

Stress Bytes Newsletter

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"WHEN STRESS BITES, BITE BACK!"

THE NEWSLETTER OF ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.
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Stress Jujitsu

In the "soft" form of jujitsu, the objective in self-defense is going with the force of a blow instead of encountering it or resisting it. Instead of using extra energy to make contact and turn a blow away, the martial artist either steps aside or moves with the momentum of the blow, thus throwing the attacker off balance.

This could be applied to stressors too. Instead of mentally resisting or fighting stress, try giving it an unequivocal, "Yes! Yes, I acknowledge and accept this stress. Yes, I'm on board with it. Yes, I accept the adjustments and changes it's bringing into my life. Yes, I accept this new challenge coming into my life." If we cooperate with the stress, instead of resist or fight it, we will save energy and most likely reduce the intensity and duration of the stress.

There's a saying, "what we resist persists." If we give a YES to STRESS, perhaps it will run its course faster. Instead of feeling out of control and angry that we did not

choose to bring this stress into our lives, we choose to work with its energy and momentum.

Honestly, has it ever helped make a stressor go away any faster by resisting it, complaining about it, and thinking how unfair it is that you have to deal with it? If a stressor is something outside your control, working with it, instead of against it, makes more sense.

For example, if you are stuck in an airport because your flight has been delayed or cancelled, ask yourself, "what would be a more productive use of this unexpected free time? Could you make phone calls? Write a letter? Read? Make notes for your next business meeting? Write up a proposal? Make a new friend? Meditate? Balance your checkbook?

Having a positive and flexible attitude toward unforeseen changes in plans turns them into adventures instead of stressors. "I wonder what

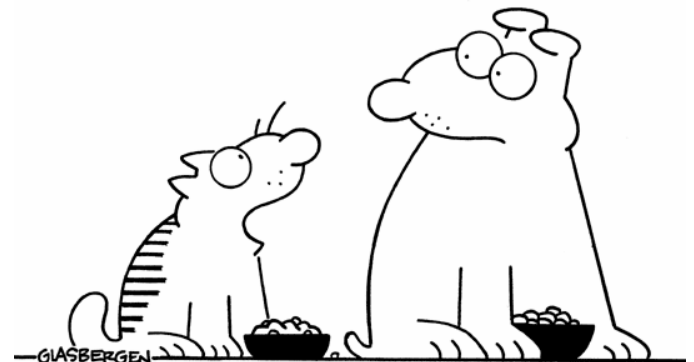
will happen now that what I thought was going to happen has fallen through." You might be propelled by the momentum of the moment into something wonderful!

Another mental method of stress jujitsu would be to view everything about any situation as happening exactly as it should.

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"The vet says i need a hobby. I thought eating and sleeping were my hobbies!"

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Then it can feel like there's a flow and a purpose to the event and that you are not busy judging it or yourself because you've been surprised.

Instead of telling yourself, "I can't stand this" or "this isn't supposed to happen," which creates stress and denies the reality, change it to, "this is unpleasant and I can get through it" or "I don't like this very much and I accept that it is happening." Then, instead of being locked in a struggle of forces - of stress moving towards you and you exerting force against it - try giving it your cooperation and watch it move more quickly.

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P.S. I wrote this and last month's newsletter articles while stuck in the Denver airport!

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**"Howl at an ambulance or fire siren every chance you get.
Run around the room in circles with a sock in your mouth.
Eat a messy meal without using your hands or utensils.
Ask a friend to scratch your belly..."**

How Stressed Are You?

Rate yourself as to how you typically react in each of the situations listed below. There are no right or wrong answers.

4 = Always

3 = Frequently

2 = Sometimes

1 = Never

Enter a number in the line next to each question. When you complete the questionnaire, add up your total number of points and write it in the line next to TOTAL at the bottom. An answer key is on Page 4.

