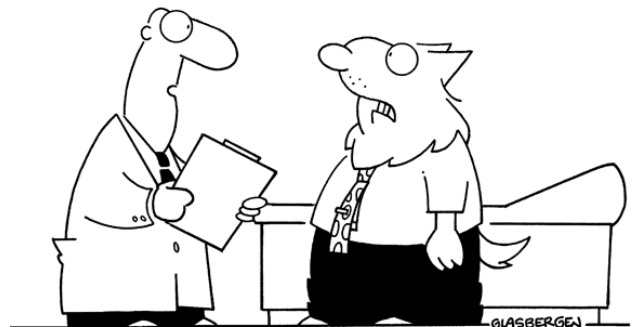
Stress also affects your social life. When you are under stress how you related to others may change. Some of us withdraw from social contact and need a lot of quiet time alone to rest, recharge and regroup. Others need more people contact when they are stressed to distract, discharge and dumb (seek support). Plus, if you are already feeling the

emotional impact of stress then problems may arise in your interpersonal relationships. Signs of this may be increase bickering or discord, a change in the level of interest in sexual contact, and a change in your patience with the other person. Yes, if your sex life comes to a screeching halt, look at the level

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"It could be the full moon that turns you into a werewolf or it might just be a stress management issue."

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

Signs and Symptoms of Stress Overload—cont'd

of stress in your life first as the likely culprit.

Also, stress may increase addictive behaviors, like drinking or smoking. These can also affect your social life, especially if the people you are around object to these behaviors. Finally, stress affects how well your brain works. Cognitive signs of stress include: forgetfulness, poor comprehension, inability to learn or retain new information, reduced ability to access or recall information (ever forget your kids names?), and difficulty making decisions. In short, your mind has too much to think about because it's dealing with too many other things. It's full and nothing is going in or coming out quickly or easily. I like to say you need a dose of "Braino" - time to rest, let go of worries and cares, daydream, meditate, listen to music or just watch your thoughts go by like a train on a track, except you're not on the train of thought. You are standing aside and just watching it go by.

My recommendation to you is to identify your unique constellation of stress overload indicators, so when you start to notice them, you can take action to reduce the stress and let it become chronic. Chronic stress can kill.



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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My Personal Stress Reduction Plan

Check at least *one thing* you will do **today** to help manage your stress.

Stress management takes *minutes* a day.

When I see my stress symptoms interfering with the quality of my life I will...

- Take _____ deep, relaxing breaths
- Go for a walk for _____ *minutes*
- Read a good book for _____ *minutes*
- Go exercise for _____ *minutes*
- Do some gentle stretching exercises
- Take a mental "vacation" for _____ *minutes*
- Listen to my favorite music for _____ *minutes*
- Talk to a supportive friend
- Be aware of my negative self-talk and change it to something positive
- Take _____ *minutes* today to do anything I like
- Soak in a hot bath (bubbles optional)
- Play a musical instrument for _____ *minutes*
- Meditate or pray for _____ *minutes*
- Do something I enjoy, such as _____
- Spend quality time out in nature for _____ *minutes*
- Ask for help from _____
- Confront the situation by doing _____
- Treat myself to _____
- Ask my friend, _____, for support and a hug
- Make a plan to reach my goals
- Delegate excess responsibility to _____
- Spend _____ *minutes* with my pet _____
- Get a massage from _____
- Be nice to myself by doing _____
- Ask a friend or co-worker for positive feedback
- Prioritize my responsibilities
- Break my responsibilities down into small, do-able tasks
- List my positive qualities
 - #1 _____
 - #2 _____
 - #3 _____
- Write down my worries
 - #1 _____
 - #2 _____
 - #3 _____
- Figure out if I have any control over the things I worry about (if not, forget them)
- Other (Describe) _____

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

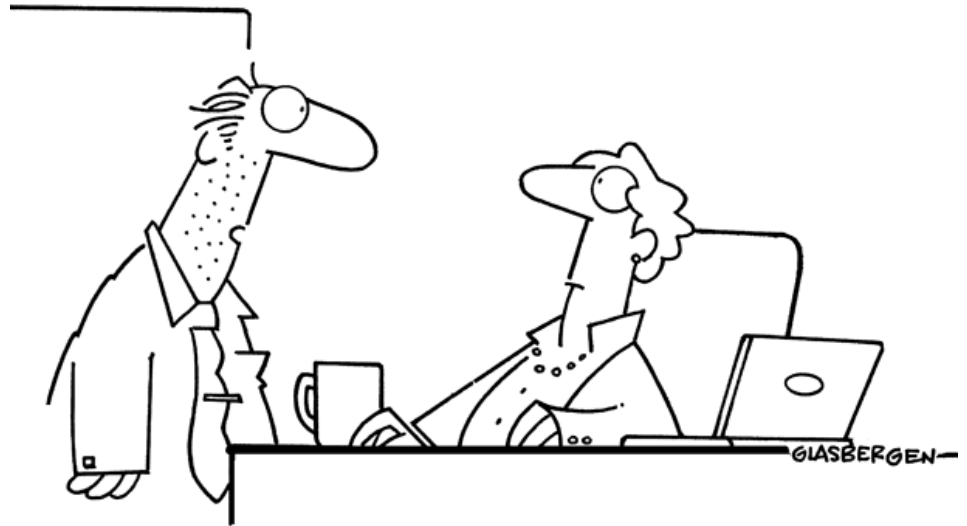


The Stress Doctor is IN!!!

“REALITY IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF STRESS AMONGST THOSE IN TOUCH WITH IT.”
JANE WAGNER

“EXERCISE RELIEVES STRESS. NOTHING RELIEVES EXERCISE.” - TAKAYUKI IKKAKU, ARISA HOSAKA AND TOSHIHIRO KAWABATA

“BEFORE YOU AGREE TO DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT ADD EVEN THE SMALLEST AMOUNT OF STRESS TO YOUR LIFE, ASK YOURSELF: WHAT IS MY TRUEST INTENTION? GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO LET A YES RESOUND WITHIN YOU. WHEN IT'S RIGHT, I GUARANTEE THAT YOUR ENTIRE BODY WILL FEEL IT.” - OPRAH WINFREY



**“This job has cost me my health, my family,
and my soul. Can I get a receipt?”**

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
- Available for Motivational Speaking and Stress Busting!

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

10 Simple Solutions to Stress: How to Tame Tension And Start Enjoying Your Life
by Claire Michaels Wheeler

It's practically the watchword of modern American life. We all know we should learn to manage it. We know that it can shorten our lives, age us prematurely, make us fat. We know it can cause a host of physical and psychological problems, from heart disease to impotence—but we all seem to keep suffering from it. One more thing we all know is that, ultimately, we are responsible for reducing the stress we experience each day. This little book offers ten simple solutions any of us can use to make this important change once and for all.

Based on positive psychology, mind-body medicine, and cognitive behavioral therapy, the ten solutions in this book take stress management to an unprecedented level of effectiveness. These short assessments, lifestyle enhancement tips, and emergency stress rescue techniques help you to cope effectively with stress and to reduce its frequency in your life. More than just lowering blood pressure and being generally happier, the techniques in this book can lead you to physical wellness and foster a greater sense of purpose, joy, and fulfillment.