

Stress Bytes Newsletter

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2008

"WHEN STRESS BITES, BITE BACK!"

THE NEWSLETTER OF ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.
LICENSED CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR.

The Valiant Struggle

I was struggling to write this column. After 2-3 years of writing about stress I was feeling like I was running out of ideas. How many ways can I spin stress management? So I got thinking about what I've learned from my clients about facing life and dealing with stress. Mostly I've learned about the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity. I thought I'd share a little of that with you.

I've seen a lot of things in my 17+ years of doing psychotherapy. I've seen tremendously strong people come into my office thinking they are weak because they do not always have a grip on their emotions. I've seen smiling people dissolve into a puddle of hidden grief no one would suspect. I've seen competent people make poor choices that derail a successful career or marriage. I've seen analytical people hamstrung by anxiety that they cannot think themselves out of. I've seen people in intense emotional pain wonder if they really need therapy. I've seen people

struggling with chronic illness, chronic depression, chronic anxiety, and chronic abuse struggle with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. I've seen families wrecked by the tragedy of suicide. I've seen marriages teetering on the brink of dissolution because of violence, betrayal, immaturity or just plain indifference. In short, I've seen people who were so defeated by life that they didn't think they would ever see another happy day.

By the time people get to my doorstep, they are sometimes so full of despair that hope seems like a painfully distant wish. They are at the end of what they know to do, even if they've read all the self-help books in the world. I've seen young people come in with a long list of medications that they are taking to help them manage their emotional problems...to know avail. I frankly wonder how they are able to stay awake and function at all. I see people who believe they are trapped in unfulfilling jobs, marriages and lives.

I've seen people who are so afraid of other people that they haven't had a date or an intimate relationship....ever. I've heard stories of how people were abused, beaten, raped and sometimes left for dead by the very people that were supposed to love and care for them. I've heard cries of anguish, gasping sobs of unbearable grief, and shrieks of terror that lie hidden beneath the social facades we present to the world. **Cont'd on Page 2**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Valiant Struggle	1
The Valiant Struggle —continued	2
Poem: The Invitation	3
Reading Recommendations	4

THE SKY IS NOT FALLING! THAT'S JUST A CROCK OF ALARMIST PROPAGANDA FROM A BUNCH OF LEFT WING ENVIRONMENTALIST WACKOS!



Chicken Little, Age 40.

Annette Vaillancourt, Ph.D.
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor
231 W. Main, 2W
Carbondale, IL 62901

Phone: 618-549-5935
www.GotStressGetHelp.com
E-mail: DrAnnette@Hughes.net

Struggle..... —cont'd

My clients will often ask me, how do I sit day after day, year after year listening to such depressing stories and not go home depressed myself. Well, I'll tell you this: I am in awe of my clients. Yes, I think, no wait....I KNOW that the people who come for help are the most courageous people I've ever had the privilege to know. Within the confines of my office, I've heard the worst stories of what one human being can do to another from the survivors, who still wonder if they "made it all up."

Yes, I want to help people who are in pain, but first I want to RESPECT their pain and what they had to do to survive emotionally and sometimes physically. By respecting their pain, what I mean is that I take it very seriously. I don't care if their pain is the emotional equivalent of a hang nail or a crucifixion, it is pain and it is theirs to deal with. Pain is pain. In this, size doesn't matter.

Second, I know from my experience of being with clients who struggle courageously to come to terms with what life has given them, that hope is not only possible, but it's a certainty. I don't GIVE my clients hope or strength to face the challenges they wrestle with. I watch and listen while they FIND it within themselves, within their story, and within their struggle. Without a doubt, any person who looks within and who dives deeply enough into what seems like intractable pain will find the source of their hope within themselves.

I've seen this so many times, I look forward to it. I can't really predict when it will happen or what will trigger it. I just know it will come. Sometimes I see it dawning; sometimes it's a complete surprise. However it comes, it feels like....grace. Like that person has been moved by something larger than their pain, their woundedness, larger than their personal history and larger than their conscious resources. When that day comes, there's still work to be done, but a corner has been turned. Things start to change gradually or suddenly. What I first notice is my clients start discussing their choices in terms of "the old me" vs. "the new me." Certainly something new has been born and just like a baby, it doesn't get up and run marathons the first day. It has to learn to creep, crawl, and toddle before it walks, but at least it's moving....moving towards the light of hope.