- _____ 1. Do you try to do as much as possible in the least amount of time?
- _____ 2. Do you become impatient with delays or interruptions?
- _____ 3. Do you always have to win at games to enjoy yourself?
- _____ 4. Do you find yourself speeding up the car to beat the red light?
- _____ 5. Are you unlikely to ask for or indicate you need help with a problem?
- _____ 6. Do you constantly seek the respect and admiration of others?
- _____ 7. Are you overly critical of the way others do their work?
- _____ 8. Do you have the habit of looking at your watch or clock often?
- _____ 9. Do you constantly strive to better your position and achievements?
- _____ 10. Do you spread yourself "too thin" in terms of your time?
- _____ 11. Do you have the habit of doing more than one thing at a time?
- _____ 12. Do you frequently get angry or irritable?
- _____ 13. Do you have little time for hobbies or time by yourself?
- _____ 14. Do you have a tendency to talk quickly or hasten conversations?
- _____ 15. Do you consider yourself hard-driving?
- _____ 16. Do your friends or relatives consider you hard-driving?
- _____ 17. Do you have a tendency to get involved in multiple projects?
- _____ 18. Do you have a lot of deadlines in your work?
- _____ 19. Do you feel vaguely guilty if you relax and do nothing during leisure?
- _____ 20. Do you take on too many responsibilities?

_____ TOTAL

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The Stress Doctor is IN!!!

“AFFIRMATIONS ARE LIKE PRESCRIPTIONS FOR CERTAIN ASPECTS OF YOURSELF YOU WANT TO CHANGE.”

JERRY FRANKHAUSER

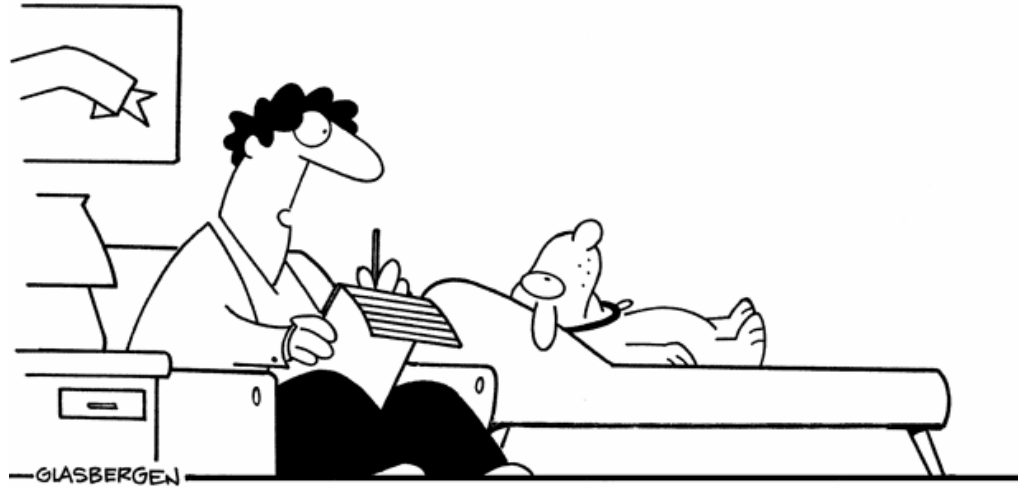
“THERE IS NO NEED TO GO TO INDIA OR ANYWHERE ELSE TO FIND PEACE. YOU WILL FIND THAT DEEP PLACE OF SILENCE RIGHT IN YOUR ROOM, YOUR GARDEN OR EVEN YOUR BATHTUB.”

ELISABETH KUBLER-ROSS

“ADOPTING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE CAN CONVERT A NEGATIVE STRESS INTO A POSITIVE ONE.”

DR. HANS SELYE

“RESISTANCE IS FUTILE.”
UNKNOWN



“In one way or another, we’re all confined by invisible fencing.”

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

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

Visit our website at www.GotStressGetHelp.com

HOW STRESSED ARE YOU? ANSWER KEY

If your score is between 20 and 30, chances are you are probably non-productive or your life lacks stimulation.

A score between 31 and 50 designates a good balance in your ability to handle and control stress.

If you tallied up a score ranging between 51 and 60, your stress level is marginal and you are bordering on being excessively tense.

If your total number of points exceeds 60, you may be a candidate for heart disease.