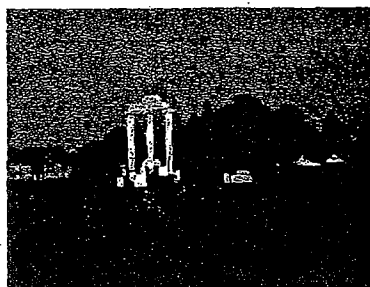


**UB** **University at Buffalo** *The State University of New York*



# RRCEP II

*Region II Rehabilitation Continuing Education  
and Community Rehabilitation Programs*

## TIME & STRESS MANAGEMENT

2002

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# **TIME & STRESS MANAGEMENT**

## **Agenda**

### **Day 1**

Sign In and Coffee

Icebreaker

Introduction - What is Time Management?

"What's My Time Style?"

The Truth about Effective Time Management:

- a) Assessing levels of satisfaction with ways in which we currently spend our time
- b) Implementing change in the way we budget our time

Effective Time Planning Strategies

- a) Making Task Lists
- b) Prioritizing
- c) Time Scheduling
- d) Making Meetings Effective
- e) Controlling Procrastination

Creating an Efficient Work Environment

# **Agenda**

## **Day 2**

Coffee and Sign In

Assessing Your Stress Knowledge

What is Stress?

Understanding the Body's Response to Stress

Physical Responses of the Body to Stress

Type A vs. B

Stress Management for Anger

Assertiveness Training

Job Stress and Burnout

Job Stress Management

Strategies for Dealing with Irrational Thoughts and Ideas

Coping Skills Training

Wrap Up and Evaluation

# Human Bingo Ice Breaker Activity

Plays Tennis	Hates Football (Male)	Has 2 Children Below 6	Skis	Loves "Everybody Loves Raymond"
Is Wearing Red	Visited Foreign Country	Loves Chocolate	Speaks Foreign Language - Not Spanish	Bowls
Plays Piano	Has Beatles Tapes	Free	Hates Football (Female)	Reads Sports Illustrated
Has Pet Fish	Plays Softball	Knows How to knit	Has a Home computer	Drives A Pick up
Blue Eyes	Has a Pool	Planted Tulips Last Spring	Plays Volley Ball	Likes Camping

# **TIME MANAGEMENT**



**Management Is About Setting Priorities**



**Priorities Result From Setting Objectives**



**Setting Objectives is About Planning**



**Planning is About Control**



**Being in Control is About Self Empowerment**



**SELF EMPOWERED PEOPLE  
MANAGE THEIR TIME WELL!**

# WHAT IS TIME MANAGEMENT?

Time management means working smarter, not harder, and a good time plan is crucial. Additionally, time management is all about awareness. First of all we need to become aware of:

- ◆ How we presently spend our time
- ◆ Prioritize the ways in which you use your time
- ◆ Rank your priorities in order of importance
- ◆ Explore the concepts of sold time, maintenance time and discretionary time

And...

- ◆ Develop your skills in managing time

Time management first and foremost involves doing an inventory of how we presently spend our time.

Time management is about **setting priorities**, and making sure that you achieve them. Time is a limited resource, so you have to make choices.

There are three key words that must be memorized. They are:

1. **Knowledge:** You need to know clearly what you need or want to do.
2. **Choice:** You need to make choices among these.
3. **Time:** You need to schedule time to act on your choice.

The most important skill that has to be developed is the ability to establish priorities and to set aside time to achieve them. When you do that, you can explore techniques for planning your time more effectively so that you can accomplish all your important priorities, some of your less important ones, and maybe even a few unimportant ones.

Since life has so many surprises, flexibility is the key.

**Picture this:**

Management is About Setting Priorities

Priorities Result From Setting Objectives



Setting Objectives is About Planning

Planning is about Control

Being in Control is about Self-Empowerment

Self-Empowered People Manage Their Time Well

The key to time management is knowing how to spend your time. You have 24 hours each day; consider this as a stock of investment funds that you must decide how you spend.

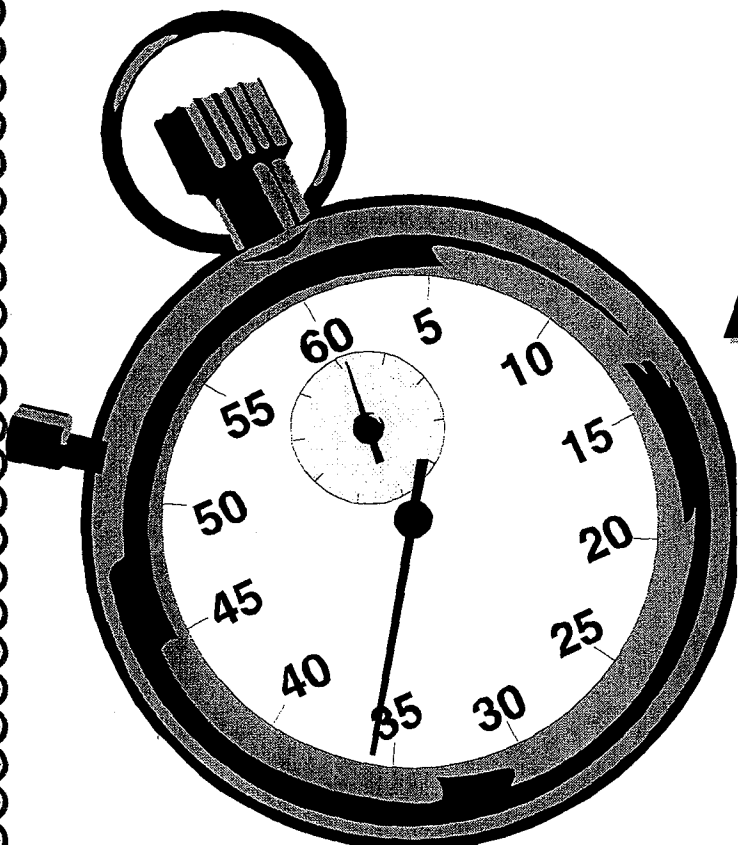
Creating a "priorities chart" helps to clarify what's really important, what's next, and so on and so forth.

Understanding of the concept of sold time, maintenance time and discretionary time.

Sold time is the time that you sell an employer, or if you are a student, the time you spend studying. Sold time extends beyond the actual hours spent at work, but includes the time spent in preparation for these; getting dressed for work, homework, travel time, etc.

Maintenance time is the time spent in keeping your life in workable order. It is when you do the tasks that are necessary to maintain yourself; eating, sleeping etc. It also includes time spent maintaining others; cooking and cleaning, grocery shopping, caring for family members, etc.

**Discretionary time is the time that remains. This is when we can choose how to spend our time.**



***Determining  
Your  
Time Style***

# Determining Your Time Style!

We all have our own style of managing time. We express that style in everything we do at work – whether it's beginning a new project, handling an interruption, managing multiple tasks, arranging our workspace, participating in a meeting, or sharing a task with a coworker. To make your individual time style work to your best advantage, you first need to identify it.

**Directions:** For each statement below, choose the statement ending that most closely reflects the way you manage time. Sometimes you will find that more than one statement describe you. In that case, choose the one that most closely represents your style of managing time. Circle the letter you have chosen on the Response Form.

1. When I begin a project, the first thing I do is...
  - a. Collect all the data that I will need.
  - b. Bounce ideas off other people.
  - c. Seek input from everyone.
  - d. Jump right in.
2. I approach paperwork by...
  - a. Beginning with the items people have asked me for.
  - b. Sifting and sorting it.
  - c. Attacking top priority items.
  - d. Beginning with the items that look most energizing.
3. Once I have handed over work to someone else, I...
  - a. Often step back.
  - b. Occasionally ask the other person how it's going.
  - c. Supply lots of positive feedback.
  - d. Ask detailed questions about how the person is performing the work.
4. When someone asks me to take on another project and my plate is already full, I...
  - a. Accept the new project but worry that I may not be able to take care of everyone's needs.
  - b. Say "no" unless I view the new project as urgent.
  - c. Make room for the new project if it seems more interesting.
  - d. Evaluate where to place the new project in my work lineup.
5. When a project is stalled because people can't agree on which action to take, I...
  - a. Analyze the different positions to see which one makes most sense.
  - b. Work to bring people together.
  - c. Forge ahead, even if it means placing limits on input from others.
  - d. Try to re-energize people.

6. The first thing I do when I arrive at work is...
  - a. Hope that something unexpected will occur to change the week's routine.
  - b. Check in with coworkers to see how they're doing.
  - c. Organize my work using a paper or electronic planner.
  - d. Get down to the most important business and tune out the noise around me.
7. I like to organize my papers by...
  - a. Tossing papers into loose piles.
  - b. Using appropriate folders.
  - c. Keeping items related to current projects within quick reach.
  - d. Using a system that I think others can easily pick up in case they need access to my papers.
8. When someone offers to help me with a project, I...
  - a. Am hesitant. I think about whether helping me would place too much of a burden on the other person.
  - b. Am eager. "Two heads are better than one."
  - c. Am reluctant. The other person may not analyze the information accurately.
  - d. Turn the person down. I can't count on other people to move as quickly as I do.
9. Small talk at the beginning of meetings makes me feel...
  - a. Uncomfortable. I'd rather not get into personal topics
  - b. Impatient. We need to get moving.
  - c. Energized. I can tell there'll be some good give-and-take.
  - d. Comfortable. We can all get to know one another so we can work better together.
10. When I'm given some lead-time on a project, I...
  - a. Evaluate how best to budget my time.
  - b. Wait until the last minute. I work best under pressure.
  - c. Plunge right in. I can't relax until it's done.
  - d. Consider where the project fits into my commitments to other people.
11. Within view of my desk, I like to keep...
  - a. A list of major milestones I need to reach.
  - b. A detailed schedule related to current projects.
  - c. Motivational sayings to keep me focused.
  - d. Pictures of loved ones to brighten my day.
12. When my group arrives at a decision quickly, I feel...
  - a. Dissatisfied. We may have oversimplified the situation.
  - b. Concerned. We may have overlooked other people's opinions.
  - c. Relieved. Now we can move on to the next item.
  - d. Disappointed. We may have closed off some creative discussion.
13. When I'm busy and someone stops by "just to say 'hi'," I usually...
  - a. Become impatient to get back to the project I'm working on.
  - b. Feel distracted from the details I've been focusing on.
  - c. Take the opportunity to see how the person is doing.
  - d. Am relieved to have some variety in my day.

14. In making decisions, I like to...
  - a. Make everyone feel included.
  - b. Cut to the chase.
  - c. Gather and evaluate all the data before acting.
  - d. Toss around fresh, new ideas with people in my group.
15. When my workspace becomes cluttered, I...
  - a. Become merciless. "When in doubt, throw it out."
  - b. Put all the old papers in a file (someone may need them later).
  - c. Get creative. I toss related items into loose piles or folders.
  - d. Start organizing. "A place for everything, everything in its place."
16. When I'm faced with multiple requests for my time, I...
  - a. Jump into the task that looks most fun.
  - b. Set priorities by carefully reviewing my group's overall goals.
  - c. Delve into the task that I view as most pressing.
  - d. Pause to think about who will benefit the most from my help.
17. If I'm in charge of keeping time at a meeting, I...
  - a. Feel pleased if everyone has had time to contribute.
  - b. Make sure we cover each agenda item thoroughly.
  - c. Place limits on people's input so that we can wrap up on time.
  - d. Find that we've gone over time because of all the give-and-take.
18. When I'm in the middle of an important project and the phone rings, I...
  - a. Pick it up hoping for a social break.
  - b. Ignore it. It's more important to push the project over the finish line.
  - c. Answer it. I think of how the caller would feel if I didn't pick it up.
  - d. Let my voice mail pick it up. I can return messages later in order of priority.
19. I am most comfortable in discussions when...
  - a. People get to the point immediately.
  - b. The group takes the time to hear each person's opinion.
  - c. The group walks through points one by one.
  - d. People produce ideas on the spur of the moment.
20. My workspace...
  - a. Looks messy, but I have a knack for finding what I want.
  - b. Looks comfortable. I want, visitors to feel welcome.
  - c. Is carefully organized with every item in the right place.
  - d. Has lots of space for me to spread out my work.
21. When I'm at a brainstorming session, I...
  - a. Think the exchange of ideas is fun.
  - b. Feel reassured when I know that everyone is being included.
  - c. Find many of the ideas people offer to be random and imprecise.
  - d. Feel as though people are going in circles and getting nowhere fast.

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR TIME STYLE

We all want to feel that the time we spend at work is time well spent. We want to know that we're productive, and we want to find our work fulfilling. In other words, we all seek to manage time well. But how we do so varies from person to person. These differences show up in everything we do.

For example, you may like to work through a project step by step and on your own. A coworker down the hall may prefer to bounce ideas off other people and wait until the last minute to complete a project. Yet, one way or another, you are both productive. It's just that you have different approaches to time management.

Your style of managing time (for that matter, your style of performing any activity) is determined by your behavioral style. Think of it as though you have some internal wiring that determines a single style that applies to all your behaviors. For example, you may have noticed that a person whose speech and body language are slow and controlled will typically move through work tasks slowly and systematically. But a person whose speech and body language are fast and uninhibited will usually move through tasks in a faster, less disciplined style. In other words, a specific style colors all of a person's behavior – whether these behaviors involve time management, communication, or any other activity.

The secret of effective time management is to understand your own style of managing time so that you can complete your work easily, in a manner that feels comfortable and natural to you. *Determining Your Time Style!* will identify your style and familiarize you with the strengths and weaknesses of that style. As a result, you will be able to make your style work for you rather than against you. And by learning about other time styles, you will be able to interact effectively with coworkers who manage their time differently than you.

*Determining Your Time Style!* look at time style in terms of two dimensions: assertiveness and expressiveness. Assertiveness describes the degree to which a person's behavior is forceful or directive. Expressiveness describes the degree to which a person's behavior is emotionally responsive and open.

The more assertive a person is, the more that person likes to move at a fast pace. In terms of time management, this means that if you are very assertive, you may like to complete tasks quickly – you may direct all your energy toward achieving goals. Or you may enjoy quick, lively interactions with other people – consequently, you're probably successful in moving work forward by motivating others.

The more expressive a person is, the less that person feels the need to control his or her emotions and time. If you're an expressive person, you may like to "wing it" rather than plan your time. Or you may free up a lot of your time to take care of other people's needs. Combine the two dimensions – assertiveness and expressiveness – and the result is four different time styles. To learn about your time style, begin by scoring this instrument using the directions that follow in the next section.

## SCORING YOUR TIME STYLE

*Determining Your Time Style!* can be scored quickly and easily by following these steps:

- Step 1** Using the score interpretation sheet that has been provided to you. Count the number of responses that you have made in each category (Creative, Planner, Accommodating, Focused).
- Step 2** Copy the Style Totals into the corresponding shapes of Chart 1: My Time Style Profile, which is found on page 6.

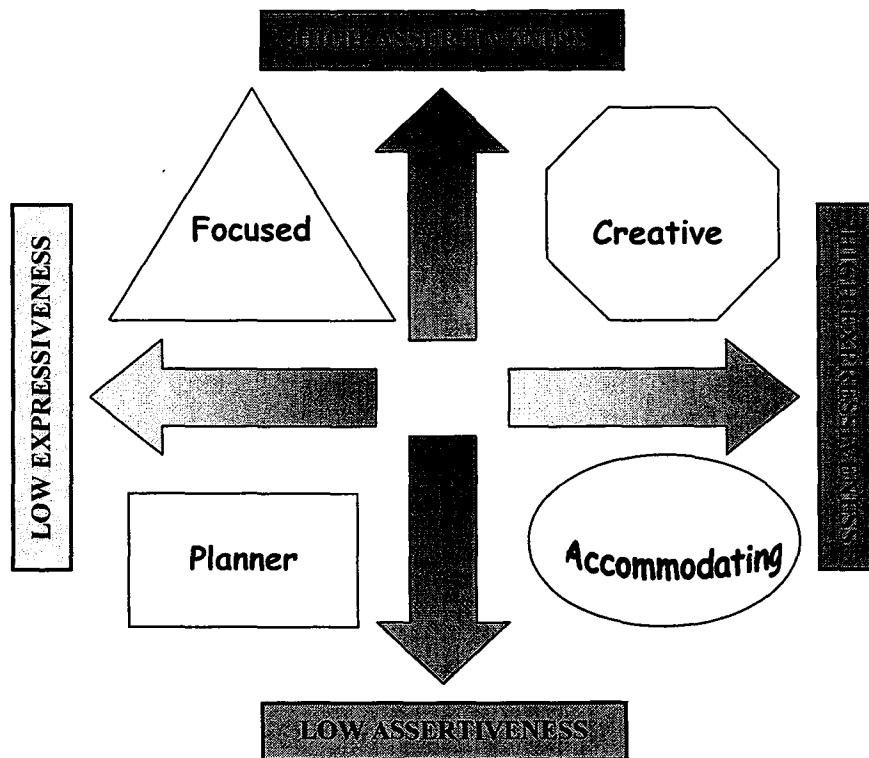
### Interpreting Your Scores

Each of the four time styles is based on the degree of assertiveness and expressiveness exhibited. The four styles are:

<b>Focused</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>High assertiveness, low expressiveness</b>
<b>Creative</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>High assertiveness, high expressiveness</b>
<b>Accommodating</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Low assertiveness, high expressiveness</b>
<b>Planner</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Low assertiveness, low expressiveness</b>

Your time style comes through whether or not you are aware of it. The style that you use most often is called your dominant style. If you look at your Time Style Profile in Chart 1 on page 6, you can see whether you have one dominant style.

