MANAGING PERSONAL AND
JOB-RELATED STRESS

Breakthrough to Resilience and Personal Mastery

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217 Ives Hall

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MANAGING PERSONAL AND JOB-RELATED STRESS

Introduction

The purpose of this session is to help participants understand, manage and use stress to their advantage. During the session participants will develop greater self-awareness and insight into their motivation, self-regulation, and resilience. They will explore what gives them meaning through a series of exercises and develop a personal mission, vision and values statement that can be used as a source of strength and inspiration and serve as a proactive design for life.

Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will learn:

1. The causes, effects and nature of stress;
2. Healthy and unhealthy ways of coping with stress;
3. Strategies and techniques for reducing and managing stress and building personal resilience;
4. How to incorporate these strategies and techniques in their values, personal mission and vision.
STRESS AND MODERN LIVING

INTRODUCTION

Stress has become one of the buzzwords of our times. We live in the so-called Age of Anxiety, the very Age of Stress. We talk a lot about being “under stress” and “coping with the stresses of modern life.”

Actually, stress has always been a part of life. We probably have no greater number of stresses to cope with than our forebears had. But the source and nature of stress are usually different now. And the effects are more insidious.

Until quite recently in human history, the major stresses people had to deal with were mostly physical: getting food, keeping food, keeping warm, maintaining shelter, and warding off danger. But since the coming of technologies that help us largely control these factors, the kinds of stress that now confront us are more social and psychological in nature.

Our bodies, however, still respond in ancient ways. They prepare us to strike out vigorously against enemies or run desperately for our lives – actions that are really not appropriate in normal everyday life today.

THE NATURE OF STRESS

As it’s commonly used, the term stress has two meanings. It refers to anything out of the ordinary that we have to adjust to (also called stressors); and to the changes that occur in the body as it attempts to adjust (the stress response or adaptive reaction).

According to Hans Selye, MD, president of the International Institute of Stress in Montreal and a pioneer researcher in the field, we experience both “delightful eustress” and “painful distress” and the body responds in much the same way to any demand made on it, pleasant or unpleasant.

An even earlier researcher, physiologist Walter B. Cannon, called the physical reaction to stress “the wisdom of the body”. The “fight-or-flight” syndrome is the body’s attempt to limit damage by preparing for action when fear, rage or other intense emotions are experienced. Cannon also coined the term homeostasis – the body’s tendency to maintain balance and equilibrium in all its processes. In the face of stress, the body prepares to protect itself first, then return to normal.

OUR BODIES TRY TO ADAPT

In his extensive research, Selye noted three stages in the body’s response to stress; he called the sequence the general adaptation syndrome.

First is the alarm reaction (which corresponds to Cannon’s fight-or-flight response), a varying mixture of alertness, anticipation, curiosity and fear. The brain starts an automatic hustle and bustle of nerve and hormone activity. The pulse quickens, breathing becomes faster and deeper, the senses become more acute, blood pressure and blood sugar rise, muscles tense, perspiration
increases, digestive processes slow down. The body gets ready to do something about the stressor. (This preparation can save your life in a mortal emergency. It can even goad you into creative accomplishment.) What you do depends on how you size up the particular situation and on your personal patterns of behavior.

Soon the body begins to adjust to and resist the stress; this is the stage of resistance, homeostasis of work. If you have taken action to relieve the stress, your body functions begin to return to their normal equilibrium. And that’s that, until the inevitable next time.

But if you haven’t taken action, and if the stress (or your emotions about it) continues, the body soon returns to an aroused, “ready” state, which requires energy to maintain. As energy is used up, the body’s ability to adapt wears down. The physical limits of adjustment are passed and the body can no longer maintain its delicate internal balance. This is the stage of exhaustion. And illness—even death—can result.

What Selye calls “diseases of adaptation” are most likely to occur in the body’s areas of least resistance, its “weak links” – any organ system that may be vulnerable at the time, perhaps because of an inherited tendency or a previous injury.

**HOW TO TELL WHEN IT’S GETTING TO YOU**

People respond to stress in three basic ways. In addition to the physiological sequence of the general adaptation syndrome, there are also emotional and behavioral results. And all three factors are highly interrelated.

Emotions are hard for scientists to measure and difficult for individuals to gauge in themselves. Any emotion, from mild to annoyance to overpowering rage or fear, from amusement to ecstasy, has an intertwining relationship with stress. Some emotions such as fear, resentment, or excitement can bring on the stress response, thus creating physical strain. If that strain is not eased (by emotional expression, a changed frame of reference or problem solving), it can bring on further anxiousness, thus creating a vicious cycle of emotional and physical upset. And all of this, of course, affects behavior – the way we act, how well we perform.

Fortunately, there are many signals which serve to warn us that stress is taking its toll – “symptoms” that show up in varying degrees in our feelings, bodies, and actions.

People under stress may be extremely irritable, getting upset over the most insignificant things. They may feel confused or disoriented. Some people become aggressive; other simply give up, passively avoiding or taking no interest in work or other normal activity.

One might be afraid without knowing what there is to be afraid of (“floating anxiety”). Or the slightest disturbance may be startling.

Keyed-up feelings can prevent sleep; nightmares may disturb it.
A pounding heart may indicate high blood pressure. Headaches, neck pain or lower back pain are often brought on by the muscle tension of the stress reaction. Frequent urination, or bed-wetting in children, may be a sign of stress. Extreme fatigue, trembling, nervous tics, grinning of the teeth, stuttering and other speech difficulties are often indicators. Indigestion is common; appetite may be affected, sometimes increasing, sometimes decreasing.

