

# Stress Bytes Newsletter

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## “WHEN STRESS BITES, BITE BACK!”

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

## You Must Be Present to Win!

Have you ever noticed that depressed people dwell on the past and anxious people are worried about the future? If so, you'll understand the profound wisdom written in small print on raffle tickets, "you must be *present* to win."

First, living in the present moment gives you a quality of presence. To live in the present means to let go of the past and stop worrying about the future and focus on what's going on right now. It's letting go of the "if only's" and the "what if's" and concentration on the "what is." Another way of saying the same thing is, "Be here now."

People who have presence are calmer, more radiant, vital, happier, more approachable and attractive, in the sense that this quality draws you to them. They are in touch with and responsive to the realities of the moment. I notice that when I'm in the present all my senses are more alive and everything seems to be more vivid. It's like I've fallen in love and everything is bright and shiny and full of hope.

Where does stress live in time? In the future, not the present. Where does regret and guilt live in time? In the past, not the present. What lives in the present? Peace.

Here's an exercise to get into the moment. When a client is anxious or depressed, I'll suggest they verbalize a litany of "Right now *in this moment* I notice...." statements to get them into the present. So, they might start out with, "Right now in this moment I notice I'm hungry." "Right now in this moment I notice I'm sad." "Right now in this moment I notice the room smells like lavender." "Right now in this moment I notice my body is tense." In the moment unpleasant emotions seem to shift towards neutral or pleasant.

A second reason why living in the moment is optimal is because the present is all there is. Life is a stream of present moments. About 10 years ago, while attending a 5 day silent meditation retreat, the clock on the wall in the meditation room was covered with paper. All that was printed on that paper was the word, "NOW." I found that both humorous and true. When people ask me what time it is, I often answer, "Now."

Finally, I believe it's easier to make changes in your life if you let go of the stories you have about the way things "have always been and always will be," in other words, when you live in the moment. What if you started off with a totally clean slate, as if the past

didn't matter or predict the future? What if the future was up to you and started out in the present? What if your future had more to do with your plans and intentions of the moment than about anything that happened to you in the past?

Where do you want to spend the rest of your life?

Why not give Christmas presence to loved ones this year?

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

**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

## Living in the Moment

**Carpe Diem! Seize the Day.** Words to live by, but how many of us know how to do so?

Here's a simple exercise to just notice the beauty of the moment. Try looking at the palm of your hand as if you were an infant seeing it for the first time. Look, really look. What are its colors and textures, shapes and smell? Notice all the thoughts that interfere with the moment. Your mind may produce a litany of self-judgments, such as

- This is silly
- I know what my hand looks like
- I have my mother's hands
- I have fat fingers

If you let those thoughts go and just focus on looking, you may feel a sense of wonder, awe and love. Try it!

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**"I've developed a stress management program based on the Shut Up And Stop Whining Principle."**

## Being Here Now

The next time you are feeling stressed stop and try this exercise. In the blanks below complete the sentence with the first thing you notice or that comes to mind.

Right now, in this moment I notice \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, I know for sure that \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, I am aware of feeling \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, in this moment, my thoughts are \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, in this moment, my body feels \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, in this moment, I want \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, in this moment, my soul is \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, in this moment, I love \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, in this moment, my peace is \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, in this moment, I \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, this moment is \_\_\_\_\_

Right now, I want the next moment to \_\_\_\_\_

Write your own \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**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](mailto:DrAnnette@hughes.net)



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

“THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT WE CAN OFFER OTHERS IS OUR PRESENCE. WHEN MINDFULNESS EMBRACES THOSE WE LOVE, THEY WILL BLOOM LIKE FLOWERS.” - THICH NHAT HANH

“IF YOU BEGIN THE DAY WITH LOVE IN YOUR HEART, PEACE IN YOUR NERVES, AND TRUTH IN YOUR MIND, YOU NOT ONLY BENEFIT BY THEIR PRESENCE BUT ALSO BRING THEM TO OTHERS, TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AND TO ALL THOSE WHOSE DESTINY DRAWS ACROSS YOUR PATH THAT DAY.”  
AUTHOR UNKNOWN

“WE ARE HERE AND IT IS NOW. FURTHER THAN THAT ALL HUMAN KNOWLEDGE IS MOONSHINE.”  
-- H. L. MENCKEN



**“Ever have one of those days when you’re not sure whether you’re in the zone, out of the box, under the gun, over the hump, or behind the curve?”**

**ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.**

**LICENSED CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR**

- 16 years experience gently helping individuals, couples and groups resolve personal problems, manage stress, and reach their full potential.
- Specializing in Women’s Issues and Stress Management
- Emotional Freedom Technique

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

## **BOOKS ON PRACTICING PRESENCE**

[The Presence Process: A Healing Journey into Present Moment Awareness](#)

by Michael Brown

Publisher Comments:

We no longer need to feel that the path tread by most of humanity is one of quiet desperation. In *The Presence Process (TPP)*, we now have a sensible step-by-step procedure that empowers us to heal the ghosts from our past so we can live liberated lives — Now.

What was hard to explain has now been written. What was previously assumed to be a peaceful territory available only to "spiritual adepts" is now open to all. By simply reading this book, our perceptions are cleansed. By participating experientially in TPP, our life experience enters healing.

In showing us how to step beyond our personal physical, mental, and emotional afflictions and addictions and by empowering us to facilitate ourselves into wholeness, TPP takes a bold new step into a new paradigm of healthcare.

The lucid flow of the text magnetically and gently draws us into a transformational experience of the vibrant radiance of present moment awareness — where we find our liberation, our healing, and our innate wisdom.