A score of 8 or above would indicate a dominant style. On the other hand, if you scored 3 or below on any one style, you probably do not use that time management style very often. Although many people have a clearly dominant style, others can manage their time more comfortably by using several styles. If you have a relatively even distribution of points, you probably use several styles of time management. You may also use different styles in different situations.



**CHART 1: MY TIME STYLE PROFILE**

What do you picture yourself doing when you think about managing your time? Many people picture themselves using paper or electronic planners. They may imagine themselves listing their goals and priorities. They may think of the way they've set up their workspace. All these activities are, in fact, important aspects of time management, and they are all personal activities – activities that we perform on our own.

But, who among us works in a vacuum? Our workdays are filled with interpersonal situations. A coworker stops by to chat while you're working on a project. A supervisor asks you to take on yet another assignment. You need to hand over work to someone in your group for completion.

In addition to these one-on-one interactions, think of all the group interactions that fill your days. You gather with coworkers informally in the break room, or you attend scheduled meetings. Being productive at work does not simply mean managing your personal time well. It also means managing these one-on-one and group interactions effectively.

The items in *Determining Your Time Style!* measure both the personal and the interpersonal behaviors we exhibit as we get our jobs done. The following table shows the time management behaviors that are likely to be exhibited by each of the four styles in personal activities, as well as in one-on-one and group interactions.



	Focused	Creative	Planner	Accommodating
<b>Personal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directs attention toward reaching goals rather than on the means of reaching them.</li> <li>• Makes quick decisions.</li> <li>• Has immediate access to needed items.</li> <li>• Completes projects by keeping the goal in view.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers spontaneity to planning.</li> <li>• Doesn't like to close out options.</li> <li>• Organizes materials loosely using visual cues.</li> <li>• Completes projects by thinking of creative new angles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses as much on procedure as on final product.</li> <li>• Evaluates data before deciding.</li> <li>• Keeps every item in its proper place.</li> <li>• Completes projects by following procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on taking care of others' needs.</li> <li>• Makes decisions by evaluating others' needs.</li> <li>• Keeps items of personal significance in view.</li> <li>• Completes projects by thinking of others' needs.</li> </ul>
<b>One-on-One</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gets to the point quickly.</li> <li>• Focuses on completing tasks rather than on personal information.</li> <li>• Likes to retain control when handing over a project.</li> <li>• Helps others complete projects by reminding them of the goal and the deadline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spends more time talking than listening.</li> <li>• Prefers to exchange ideas rather than to arrive at conclusions.</li> <li>• When handing over work, asks for informal oral feedback.</li> <li>• Helps others complete projects by inspiring them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps discussion on task-related details.</li> <li>• Avoids personal exchanges.</li> <li>• When handing over work, provides precise instructions.</li> <li>• Helps others complete projects by instructing them in procedure, reminding them of details.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens attentively.</li> <li>• Focuses on the other person's needs and methods of handling tasks.</li> <li>• When handing over work, provides lots of positive feedback.</li> <li>• Helps others complete projects by taking care of their needs, following their methods.</li> </ul>
<b>Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places limits on group discussion.</li> <li>• Likes to direct group toward task completion.</li> <li>• Speeds up group process by keeping everyone focused on goal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers not to close off discussion.</li> <li>• Prefers spontaneous interaction to planning.</li> <li>• Speeds up group process by motivating and persuading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likes to follow an agenda.</li> <li>• Prefers to cover every item sequentially.</li> <li>• Speeds up group process by confining discussion to the agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that all members feel valued.</li> <li>• Seeks input from everyone.</li> <li>• Speeds up group process by making everyone feel valued.</li> </ul>

**Table 1:** Time Management Behaviors in Personal, One-on-One, and Group Situations

Each of the four time styles has its own characteristics. Find your dominant style(s) in Chart 2: Time Style Strengths. Put a check mark by the characteristics that best describe your strengths.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accomplishes tasks quickly.</li> <li>• Remains on course.</li> <li>• Makes quick decisions.</li> <li>• Has immediate access to needed items.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinks of new ways of doing things.</li> <li>• Inspires and motivates group to move project along.</li> <li>• Finds it easy to begin new projects.</li> <li>• Handles multiple tasks easily.</li> </ul>
<b>Focused</b>	<b>Creative</b>
<b>Planner</b>	<b>Accommodating</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets aside time to do the job right.</li> <li>• Takes time to analyze and evaluate.</li> <li>• Follows procedures carefully.</li> <li>• Is thorough with detail.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devotes time to helping others.</li> <li>• Adapts easily to others' ways of handling tasks.</li> <li>• Includes everyone's opinions.</li> <li>• Moves projects along through active listening.</li> </ul>

**CHART 2: Time Style Strengths**

As you can see from Chart 2, each style has definite strengths. However, a style taken to an extreme can become counterproductive. Each style also has weak points. Recognizing your trouble spots is the first step to overcoming them. Chart 3 shows some of the extremes for each style. As you read through them, do you recognize some of your own weak points? Put a check mark by the trouble spots that you have.

<p><i>Because of desire to move quickly, may:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlook interpersonal factors.</li> <li>• Close off valuable input from others.</li> <li>• Stall projects by unintentionally offending others.</li> <li>• Neglect important details.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Because of desire for quickly changing, new input, may:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become easily distracted.</li> <li>• Let spontaneous discussions eclipse tasks at hand.</li> <li>• Find it difficult to complete tasks.</li> <li>• Find it difficult to organize workspace.</li> </ul>
<b>Focused</b>	<b>Creative</b>
<b>Planner</b>	<b>Accommodating</b>
<p><i>Because of desire to do the job right, may:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become bogged down by detail.</li> <li>• Lose sight of the goal.</li> <li>• Take too long to make decisions.</li> <li>• Miss signs of personal discomfort that could stall a project.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Because of desire to take care of others' needs, may:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose sight of immediate tasks.</li> <li>• Not leave enough time to complete own work.</li> <li>• Feel uncomfortable pushing through projects for fear of offending others.</li> <li>• Take on too much and feel overwhelmed.</li> </ul>

**CHART 3: Time Style Trouble Spots**

# **MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME STYLE**

Here are some suggested tips for managing your time in personal, one-on-one, and group situations. There are many ways you can improve your time management. Those presented here are just some samples to get you thinking about how you can better manage that most precious of commodities – your time. Review the suggestions for your style, then go on to the "Action Planning" section on page 10. There you will find thought-provoking questions for making the most of your personal time style.

## **Tips for the Focused**

If anyone will get to the finish line first, it's you. You keep the goal firmly in mind, and no one can steer you off course. If the details do not appear important, you quickly move past them. If group discussions digress, you'll pull people back on track.

The trick is not to make other people in your path feel steamrolled. Remember that you may actually slow down a project when you push too hard. Other people may set up resistance if they feel pushed or overlooked. And by overlooking details, you may be forced to backtrack.

Don't decide too quickly to bypass the details. Allow time for interpersonal discussion. Make room for some spontaneous give-and-take. Who knows? Maybe those brainstorming sessions will actually produce some faster ways of getting the job done.

## **Tips for the Creative**

If a project becomes bogged down, you're the person who can spark things to start moving again. By providing a sudden flash of insight, you may send people leapfrogging over all the steps they thought they needed to follow to get the job done. Your spontaneity is engaging and motivating.

But taken too far, your spontaneity can cause problems. Although you could keep that, creative give-and-take going all day long, eventually the job needs to get done. Keep the finish line in mind. Otherwise, your task-oriented coworkers may become impatient and close their minds to your input.

Remember that organization does matter. Many spirited people find that loose structure and visual cues work well for them. Try keeping like items in your workspace in different colored bins. You may find it effective to put to-do items on sticky notes. Put them on a board within close view. You can rearrange them as your priorities shift.

## **Tips for the Planner**

Whereas some people may want to get the job done quickly, you make sure it gets done right. You like to look before you leap to ensure that all available information has been evaluated properly. While some people may digress into personal topics, you steer them back onto the agenda and make sure that every item is addressed thoroughly. You're the consummate quality control expert.

The trick is not to let your concern for detail and procedure close your mind to the big picture or to new ways of accomplishing tasks. People who like to move more quickly may become frustrated with you. And those who thrive on interpersonal relationships may feel put off by your focus on tasks.

Let the unexpected happen. Remember that by always adhering to procedure, you may close off some new and better ways of handling tasks.

## **Tips for the Accommodating**

Your diplomatic skills can bind together the most diverse personalities and help them work together effectively. You're good at working behind the scenes to listen to people and attend to their needs. Because you are so attuned to other people, you can easily adapt to their ways of accomplishing work. It's hard to imagine a group that could work well together for very long without at least one member as concerned for the welfare of others as you are.

But take that concern too far, and it may turn into a kind of selflessness that doesn't pay. You may not give yourself enough time to complete your own work, or you may take on too much and end up feeling overwhelmed.

Allow yourself time for your own work. Do not worry too much about offending others when you need to push through a project. In fact, by taking care of your own work, you may ultimately be providing others with more help than you can imagine.

## **ACTION PLANNING**

*Determining Your Time Style!* should have given you some insight into how you manage your time in personal, one-on-one, and group situations. This insight will be most useful if you think about how effective your time management is now and how you can improve it by highlighting your strengths and controlling your trouble spots. The following questions will help you to think about your time style and make plans to improve it.

1. What are the positive aspects of your time style?

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2. What are some specific ways in which these positive aspects have benefited you in managing your time at work?

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3. What are some specific ways that your time style hinders the effectiveness of your time management? Note whether those hindrances tend to involve personal, one-on-one, or group situations.

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4. What specific actions can you take to improve how you manage your time?

Personal \_\_\_\_\_

One-on-One \_\_\_\_\_

Group \_\_\_\_\_

5. Can you think of someone with whom you find it particularly difficult to work because that person has a different time style than yours? What can you do to work more effectively with this person?

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6. Does your group or team have individuals with a variety of time styles? What can you do to ensure that your time style benefits group activities?

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# THE TRUTH ABOUT EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Creating a time plan is really the easy part of time management. The challenge in becoming an effective time manager is the monitoring, analyzing, and revising your plan until you find one that works for you.

## PATIENCE:

One of the most critical skills in the whole time management issue is the ability to be patient. It takes time to acquire and polish a skill. Expect some frustration. At the beginning, it may seem like you are spending more time monitoring and planning and this may seem to be very time consuming, but patience and the ability to iron out the kinks at the beginning will reap its rewards in time. Trying out strategies until you find one that works for you is a necessary part of the process.

## ANALYSIS:

The difficult aspect of time management is that you have to be your own monitor. You must be your own watchdog and you must monitor yourself (not unlike being on a diet, and I know many people can identify with that). Take a few minutes of each day to evaluate yourself. Did you accomplish what you set out to do, and if not, why? Did you over-estimate or under-estimate the time to do a particular project? Are you sabotaging yourself by over-monitoring yourself? Thoughtful analysis of the reasons why a plan is working, or not working is key in determining the long-term success of your time management plan.

## FLEXIBILITY:

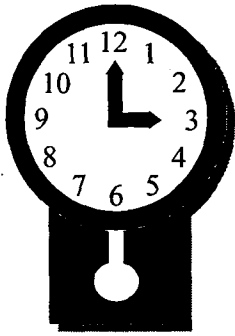
The key to success is flexibility. You are doomed to failure if you imagine that your plan is written in stone. If you are in the middle of a really great idea and the thoughts are flowing, but you are coming to the end of the time you allotted for it, it would not make much sense to stop abruptly just because of that, now would it? ***Flexibility is the key.*** Time management is as much about intelligence as about anything else. Build flexibility into your plan.

## AWARENESS:

We have talked so far about planning, monitoring, analyzing your plan, and flexibility when it comes to effective time management. The key factor in all of these is ***awareness***. Being aware at all times of your plan and whether it's working, the adjustments and tweaks that it needs, etc. is the key to coming up with the custom made plan that works for you.

## INFORMATION:

Learning to manage time is an ongoing process. The more information you gather and the more strategies you "gather" in your repertoire, the easier it will be to adapt to new challenges.



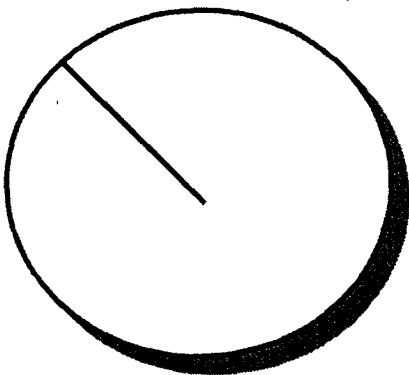
# Time and Satisfaction

## Satisfying Activities

**In the box, make a list of the activities that satisfy you, but use only those activities that you actually do now.**

**Satisfying Activities...**

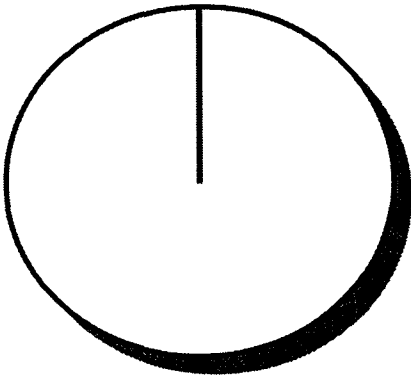
## Your Satisfaction Pie



Now enter your satisfying activities on the blank pie chart. The more satisfying the activity, the larger its slice of the pie. The complete pie is a synopsis of your satisfying life activities.

Spend a minute or two looking at your Satisfaction Pie. Then go on to the next stage, which looks at the amount of time you actually spend on each of your satisfying activities.

## Your Actual-Time Pie



On the Actual-Time Pie, enter the amount of time you now spend on your satisfying activities. This time, the size of the slice indicates the actual amount of time spent in proportion to other activities.

Compare your two pies and answer these questions:

Does anything surprise you about either of your pies?

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Are there any differences between your Satisfaction Pie and your Actual-Time Pie?  
What are they?

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What does this say about your current lifestyle?

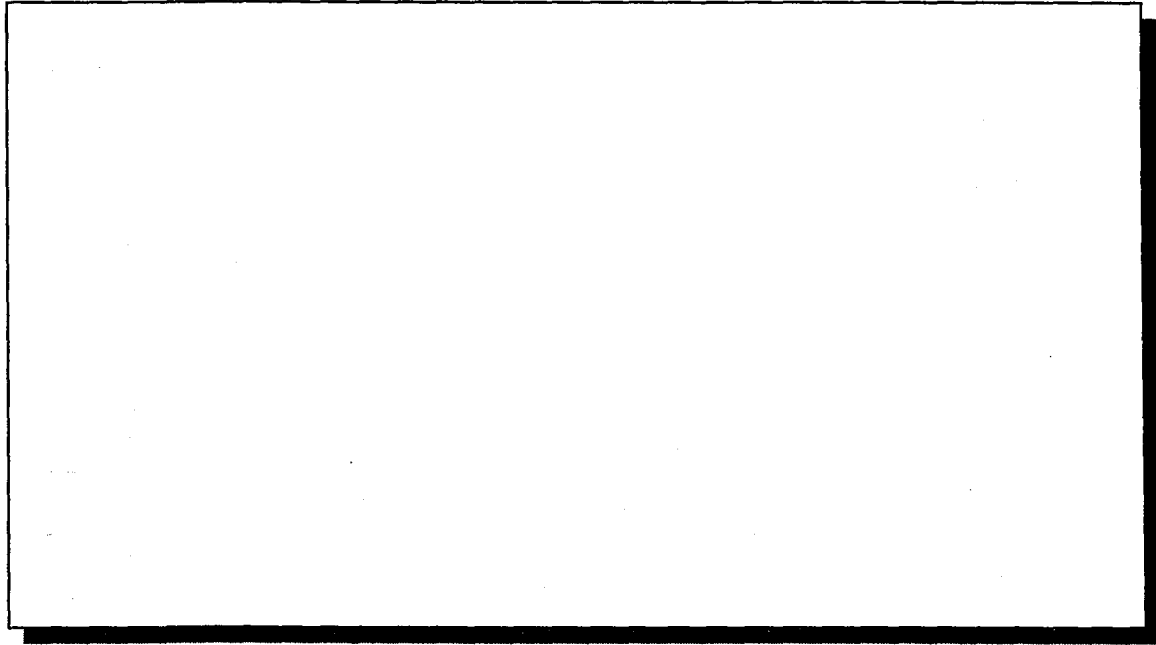
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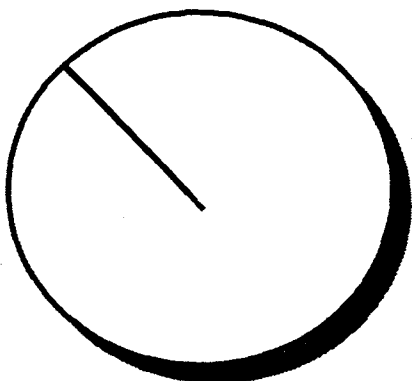
Your Actual-Time Pie shows the amount of time you think you spend on satisfying activities. Your Satisfaction Pie shows the activities you do to satisfy you. Is there any mismatch between the amount of time you think you spend and the time you actually spend on satisfying activities? Write your thoughts below.