People also make more and more mistakes under stress and actually become accident-prone.

People experiencing stress in their work may have a high rate of absenteeism-boredom; anger or tensions on the job simply outweigh the desire to go to work.

When you experience any of these conditions, they shouldn’t be thought of as signs of weakness; only as evidence that your body is reaching the limits of what it can safely endure.

**GETTING A GRIP ON STRESS**

If there’s one idea that stands out from all the research that’s been done on stress, it is this:

**It’s not what happens that counts. It’s how you handle it.**

To prevent the bad effects of stress, you have to understand what your individual stresses are and find your own best ways to deal with them. Because coping with stress is just as much an individual matter as the human responses to it.

Handling stressful experiences successfully can contribute greatly to personal growth and the meaningfulness of life. Whatever coping techniques you choose, small successes can give you the confidence needed to go on to larger ones, and you’ll gain increasing control over your physical and emotional response.

Then you can relax and enjoy the positive ones.
### SOURCES AND METHODS OF DEALING WITH STRESS

**Instructions**

List below some of the modern sources of stress on employees and indicate how these stresses are generally handled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Stress</th>
<th>Methods of Handling</th>
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EXERCISE: UNDERSTANDING STRESS

Instructions: In order to clarify our understanding of stress it is necessary to examine our knowledge of the subject and to eliminate false assumptions. Of the statements listed below, indicate whether you think the statement is true (T) or false (F).

1. _________ The less stress in your life the happier you will be.

2. _________ Stress is a physical and psychological response.

3. _________ The automatic (involuntary) nervous system is responsible for the stress response and the relaxation response.

4. _________ Stress has seldom been the cause of death.

5. _________ The symptoms or signs of stress are usually obvious to other people.

6. _________ The less stress there is on the job, the better your performance will be.

7. _________ Stress is related to depression and mental illness.

8. _________ Most organizations create stress to accomplish their goals.

9. _________ Personal values are one of the major sources of stress.

10. _________ The goal of stress management is to improve our health by reducing stress in our work and lives.
BEHAVIORAL REACTIVITY CHART

How does your body manifest its reaction to stress? Place a check mark next to as many of the behaviors that are descriptive of your reactions in a pressure situation.

____ 1. general irritability, hyperexcitation, or depression
____ 2. pounding of heart, increase in blood pressure
____ 3. dryness in mouth
____ 4. impulsive behavior, aggressiveness, or emotional instability
____ 5. urge to cry or to run and hide
____ 6. inability to concentrate, general disorientation
____ 7. accident proneness
____ 8. feelings of weakness, dizziness
____ 9. fatigue or loss of joy or life
____ 10. free-floating anxiety
____ 11. emotional tension, feelings of persecution
____ 12. sexual difficulties
____ 13. trembling, nervous ticks, wringing of hands
____ 14. easily startled, on edge
____ 15. high-pitched, nervous laughter
____ 16. stuttering
____ 17. grinding of teeth
____ 18. insomnia
____ 19. increased tendency to move about (hyperkinesias)
____ 20. excessive sweating, frequent urination, nausea
____ 21. changes in body weight
____ 22. migraines, pains in neck or lower back
____ 23. substance abuse: drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine
____ 24. nightmares
____ 25. withdrawal or lashing out
STRESS-RELATED DISEASES AND DISORDERS

Stress is related to about 80% of the diseases known to modern medicine. Some of these illnesses are severe enough to produce mature death while others only lead to minor discomfort. In either case, the use of proper stress management techniques would lessen the possibility of contracting one or several of these diseases. Below is a partial list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heart Disease</th>
<th>Alcoholism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Blood Pressure</td>
<td>Obesity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Lung Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>Kidney and Urinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acne</td>
<td>Allergies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulcers</td>
<td>Muscular Disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>Osteoporosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramps</td>
<td>Eyesight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronchitis</td>
<td>Mental Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cirrhosis of the Liver</td>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accident-Proneness</td>
<td>Nausea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premature Aging</td>
<td>Gastrointestinal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis</td>
<td>Backaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiff Neck</td>
<td>Excessive Fatigue</td>
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</table>
## JOB AND CAREER STRESSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Behavior Patterns</th>
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</table>
| Twenties    | Provisional career commitment  
23-28        | Developing self-reliance, self confidence  
              | Personal commitment – marriage, family, friends  
              | Establishing competency and control in adult world |
|             | Psychological Realty “I will be”. |
| Early       | Definite career commitments  
Thirties     | Uncertainty, less confidence  
              | Self-reflective, questioning values, self-worth  
              | Martial dissatisfaction, infidelity  
              | Ambivalence, incompatible drives |
|             | Psychological Reality “I’m not certain”. |
| Mid-Life    | Re-evaluating, confronting old values, attitudes, beliefs  
Crisis       | Instability, uncertainty  
35-43        | Major careers and job changes  
              | Concerns: Health, income, career status  
              | Greater financial burdens  
              | Identity crisis  
              | Marital conflicts  
              | Awareness of aging, loss of youth |
|             | Psychological Reality “I am limited”. |
| 43-50       | Restabilization, personal stability  
              | Acceptance of self-limitations  
              | Resurgence of old values, beliefs  
<pre><code>          | Re-emphasis on marriage, family, friends |
</code></pre>
<p>|             | Psychological Reality “I can”. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Fifties| Richer human experiences, relationships  
Mellowed feelings  
Altruistic global interests, special contributions  
Less concerned with past or future |
|        | Psychological Reality “I will”.                                                  |
| Sixties| Stands up for principles, beliefs  
Autonomy from group pressure  
Freedom from family burdens  
Retirement crisis |
|        | Psychological Reality “I am.”                                                    |
LEARN TO RELAX*