“When you’re done ruining the sofa, I want you to start clawing the new stereo speakers. After that, you need to leave your tongue prints in the butter, then take a nap on a pile of clean laundry.”

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE OUR FREE NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO DRANNETTE@HUGHES.NET WITH THE WORDS “SUBSCRIBE TO STRESS BYTES” IN THE SUBJECT LINE OR COMPLETE THE SUBSCRIPTION FORM ON AT GOTSTRESSGETHELP.COM

FEEL FREE TO COPY AND FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER IN ITS ENTIRETY TO ANYONE YOU KNOW WHO MAY BENEFIT FROM IT.

COPYRIGHT © 2008.

The Invitation by Oriah Mountain Dreamer

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.

I want to know what you ache for and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are.

I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool

for love

for your dream

for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon...I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own sorrow if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain mine or your own without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy mine or your own if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us

to be careful

to be realistic

to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself. If you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul. If you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see Beauty even when it is not pretty every day. And if you can source your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure yours and mine and still stand at the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes."

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair weary and bruised to the bone and do what needs to be done to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the centre of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

Annette Vaillancourt, Ph.D.
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor

Schwartz Building
231 W. Main, 2W
Carbondale, IL 62901

Phone: 618-549-5935
E-mail: DrAnnette@hughes.net

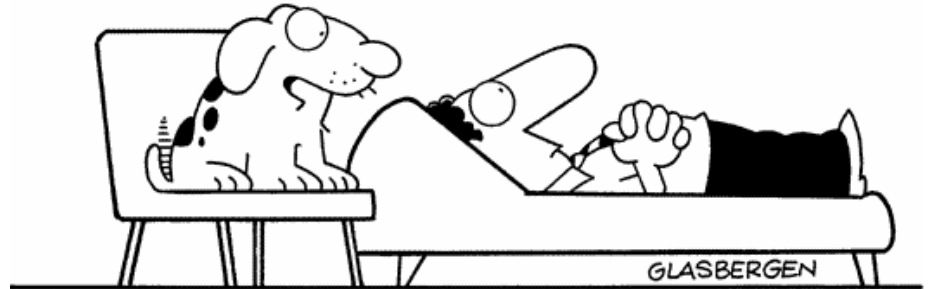
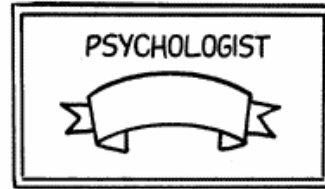


The Stress Doctor is IN!!!

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

“ONCE WE BELIEVE IN
OURSELVES, WE CAN RISK
CURIOSITY, WONDER,
SPONTANEOUS DELIGHT, OR
ANY EXPERIENCE THAT
REVEALS THE HUMAN
SPIRIT.”
E E CUMMINGS

“ONE'S DIGNITY MAY BE
ASSAULTED, VANDALIZED
AND CRUELLY MOCKED,
BUT CANNOT BE TAKEN
AWAY UNLESS IT IS
SURRENDERED.”
MICHAEL J. FOX



“My therapy is quite simple: I wag my tail and lick your face until you feel good about yourself again.”

ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.

LICENSED CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

- 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
- Emotional Freedom Technique

Call **(618) 549-5935** to set up an appointment

READING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Invitation by Oriah Mountain Dreamer

The profound poem, *The Invitation* (see page 3), became the framework for this wise and inspiring book. Chapter by chapter, the author uses passages from her poem to welcome readers into a life that is more soul fulfilling and passionate, and has far greater truth and integrity. In a sense, she invites readers to get a life instead of buying into a lifestyle.

Dark Nights of the Soul by Thomas Moore

“When it comes to spiritual growth, we humans are solar-seeking beings; eager for the bright lights of clarity and the bliss of illumination. Paradoxically, we all need to walk through the shadow of the dark night in order to discover a life worth living, according to psychotherapist and spiritual commentator Thomas Moore. Unlike depression, which is more of an emotional state, Moore calls the dark night a slow transformation process, which is fueled by a profound period of doubt, disorientation and questioning. Ultimately, a journey into the dark night will reshape the very meaning of your life. “ from Amazon.com