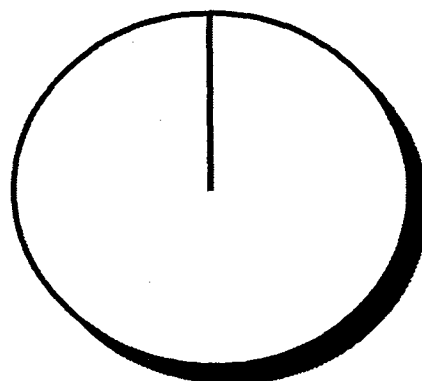
**Summary:** By comparing your sets of pies, you now know where you are and where you would like to be. You have the basic information for making time management decisions that will enable you to manage your time to your greater satisfaction. Today is the first day of the rest of your life, so make the most of it!

**Homework:**

**Your Ideal Satisfaction Pie**



**Your Ideal Actual-Time Pie**



# **Effective Time Planning Strategies**

# Making Task Lists

- One of the basics of effective time management is to be aware of all that needs to be done. Though many people keep track of day-to-day activities in their heads, **effective time managers** facilitate planning and productivity by making a **task list**.
- **If you develop the skill of listing tasks regularly, you'll benefit in several ways:**
- you will be less likely to forget even minor tasks
- you may procrastinate less when you have a realistic idea of the work that needs to be done, and the time available to do it
- you'll have more flexibility when deciding what to do and when to do it because you determine which tasks have high priority
- you will have both a short- and long-range view of the work coming up.

## Step 1: List

- The first step is to write down a list of all the work (study, households, etc) related tasks that need to be done. Almost everyone uses a calendar of some sort to jot down due dates, anniversaries, tests and special events. The key differences are that you do it regularly - **usually once a week works well** - and that all the tasks you have, everything from phone calls, readings, or typing, are put on the list.

## Step 2: Estimate

- This second step is critical, but very few people do it. For each task on the list, estimate the amount of time it will take you to complete it. At first you may find this difficult, and your guesses may be way off. With practice, however, your accuracy will quickly increase. Major tasks, which span several weeks, may pose a problem, but by breaking the task down into steps, estimating becomes much easier.

A report, for example, could break down like this:

1. Choose data set and have it approved by your boss.
2. Do the research piece (introduction, purpose, etc.).
3. Organize and categorize the material and create an outline.
4. Write rough copy.

4. Revise rough copy.
  5. Type good copy.
  6. Type any notes.
  7. Prepare presentation.
- Estimate how long each step will take, and then total the estimations. Next, add a safety margin to the total. This "**sanity zone**" allows for all the unexpected things that can happen over the course of several weeks - everything from your getting sick to not finding the correct database.
  - Divide the new total by the number of weeks you have to accomplish the task.  
Ex: Estimated time for task = 10 hrs x 1.5 (sanity zone) = 15; 15 hours divided by 5 weeks to do the report = 3 hours per week.
  - You would then put 3 hours for this report on your task list for each of the next five weeks. If you need to compromise a few hours somewhere, report time could be a safe choice.

### Step 3: Prioritize

- The next step is to prioritize - decide what tasks are most important to do first and number them in rank order.
- Everyone has his or her own criteria for making these decisions - due dates, appointments, and presentations usually figure prominently when priorities are set.

Sometimes during the year (particularly if you've been procrastinating) there will be more items on the list than can be realistically completed in a week.

If time is tight you can **delegate** certain tasks (such as typing) or **postpone** low priority items. Prioritizing forces you to **weigh the importance** of each item on the task list, and to make a conscious, thoughtful decision about what to do when.

# Put your Priorities to Work

## Priorities are key to living the good life

Can you imagine a life where time management is not an issue? Where there is never a struggle to fit in all your To-Do's so you can still have time left for Want-To's?

Chances are you are faced with all these demands on your time and occasionally react to the resulting stress in less than positive ways. Since you probably can't make most of these demands go away; maybe you need to try to learn how to live with them.

- You may find that the biggest stresses come not from doing too many things but from doing the wrong things. Correct this by deciding what your priorities are. **Priorities** tell us which activities are “**worth**” spending time on.
- Get specific and actually write down the goals you have for your life. Considering the following questions might be helpful.
  1. Who do you want to be? Describe the person you want to be, your life's work, your spiritual goals, health goals.
  2. Who is important to you? What relationships do you put above all others?
  3. How do you want to live? What pursuits do you value? What quality of life?
  4. What do you love/hate about your life? What do you wish were different? Why?
- These questions deserve serious thought; take some time to develop meaningful answers.
- Once you determine which things are most important to you, you can begin to match demands on your time to that list and stop spending time on things that don't help you achieve your personal goals.
- Your list of priorities gives you the guidelines to decide the best uses of your time.
- Next, it is important to realize how valuable your time is. Recognize that your time it is not unlimited and neither are the ways in which you can spend it. You have to balance the quality of a demand on your time against the quantity of time it demands.

**Your time is precious and limited. Use it wisely.**

# TIME SCHEDULING SUGGESTIONS

Do not expect time scheduling to be your miracle answer. Very few people can keep a rigorous schedule day after day over a long period of time. However, one method of organizing time has been helpful to many people. It is more flexible than many methods, and involves establishing long term, intermediate and short-term goals.

## Long Term Schedule

Construct a schedule of your fixed commitments only. These would include, job, classes you attend, church, meetings that occur regularly etc.

## Intermediate Schedule

Now make a short list of the major events and amount of work that has to be accomplished in each area of your life just for the present week. For example you may write:

Calls to RRCEP consultants to be made today (John, Rick, George) (Tuesday)

Call to Boston College to pursue housing arrangements for son today

Give film for developing by Tuesday p.m.

Try Diane N. again on Wednesday, when she returns from mini-vacation

Read Stress Management book by Tuesday p.m. or latest Wednesday a.m.

Hand-Outs due to Michelle on Wednesday

Order cake by Wednesday p.m.

"Clean up" first ten pages of Cultural Diversity paper by Friday afternoon.

These events will change from week to week, so a new one will have to be done each week. Sunday night might be the most convenient time for this.

## Short Term Schedule

On a small note card each morning or before retiring at night, make a tentative schedule for the day. Write down specifically what is to be accomplished.

### Such as:

5:00-6:00: Exercise

6:00-7:30: get ready for work, breakfast

7:30-8:00: Travel to work

4:15: Pick up dry cleaning on way home

4:30: Stop at grocery store on way home to pick up things for dinner etc.

Carry this card with you and strike things off as you accomplish them. Writing things down in this manner forces you to plan your time and makes you keep the commitment of accomplishing these goals, even if they are small ones.

# **MAKING MEETINGS EFFECTIVE**

**Keep a PAL with you:**

**P** = PURPOSE

**A** = AGENDA

**L** = LIMIT

## **GUIDELINES:**

- Start the meeting on time
- Effectively use the time period of the meeting
- Encourage participation
- Create an atmosphere that encourages creativity
- Be careful to prevent interruptions
- Give some notice before the meeting
- The right people should be present
- The leader should control the meeting

**ONE-MINUTE MINUTES = ACCOUNTABILITY**

# CONTROLLING PROCRASTINATION

Who doesn't have a problem with procrastination? Procrastinators say that the reason they procrastinate is because of the inability to prioritize the tremendous amount of work that has to be done.

Sometimes it seems impossible to ever finish. Often our time is unstructured so we have to impose structure on our time in order to be able to accomplish what we need to accomplish.

What complicates things is that there is almost always something more enjoyable to do than the task that you have been putting off for all these days.

All these reasons make it easy to understand why it is so easy to procrastinate. Learning some strategies to gain control of procrastination can help getting started less painful, and reduce the constant feeling of "getting behind".

## Strategy no. 1: Realistic Goal Setting

Setting realistic goals is probably one of the easiest strategies to master. Instead of scheduling five hours of work on a project on a given day, schedule an hour a day for the whole week. This is especially true for projects or work that is unpleasant and that you would rather put off. It is much more likely that you will work at something for thirty or sixty minutes a day than have to sit down for a five-hour marathon session.

## Strategy no. 2: Plan to Work, Plan to Play

The word "plan" is the key word here - one that is usually missing from the procrastinator's vocabulary. When you don't plan, and just do whatever you feel like doing, whenever you feel like doing it, you feel guilty when "playing" because you know you should be "working", and when you are working, your mind is on other things that you would rather be doing. Planning does not have to be elaborate or rigid, but does require some skill and decision-making. A good time plan that *plans* for work **but also allows time for play** is critical when it comes to controlling procrastination.



### **Strategy no.3: "The Making a Molehill out of a Mountain" Method**

When a task appears difficult or unpleasant, you may make a mountain out of what is really a relatively small problem. By scaling the task "down to size", using this method, you will find that the task is not as intimidating as it may appear. When you first receive an assignment or a task to do, spend fifteen minutes of time trying to work on it, and do this each day for a week. At the end of the week you may have found that it is not as horrible or as intimidating as you thought. Once you get involved or maybe even interested, you may be motivated to spend more time on it. One word of caution: Very large tasks require larger blocks of time, but should still be manageable, and starting earlier, instead of putting it off for later, is the key.

### **Strategy no.4: Self-Discipline**

Sometimes people blame their problems of procrastination on laziness or a lack of self-discipline. While this is certainly possible, procrastination may also be a fear of failure or of lack of motivation. While self-discipline may certainly be a factor, one of the first tasks at hand is to figure out what the **real reason is that you procrastinate if you are interested in long-term management of this problem.**

### **Strategy no. 5: Get Help**

Join a support group, seek out individual counseling or help with managing your time. Use the resources available wisely.

# CREATING AN EFFICIENT WORK ENVIRONMENT

An ideal working environment, whether at home or at an office should have the following:

1. A clear work space or a desk
2. The right tools for the job; equipment, books, stationary, and supplies
3. A comfortable workspace and peace and quiet, if possible. Good lighting, comfortable chair and a desk at the right height.
4. A favorite picture on the wall, or fresh flowers on the desk to create a pleasant visual distraction when you need to take a break and relax.

## **A Good Filing System:**

The basis of a time efficient approach is a good filing system. This is not as technical as it sounds. Most people "file" their house-hold goods, such as cleaning supplies all in one place, holiday photographs in a scrap book, etc.

Write down the filing systems that you use.

## **Keeping Track of Paper Work and Information:**

With paper work, the curse of most of our lives, follow the "3 D's" system: Do, Delegate, or Ditch. If you decide to "Do" something, put it in the "Do Now" box below. If you decide to "Delegate" it to someone else, put it in the "Pass On" box below. If you are going to "Ditch" something, ditch it now rather than let it accumulate on your desk. For the rest, follow the following system.

**File:** Work that has been finished, but needs to be kept for reference.

**Do Now:** Work that needs action today.

**Do Soon:** Jobs that must be done soon, but are not yet urgent.

**Read:** Papers, magazines, reports

**Pass On:** Work that can go to another person with a comment or advice.

**Awaiting Information:** Jobs that need further information before anything can be done.

In a system that works, you may find that some jobs progress through most or all of the files. Example, an article that you must read comes in, and while reading it you spot something a colleague could use. You put this article in the "Do Soon" file. The next day it moves to the "Do Now File", where you write a note and attach a copy of the article and send it on. You put the originals in the "Awaiting Information" file. Your friend writes back, thanking you, so now you can file the original.

**In and Out Trays:** These trays can be very useful when used in conjunction with your filing system. Make sure that incoming messages, letters or memos are put into the "in tray". Look at the "in tray" regularly and transfer stuff to your filing system if necessary. When mail is due to be sent, or sent to another person, put it in the "out tray."

**Notice Boards:** Notice Boards are a great way of reminding yourself and others about things at home or work, and of what needs to be done. Notice Boards can be as bright and colorful as you want!

Don't forget the waste paper basket and recycling bin!

# **Stress Management**

## Testing Your Stress Knowledge

How much more do you know about stress and how it affects you? The following stress tests are meant to reinforce your knowledge of stress and coping strategies and make you more aware of stress management as a tool for better living. If you answer a question incorrectly, go back to the section of the book that deals with that aspect of stress and read it once again. It's important to review those areas that you're unsure of in order to make stress management a complete and effective method for relieving the stress and anxiety in your life. If you answer all or most of all the questions correctly, you can take heart in the fact that you're now your own stress expert and well on your way to becoming healthier and more stress-free.

### FACTS ABOUT STRESS

	True	False
1. People react to emotional stress just as easily as they do physical stress.	_____	_____
2. Constant arousal due to stress can cause a person's blood pressure to remain low.	_____	_____
3. Stress due to overload can result from demands that occur at home.	_____	_____
4. An individual who is adjusting to many life changes in a short period of time is less likely than usual to become ill.	_____	_____
5. Thinking about an unpleasant event is never as stressful as actually experiencing that event.	_____	_____
6. Thinking of oneself as useless and powerless can increase one's stress level.	_____	_____
7. The most stressful situations are usually those over which people feel they have a great deal of control.	_____	_____
8. Stress may decrease the body's ability to defend itself against disease.	_____	_____
9. Severe stress may cause people to have accidents.	_____	_____
10. People who have Type A personalities are more likely to suffer from stress reactions.	_____	_____
11. One of the most common traits of Type A personality is doing only one thing at a time.	_____	_____

		True	False
12.	Excessive stress affects the body's ability to utilize nutrients such as vitamins and minerals.	_____	_____
13.	A person under stress may feel confused.	_____	_____
14.	Overload occurs when people are able to meet the demands which are placed on them.	_____	_____
15.	A person under stress is usually able to perform tasks better than usual.	_____	_____
16.	Some degree of stress is necessary in life.	_____	_____
17.	Stress disorders are caused by constant stress arousal, leading to organ system failure.	_____	_____
18.	Too much stimulation is always more stressful than too little.	_____	_____
19.	The stress produced by a situation depends more on the situation than on the person's perception of the situation.	_____	_____
20.	The Type A personality is associated with heart disease.	_____	_____
21.	The best level of stress is the amount which improves a person's performance without producing harmful side effects.	_____	_____
22.	Frustration occurs when individuals lack the ability to take necessary actions or when their actions are blocked by external obstacles.	_____	_____
23.	Favorable life changes are never as stressful as unfavorable life changes.	_____	_____
24.	The amount of stress individuals feel when in a crowd depends on how much control they think they have in a situation and on their cultural background.	_____	_____
25.	An individual's reaction to stressors is determined by that person's prior attitudes, experiences, values, and even religion.	_____	_____
26.	Thinking of oneself as helpless and worthless can lead to increased stress.	_____	_____
27.	An individual's expectation about a stressful event can influence the individual's stress level significantly.	_____	_____
28.	Physiological responses to stressors occur automatically without very much conscious thought.	_____	_____

	True	False
29. Hormones released under stress remain in the body for only a short period of time.	_____	_____
30. Arthritis and cancer may be indirectly related to stress.	_____	_____
31. A person under stress doesn't usually return to old habits if they're inappropriate to the present situation.	_____	_____
32. An individual's stress level can increase if that individual receives no information or false information about a potentially stressful event prior to its occurrence.	_____	_____
33. During prolonged stress, the body enters a phase in which everything returns to a normal level of functioning without any symptom of stress.	_____	_____
34. Mental health problems, such as depression, should never be treated as emotional stress responses.	_____	_____
35. There is no evidence that stress causes an acceleration of the aging process.	_____	_____
36. Many cases of sexual dysfunction, such as impotence, frigidity, and premature ejaculation are a direct result of stress.	_____	_____
37. The body can be conditioned to relax just as quickly and easily as it's conditioned to tense up during stress.	_____	_____
38. One of the biggest sources of stress is the inability to make use of time.	_____	_____
39. Diet and nutrition are not very important factors in stress reactions.	_____	_____
40. Muscles that are constantly contracted lead to increased anxiety and emotional stress.	_____	_____

**Scoring Key:**

(1) T	(2) F	(3) T	(4) F	(5) F	(6) T	(7)
F						
(8) T	(9) T	(10) T	(11) F	(12) T	(13) T	(14)
F						
(15) F	(16) T	(17) T	(18) F	(19) F	(20) T	(21)
T						
(22) T	(23) F	(24) T	(25) T	(26) T	(27) T	(28)
T						
(29) F	(30) T	(31) F	(32) T	(33) T	(34) F	(35)
F						
(36) T	(37) T	(38) T	(39) F	(40) T		

Total Number Correct \_\_\_\_\_

35 - 40 = Excellent

30 - 34 = Good

25 - 29 = Fair

Less than 25 = Poor



## WHAT IS STRESS AND HOW YOU REACT TO IT

### CHRONIC STRESS AND DISEASE

Stress is a fact of everyday life. You can't avoid it. Stress is any change you must adapt to from the negative extreme of extreme physical danger to the exhilaration of falling in love or achieving some long desired success. And in between, day-to-day living confronts even the most well managed life with a continuous stream of potentially stressful situations. How you **respond** to stress is the key factor, however.