Systematic Relaxation Exercise*

First sit in a comfortable chair or lie on a couch or bed. Then say something like the following to yourself, “I am going to relax completely. First, I will relax my forehead and scalp. I will let all the muscles of my forehead and scalp relax and become completely at rest. All of the wrinkles will smooth out of my forehead and that part of my body will relax completely. Now, I will relax the muscles of my face. I will just let them relax and go limp. There will be no tension in my jaw. Next, I will relax my neck muscles. Just let them become tranquil and allow all of the pressure to leave them. My neck muscles are relaxing completely. Now, I will relax the muscles of my shoulders. That relaxation will spread down my arms to the elbows, down the forearm to my wrists, hands, and fingers. My arms will just dangle from the frame of my body. I will now relax the muscles of my chest. I will let them relax. I will take a deep breath and relax, letting all of the tightness and tenseness leave. My breathing will now be normal and relaxed, and I will relax the muscles of my stomach. Now I will relax all of the muscles up and down both sides of the spine; now the waist, buttocks, and thighs down to my knees. Now the relaxation will spread to the calves of my legs, my ankles, feet, and toes. I will just lie there and continue to let all of my muscles go completely limp. I will become completely relaxed from the top of my head to the tip of my toes.”

If you try this one or two times, you will be amazed at just how relaxed you can become. If you have trouble doing this at first, you might try purposely tensing the muscles of various parts of your body a few times and then letting them relax completely immediately following the forced tension. This will teach you to discriminate clearly between the tense and relaxed state, and train you in producing relaxation at will. Go through each of the muscle groups mentioned above (forehead and scalp, face, neck, shoulders, etc.) and learn to relax them one by one. You may spend three or four sessions just working on this. Then go through the whole procedure in one sitting. You will find yourself very relaxed at this point.

SELF-HYPNOSIS

One simple way to do this is to hold your hand, at arm’s length, in front of your face at eye level. Then, stare at a point on the hand. It can be any point such as a knuckle, ring, or freckle. The important thing is focusing vision on a spot. Then, move the hand slowly toward your forehead and bring the point being focused on up to the forehead right between your eyes. When your hand touches your forehead, close your eyes, and go through the relaxation procedure outlined on the previous page. At this point you will be completely relaxed and your eyes will be closed. Now, begin to count and with each count let your body relax a little more and go a little deeper into the state of hypnosis. Beginners may want to count to 45 or 50. With a little practice you will be able to achieve satisfactory results by counting to only 10 or 15. At the end of this procedure you will be in a light state of hypnosis. An alternate procedure is to roll the eyes back into the head as far as you can for a few seconds (rather than focusing of the hand and moving it to the forehead). Follow this with the same relaxation and counting procedure as above.

Once your achieve a light state of hypnosis, you can use it to relieve anxiety. One way is simply to tell yourself that you are going to calm down and get things under control. You will often find that this works wonders. When you wake up you will feel much better, less tense, and more relaxed.

You can also think through problems in this state and figure out ways to handle them. The relaxation and freedom from distraction will facilitate good problem solving.
RELAXATION RESPONSE*

1) Pick a focus word or phrase from your personal belief system that gives you strength or comfort, e.g., “The Lord is my Shepherd”.

2) Sit quietly in a comfortable position.

3) Close your eyes.

4) Deeply relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face by firmly but gently telling them to “relax”.

5) Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word, or phrase, silently to yourself. For example, breathe in…OUT, “The Lord is my Shepherd”.

   IN…OUT, (Say word or phrase), etc. Breathe easily and naturally. Use the same word or phrase during all your sessions so that you’ll come to associate it with the calming impact of the Relaxation Response.

6) Continue for 10 to 20 minutes. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, at first with your eyes closed and later with your eyes opened. Do not stand up for a few minutes.

7) Do not worry about whether you are successful in achieving deep level of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace. When distracting thoughts occur, gently disregard them and return to repeating the work or phrase. With practice, the response should come with little effort. Practice the technique once or twice daily, but not within two hours after any meal, since the digestive processes seem to interfere with the elicitation of the Relaxation Response.

MEDITATION

The two primary aspects of most meditation techniques are concentration and mindfulness. Concentration begins with drawing the meditator’s attention to an internal or external object—such as breath, sound, word, and bodily sensations—while minimizing distractions. Then you focus the mind by gently reining in its natural tendency to wander, repeatedly bringing your attention back to the chosen object. This process relaxes, clears, pacifies, and calms the mind through sustained attention. Breath, mantra, and repetitive prayer are the most commonly used forms of concentration.

Mindfulness is awareness of the present moment. To develop mindfulness, meditators attend alertly, but non-judgmentally, to all processes passing through the mind and body. The idea is to observe experience just as it is. This practice helps us to be awake and alert to all experiences, to meet them with equanimity, and to allow them to pass through the mind and body without holding on to them or rejecting them. These experiences include thoughts, emotions, sounds, and physical sensations. Mindfulness meditation is the practice of seeing these experiences arise just as they are, and letting them go and be without projection or judgment.

This process is summarized in the following:

Meditation is concentration on an object
- breath
- bodily sensations
- sound
- feelings and feeling

With an awareness of the experience
- as it is
- without accepting or rejecting
- just letting be and letting go

That brings
- stillness
- clarity
- relaxation
- insight

And results in greater
- creativity
- comprehension
- health
- memory
- productivity
- relationships

In essence, meditation is the practice of “letting go, and letting be.” In meditation we do not impose anything on our mind too forcefully, nor do we let it wander. There is no ambition to stir up thoughts or to suppress them. We learn to relate to the world “as it is.”
**Posture:** Sit in a chair in a comfortable position with your back straight, your feet flat on the floor, and your hands resting in your lap. Keep your head in alignment with your spine with your chin pointed slightly down. Instead of using a chair, some people may wish to sit on a cushion; but do so only if you can remain comfortable in that position without moving for 20 – 30 minutes.

**Bring Your Attention to the Breath.** Bring attention to your breath – on your upper lip as the breath passes in and out of your nostrils, or on your abdomen as it rises and falls with your breathing. Either is fine. Just relax and gently bring your attention to your breath as it comes in and out and notice any sensations that arise at your point of focus: hot, cold, tingling – any sensation at all. Just be with your breath and these sensations without reacting. As the mind wanders and begins to think or feel about other things, just bring it gently back to the breath and observe. The mind’s natural tendency is to wander, so don’t become perturbed at having to return your attention to the breath frequently. Let go of your wandering thoughts and emotions and return to the breath. You will need to let go hundreds and thousands of times, but in bringing your attention back to your breath remember to do so without judgment or aggression. Just gently bring it back and rest your attention on the breath, let go, and relax.

**Sweep Attention Up and Down the Body.** After the mind has settled and you have achieved some continuity in your attention, turn your attention to the crown of your head and gently notice any sensations that might arise there. Don’t force anything, just gently pay bare attention to what is. As sensations arise – tingling, pleasure, or discomfort – or as thoughts or emotions arise – desire, pain, or indifference – simply let them be as they are and meet them with equanimity without being pulled into reaction. Now spread your attention across the top of your head doing the same – constantly noticing any sensations, thoughts, or feelings as they arise while allowing them to just be.

Sometimes you will feel things and sometimes not, but do not force. Just gently move your attention around the top of your head. Then slowly move it to your face, your neck, your arms, your torso, and so on, sweeping your entire body all the way down to your toes and then slowly back up again to your crown. And repeat the sweeping, up and down the body, all the while paying gentle attention to any thoughts and sensations and meeting them with equanimity. Continue until you want to finish the session, then bring your attention back to the breath and relax there for a few minutes. Gently open your eyes and end the session.

Meditators often devote anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour to the daily practice of meditation. It is through such a daily practice that we reap the benefits. Meditating just now and then does not allow for the benefits to accumulate and have real impact on our life. In using the above technique, it is important to spend one-third of whatever time you take on the concentration aspect – the breath – and two-thirds on the mindfulness aspect – the sweeping.
IDEAS/BELIEFS/NEEDS THAT INCREASE STRESS*

1. We must be loved by everyone and everyone must approve of everything we do.

2. We must be thoroughly competent, adequate, intelligent and achieving in all possible respects.

3. Certain acts are wrong or wicked and people who perform them should be severely punished.

4. It is a terrible catastrophe when things are not as we would like them to be.

5. Unhappiness is the result of external events and happenings that are forced on us and that we have no control over.

6. We should be greatly concerned about dangerous and fearful things and must center our thinking on them until the danger has passed.

7. It is easier to avoid difficulties and responsibilities in life than to face them.

8. We need something or someone stronger than ourselves to rely on.

9. Because something greatly influenced us in the past, it must determine our present behavior; the influence of the past cannot be overcome.

10. What other people do is vitally important to us, and we should make every effort to change them to be the way we think they should be.

11. There is one perfect solution to every problem, and if it is not found, the result will be terrible.

12. One has virtually no control over his emotions or feelings, he is their victim and cannot help how he feels.

13. The dire need to always be right and never make a mistake.

14. The dire need for success and approval.

15. The dire need for considerateness and justice.

16. The dire need for immediate and constant gratification and ease.

GUIDES FOR RATIONALE LIVING AND STRESS MANAGEMENT*

1. Dispute the belief that you must feel loved or accepted by every significant person for almost everything you do.

2. Give up the notion that you must act quite competently, adequately, and achieving. Try to do or to do well rather than to do perfectly.

3. Get rid of the idea that you can label certain people bad, wicked or villainous and that they deserve severe blame or punishment for their sins. Accept and learn from your own and others’ wrong doings and try to correct them in the future.

4. Combat the idea that you must view it as terrible, horrible, and awful when things do not go the way you would like them to go. Instead try to change them for the better.

5. Reject the notion that human misery is externally caused and that you have no ability to control your feelings of depression, self-pity etc. Realize that you create most of your misery with your own irrational shoulds, oughts and musts.

6. Rid yourself of the idea that if something may prove dangerous or fearsome, you must get terribly occupied with and upset about it. Test your assumptions and place fears into a realistic perspective.

7. Stop trying to run away from life’s difficulties and responsibilities. Determine what’s good for you and do it.

8. Surrender the idea that the past is all-important and controls the present. Begin choosing your feelings and living now.