#### **Stress comes from four basic sources:**

1. The environment bombards you with demands to adjust. You must endure weather, traffic, noise and pollution.
2. You must also cope with social stressors such as deadlines, financial problems, job interviews, presentations, disagreements, demands for your time and attention, and loss of loved ones.
3. A third source of stress is physiological. Adolescence, menopause, illness, aging a lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and sleep disturbances all tax the body.
4. The fourth source of stress is your thoughts. Your brain interprets and translates complex changes in your environment and determines when the emergency response should come into play.

Stress researcher **Richard Lazarus**, has argued that stress *begins with your appraisal of a situation*. You first assess how difficult or dangerous the situation is, and then you assess the resources you have to deal with it. Anxious, stressed people often decide that a) an event is dangerous and b) that they do not have sufficient resources to cope with it.

#### **Flight or Fight**

Walter Cannon, a physiologist at Harvard was the first to describe the "fight or flight response" around the turn of the century. He was the first to describe the fight or flight response as a series of bio-chemical changes that prepares you to deal with threats or danger. Primitive man needed these quick bursts of energy to fight or flee from predators such as a saber toothed tiger who might have, in those days, popped up unannounced. These days when social custom prevents you from fighting or running away, this "emergency response" is not often useful.

**Hans Selye** was the first major researcher on stress. He was able to trace exactly what happens in your body during the fight or flight response. He found that any problem, imagined or real, can cause the cerebral cortex (the thinking part of the brain) to send an alarm to the hypothalamus (the main switch for the stress response, located in the mid-brain), which then stimulates the sympathetic nervous system to make a series of

changes in your body. Your heart rate, breathing rate, muscle tension, metabolism and blood pressure all increase. Hands and feet get cold and sweaty and you experience butterflies in your stomach. While all of this is going on, something else happens that can have long-term negative effects if left unchecked. Your adrenal glands start to secrete corticoids, which inhibit digestion; reproduction, growth and tissue repair, and some very important functions that keep the body healthy begin to shut down. However, the same response that turned the stress response on can shut it off. This is called the relaxation response, whereby when the situation is no longer perceived as dangerous, the fight or flight response ceases, and your body starts to return to "normal" levels. **Herbert Benson** (1975) suggests that you can use your mind to change your physiology for the better, improving your health and perhaps reducing your need for medication. He coined this term "relaxation" response to refer to this natural restorative process.

### **Chronic Stress and Disease**

Chronic or persistent stress exists when the stressors of life are unrelenting as they could be during a major reorganization or downsizing at work, a divorce or a life threatening illness. Chronic stress also occurs when little stressors accumulate and you are unable to recuperate from them. As long as the mind perceives a threat, the body remains aroused. If the stress response remains turned on, you can be increasing your chances of a stress-related disease.

Researchers have been looking at the relationship between stress and disease for the last fifty years. There is a long list of illnesses and symptoms that have been at least partially linked to stress including coronary heart disease, hypertension, kidney disease, migraine headaches, cold sores, hives, ulcers, back ache, muscle aches, constipation, nausea, diarrhea, chest pains, insomnia and chronic fatigue to just mention a few. In one study of nine to sixteen year olds it was discovered that a routine act of reading out loud in front of classmates caused significant elevations in blood pressure. Skin problems such as eczema, psoriasis and shingles have been cured using stress management techniques, showing a strong relationship between skin problems and stress. However, a certain amount of stress is necessary for normal health as long as the amount does not exceed the coping ability of our personality styles.

Most of us don't have the luxury of choosing what our day-to-day experiences will be like. We go to work and are forced to confront situations that lead to stress, anxiety and depression. Some of us feel helpless and alienated because we can't or won't take control over the events in our lives. These feelings grow and intensify and eventually grow into major emotional problems leading to ulcers, heart attacks, hypertension and many other stress related illnesses. In order to prevent this from happening we need to develop a "stress tolerant" attitude. This kind of attitude changes the way our brain interprets events and conditions because stress tolerance, in truth, begins in the brain. It is there that we must attack and change the conditioning process needed to become more stress tolerant. There are several methods by which stress management becomes a reality instead of a dream but they all involve replacing negative images with positive ones. It is these processes that we must turn our focus to.

# Attitude

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than success, than what other people think, say or do. It is more important than appearances, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company . . . a home . . . a relationship. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past . . . we cannot change the fact that other people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it.

Charles Swindoll

## **Keeping a Stress Diary to Link Symptoms to Stress Sources**

Keep a stress diary for at least two or three weeks. Divide it into four columns for time of day, stress symptom, immediate activity, and previous activity. Entries must be made as soon as symptoms are noticed, so that nothing gets forgotten or omitted. Include thoughts because thoughts are important triggers for stress that cannot be over-looked.

After a week, start looking for patterns. Did you get symptoms at certain times of the day? Do you get a specific symptom every time you do something or think a certain thought?

This is when you start to play detective. For example, if at 9:30 a.m. every morning you often have frequent headaches, it might bear mentioning that at around this time every day you are rushing the children off to school. If on Thursday nights you have insomnia, it could be anxiety over having to conduct a staff meeting on Friday mornings. Once we recognize the symptoms and link them to stress sources, the next step is to ask why these sources are causing the symptoms.

Ask yourself:

1. Is the time of day causing the stress symptom?
2. Is the reason we are doing the activity causing the stress symptom?
3. Is the way we're doing the activity causing the stress symptom?
4. Is the amount of time spent doing the activity causing the stress symptom?

If the answer lies in the first, then find out if there is a better time to do this activity (e.g. ironing). Can we re-organize our schedule to accommodate it if the time for it cannot be changed.

If the answer lies in the second area, ask: "Why am I doing this activity?" "Is it really necessary?" "Can I do without it?"

If the answer lies in the third, find out what you are doing wrong. Are you too intense about the activity? Too worried, or too tense? Do we expend so much energy on this that we feel worn out?

And the fourth, how much time are we spending doing this activity? Too much? Too little? Is it going to take time away from something else?

At the end of our stress diary we should be able to list:

- a) The exact cause of our stress symptoms (physical activity, thought).
- b) The reason why the activity is causing stress (timing, the way we do it, the reason for doing it, etc.)
- c) And, our goals for eliminating the stress symptom.

For example:

Cause of stress symptom: Headache when rushing kids off to school in the morning.

Reason: Timing; not enough time; feel rushed.

Solution: Go to bed earlier; get up earlier; iron the night before; pack lunches the night before; leave earlier.

### **Type A Versus Type B Individuals:**

Type A individuals are more prone to stress than Type B individuals, often because of certain personality characteristics and attitudes that are the reason for the stress symptoms in the first place.

Following are some of the differences between Type A and Type B characteristics:

#### **Type A Characteristics:**

- ◆ Intensely competitive
- ◆ Impatient
- ◆ Achievement oriented
- ◆ Aggressive and driven
- ◆ Rapid movements
- ◆ Talking fast and listening impatiently

#### **Type B Characteristics:**

- ◆ Relaxed and unhurried
- ◆ Patient
- ◆ Non-competitive
- ◆ Non-aggressive
- ◆ Not much time urgency

In addition to these basic traits, Type A individuals have a greater cardiovascular response to stress; a greater increase in blood pressure; a greater release of adrenaline; higher cholesterol, etc. which may not be occurring at the same time, but which none the less increases the chances of becoming dramatically sick.

Developing Type A or Type B characteristics are a result of our upbringing, environment, and sometimes our genetic make-up. Modifying our behaviors therefore cannot occur overnight. It will take practice and effort. For example, a Type A person to develop more Type B responses.

## Type A Behavior Quiz

Many times, stress symptoms are the direct result of Type A behavior. Unless we become aware of our own Type A traits, recognizing stress symptoms and linking them to stress sources can be very difficult. The following quiz is designed to give you an idea of your own behavioral type. Read each statement carefully and then circle the number corresponding to the category of behavior that best fits you. (1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Usually; 5 = Always). When you finish, add up all the circled numbers. A key at the end of the quiz will explain what your total score means.

- |     |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  | I become angry or irritated whenever I have to stand in line for more than 15 minutes.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2.  | I handle more than one problem at a time.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3.  | It's hard finding the time to relax and let myself go during the day.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4.  | I become irritated or annoyed when someone is speaking too slowly.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5.  | I try hard to win at sports or games.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6.  | When I lose at sports or games, I get angry at myself or others.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7.  | I have trouble doing special things for myself.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8.  | I work much better under pressure or when meeting deadlines.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9.  | I find myself looking at my watch whenever I'm sitting around or not doing something active. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | I bring work home with me.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | I feel energized and exhilarated after being in a pressure situation.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | I feel like I need to take charge of a group in order to get things done.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | I find myself eating rapidly in order to get back to work.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | I do things quickly regardless of whether I have time or not.                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | I interrupt what people are saying when I think they're wrong.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

16.	I'm inflexible and rigid when it comes to changes at work or at home.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I become jittery and need to move whenever I'm trying to relax.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I find myself eating faster than the people I'm eating with.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	At work, I need to perform more than one task at a time in order to feel productive.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I take less vacation time than I'm entitled to.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I find myself being very picky and looking at small details.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I became annoyed at people who don't work as hard as I do.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I find that there aren't enough things to do during the day.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I spend a good deal of my time thinking about my work.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I get bored very easily.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I'm active on weekends either working or doing projects.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I get into arguments with people who don't think my way.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I have trouble "rolling with the punches" whenever problems arise.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	I interrupt someone's conversation in order to speed things up.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I take everything I do seriously.	1	2	3	4	5

The minimum score is 30 and the maximum is 150. The breakdown by personality type is as follows:

Score	Personality Type
100 - 150	Type A
76 - 99	Type AB (Average)
30-75	Type B

If your score was 75 or below, you're a Type B person. You pretty much take life as it comes and usually don't allow problems and worries to dominate your life. If your score was in the range of 76 to 99, you're part of a majority who has some Type A and some Type B characteristics. For the most part, you probably know how to relax and aren't very aggressive or competitive. You do, however, take some things seriously and, in certain situations, like to be active, competitive, and productive. You need to see which Type A traits you have and decide whether or not they're affecting your health and lifestyle. If your score was 100 or above, then chances are you're Type A person and you need to work on your attitudes, behavior, and priorities before you become seriously ill.



## **:60 Second Stress Managements For Anger**

1. ***Learn to be assertive.*** Begin slowly if you feel uncomfortable, but take one minute per day to look for opportunities to communicate about minor issues so that you build up confidence to express feelings spontaneously and non-aggressively. (Making a list of these is helpful.)
2. ***Identify the source of your anger.*** Whenever you become angry, take sixty seconds to make sure you focus on the specific reason for that anger. Once you are focused, it will become easier to work on strategies that will eliminate the source of frustration.
3. ***Use a third party to intervene.*** Direct communication is not always possible. Take a minute to find and utilize a third party as a sounding board rather than close a matter entirely. Always try to resolve anger-causing conflicts as quickly as possible by working through someone you feel is willing, able, and qualified to assist.
4. ***Try to be more understanding.*** Try to become aware of how the person with whom you are angry may be feeling. By nature, when we become more sympathetic, we have a tendency to be less aggressive and more accommodating. Take sixty seconds to define and consider the feelings of others and how those feelings may create even more anger for both of you.
5. ***Find ways to prevent anger-causing situations.*** Anger situations reoccur frequently. Identify the cause of your anger and find solutions to eliminate or bypass that cause. Anger actually can become intensified by repetition. Take sixty seconds to set down with pencil and paper and diagram a method to eliminate the problem. This activity alone will relieve your angry feelings because you will be reacting positively to your anger.

## **:60 Second Type B Behavior Exercises**

There are several practical exercises we can do to change our Type A habits and activities. After doing these exercises several times, they will eventually become automatic :60 second stress managements and even allow us to think up different ones using our own particular Type A behavior patterns. Practicing these exercises is important in habit formation because the physical act is a more powerful conditioner than just thinking about them. Conditioning, whether physical or mental, requires both mental and physical effort to achieve positive, lasting effects.

1. ***Determine what activities arouse Type A behavior and reenact them utilizing Type B behavior.*** Take sixty seconds to list them. For instance, if standing in line triggers stress symptoms, the next time you have to stand in line try to consciously practice not being irritated or annoyed. Think about a pleasant upcoming weekend, a funny thing you read or saw on television, or a favorite experience. Thinking about pleasant things will eventually come easily and naturally.
2. ***While eating, put your utensils down between bites.*** Count to twenty. This will force you to slow your eating pattern and leave more time for conversation and interaction. Slowing down your eating habits will spill over into other activities, helping you to slow down as well.
3. ***Force yourself to do more recreational activities.*** Take sixty seconds to make a list of things you might enjoy. For instance: Instead of reading job-related material, buy a book and enjoy it purely for the sake of reading. Make a date with yourself to go to a fun movie, take a joyous ride in the country or walk in the woods. In a short period of time, you will feel special and become aware of any negative behaviors affecting your health.
4. ***Spend an entire day without your watch.*** Make a real effort to forget time. A few periods without your watch will make you aware of how nice it is not to be a clock watcher.
5. ***Pay attention to every frown and negative facial expression.*** This exercise will train you to become acutely aware of the difference between negative and positive expressions. At the end of one day take 60 seconds to write down what you have noticed. After a week or two, any negative facial expression will instantly trigger an awareness. Being aware of negative expressions also will allow you to instantly recognize the sources of negative stress.
6. ***Give yourself positive Type B self-instruction.*** Take 60 seconds to make a list of Type B self-instructions. Don't be afraid to verbalize Type B expressions—relax, slow down, stay calm, don't rush, easy does it, etc.—out loud. Hearing them will add to their effectiveness. Eventually, they will become so automatic that you'll be able to retrieve them from your subconscious without having to verbalize at all.
7. ***Reward yourself.*** Take ten seconds to choose a Type B behavior pattern. Follow it for an entire week. At the end of a successful week, reward yourself with something special. Recognizing your accomplishment with a reward makes the conditioning process stronger.

At the end of our stress diary, we should have a section set aside for writing down our Type A character traits, our goals for modifying them into Type B character traits, and whether or not any of our stress symptoms are eliminated as a result of our changing from Type A to Type B. Here's how it might look:

<b>Type A Traits</b>	<b>Type A Stress Symptoms</b>	<b>Goals for Modifying Type A Behavior</b>	<b>Symptoms Eliminated?</b>
Impatient about waiting	1. Grinding teeth 2. Neck pains	Think positive & pleasant thoughts when waiting in line.	1. Yes 2. No
Overscheduling work. Trying to do too much.	1. Headaches	Schedule only 1 thing at a time. Take periodic breaks.	1. Yes
Always in a rush to go somewhere.	1. Stomach pains 2. General muscle tension	Get up earlier - do advance planning. Organize time better.	1. Yes 2. No

The idea behind practicing Type B character traits and keeping stress diary records is that once we recognize stress symptoms, become more aware of our behavior, and repeatedly perform constructive activities to modify that behavior, Type A stress management becomes a spontaneous one-minute mental exercise. That is, we eventually teach ourselves to "turn off" Type A character traits and "turn on" Type B character traits in as little as one minute because our brain will be conditioned to guide our behavior in a Type B way. Again, this doesn't come easily at first. We've spent a lifetime acquiring Type A habits. But if we use the simple principle of habit formation by physically doing Type B activities, we can gradually eliminate almost any Type A habit. Having done this, we'll not only become healthier and happier, but we'll feel better about ourselves for having the strength to change our habits and for finally bringing out the Type B person that has been inside us all along.

# ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

How you interact with others can be a source of considerable stress in your life. Assertiveness training can reduce that stress by teaching you to stand up for your legitimate rights, without bullying others or letting them bully you.

Before reading any further, it will be useful to write down how you would typically respond to the following problem situations:

1. You buy your favorite beverage in the market, and after you walk out you discover that the change is a dollar short.

*I would*

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2. You order a steak rare and it arrives medium-well.

*I would*

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3. You're giving a friend a lift to a meeting. The friend keeps puttering around for half an hour so that you will arrive late.

*I would*

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4. You ask for \$5 worth of gas at a service station. The attendant fills up your tank and asks you for \$9.50.

*I would*

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5. You are relaxing with the paper after a long day. Your spouse pops in, list in hand, and says, "I never thought you'd get here. Quick, pick these up from the store."

*I would*

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6. While you wait for the clerk to finish with the customer ahead of you, another customer comes in and the clerk waits on him before you.