9. Give up the notion that people and things should happen differently from the way they do. You have to accept reality before you can try to change it.

10. Dispute the idea that you can achieve maximum human happiness by inertia or inaction. Get absorbed and involved in life. Force yourself to take risks, to act against inertia, to make yourself committedly alive.

RETRAINING YOUR EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO STRESS

Once you have decided what it is that’s causing your stress, write out a step-by-step plan on how you want to see yourself handling the situation.

1. Become completely relaxed by doing the controlled breathing or muscle relaxation exercises.

2. Write out a script or visualize in your mind the person, place, or thing that normally makes you anxious, such as a deadline to meet.

3. Imagine yourself completely calm and in control of the situation.

4. Decide how you want to see yourself handling the situation, what you want to say or do, how the other person might respond, and the results you would like to see happen.

5. Have several alternatives if the situation doesn’t go exactly as you expect.

6. Maintain a feeling of total relaxation in your body as you visualize the scene.

7. Visualize the scene several times while seeing yourself calm and in control of the situation.

8. Stop visualizing the scene if you feel yourself become tense, and take several deep breaths until you completely relaxed.

9. Repeat the scene as often as necessary until you can see yourself in the situation without feeling tense.

Alternative Technique

If you still feel yourself becoming tense, try this exercise:

1. Imagine the worst possible thing that could happen.

2. Experience the complete intensity of the feeling.

3. As you bring up and experience your worst fears and re-examine them, they gradually begin to lose their control over you.

4. Begin to see how ridiculous it is to be dominated by irrational, negative feelings and start to look for alternative solutions.
CASE 1 – THE NERVOUS STOMACH

Life is really fantastic. At the end of every day you wonder how you could be so lucky. Your job is very exciting, and you are able to travel – which you love – about one week of every two weeks. You always have to be at your best because you are meeting clients every day. You are responsible for bringing in a lot of sales. In fact, it seems that no one every says “No, we’re not interested,” to you. On the weekends, you have an active social life. You just moved to a new apartment and you are now able to have big dinner parties for your many friends. Your only problem is that you seem to have a nervous stomach, which is bothering you more and more lately.

What would you do?

CASE 2 – THE NEW BOSS

You have a new job and you want to do well. But your boss does not seem to like you. She is also new to the job. No matter what you do, your boss is displeased and says it is not at all what she wants. You think you’ll never be able to please her.

What would you do?
**CASE 3 – THE CAREER WOMAN**

You are a 28-year-old woman, and you have been married for four years. You work full-time at a job you really enjoy. You get home about 6:15 p.m. every day. Your husband gets home a 5:30. When he gets home, he reads the paper, listens to the news, has a beer, and relaxes for the evening. When you get home, you fix dinner, clean up the kitchen, pick up his clothes that he throws around, and work on other chores around the house. Although you’re not “big” on women’s lib, you are starting to feel that the situation is not fair. You have tried to bring up the subject once or twice, but your husband has a real temper tantrum each time.

What would you do?

**CASE 4 – THE WORRIER**

You are nearing your fortieth birthday. Despite efforts to laugh it off, you are feeling very, very depressed about it. You can’t seem to get to the bottom of your fears, but you worry constantly. You have not been able to tell anyone about your feelings. Several people have asked you if something is bothering you-so you guess your worries must show.

What would you do?
RESEARCH ON DEALING WITH STRESS

1. **Know yourself** – Purpose, Aim, Commitment, Meaning
2. Altruistic egotism – **Serve Others**
3. Develop a **positive attitude** toward work
4. Be **selective/choose** carefully between catatoxic and syntoxic behavior
5. Don’t **waste time** loving a mad dog
6. Admit there is **no perfection**
7. Avoid affectations – **Live simply**
8. Count pleasant days - **Take stock** of successes and achievements
9. **Act** – Don’t procrastinate
10. Accept **differences** in people
11. **Forget** about short-cuts to anything
12. “Fight for the highest aim but never put up resistance in vain”

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**Grant Study** – Healthy, happy and successful people are:

1. In touch with their **identity** and feelings
2. Have a **purpose** in life
3. Recognize their **needs**
4. Possess **autonomy**
5. Possess **empathy**
6. Able to **work, play, laugh, and solve problems**
STRESS MANAGEMENT REVIEW

1. I could better avoid or ease the impact or stress if I would START…
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   d. 
   e. 
   f. 

2. I could better avoid or ease the impact of stress if I would STOP…
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   d. 
   e. 
   f. 

3. My most effective ways of avoiding or easing the impact of stress are…
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   d. 
   e. 
   f.
STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING PERSONAL RESILIENCE

Notes:
SOURCES OF PERSONAL RESILIENCE

“More than education, more than experience, more than training, a person’s level of resilience will determine who succeeds and who fails. That’s true in the cancer ward, it’s true in the Olympics, and its true in the boardroom . . . Resilience is the skill and capacity to be robust under conditions of enormous stress and change.”

Diane L. Coutu

Resilience means bouncing back from stress, trauma, and risk in our lives. People often become stronger in the process of overcoming adversity. Some protective factors that facilitate resiliency are:

- Sense of humor
- Autonomy
- Initiative
- Creativity
- Good decision-making
- Impulse control
- Insight
- Self-confidence
- Internal locus of control
- Optimism
- Perceptiveness

- Sense of purpose
- Hopefulness
- Positive relationships
- Assertiveness
- Flexibility
- Self-motivation
- Feelings of self-worth
- Personal competence
- Planning and Problem Solving
- Spirituality
- Perseverance

Resilience involves a process of learning and development. It involves becoming aware of how you deal with crisis, conflict, change, and pain and choosing a healthy response. In other words it involves a conscious decision of your defending and coping behaviors or adaptive styles, and responding intelligently to your life’s challenges.

What makes it possible for people facing extreme stress, incredible trauma and hardships, to not only survive, but also to overcome these challenges and thrive?

INSIGHTS INTO RESILIENCE

“The willingness to examine the conduct of one’s life in all of its aspects serves as the one moral ground of all human endeavor.”

Socrates

“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”

Emerson

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face . . . You must do the thing that you think you cannot do.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

“It is said an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him with the words: ‘And this too shall pass away.’ How much it expresses! How chastening in the hour of pride! How consoling in the depths of affliction.”

Lincoln

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of overcoming it.”

Helen Keller

“The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity.”

Tolstoy
Spheres of Personal Control

There’s no point getting upset about things over which you have no control. When you get upset, first ask yourself, “What can I do to improve or change the situation?” If you can do something, do it! If you can’t control or influence the situation, drop it, and redirect your energies to something you can do that will result in some good for you or somebody else.
CHARACTERISTICS OF RESILIENT PEOPLE*

1. **Positive**: they display a security and self-assurance that is based on their view of life as complex, but filled with opportunity.
   - Change your self-talk
   - Meditate or use positive visualization
   - Inventory your strengths & accomplishments
   - Maintain a journal of triumphs
   - Identify factors that make you feel good, e.g., other people, hobbies, etc.

2. **Focused**: they have a clear vision of what they want to achieve.
   - Visualize completion of a successful project
   - Have clear priorities
   - Take small steps toward their goals
   - Use symbols and props to remind them of their aim, e.g., posters, etc.
   - Make a pact with themselves and others to follow up

3. **Flexible**: they demonstrate pliability when responding to uncertainty.
   - Strive to see all sides of a situation without arguing
   - Seek out other views
   - Try to find positive aspects of change
   - Practice using ‘three pluses and a wish’ when responding to suggestions from others
   - Identify people who can help them, i.e., they build a support system

4. **Organized**: they develop structured approaches for managing ambiguity.
   - Make a to-do list for each project
   - Plan their activities and meetings
   - Chunk work down to manageable units
   - Gather and files and information and organize them for easy access
   - Pick a regular time to work each day on their goals

5. **Proactive**: they engage change rather than defend against it.
   - Ask questions about change
   - Assess risks
   - Team up with allies
   - Take responsibility for their own reactions
   - Celebrate

*Adapted from Developing Personal Resilience, ODR, 1995.
**SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL RESILIENCE**

Using the scale below, first indicate your current level for each item. Then enter your desired level or goal for each. Enter the difference in the last column. Circle three or four of the highest numbers in the last column that are important to you. Note: This questionnaire was developed from Daryl Conner’s work about the characteristics of resilient people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE (WORLD)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Find opportunities during change situations</td>
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<td>Develop a number of possibilities during change situations</td>
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<td>Look at the pros as well as the cons during change situations</td>
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<td>Worry very little about those items over which I have not control</td>
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<td><strong>POSITIVE (SELF)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>See myself as a valuable person during the change process</td>
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<td>Believe I am capable during change situations</td>
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<td>Am able to risk failure during times of change and handle it if it happens</td>
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<td>Find some things I can influence/control during change situations</td>
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<td><strong>FOCUSED</strong></td>
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<td>Know clearly my purpose in life and/or in work</td>
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<td>Set and maintain priorities during times of change</td>
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<td>Get back on course if I derail temporarily during change situations</td>
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<td>Set small, interim goals if needed during times of change</td>
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<td><strong>FLEXIBLE (THOUGHTS)</strong></td>
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<td>Handle ambiguity well, especially during change situations</td>
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<td>Suspend judgment during change situations</td>
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<td>Consider several alternatives before making decisions about changes</td>
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<td>Find links between the “old way” and the “changed way”</td>
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<td><strong>FLEXIBLE (SOCIAL)</strong></td>
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<td>Develop a good support system and use it during times of change</td>
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<td>Draw on others’ resources during change situations</td>
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<td>Recognize and practice interdependence with others</td>
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<td>Know when and how to ask for help from others</td>
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<td><strong>ORGANIZED</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Set some structure despite ambiguity during change situations</td>
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*Adapted from Developing Personal Resilience, ODR, 1995.*
Develop and practice self discipline
Able to “chunk down” major change into smaller manageable parts
Develop “Plan A” and “Plan B” during uncertain times

PROACTIVE
Take calculated risks during times of change
Act decisively despite some uncertainty
Invest energy into change situations instead of withdrawing from them
Experiment with an open mind during change situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL RESILIENCE PLAN</th>
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<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
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<td>5.</td>
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UNDERSTANDING DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR

A. Psychotic Defenses
- Delusional Projection (paranoia, persecution): “Everybody is out to get me.”

B. Immature Defenses
- Projection (blaming others): “They’re all a bunch of idiots.”
- Denial (blocking out reality): “I don’t have any problems – really!”
- Passive Aggressive Behavior (provocative behavior): “I don’t get mad, I get even.”
- Acting Out (impulsive behavior): “I told off five people last week.”
- Fantasy (escaping reality): “When I win the lottery, I’ll get out of this place.”