*I would*

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## **Some Thoughts About Assertiveness . . .**

Assertiveness was initially described as a personality trait by Andrew Salter in 1949. It was thought that some people had it, and some people didn't, just like extroversion or stinginess. But Wolpe (1958) and Lazarus (1966) redefined assertiveness as "expressing personal rights and feelings." They found that nearly everybody could be assertive in some situations, and yet be totally ineffectual in others. The goal of assertiveness training is to increase the number and variety of situations in which assertive behavior is possible, and decrease occasions of passive collapse or hostile blow-up.

You are assertive when you stand up for your rights in such a way that the rights of others are not violated. Beyond just demanding your rights, you can express your personal likes and interests spontaneously, you can talk about yourself without being self-conscious, you can accept compliments comfortably, you can disagree with someone openly, you can ask for clarification, and you can say no. In short, when you are an assertive person, you can be more relaxed in interpersonal situations.

Some people think that assertiveness training turns nice people into irascible complainers or calculating manipulators. Not so. It's your right to protect yourself when something seems unfair. You are the one who best knows your discomfort and your needs.

Investigators such as Jakubowski-Spector (1973) and Alberti and Emmons (1970) discovered that people who show relatively little assertive behavior do not believe that they have a right to their feelings, beliefs, or opinions. In the deepest sense, they reject the idea that we are created equal and are to treat each other as equals. As a result, they can't find grounds for objecting to exploitation or mistreatment. It is likely that they learned as children traditional assumptions that implied that their perceptions, opinions, feelings, and wants were less important or correct than those of others. They grew up doubting themselves and looking to others for validation and guidance.

You did not have much choice about which traditional assumptions you were taught as a child. Now, however, you have the option of deciding whether to continue behaving according to assumptions that keep you from being an assertive adult. Each of these mistaken assumptions violates one of your legitimate rights as an adult.

<b><i>Mistaken Traditional Assumptions</i></b>	<b><i>Your Legitimate Rights</i></b>
1. It is selfish to put your needs before others' needs.	You have a right to put yourself first sometimes.
2. It is shameful to make mistakes. You should have an appropriate response for every occasion.	You have a right to make mistakes.
3. If you can't convince others that your feelings are reasonable, then they must be wrong, or maybe you are going crazy.	You have a right to be the final judge of your feelings and accept them as legitimate.
4. You should respect the views of others, especially if they are in a position of authority. Keep your differences of opinion to yourself. Listen and learn.	You have a right to have your own opinions and convictions.
5. You should always try to be logical and consistent.	You have a right to change your mind or decide on a different course of action.
6. You should be flexible and adjust. Others have good reasons for their actions and it's not polite to question them.	You have a right to protest unfair treatment or criticism.
7. You should never interrupt people. Asking questions reveals your stupidity to others.	You have a right to interrupt in order to ask for clarification.
8. Things could get even worse, don't rock the boat.	You have a right to negotiate for change.
9. You shouldn't take up others' valuable time with your problems.	You have a right to ask for help emotional support.
10. People don't want to hear that you feel bad, so keep it to yourself.	You have a right to feel and express pain.
11. When someone takes the time to give you advice, you should take it very seriously. They are often right.	You have right to ignore the advice of others.
12. Knowing that you did something well is its own reward. People don't like show-offs. Successful people are secretly disliked and envied. Be modest when complimented.	You have the right to receive formal recognition for your work and achievements.

<b><i>Mistaken Traditional Assumptions</i></b>	<b><i>Your Legitimate Rights</i></b>
<p>13. You should always try to accommodate others. If you don't, they won't be there when you need them.</p> <p>14. Don't be anti-social. People are going to think you don't like them if you say you'd rather be alone instead of with them.</p> <p>15. You should always have a good reason for what you feel and do.</p> <p>16. When someone is in trouble, you should help them.</p> <p>17. You should be sensitive to the needs and wishes of others, even when they are unable to tell you what they want.</p> <p>18. It's always a good policy to stay on people's good side.</p> <p>19. It's not nice to put people off. If questioned, give an answer.</p>	<p>You have a right to say "no."</p> <p>You have a right to be alone, even if others would prefer your company.</p> <p>You have a right not to have to justify yourself to others.</p> <p>You have a right not to take responsibility for someone else's problem.</p> <p>You have a right not to have to anticipate others' needs and wishes.</p> <p>You have a right not to always worry about the goodwill of others.</p> <p>You have a right to choose not to respond to a situation.</p>



## Three Basic Interpersonal Styles

Assertiveness is a skill that can be learned, not a personality trait that some are born with and others are not. The first step in assertiveness training is to identify the three basic styles of interpersonal behavior.

**Aggressive Style:** In this style, opinions, feelings, and wants are honestly stated, but at the expense of someone else's feelings. The underlying message is "I'm superior and right, and you're inferior and wrong." The advantage of aggressive behavior is that people often give aggressive individuals what they want in order to get rid of them. The disadvantage is that aggressive individuals make enemies, and people who can't avoid them entirely may end up behaving dishonestly toward them in order to avoid confrontations.

**Passive Style:** In this style, opinions, feelings, and wants are withheld altogether or expressed indirectly and only in part. The underlying message is "I'm weak and inferior, and you're powerful and right." The advantage of passive communication is that it minimizes responsibility for making decisions and the risk of taking a personal stand on an issue. The disadvantages are a sense of impotence, lowered self-esteem, and having to live with the decisions of others.

**Assertive Style:** In this style, you clearly state your opinion, how you feel, and what you want without violating the rights of others. The underlying assumption is "You and I may have our differences, but we are equally entitled to express ourselves to one another." The major advantages include active participation in making important decisions, getting what you want without alienating others, the emotional and intellectual satisfaction of respectfully exchanging feelings and ideas, and high self-esteem.

## Exercise

To test your ability to distinguish interpersonal styles, label person A's behavior in the following scenes as aggressive, passive, or assertive:

### Scene 1

- A: Is that a new dent I see in the car?  
B: Look, I just got home, it was a wretched day, and I don't want to talk about it now.  
A: This is important to me, and we're going to talk about it now.  
B: Have a heart.  
A: Let's decide now who is going to pay to have it fixed, when, and where.  
B: I'll take care of it. Now leave me alone, for heaven's sake!

A's behavior is      ☐ Aggressive                      ☐ Passive                      ☐ Assertive

### Scene 2

- A: You left me by myself at that party . . . I really felt abandoned.  
B: You were being a party pooper.  
A: I didn't know anybody - the least you could have done is introduced me to some of your friends.  
B: Listen, you're grown up. You can take care of yourself. I'm tired of your nagging to be taken care of all the time.  
A: And I'm tired of your inconsiderateness.  
B: Okay, I'll stick to you like glue next time.

A's behavior is      ☐ Aggressive                      ☐ Passive                      ☐ Assertive

### Scene 3

- A: Would you mind helping me for a minute with this file?  
B: I'm busy with this report. Catch me later.  
A: Well, I really hate to bother you, but it's important.  
B: Look, I have a four o'clock deadline.  
A: Okay, I understand, I know it's hard to be interrupted.

A's behavior is      ☐ Aggressive                      ☐ Passive                      ☐ Assertive

#### Scene 4

- A: I got a letter from mom this morning. She wants to come and spend two weeks with us. I'd really like to see her.
- B: Oh no, not your mother! And right on the heels of your sister. When do we get a little time to ourselves?
- A: Well, I do want her to come, but I know you need to spend some time without my in-laws underfoot. I'd like to invite her to come in a month, and instead of two weeks, I think one week would be enough. What do you say to that?
- B: That's a big relief to me.

A's behavior is      ☐ Aggressive      ☐ Passive      ☐ Assertive

#### Scene 5

- A: Boy, you're looking great today!
- B: Who do you think you're kidding? My hair is a fright and my clothes aren't fit for the Goodwill box.
- A: Have it your way.
- B: And, I feel just as bad as I look today.
- A: Right. I've got to run now.

A's behavior is      ☐ Aggressive      ☐ Passive      ☐ Assertive

#### Scene 6

While at a party, A is telling her friends how much she appreciates her boyfriend taking her out to good restaurants and to the theater. Her friends criticize her for being unliberated.

- A: Not so. I don't make nearly as much as a secretary as he does as a lawyer. I couldn't afford to take us both out or pay my own way to all the nice places we go. Some traditions make sense, given the economic realities.

A's behavior is      ☐ Aggressive      ☐ Passive      ☐ Assertive

Now that you have labeled person A's response in these scenes as aggressive, passive, or assertive, it may be useful to compare your assessment with ours:

**Scene 1.** A is aggressive. A's seemingly innocent question is actually an accusation in disguise. A's insistence on immediate action with total disregard for B's state of mind sets up a polarized conflict in which B is likely to feel wrong, withdrawn, and defensive.

**Scene 2.** A is aggressive. The tone is accusing and blaming. B is immediately placed on the defensive and no one wins.

**Scene 3.** A is passive. A's timid opening line is followed by complete collapse. The file problem must now be dealt with alone.

**Scene 4.** A is assertive. The request is specific, non-hostile, and open to negotiation.

**Scene 5.** A is passive. A allows the compliment to be rebuffed and surrenders to B's rush of negativity.

**Scene 6.** A is assertive. She stands up to the prevailing opinion of the group and achieves a clear, non-threatening statement of her position.

# The Assertiveness Questionnaire

(Adapted from Sharon and Gordon Bower's *Asserting Your Self*)

The next step in assertiveness training is to identify those situations in which you want to be more effective.

To further refine your assessment of the situations, in which you need to be more assertive, complete the following questionnaire. Put a check mark in column A by the items that are applicable to you and then rate those items in column B: as:

1. Comfortable
2. Mildly uncomfortable
3. Moderately uncomfortable
4. Very uncomfortable
5. Unbearably threatening

(Note that the varying degrees of discomfort can be expressed whether your inappropriate reactions are hostile or passive.)

	<b>A</b> <i>Check here if the item applies to you</i>	<b>B</b> <i>Rate from 1-5 for discomfort</i>
<b>WHEN</b> do you behave non-assertively?		
Asking for help	_____	_____
Stating a difference of opinion	_____	_____
Receiving and expressing negative feelings	_____	_____
Receiving and expressing positive feelings	_____	_____
Dealing with someone who refuses to cooperate	_____	_____
Speaking up about something that annoys you.	_____	_____
Talking when all eyes are on you.	_____	_____
Protesting a rip-off	_____	_____
Saying "no"	_____	_____
Responding to undeserved criticism	_____	_____
Making requests of authority figures	_____	_____
Negotiating for something you want	_____	_____
Having to take charge	_____	_____
Asking for cooperation	_____	_____
Proposing an idea	_____	_____

	<b>A</b> <b>Check here</b> <b>if the item</b> <b>applies to you</b>	<b>B</b> <b>Rate</b> <b>from 1-5</b> <b>for discomfort</b>
Taking charge	_____	_____
Dealing with attempts to make you feel guilty	_____	_____
Asking for service	_____	_____
Asking for a date or appointment	_____	_____
Asking for favors	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____
<b>WHO</b> are the people with whom you are nonassertive?		
Parents	_____	_____
Fellow workers, classmates	_____	_____
Strangers	_____	_____
Old friends	_____	_____
Spouse or mate	_____	_____
Employer	_____	_____
Relatives	_____	_____
Children	_____	_____
Acquaintances	_____	_____
Sales people, clerks, hired help	_____	_____
More than two or three people in a group	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____
<b>WHAT</b> do you want that you have been unable to achieve with nonassertive styles?		
Approval for things you have done well	_____	_____
To get help with certain tasks	_____	_____
More attention, or time with your mate	_____	_____
To be listened to and understood	_____	_____

	<b>A</b> <b>Check here</b> <b>if the item</b> <b>applies to you</b>	<b>B</b> <b>Rate</b> <b>from 1-5</b> <b>for discomfort</b>
To make boring or frustrating situations more satisfying	_____	_____
To not have to be nice all the time	_____	_____
Confidence in speaking up when something is important to you	_____	_____
Greater comfort with strangers, store clerks, mechanics, and so on.	_____	_____
Confidence in asking for contact with people you find attractive	_____	_____
To get a new job, ask for interviews, raises, and so on.	_____	_____
Comfort with people who supervise you or work under you	_____	_____
To not feel angry and bitter a lot of the time	_____	_____
To overcome a feeling of helplessness and the sense that nothing ever really changes	_____	_____
To initiate satisfying sexual experiences	_____	_____
To do something totally different and novel	_____	_____
To have time by yourself	_____	_____
To do things that are fun or relaxing for you	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____

**Evaluating your responses.** Examine your answers, and analyze them for an overall picture of what situations and people threaten you. How does non-assertive behavior contribute to the specific items you checked on the "What" list? In constructing your own assertiveness program, it will be initially useful to focus on items you rated as falling in the 2 -3 range. These are the situations that you will find easiest to change. Items that are very uncomfortable or threatening can be tackled later.

# Short Form Assertiveness Technique

The short form assertiveness technique is designed for situations where you lack the time or energy to prepare an entire LADDER script. Assertiveness can be condensed to three basic statements:

1. *Your thoughts* about the problematic situation. This is a non-blaming, non-pejorative description of the problem as you see it. You stick as closely as possible to objective facts, making no inferences about the motives or feelings of others.
2. *Your feelings*. These are “I statements” about your emotional reaction to the problem. Try to avoid the implication that you’re holding the other person responsible for your feelings. You’re angry, sad, hurt, or disappointed. But your main message should be that you are trying to solve a problem, not blame or prove the other person wrong.
3. *Your wants*. As in the LADDER script, make your request specific and behavioral. Don’t ask your tardy employee to be “more considerate”. Request specifically that he or she call if more than 15 minutes late.



# **Job Stress and Burnout**

# **Job Stress and Burnout**

## **Sources of Job Stress**

- Disorganization or inability to manage time
- Conflict with supervisors or colleagues
- Unqualified to do the job
- Feeling overwhelmed or overburdened by work
- Too much or too little responsibility
- Inability to meet deadlines
- Unable to adapt to changes in work routine
- Inability to utilize skills
- Feeling of boredom
- No support from superiors

## Expectation vs. Reality

Whenever our expectations exceed job reality but don't reach a balance after a certain period of time, we begin to experience the stress of "unattainable expectations". Here's an example of how some expectations and job realities can differ and become a real source of job stress.

Expectation	Reality
Work will be a challenging, stimulating, and rewarding experience.	Work is more often routine and sometimes very boring.
We'll be asked to use all our educational training or all our skills to do our job.	Much of what we learn in school is not practiced on the job. We often learn to do things the company way.
We'll be needed to utilize our abilities and intelligence in decision-making and in implementing new ideas.	Decision-making and the implementing of ideas are left to senior executives and managers.

When reality finally sets in, how do we cope with the fact that our expectations may never be realized? Instead of becoming depressed and isolated, we can begin to adjust to reality by accepting three irrefutable facts of work life:

1. Expectations in all areas of life, including work, are almost always distortions of reality. Reality, then, is always going to be a disappointment at first unless we accept the challenge and do something positive about it.
2. In almost all instances, work is something we need to fit into, not the other way around. No one is going to mold a job to meet our needs or demands unless we're someone very special. Positive attitudes make us more flexible and allow us to fit into almost any situation we want.

3. No job, regardless of what it is, is going to satisfy us unless we adopt attitudes and behaviors that condition us to perceive job events the way we want to perceive them. We can choose to make work either a pleasant or unpleasant experience through the power of our mind, and we can lower our expectations and still receive satisfaction from our work by setting realistic goals and by coming to terms with our negative feelings and attitudes.

**Our job expectations, then, can be as powerful as our perceptions.**

# **Four Stages of Burnout Syndrome**

**Stage 1.** High expectations and idealism

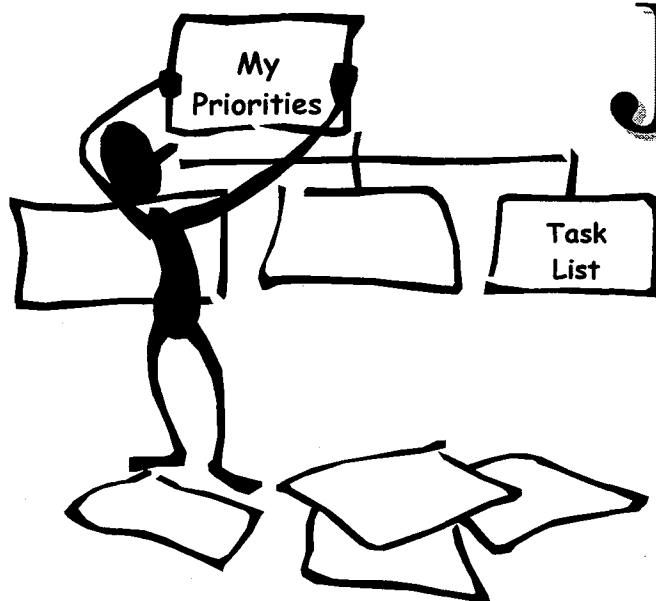
**Stage 2.** Pessimism and early job dissatisfaction

**Stage 3.** Withdrawal and isolation

**Stage 4.** Irreversible detachment and loss of interest

## **Burnout “Extinguishers”**

1. Express feelings and emotions.
2. Schedule down time.
3. Recognize energy patterns and schedule work accordingly.
4. Never schedule more than one stressful activity at the same time.
5. Engage in outside physical activities.
6. Break projects down into smaller parts.
7. Delegate responsibility.
8. Learn to say no.
9. Improve work skills.
10. Strive for success.
11. Learn to relax.



**Job**

**Stress**

**Management**

# Steps Toward Managing Your Job Stress

## *Step 1. Identify Your Symptoms of Job Stress:*

Instructions: Rate each of the following items in terms of how often the symptom was true for you during the last three months.

- 0 = Never
- 1 = Occasionally
- 2 = Somewhat often
- 3 = Frequently
- 4 = Almost always

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I feel little enthusiasm for doing my job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I feel tired even with adequate sleep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I feel frustrated in carrying out my responsibilities at work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I am moody, irritable, or impatient over small inconveniences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I want to withdraw from the constant demands on my time and energy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I feel negative, futile, or depressed about my job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. My decision-making ability seems less than usual.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I think that I am not as efficient as I should be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The quality of my work is less than it should be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I feel physically, emotionally, or spiritually depleted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. My resistance to illness is lowered.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. My interest in sex is lowered.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I am eating more or less, drinking more coffee, tea, or sodas, smoking more cigarettes, or using more alcohol or drugs in order to cope with my job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I am feeling emotionally callous about the problems and needs of others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. My communication with my boss, co-workers, friends, or family seems strained.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I am forgetful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I am having difficulty concentrating.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I am easily bored.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I feel a sense of dissatisfaction, of something wrong or missing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. When I ask myself why I get up and go to work, the only answer that occurs is "my paycheck."

If you scored 0 to 25, you are probably coping adequately with the stress of your job. If you scored 26 to 40, you are suffering from job stress and would be wise to take preventative action. If you scored 41 to 55, you need to take preventative action to avoid job burnout. If you scored 56 to 80, you are burning out and must develop a comprehensive job stress management plan.

## ***Step 2. Identify the Sources of Your Job Stress:***

Instructions: Rate your experience in your job during the past year, using the following 5-point scale:

- 0 = Never
- 1 = Occasionally
- 2 = Somewhat often
- 3 = Frequently
- 4 = Almost always

### **Lack of Control**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I feel the authority to carry out certain responsibilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I feel trapped in a situation without any real options.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I am unable to influence decisions that affect me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. There are a lot of requirements that get in the way of my doing certain tasks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I can't solve the problems assigned to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal

### **Information Gap**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I am unsure about the responsibilities of my job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I don't have enough information to carry out certain tasks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I am underqualified for certain tasks I'm expected to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Others I work with are not clear about what I do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I don't understand the criteria used to evaluate my performance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal

### **Cause and Effect**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. There is no relationship between how I perform and how I am rated.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I sense that popularity and politics are more important than performance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I don't know what my supervisor thinks of my performance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I don't know what I am doing right and what I am doing wrong.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. There is no relationship between how I perform and how I am treated.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal

### **Conflict**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I am expected to satisfy conflicting needs.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I disagree with co-workers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I disagree with my supervisor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I am caught in the middle.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I can't get what I need to get the job done.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal

### **Blocked Career**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I feel pessimistic about opportunities for advancement or growth in my job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. My supervisor or boss is critical.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I feel unaccepted by the people I work with.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. My good work is not noticed or appreciated.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. My progress on the job seems less than it could be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal

### **Alienation**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I experience little meaning in my work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I feel unsupported by my co-workers or boss.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. My values seem at odds with those of the management.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. The organization seems insensitive to my individuality.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. I find I cannot be myself at work because I feel different from my co-workers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal

### **Overload**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I have too much to do and too little time in which to do it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. I take on new responsibilities without letting go of any of the old ones.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. My job seems to interfere with my personal life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. I must work on my own time (during breaks, lunch, at home, and so on).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. The size of my workload interferes with how well I do it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal

### **Underload**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. I have too little to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. I feel overqualified for the work I actually do.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. My work is not challenging.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. Most of my work is very routine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. I miss contact with people in my job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal

### **Environment**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. I find my work environment unpleasant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. I lack the privacy I need to concentrate on my work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. Some aspects of my environment seem hazardous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. I have too much or too little contact with people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. I have to deal with many little hassles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal

### **Value Conflict**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. I must do things that are against my better judgement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. I must make compromises in my values.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. My family and friends do not respect what I do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. I observe my co-workers doing things that I don't approve of.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. The organization that I work for pressures employees to do things that are unethical or unsafe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grand Total
- \_\_\_\_\_

If your score is over 100, you have more than average number of job stressors. If your score is 130 or higher, the number of job stressors is unusually high. Identify the categories in which you scored 12 or more. In addition to dealing with your specific major stressors, you will want to give consideration to these general areas.

### ***Step 3. Identify How You Respond to Your Specific Job Stressors:***

What are your specific job stressors and how do you tend to respond to them? In addition to referring to your responses on the job stress inventory, reflect back over your recent experiences at work. In the far left-hand column, list your specific stressors. For each stressful item, write down your feelings when it occurs, what you say to yourself about it, and what you do in response to it.

**Exercise:** List your specific stressors and how you respond to them. Use as little or much detail as you need.

[illegible]

Now that you have written out your specific job stressors and how you typically respond to them, review your list and see if any patterns emerge.

### ***Step 4. Pace and Balance Yourself:***

Do you pace yourself at work? If you are a sprinter, you can afford to throw everything you've got into the race. This is because at the end of a fast short run you know you have plenty of time to recover from your intense effort. Most jobs, however, require you to be more like a marathon runner who must pace himself in order to get across the finish line in a timely manner without collapsing. Like the marathon runner, you need to maintain a certain detachment from the immediate demands of your job so that you will remember to reserve enough energy to deal with what you anticipate down the road as well as any surprises.

Here are eight tips for pacing and balancing yourself:

1. Pay attention to your natural rhythm to determine when you tend to perform optimally and schedule your most difficult tasks for then.
2. Try to set up your day so you shift back and forth between pleasant and more difficult tasks. After something tough, make an effort to schedule something you enjoy.
3. Schedule inviolate periods of time into your day for work-related tasks that are pleasurable, even though not terribly productive. Try to do this even when you feel rushed.
4. Take advantage of your coffee breaks and lunches to do things that will reverse the stress response. For example, go to a quiet place and do a relaxation exercise. A ten-minute brisk walk will give you as much energy as a cup of coffee. A light conversation with your co-workers will release tension and may be just what you need to get a fresh perspective on a problem that was weighing you down.
5. If you are fortunate enough to have a flexible schedule, consider taking a long break in the middle of the day to do aerobic exercise, a relaxation exercise, or personal errands.
6. Take mini-breaks throughout the day to reduce or prevent symptoms of tension and stress. These breaks never take more than a few minutes and pay for themselves in terms of increased mental alertness and productivity. See the Brief Combination Techniques chapter for exercises appropriate to short breaks.
7. Choose leisure activities that balance the unique stresses of your job.

***If your job requires:***

Much sitting or mental concentration  
Mindless repetition

A controlled environment  
Boring tasks or no recognition

Responding to people demands  
Dealing with conflicts  
Working alone

***Consider a complementary leisure activity  
such as:***

Aerobic exercise  
Intellectually challenging hobbies and  
interests  
Hiking in nature; adventure  
Competitive or achievement-oriented  
activities  
Solitary activities  
Peaceful activities  
Social activities

8. Carefully plan the timing and type of vacations that you take to maximize their recuperative effects.

### ***Step 5. Know When To Quit:***

After making a genuine effort to modify your own thinking, behavior, and work conditions, you may find that your job is still dissatisfying. It may be that you are just not suited to your job. Ask yourself whether the price you are paying emotionally is worth the material benefits. Visualize yourself continuing in the same manner for another five years. Will your job make you a stronger, happier person in five years or a weaker, more miserable person? Your time is precious. Is this how you want to spend it?

**Exercise:** Describe your ideal job. Include your job title, your job responsibilities, your boss, your co-workers, your environment, and the management.

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Although, you may have yearned to quit for years, you probably have several fears that stand in the way of making your move. Perhaps you think that you are too old or too young, too inexperienced or over-qualified, the wrong sex, or that you interview poorly, or there aren't any jobs that you want out there, or the economy is going to hell and you're lucky just to be employed.

**Exercise:** List your fears about leaving your job:

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Each one of your fears is a barrier that stands between you and finding your ideal job. Turn each one of your fears into a goal designed to get around the barrier. For example, if the fear is that you are too old, your goal statement might be: "I will talk to someone my age who has a job like my ideal one and find out if age really makes a difference." If your fear is that you will do poorly in an interview, your goal statement could be, "I will take an interview class and improve my skills."

*Now Your turn:*

My fear: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My goal statement:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My fear: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My goal statement:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Carefully explore your alternatives. Looking at your options can either make you realize how good you have it, or motivate you to plan for a change.

# **Strategies for Dealing with Irrational Thoughts and Ideas**

## Ten Basic Irrational Ideas

1. **It is an absolute necessity for an adult to have love and approval from peers, family and friends.**

In fact, it is impossible to please all the people in your life. Even those who basically like and approve of you will be turned off by some behaviors and qualities. This irrational belief is probably the single greatest cause of unhappiness.

2. **You must be unfailingly competent and almost perfect in all you undertake.**

The results of believing that you must behave perfectly are self blame for inevitable failure, lowered self esteem, perfectionistic standards applied to mate and friends, and paralysis and fear at attempting anything.

3. **Certain people are evil, wicked, and villainous, and should be punished.**

A more realistic position is that they are behaving in ways which are antisocial or inappropriate. They are perhaps stupid, ignorant, or neurotic, and it would be well if their behavior could be changed.

4. **It is horrible when people and things are not the way you would like them to be.**

This might be described as the spoiled child syndrome. As soon as the tire goes flat the self-talk starts: "Why does this happen to me? Damn, I can't take this. It's awful, I'll get all filthy." Any inconvenience, problem, or failure to get your way is likely to be met with such awful self-statements. The result is intense irritation and stress.

5. **External events cause most human misery - people simply react as events trigger their emotions.**

A logical extension of this belief is that you must control the external events in order to create happiness or avoid sorrow. Since such control has limitations and we are at a loss to completely manipulate the wills of others, a sense of helplessness and chronic anxiety results. Ascribing unhappiness to events is a way of avoiding reality. Self-statements *interpreting* the event caused the unhappiness. While you may have only limited control over others, you have enormous control over your emotions.

6. **You should feel fear or anxiety about anything that is unknown, uncertain, or potentially dangerous.**

Many describe this as "a little bell that goes off and I think I ought to start worrying." They begin to rehearse their scenarios of catastrophe. Increasing the fear or anxiety in the face of uncertainty make coping more difficult and adds to stress. Saving the fear response for actual, perceived danger allows you to enjoy uncertainty as a novel and exciting experience.



7. **It is easier to avoid than to face life's difficulties and responsibilities.**  
There are many ways of ducking responsibilities: "I should tell him I'm no longer interested - but tonight . . . I'd like to get another job, but I'm just too tired on my days off to look . . . A leaky faucet won't hurt anything. . . We could shop today, but the car is making a sort of funny sound." If you have checked this idea, please add your standard excuses to avoid responsibility here:

*Area of responsibility*

*Method of avoidance*

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8. **You need something other or stronger or greater than yourself to rely on.**  
This belief becomes a psychological trap in which your independent judgment and your awareness of your particular needs are undermined by a reliance on higher authority.
9. **The past has a lot to do with determining the request.**  
Just because you were once strongly affected by something, does not mean that you must continue the habits you formed to cope with the original situation. Those old patterns and ways of responding are just decisions made so many times they have become nearly automatic. You can identify those old decisions and start changing them *right now*. You can learn from past experience, but you don't have to be overly attached to it.
10. **Happiness can be achieved by inaction, passivity, and endless leisure.**  
This is called the Elysian Fields Syndrome. There is more to happiness than perfect relaxation.

#### **Other Irrational ideas**

11. **You are helpless and have no control over what you experience or feel.**  
This belief is at the heart of much depression and anxiety. The truth is we not only exercise considerable control over interpersonal situations, but also control how we interpret and emotionally respond to each life event.
12. **People are fragile and should never be hurt.**  
This irrational belief results in failure to openly communicate important feelings, and in self-sacrifice that gives up what is nourishing and pleasurable (Farquhar and Lowe 1974). Since everything you need and want seems to hurt or deprive

someone else, you feel frustration, helplessness, and depression. Relationships become full or dead space where conflicts developed and nothing was said.

13. **Good relationships are based on mutual sacrifice and focus on giving.**  
This belief rests on the assumption that it is better to give than to receive. It is expressed in a reluctance to ask for things and the anticipation that your hidden needs will be divined and provided for. Unfortunately, constant self-denial usually results in bitterness and withdrawal.
14. **If you don't go to great lengths to please others, they will abandon or reject you.**  
This belief is by-product of low self-esteem. You usually run less risk of rejection if you offer others your true unembellished self. They can take it or leave it. But if they respond to the real you, you don't have to worry about slacking off, letting down your guard, and being rejected later.
15. **When people disapprove of you, it invariably means you are wrong or bad.**  
This extremely crippling belief sparks chronic anxiety in most interpersonal situations (Farquhar and Lowe 1974). The irrationality is contained in the generalization of one specific fault or unattractive feature to a total indictment of the self.
16. **Happiness, pleasure, and fulfillment can only occur in the presence of others, and being alone is horrible.**  
Pleasure, self worth, and fulfillment can be experienced alone as well as with others (Farquhar and Lowe 1974). Being alone is growth producing and desirable at times.
17. **There is a perfect love, and a perfect relationship.**  
Subscribers to this belief often feel resentful of one close relationship after another. Nothing is quite right because they are waiting for the perfect fit. It never comes.
18. **You shouldn't have to feel pain; you are entitled to a good life.**  
The realistic position is that pain is an inevitable part of human life. It frequently accompanies tough, health decisions and the process of growth. Life is not fair, and sometimes you will suffer no matter what you do.
19. **Your worth as a person depends on how much you achieve and produce.**  
A more rational assessment of your real worth would depend on such things as your capacity to be fully alive, feeling everything it means to be human (Farquhar and Lowe 1974).
20. **Anger is automatically bad and destructive.**  
Anger is frequently cleansing. It can be an honest communication of current feelings, without attacking the personal worth and security of others (Farquhar and Lowe 1974).

21. **It is bad or wrong to be selfish.**

The truth is that one knows your needs and wants better than you, and no one else has as great an interest in seeing them fulfilled. Your happiness is your responsibility. Being selfish means you are accepting that responsibility.

It is quite probable that you could add other irrational ideas to this list. Please do. The best way to uncover your own traditional ideas is to think of situations in which you experience anxiety, depression, anger, guilt, or a sense of worthlessness. Behind each of these emotions, particularly if they are chronic, is irrational self-talk.

**Your other irrational ideas:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Much of the difficulty in uncovering irrational self-talk results from the speed and invisibility of thoughts. They may be lightning quick and barely on the edge of awareness. You will rarely be conscious of a complete sentence, as in the irrational statements above. Because self-talk has a reflective, automatic quality, it is easy to keep the illusion that feelings arise spontaneously from events. However, once the thoughts are slowed down like a slow motion film, frame by frame, the millisecond it takes to say "I'm falling apart" is exposed for its malignant influence. The thoughts that create your emotions may frequently appear in a kind of shorthand: "No good . . . crazy . . . feeling sick . . . dumb," and so on. That shorthand has to be stretched out into the original sentence from which it was extracted. The sentence can then be challenged with methods you'll learn in the section on refuting irrational ideas.

## Example of Refuting Irrational Ideas

Rational Emotive Imagery was practiced by a housewife who became depressed whenever her husband turned on the television in the evening. During the day, she conjured the situation up in her imagination: her husband wiping his mouth, getting up from the table, taking the plates to the sink, and leaving the room. She could imagine a few moments later the sound of the television coming on, the changing of channels, voices from his favorite situation comedy. As she went through the sequence, she sank into despondency.

After becoming fully in contact with the stressful emotion, she pushed herself to change the feeling into one of disappointment and irritation. It felt like shoving a huge rock, and it took fifteen minutes of effort before she could get even momentary contact with the more appropriate emotions. Practicing at hourly intervals, she was soon able to push the depression into irritation or disappointment for several minutes.

She was ready to examine how she had changed her thoughts (self-talk) in order to change her emotions. She found she could change depression into irritation by saying, "I don't have to feel helpless. If he wants to spend his time with TV, I can do something that feels good to me." Other thoughts included: "It's his life. He can waste it if he wants to. I'm not going to waste mine. There are people that I don't visit because I think I should stay home with him. I'm going to take care of myself. He may be displeased if I don't stay home, but this is not fulfilling for me."

# Rules to Promote Rational Thinking

Evaluate your self-statements against these six rules or guidelines for rational thinking (from David Goodman's *Emotional Well Being Through Rationale Behavior Training*.)