C. Neurotic (Intermediate) Defenses
- Dissociation (temporary change of character): “I tell my colleagues dirty jokes.”
- Displacement (transferring feeling): “I get angry at my spouse because of this job.”
- Intellectualization (rationalization; excuses): “My supervisor acts this way because she’s immature.”
- Repression (forgetting): “I don’t know why I feel so angry all the time.”
- Reaction Formation (reversed behavior): “I love my manager.”

D. Mature Defenses
- Suppression (postponement): “I’m disappointed with some of my colleagues but will hold off from telling them until the time is right.”
- Humor (playfulness): “We laugh and joke about the irony of our circumstances.”
- Sublimation (creative re-channeling): “I relax by playing the piano after work each day.”
- Altruism (helping others): “I deal with my problems by helping others to solve their problems.”
- Anticipation (planning & problem-solving): “I anticipate and work out my problems.”

Longitudinal studies of college graduates and identical twins covering 35 and 60 years respectively, found that defenses in categories A, B and C were directly related to dissatisfaction with life, lack of job success, and premature illness. The mature defenses in category D were found to be strongly related to life satisfaction, job success, and personal health.

QUESTIONS ABOUT DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR

1. Why do people react defensively?

2. What defensive behaviors do you see most frequently in the workplace?

3. How can you become more aware of your own defensive behaviors?

4. What can you do to minimize the unhealthy responses and maximize the healthy coping responses to life’s challenges?
UNHEALTHY AND HEALTHY RESPONSES TO LIFE

A. Unhealthy Defensive Behaviors:

_____ 1. Feeling persecuted: “Everybody is out to get me.”

_____ 2. Blaming: “The organization is the cause of all my problems.”

_____ 3. Denial: “I have no problems.”

_____ 4. Provocative behavior: “I don’t get mad, I get even.”

_____ 5. Impulsive behavior: “starting a fight.”

_____ 6. Fantasizing: “I day dream frequently about winning the lottery.”

_____ 7. Playing uncharacteristic roles: “I play the fool around my friends.”

_____ 8. Transferring feeling: “Taking out your problems on your family.”

_____ 9. Making excuses: “I have problems because of my poor education.”

_____ 10. Forgetfulness: “I just can’t remember anymore.”

_____ 11. Opposite behavior: “I love my problems; I’d be lost without them.”

B. Healthy Coping Behaviors:

_____ 1. Suppressing: “I’m disappointed but I will deal the situation later.”

_____ 2. Humor: “I watch the Three Stooges when I’m down.”

_____ 3. Re-channeling: “I’m taking piano lessons to become a musician.”

_____ 4. Helping others: “I comfort my colleagues when they’re down.”

_____ 5. Planning & problem solving: “I plan ahead and solve my problems.”
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DEFENDING AND COPING

A. Defending Behaviors:
1. Aimed at feelings
2. Unconscious reactions to situations
3. Tend to be repeated
   1. Overly intense or exaggerated
   2. Usually boomerang

B. Coping Behaviors:
1. Aimed at reality
2. Conscious attempt to change
3. Involve behaving, doing, acting
4. Values self
5. Usually help

C. Testing Yourself:
1. In those adaptive styles I have checked, do I feel I end up being loved or unloved because of my behavior?
2. Does my behavior in these situations produce the results I really want?
3. Do I like or value myself for my behavior in these situations . . . Or would I really like to behave differently?

Generally, if your answer to question 1 is unloved; if your answer to question 2 is that your behavior doesn’t produce the results you really want; and if your answer to question 3 is you’d really like to behave differently but you continue without changing, then you may be devaluing yourself and producing much of your unhappiness.
ASSESSING AND CHOOSING HEALTHY COPING RESPONSES

“The maintenance and enhancement of the perceived self are the motives behind all behavior.”  A.W. Combs

Mature and healthy behavior is closely linked with high self-esteem. The following exercise is designed to help empower you in the way you communicate and work with others. Answer the questions below as honestly as you can. You will not be asked to share this information.

1. Think of a situation in your professional or private life when you responded using one of the unhealthy defensive behaviors. What did the person say that provoked your defensive response?

2. What did you say in response? How did this make you feel?

3. What defensive or coping behaviors do you use? What healthier coping mechanism could you have used?
YOUR 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 successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skills. It will make or break a company . . . a church . . . a home . . . a person. The remarkable thing is, we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for the day. We cannot change our past . . . We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the strings we have, and that is our attitude . . . I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you . . . we are in charge of our attitudes.”

* Quote from Charles Swindoll
**BEHAVIOR AND MOOD REHEARSAL:**
**CHANGING YOUR SELF-TALK** *

**Introduction:** In order to change how you feel, you need to change your state of mind and body. One of the most important things you can do to change your state of mind and body is to manage your physiology. This involves seven steps:

1. Exercise, diet, & rest: commit to regular exercise, a healthy diet, and adequate sleep.

2. Move your body: develop power moves and use your voice to put yourself in a peak state.

3. Change your breathing: take several deep breaths to the count of seven and hold each breath for a count of twenty.

4. Change your facial expression: adopt a determined expression or a happy expression.

5. Find something important in what you’re doing: think of reasons why what you’re doing is important.

6. Change your self-talk: write out how you are feeling and what you are saying to yourself. Then change your negative self-talk to positive self-talk. Find reasons for being thankful or positive and write them down.

7. Visualize and take action: use your imagination to see yourself doing what you have to do and doing it successfully; then take action, and give it your all.