## **It doesn't do anything to me.**

The situation doesn't make me anxious or afraid. I say things to myself that produce anxiety and fear.

## **Everything is exactly the way it should be.**

The conditions for things or people to be otherwise don't exist. To say that things should be other than what they are is to believe in magic. They are what they are because of a long series of casual events, including interpretations, responses from irrational self-talk, and so on. To say that thing should be different is to throw out causality.

## **All humans are fallible creatures.**

This is inescapable. If you haven't set reasonable quotas of failure for yourself and others, you increase the prospects for disappointment and unhappiness. It becomes all too easy to attack yourself and others as worthless, bad, and so on.

## **It takes two to have a conflict.**

Before beginning a course of accusation and blame, consider the 30 percent rule. Any party to a conflict is contributing at least 30 percent of the fuel to keep it going.

## **The original cause is lost in antiquity.**

It is a waste of time to try to discover who did what first. The search for the original cause of chronic painful emotions is extremely difficult. The best strategy is to make decisions to change your behavior *now*.

## **We feel the way we think.**

This is the positively stated principle behind the first statement in this list. It reinforces the idea that events don't cause emotions - our interpretations of events cause emotions.

# Refuting Irrational Ideas

There are five steps (A through E) to disputing and eliminating irrational ideas. Start by selecting a situation that consistently generates stressful emotions in you.

- A. **Write down the facts** of the event as they occurred at the time you were upset. Be certain to include only the *objective* facts, not conjecture subjective impressions, or value judgements.
- B. **Write down your self-talk** about the event. State all your subjective value judgements, assumptions, beliefs, predictions, and worries. Note which self-statements have been previously described as irrational ideas.
- C. **Focus on your emotional response.** Make a clear one or two word label such as angry, depressed, felt worthless, afraid, and so on.
- D. **Dispute and change the irrational self-talk** identified at step B. Here's how it is done, according to Ellis:
  1. **Select the irrational idea** that you wish to dispute. As an illustration, we will use the irrational idea, "It's not fair that I have to suffer with such a problem.
  2. **Is there any rational support for this idea?** Since everything is as it should be, given long chains of cause and effect, the answer is no. The problem must be endured and deal with because it happened. It happened because all the conditions existed necessary to make it happen.
  3. **What evidence exists for the falseness of this idea?**
    - a) There are no laws of the universe that say I shouldn't have pain or problems. I can experience any problem for which the necessary conditions exist.
    - b) Life is not fair. Life is just a sequence of events, some of which bring pleasure and some of which are inconvenient and painful.
    - c) If problems occur, it is up to me to solve them.
    - d) Trying to keep a problem from developing is adaptive, but resenting and not facing it once it exists is a dangerous strategy.
    - e) No one is special. Some go through life with relatively less pain than I do. This is due to one of two things: Luck of the draw, or decisions I have made that contributed to the necessary conditions for my problems.

- f) Just because I have a problem doesn't mean I have to suffer. I can take pride in the challenge of a creative solution. This may be an opportunity to increase my self-esteem.
4. **Does my evidence exist for the truth of this idea?** No, my suffering is due to my self-talk, how I have interpreted this event. I have convinced myself that I should be unhappy.
5. **What is the worst thing that could happen to me** if what I want to happen doesn't, or what I don't want to happen does?
- a. I could be deprived of various pleasures while I deal with the problem.
  - b. I might feel inconvenienced.
  - c. I might never solve the problem and experience myself as ineffective in this particular area.
  - d. I might have to accept the consequences of failure.
  - e. Others might not approve of how I am behaving or I might be rejected as incompetent.
  - f. I might feel more stress, tension, and a sense of being up against it.
6. **What good things might occur** if what you want to happen doesn't, or what you don't want to happen does?
- a. I might learn to tolerate frustration better.
  - b. I might improve my coping skills.
  - c. I might become more responsible.
7. **Substitute alternative self-talk**, now that you have clearly examined the irrational idea and compared it with rational thinking.
- 1. There's nothing special about me. I can accept painful situations when they emerge.
  - 2. Facing the problem is more adaptive than resenting it or running away from it.
  - 3. I feel what I think. If I don't think negative thoughts, I won't feel stressful emotions. At worst I will experience inconvenience, regret, and annoyance - not anxiety, depression, and rage.

## Homework Sheet

### A. Activating event:

*A friend canceled a date with me.*

### B. Rational Ideas:

*I know he's under a lot of time pressure right now . . . I'll do something by myself.*

### Irrational Ideas:

*I'll feel terribly alone tonight . . . The emptiness is setting in . . . He doesn't really care for me . . . No one really wants to spend time with me . . . I'm falling apart.*

### C. Consequences of the irrational ideas:

*I was depressed . . . I was moderately anxious.*

### D. Disputing and challenging the irrational ideas:

#### 1. Select the irrational idea:

*I'll feel terribly alone tonight . . . I'm falling apart.*

#### 2. Is there any rational support for this idea?

*No.*

#### 3. What evidence exists for the falseness of the idea?

*Being alone is not as pleasurable as having a date, but I can find pleasure in an alternative activity.*

*I usually enjoy being alone, and I will tonight as soon as I face the disappointment.*

*I'm mislabeling frustration and disappointment as "falling apart."*

#### 4. Does any evidence exist for the truth of the idea?

*No, only that I've talked myself into feeling depressed.*



**5. What is the worst thing that could happen to me?**

*I could continue to feel disappointed and not find anything really pleasurable to do tonight.*

**6. What good things might occur?**

*I might feel more self-reliant, and realize that I do have inner resources.*

**E. Alternative thoughts:**

I'm Ok. I'll get out my detective novel. I'll treat myself to a good Chinese dinner. I'm good at being alone.

***Alternative emotions:***

I feel quite, a little disappointed, but I'm anticipating a good meal and good book.

## Homework Sheet

A. Activating event:

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B. Rational ideas:

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---

Irrational ideas:

---

---

C. Consequences of the irrational ideas:

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---

D. Disputing and challenging the irrational ideas:

1. Select the irrational idea:

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2. Is there any rational support for this idea?

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3. What evidence exists for the falseness of the idea?

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4. Does any evidence exist for the truth of the idea?

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5. What is the worst thing that could happen to me?

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6. What good things might occur?

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E. Alternative thoughts:

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---

Alternative emotions:

---

---

# LISTING YOUR STRESSFUL THOUGHTS

## Instructions:

### 1. *Explore and List Your Stressful Thoughts*

Use the following stressful thoughts inventory to help you assess which recurrent thoughts are the most painful and intrusive.

#### Stressful Thoughts Inventory

Put a check mark after each item that applies to you. For items that you check, rate them in column A from 1 to 5, based on these statements:

1. *Sensible.* This is quite a sensible and reasonable thing for me to think.
2. *Habit.* This is just a habit. I think it automatically, without really worrying about it.
3. *Not necessary.* I often realize that this thought is not really necessary, but I don't try to stop it.
4. *Try to stop.* I know this thought is not necessary. It bothers me, and I try to stop it.
5. *Try very hard to stop.* This thought upsets me a great deal, and I try very hard to stop it.

For items that you check, rate them in column B from 1 to 4, based, on the following statements:

1. *No interference.* This thought does not interfere with other activities.
2. *Interferes a little.* This thought interferes a little with other activities, or wastes a little of my time.
3. *Interferes moderately.* This thought interferes with other activities, or wastes some of my time.
4. *Interferes a great deal.* This thought stops me from doing a lot of things, and wastes a lot of time every day.

Stressful Thought	Check here if your answer is yes	A If yes, rate from 1 to 5	B Rate from 1 to 4
Do you worry about being on time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about leaving the lights or the gas on, or whether the doors are locked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about keeping the house always clean and tidy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about keeping things in their right place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about your physical health?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about doing things in their right order?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you ever have to count things several times or go through the numbers in your mind?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Are you a person who often has a guilty conscience over quite ordinary things?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do unpleasant or frightening thoughts or words ever keep going over and over in your mind?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Have you ever been troubled by certain thoughts of harming yourself or others--thoughts which come and go without any particular reason?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about household things that might chip or splinter if they were to be knocked over or broken?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you ever have persistent ideas that someone you know might be having an accident or that something might have happened to them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Are you preoccupied with the fear of being raped or assaulted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you go back and think about a task you have already completed, wondering how you could have done it better?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you find yourself concerned with germs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you have to turn things over and over in your mind before being able to decide about what to do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you ask yourself questions or have doubts about a lot of things that you do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____

Stressful Thought	Check here if your answer is yes	A If yes, rate from 1 to 5	B Rate from 1 to 4
Are there any particular things that you try to keep away from or that you avoid doing, because you know that you would be upset by them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about money a lot?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you frequently think that things will not get better and may, in fact, get worse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you become preoccupied with angry or irritated thoughts when people don't do things carefully or correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you ruminate about details?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do guilt-tinged memories return to you over and over?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you have recurring feelings of jealousy, or fear of being left?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you feel nervous about heights?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Are you at times preoccupied with desire for things you cannot have?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about auto accidents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you find yourself returning to thoughts about your faults?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about growing old?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you feel nervous when thinking about being alone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about dirt and/or dirty things?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you tend to worry a bit about personal cleanliness or tidiness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Does a negative feature of your appearance or makeup preoccupy you at times?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you worry about getting trapped in crowds, on bridges, elevators, and so on?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you think again and again about your failures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Sometimes do you think about your home burning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Do you think frequently of certain things of which you are ashamed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Are you preoccupied with uncomfortable thoughts and sex or sexual adequacy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____

(Adapted from the Leyton Scale)

Ask yourself these questions about each stressful thought you checked: Is the thought realistic or unrealistic? Is the thought productive or counter-productive? Is the thought neutral or self-defeating? Is the thought easy or hard to control?

Thought stopping requires consistent motivation. Decide now if you really want to eliminate any of the stressful thoughts you have listed. Select a thought that you feel strongly committed to extinguishing. Column A is the *discomfort* rating for each thought, while column B is the *interference* rating for how disruptive it is to your life. Any thought that has a discomfort rating above three, or an interference rating above two many warrant thought stopping procedures.

# REFUTING IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS

Almost every minute of your conscious life you are engaging in self-talk, your internal thought language. These are the sentences with which you describe and interpret the world. If this self-talk is accurate and in touch with reality, you will be all right, but if it is untrue and out of touch with reality you will experience stress and emotional disturbance.

An example of irrational self-talk is: "I should never be mean to my wife. If I am, I am a rotten person." The word never allows any possibility of flaw or failure, and when the inevitable fight occurs, you dub yourself as entirely rotten.

Irrational ideas may be based on outright misperceptions (when there is a thunder storm I know I am just the unlucky one who will be struck by lightning), or perfectionist "shoulds", "oughts" and "musts" (I shouldn't say anything although I know I'm being taken advantage of, or it will upset everyone). Inaccurate self-talk such as "I must be thin to be attractive to other people" could be more constructive when phrased, as "I want to lose weight to feel and look better".

Albert Ellis developed a system to attack irrational ideas and replace them with realistic statements about the world. He called this rational-emotive therapy and his theory includes the basic thesis that emotions have nothing to do with actual events. In between the event and the emotion is unrealistic or realistic self-talk, and it is the self-talk that produces the emotions. Your own thoughts, directed and controlled by you, are what create, anxiety, anger and depression.

## Special Considerations

If you are having difficulty making headway with RET, one of the following factors may be the influence:

1. You remain unconvinced that thoughts cause emotions. If this is the case try Rational Emotive Imagery.
2. Your irrational ideas and self-talk are so swift that you can't "catch" them. You will need to keep a journal while undergoing intense emotions. Put down everything that flows through your mind: Images, scenes, single words and so on.
3. You have difficulty remembering your thoughts. Use a journal to write down everything that is occurring, don't wait until later.



## RATIONAL EMOTIVE IMAGERY

1. Imagine an event that is stressful and is usually accompanied by stressful emotions. Notice all the details of the situation: sight, smell, sound, how you are dressed etc.
2. As you imagine the event let yourself feel uncomfortable. Don't try to avoid the emotions, but feel the anger, shame, depression, whatever.
3. After experiencing the stressful emotion *push* yourself to change it. You can fundamentally alter the emotion of anxiety, depression, rage, and guilt and replace it with concern, disappointment, annoyance or regret.
4. Having "contacted" the emotion and having replaced it, if only for a few seconds, examine how you accomplished this. What happened inside your head that altered your original depression, rage (and so on)? What has happened is that you have told yourself something different about yourself, about others, or about the situation.
5. Instead of saying "I can't handle this; it will drive me crazy" you might have said, "I've handled situations like this before, and I've always managed". You have changed your beliefs, and your interpretations of experience. Once you know how you changed the stressful emotion to a more appropriate one, you can substitute the new, adaptive beliefs any time you want. Become deeply aware of how the new beliefs lead you away from stress and towards more bearable emotions.

### Insight

It is important to recognize that there are three levels of insight necessary to change:

1. Knowledge that you have a problem, and awareness of some of the events that might have caused the problem.
2. Seeing clearly the irrational ideas you acquired early in life, and the emotional climate that they are creating for you right now
3. The strong belief that after discovering these two insights, you will still find no way of eliminating the problem other than steadily, persistently and vigorously working to change your irrational ideas.

Without a commitment to this last insight it will be very difficult to alter your behavior.

# THOUGHT STOPPING

Bain first introduced thought stopping in his book "Thought Control in Everyday Life" In the late 1950's it was adapted by Joseph Wolpe and other behavior therapists for the treatment of obsessive and phobic thoughts. Obsessions are repetitive and intrusive trains of thought that are unrealistic, unproductive and anxiety provoking. Obsessions may take the form of self-doubt such as " I can never do this right" or "I'm too fat or too plain for anyone to ask me out". Obsessions may also take the form of fear: "I wonder if something is wrong with my heart" or "If they raise the rent I will have to move out" Phobias are specific objects or situations that are so frightening that they must be avoided if at all possible.

Thought stopping involves concentrating on the unwanted thoughts and after a short time suddenly stopping and "emptying" your mind. The command "Stop!" or a loud noise is generally used to interrupt the unpleasant thoughts. There are a few explanations for the success of thought stopping techniques:

1. The command "stop" serves as a punishment and behavior that is likely to be punished, often ceases or decreases in frequency.
2. The command "stop" acts as a distracter, and the imperative self instruction is incompatible with obsessive phobic thoughts
3. Thought stopping is an assertive response and can be followed by thought substitutions of reassuring or self-accepting statements.

It has been well documented that negative or frightening thoughts invariably precede negative or frightening emotions. If the thoughts can be controlled, overall stress levels can be significantly reduced.

## **Symptom relief**

Thought stopping has been effective with a wide variety of obsessive and phobic thoughts such as thoughts of failure, hypochondriasis, sexual inadequacy, obsessive memories and frightening re-occurring thoughts that lead to tension and anxiety attacks. Although thought stopping has been shown to be only effective in 20% of compulsive ritual behaviors, it is more than 70% effective against phobias such as fear of snakes, driving, heights, the dark, etc. Thought stopping is recommended when the problem is primarily cognitive rather than acted out. It is indicated when specific thoughts or images are repeatedly experienced as painful or leading to unpleasant emotional states.

The first piece in thought stopping is:

### **Explore and List Your Stressful Thoughts**

Ask yourself this question about every stressful thought you checked; is this thought realistic or unrealistic? Is this thought productive or counter-productive? Is this thought neutral or self-defeating? Is the thought easy or hard to control?

Thought stopping requires constant motivation. Decide NOW if you really want to eliminate it.

### **Imagine the Thought**

Close your eyes and imagine a stressful situation in which the thought is likely to occur. Try to include "normal" thoughts with the obsessive thoughts. In this way you can interrupt the stressful thoughts while allowing a continuing flow of healthy thinking.

### **Thought Interruption**

There are a couple of techniques can be used for thought interruption, called "startler" techniques.

Set an egg timer for three minutes. Close your eyes and ruminate on the stressful thought. When you hear the ring shout "Stop!" You may also want to raise your hand, snap your fingers or stand up. Let your mind empty of all but neutral and nonanxious thoughts. Set a goal of about 30 seconds for your mind to remain blank. If your thought returns within that time shout "Stop" again.

A second technique would be to tape yourself exclaiming "Stop!" at intermittent intervals (e.g. three minutes, two minutes, three minutes, one minute) You may find it useful to repeat the taped stop messages several times at five second intervals. Proceed the same way as with the egg timer. The tape recording shapes and strengthens your thought control.

### **Unaided Thought Interruption**

Now take control of the thought stopping cue, without the timer or tape recorder. While ruminating on the unwanted thought shout "Stop!" When you succeed in extinguishing the thought on several occasions with the shouted command, begin interrupting the thought with "Stop" said in a normal voice.

After succeeding with stopping the thought using a normal voice, start interrupting the thought with "Stop" verbalized in as whisper.

When the whisper is sufficient to interrupt the stressful thought, use the sub-vocal command "Stop"! Imagine hearing the word "Stop!" shouted inside your head. Tighten your vocal chords and move your tongue as if you were saying "Stop!" out loud. Success at this stage means that you can stop thoughts alone or in public without making a sound or calling attention to yourself.

### **Thought Substitution**

The last phase of thought stopping is thought substitution. In place of the obsessive thought make up some positive assertive statements that are appropriate to the situation. For example if you are afraid of flying you could say to yourself "Wow, it's a fantastic view from up here". Develop several assertive statements to say as using the same one over and over makes it lose power.

### **Special Considerations**

1. Failure at your first attempt at thought stopping may mean that you have selected a thought that is very difficult to extinguish. Choose an unwanted but less frightening thought to practice on first.
2. If the sub-vocalized thought is embarrassing in public or not successful, try keeping a rubber band on your wrist which you can "snap" when an unwanted thought occurs. Or pinch yourself or press your nails into the palm of your hand.
3. You should be aware that thought stopping takes time. The thought will return and you will have to stop it again. The main effort is to stifle each thought as it begins, and focus on something else. The thoughts will return less and less and eventually cease.

# Example of Successful Thought Stopping

A business executive who did a great deal of traveling developed a fear of sleeping in strange places. He was aware that his obsessive worrying about having to take overnight trips had begun about the time of his divorce. When preparing for bed in the motel, he would think about people entering the room by passkey while he slept. While planning for his next business trip at home, he would become very tense anticipating the anxiety he would feel in the strange motel.

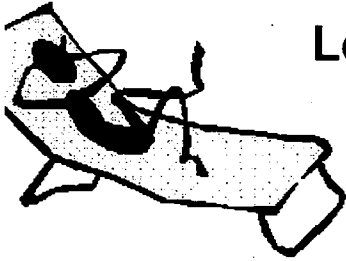
Utilizing thought stopping techniques, he allowed himself to visualize unpacking in a strange motel, thinking about plans for the next day, and anticipating going to bed. He imagined lying in darkness with the feeling that the door might be swinging slightly ajar. In the middle of these thoughts the egg timer went off - he shouted, "Stop!" and simultaneously snapped his fingers. If the thought recurred before 30 seconds were up, he shouted "Stop!" again.

After succeeding with the shout, he began saying "Stop!" in a normal voice, and then a whisper. Finally, he was able to shout "stop!" silently inside his head. He noted that he had repeated each phrase five or ten times before feeling that he could go on to the next one. During the next three days, he shouted "Stop!" sub-audibly at the very beginning of each phobic thought. Occasionally he reinforced the command by snapping a rubber band, which he kept around his wrist. The thoughts decreased in frequency and only lasted a few moments when they occurred. He had markedly decreased stress on his next trip. He took his tape recorder and set it to say "Stop!" at intervals of five, ten, three, and eight minutes during the time he was preparing for bed. By the end of the trip, he was aware that he wasn't thinking about the terrors of sleeping in strange places, but was much more focused on the challenges of his business.

# Coping Skills Training



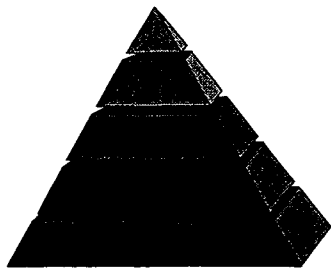
# Instructions



## Learning to Relax Efficiently

The foundation stone of coping skills training is knowing how to relax. First you need to learn progressive relaxation so that deep muscle relaxation can be achieved in a minute or two. This relaxation procedure should be “over learned” so it can be done almost automatically, at a moment’s notice. The sequences of tensing and relaxing muscles can then be gone through with the same unconscious coordination with which you drive a car or tie your shoelaces.

The second component of relaxation is diaphragmatic or abdominal breathing. To achieve deep breathing, place both hands on your abdomen, just above the pubic area. Breathe in so that the air expands your belly and pushes your hands. Direct all the air downward into your abdomen to push your hands as much as feels comfortable. Let each breath be deep, at a rhythm that feels right to you, and let it gently push your hands. Exhale with a sigh, and imagine that the tension is flowing out of your body as you let go of each breath.



## Making a Stressful Events Hierarchy

You are now ready to make a list of all your current life situations that trigger anxiety. Include any stressful event that you are likely to encounter in the relatively near future. Be specific, including the setting and the persons involved. Get as close to 20 items on your list as possible, and let them run the full gamut from very mild discomfort to your most dreaded experiences.

Your list can be turned into a hierarchy by ranking the stressful experiences in order, from the least to the most anxiety producing. Each item on the list should represent an increase in stress over the last item, and the increases should be in approximately equal increments. To accomplish this, Wolpe has devised a rating system based on *Subjective Units of Distress* (SUDS). Total relaxation is zero SUDS, while the most stressful situation on your hierarchy is rated at 100 SUDS. All the other items fall somewhere in between, and are assigned SUDS scores based on your subjective impression of where each situation falls relative to your most relaxed or most anxious states. For example, if the most stressful item on your hierarchy, "making conversation with attractive members of the opposite sex," is ranked at 100 SUDS, then "working right up to a deadline" might be ranked 65 SUDS, and "speech at PTA meeting" might fall down around 35 SUDS. You are the expert on how you react to each situation, and you therefore must decide where each stressful event fits, relative to the others. It is advisable, on a list of 20 items, to separate them by increments of five SUDS. In that way, the items will progress in relatively equal steps from one to twenty. The following sample hierarchy was constructed by a school teacher:

A good hierarchy is a mixture of many different concerns. Its focus is not limited to one particular fear or problem in your life. The described situations are succinct, but clear enough to reconstruct the scene in imagination.





## Example

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>SUDS (Subjective Units of Distress)</b>
1	Running Cub Scouts meeting Wednesday afternoons	5
2	Rushing to get son to violin lesson	10
3	Routine doctor's appointment	15
4	Gynecological exam	20
5	Yard duty in cold weather	25
6	Catching up on Saturday with housework and bill and correcting papers	30
7	Fatigued at end of day, but still needing to shop and cook	35
8	Disagreement with husband over bills, spending on dresses, etc.	40
9	Deadline for written evaluation of student teacher, problem child, etc.	45
10	Preparing house for social occasion	50
11	Having to work late at school and going home after dark.	55
12	Extra work assignment when tired: hall displays, report to school psychologist	60
13	Preparation for observation by principal	65
14	Being alone at night because husband is working late	70
15	Evening consultation meetings with parents	75
16	Principal criticizes something in which a lot of work has been invested.	80
17	Complaints from parents	85
18	Husband announces a business trip	90
19	Fit of worrying about health brought on by intense menstrual symptoms	95
20	Asthmatic son sick at home while working	100

## **Applying Relaxation Techniques to Your Hierarchy**

Your hierarchy can now be used for learning how to relax while experiencing stress. Start with the first scene (lowest SUDS) and build a clear picture of the situation in your imagination. Hold onto the stress image for 30 to 40 seconds. Notice the beginning of any tension in your body, any sense of anxiety. Use the sensation of tension as a signal for deep muscle relaxation and deep breathing. Tightening in your body is like an early warning system of what later will be real emotional discomfort. You can relax away this tension, even as you imagine the stressful situations.

When you have twice imagined a particular scene without tension or anxiety, holding a clear image 20 seconds each time, go on to the next item in your hierarchy. In the next few days, move through your entire hierarchy of stressful situations using this same procedure, progressing from the least to most difficult. At the end, you will have a more profound awareness of how and where tension builds in your body. You will welcome early signs of tension as your signal to relax. Mastery of those items with the highest SUDS provides a degree of confidence that stress reduction is possible, even in the most threatening situations.

Learning relaxation in the face of fear requires that each scene be vivid and real to you. Make an effort to call up the sounds, smells, sights, and textures of the situation. The first few times you may not feel "in it" at all. However, the more you practice putting yourself in the picture, letting the scene touch each of your senses, the easier it will be to really feel what it's like to be there. If you have trouble evoking the scene, describe it vividly and completely into a tape recorder. Play it back with eyes closed, letting the words call up the sense impressions of your problem situation. Include on the tape all dialogues and statements by others that you find distressing and describe your body movements. As soon as you are successful at visualizing the scene, notice any physical tension and begin the relaxation response. Rather than a signal for anxiety, physical tension is now your signal to relax.

The first day you begin practicing relaxation with your hierarchy, don't push much beyond three or four scenes. Stop before you get tired or turned off by the procedure. By the end of four days, you should have made it through the entire hierarchy. After you have relaxed your way through the list two or three times, you may expect a feeling of greater confidence when confronting the same problem situations in real life.



## Stress-Coping Thoughts

Having mastered relaxation skills using the hierarchy, you are ready to create a personal list of stress-coping thoughts. Stress-coping thoughts can short circuit painful emotions. To understand how they work, you must consider the four components of an emotional response:

1. **The stimulus situation:** Your supervisor has just gotten angry at you for forgetting an appointment.
2. **Physical reactions:** Your autonomic nervous system produces symptoms such as hand tremor, tightness in the stomach, sweating, palpitations, light headedness, and so on.
3. **Behavioral response:** Your attempt to deal with the situation by apologizing and getting away as quickly as possible.
4. **Thoughts:** Your interpretations of the situation, predictions, and self-evaluations are what create emotions. If, at this point, you say to yourself, "I can't stand this . . . It's too much for me . . . I'm falling apart," then the emotional response will be fear. If your self statements are, "I've had it with him riding me all the time . . . He's a real jerk," then your emotional response is likely to be anger.

Your interpretation of the incident and how you imagine it will affect the future, and what you say to yourself about your own worth are the ways you select and intensify the emotions you will feel.

If you say to yourself, "I'm going to fail (prediction), I'm too nervous and disorganized for this kind of job (self-evaluation), I know he wants to get rid of me (interpretation)," then your physiological response will probably be sweating, tremor, and a knot in your stomach. Noticing the physical reactions, you might then think, "I'm panicking, I can't do this anymore, I've got to go home." These self-statements in turn increase the physiological symptoms and the tendency to make poor decisions. The feedback loop from thoughts to physical reactions to behavioral choices to more negative thoughts can continue unbroken into a state of chronic stress.

Your thoughts don't have to intensify fear. Instead, they can act as tranquilizers for a tense stomach, calming you and pushing away panic. The feedback loop can work for you as well as against you. Stress-coping thoughts tell your body there is no need for arousal - it can relax. In the middle of any stressful situation, you can begin saying to yourself a series of fear-conquering statements such as, "stay calm . . . You've dealt with this before . . . Relax now . . . He can't really hurt me."



## Example

The more attention you give to your coping monologue, the quicker relief will come from physiological arousal, which is described as the "fight or flight" reaction. Make your own list of stress-coping thoughts and memorize them. Meichenbaum and Cameron's stress inoculation program suggested the following categories for stress-coping statements:

### 1. Preparation

There's nothing to worry about.  
I'm going to be all right.  
I've succeeded with this before.  
What exactly do I have to do?  
I know I can do each one of these tasks.  
It's easier once you get started.  
I'll jump in and be all right.

### 2. Confronting the stressful situation

Stay organized.  
Take it step-by-step; don't rush.  
I can do this; I'm doing it now.  
I can only do my best.  
Any tension I feel is a signal to use my coping exercises.  
I can get help if I need it.  
If I don't think about fear, I won't be afraid.  
If I get tense, I'll take a breather and relax.

### 3. Coping with fear

Relax now!  
Just breathe deeply.  
There's an end to it.  
Keep my mind on right now, on the task at hand.  
I can keep this within limits I can handle.  
I can always call \_\_\_\_\_.  
I am only afraid because I decided to be.

### 4. Reinforcing success

I did it!  
I did all right. I did well.  
Next time I won't have to worry so much.  
I am able to relax away anxiety.  
I've got to tell \_\_\_\_\_ about this.  
It's possible not to be scared. All I have to do is stop thinking I'm scared.

Adapted from "The Clinical Potential of Modifying What Clients Say to Themselves" by D. Meichenbaum and R. Cameron. In M.J. Mahoney and C.E. Thoresen, *Self-Control: Power to the Person*. Copyright © 1974 by Wadsworth, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

Some of these stress-coping thoughts may work for you, but your best ones will probably be those you write yourself. Memorize a number of them for each of the four stages of coping: Preparation for stress, facing the challenge, feeling the rising fear, and self-congratulation. Make the coping statements meaningful to *you*, and change them if they begin to lose their power. Keep the list handy: Scotch tape some of the most useful stress-coping thoughts on your nightstand, over the kitchen sink, on the inside flap of your briefcase. Slip them inside the cellophane of your cigarettes. Let them become second nature.

## Coping “in Vivo”



The final step in the training is applying coping skills in real life situations. When encountering stress, body tension is used as a cue to relax away tightness. At the same time, stress-coping thoughts flow in a constant stream as you prepare for and confront the situation, limit the fear, and praise yourself for meeting the challenge.

It is expected that using coping skills in vivo will be more difficult than relaxing away stress in the imagined scenes. Some setbacks are inevitable. Practice, however, will make relaxation and stress-coping thoughts so natural that they will automatically begin at the first clutch of tension.

# **References and Resources**



Date \_\_\_\_\_

## THINGS TO DO TODAY

TO DO	
1	
2	
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18	

TO CONTACT	
Time	Person / Place / Phone

TO FOLLOW UP

***Weekly Calendar:***

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
<b>M o r n i n g</b>						
<b>A f t e r n o o n</b>						
<b>E v e n i n g s</b>						

# Weekly Schedule

Week: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
Staff Signature:				Title:			

# 5 STEPS

by Timothy J. O'Brien

**Whenever you face a problem, gain quick control of the situation by answering these five questions.**

- ☺ What is the problem? Define it precisely, accurately and objectively. Emotions cloud and confound real issues.
- ☺ What is the cause of this problem? Detail what you feel are the underlying factors that cause the problem. List everything you can think of.
- ☺ What is my goal? What do you hope to accomplish? What is the ideal resolution to your problem? Is it a real problem? Is it worth correcting, or should you learn to accept it?
- ☺ What is the solution? Quickly list 5 to 7 possible solutions. Don't think too much about it. Try to get your spontaneous thoughts on paper. After you list your instant answers, look at them. Rank them in order of perceived value. Later, you will use approach one first, then number two etc.
- ☺ What techniques or methodology should I use to correct this problem? List people, resources and approaches that can or must play a part in the solution to your problem. Write out a time frame, also. Everything needs that context of time.



**Using a problem solving approach like this helps identify and define an inhibiting situation. It proposes self-generated solutions; a methodology of approach and it clarifies goals and intentions.**

- ☞ A way to make this five-step approach even more effective is to break the problem into its smallest parts and perform this analysis on each part.
- ☞ Then, what once appeared overwhelming and insurmountable becomes manageable. And the solution that was once hidden becomes obvious and attainable.

## Burnout Rating Quiz

The following quiz is one way to rate how prone we are to burnout, or our “burnout index”. Following the quiz is a scoring key\* and list containing some common signs and symptoms that are associated with burnout or that are seen shortly prior to burnout.

	Seldom	Some- times	Always
1. I feel hostile or angry at work.	1	2	3
2. I feel like I have to succeed all the time.	1	2	3
3. I find myself withdrawing from co-workers.	1	2	3
4. I feel like everything I’m asked to do is an imposition.	1	2	3
5. I find myself increasingly insensitive or callous to clients, co-workers, or associates.	1	2	3
6. Work has become very boring, tedious, and routine.	1	2	3
7. I feel like I’m at a standstill in my career.	1	2	3
8. I find myself feeling negative about work and focusing only on its bad aspects.	1	2	3
9. I find myself accomplishing less than I ever had before.	1	2	3
10. I have trouble organizing my work and my time.	1	2	3
11. I’m more short-tempered than I’ve ever been before.	1	2	3
12. I feel inadequate and powerless to make changes at work.	1	2	3
13. I find myself taking out my work frustrations at home.	1	2	3
14. I consciously avoid personal contact more than I ever have.	1	2	3
15. I find myself asking whether my job is right for me.	1	2	3
16. I find myself thinking negatively about work even when I go to bed at night.	1	2	3
17. I approach each work day with the attitude of “I don’t know if I’m going to make it through another day.”	1	2	3
18. I feel as if no one at work cares about what I do.	1	2	3
19. I find myself spending less time working and more time avoiding work.	1	2	3
20. I feel tired or exhausted at work even when I get enough sleep at night.	1	2	3

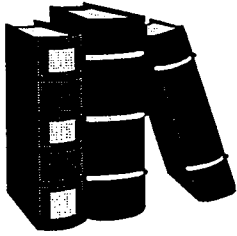
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**\* Scoring Key:**

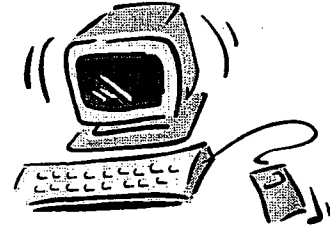
20 – 34 No Burnout

35 – 49 Moderate Burnout (early warning signs)

50 – 60 Severe Burnout (need help & guidance)



# REFERENCES AND RESOURCES



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