**Instructions:** Run a test of the mental states operating in your job. Select a task that you usually do not enjoy doing. What is your mood and attitude just prior to starting the task? What do you say to yourself before starting the task (self-talk)? Are you fighting yourself? Write your responses in the appropriate place below.

Now ask yourself, could your self-talk (mental state) be self-defeating and draining you of energy? Spend a few minutes thinking of all the possible reasons for doing a quality job on the task. Imagine an energy-building attitude toward it and remind yourself of the importance of your task to your teammates and customers. Write

down your positive energy-building attitude or self-talk in the appropriate space. Then visualize yourself doing this task and feeling great. Finally, take action; do it with an attitude as if your life depended on it; don’t hold anything back.

The next time you start an undesirable task, or any other task for that matter, reframe your physical and mental state with power moves: posture, breathing, tone of voice, facial expression, and sense of importance. See it happening successfully in your mind and do it with gusto!

Exercise:

1. Describe an undesirable task:

2. What negative things do you usually say to yourself about this task?

3. Reframe your negative self-talk into positive self-talk: why is this task important? How will it help your team and customers? What are some positive consequences for you? Visualize yourself successfully doing the task.

4. Take a few deep breaths; adopt an attitude of importance about what you’re doing; change your posture, facial expression, and tone of voice. Now visualize what you will do, and tell somebody about it (make a psychological contract with the person).
GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOR REHEARSAL

Instructions: Once you have decided what behavior and self-talk you need to develop and pursue, write out a step-by-step plan on how you want to see yourself handling the situation, i.e., you need to mentally rehearse your plan of action. By following the following instructions below, you will increase the likelihood of successful execution of your plan.

1. Summary of Behavior: write a summary of your actions vividly describing what you will do, how you will do it, why it’s important, and what you will say to yourself. Be as specific as possible in describing your attitudes, emotions, behaviors, and self-talk.

2. Relaxation and Visualization: pick a key word or phrase from your summary that gives you confidence or strength, i.e., reinforces the action you plan to take. Then complete the following exercise:

   (a) Sit quietly in a comfortable position; close your eyes, deeply relax all your muscles beginning with your feet and progressing up to your face and head by firmly but gently telling them to “relax”.

   (b) Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word or phrase silently to yourself. Continue breathing naturally for 5-10 minutes, saying the word or phrase as you breathe out.

   (c) Expand your visualization by extending the word or phrase into an entire review of your behavior and self-talk. Imagine yourself completely calm and in control of the situation. Imagine yourself handling the situation by visualizing what you are going to say and do, and how other people might respond to you. Visualize the results you would like to see happen. Use as many of your senses as you can in visualizing the desired results of your actions. Try to feel it with your entire being.

   (d) Consider several alternatives if the situation doesn’t go exactly as you expect. Maintain a feeling of total relaxation in your body as you visualize the scene.

   (e) Visualize your actions several times while seeing yourself calm and in control of the situation. Stop visualizing if your feel yourself becoming tense. Take several deep breaths until you feel completely relaxed and then begin again.

   (f) Repeat the visualization process as often as necessary until you can see yourself executing your plan, creating positive self-talk, and acting with great confidence to achieve the results you desire.
Personal Action Planning

1. What are the three most important things or ideas I discovered from this workshop?
   •
   •
   •

2. How can I use this information to be a more resilient and effective person?
   •
   •
   •
   •

3. What areas do I still need to work on to improve my capabilities?
   •
   •
   •
   •
WHAT IS PERSONAL MASTERY?

1. Personal Responsibility
   • From victim to victor mentality
   • A sense of personal empowerment
   • Proactivity

2. Personal Vision
   • From imagination to reality
   • What you stand for – taps into a deep passion
   • Frame of reference by which everything is examined

3. Personal Authenticity
   • From knowing to doing
   • Alignment of what you do with what you believe

4. Personal Journey
   • From the acquired to the innate
   • It takes practice and time – presence and perseverance
Personal mastery. ‘Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs’ (Senge 1990: 139). Personal mastery is the discipline of ‘continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively’ (ibid.: 7). It goes beyond competence and skills, although it involves them. It goes beyond spiritual opening, although it involves spiritual growth (ibid.: 141). Mastery is seen as a special kind of proficiency. It is not about dominance, but rather about calling. Vision is vocation rather than simply just a good idea.

People with a high level of personal mastery live in a continual learning mode. They never ‘arrive’. Sometimes, language, such as the term ‘personal mastery’ creates a misleading sense of definiteness, of black and white. But personal mastery is not something you possess. It is a process. It is a lifelong discipline. People with a high level of personal mastery are acutely aware of their ignorance, their incompetence, their growth areas. And they are deeply self-confident. Paradoxical? Only for those who do not see the ‘journey is the reward’. (Senge 1990: 142)

In writing such as this we can see the appeal of Peter Senge’s vision. It has deep echoes in the concerns of writers such as M. Scott Peck (1990) and Erich Fromm (1979). The discipline entails developing personal vision; holding creative tension (managing the gap between our vision and reality); recognizing structural tensions and constraints, and our own power (or lack of it) with regard to them; a commitment to truth; and using the sub-conscious (ibid.: 147-167).
CLARIFYING YOUR ROLES AND IDENTITY

Instructions: On the ten blank lines below write a different response to the question: “Who am I?” Write your responses in whatever way you think of yourself. Your framework for thinking of yourself may be the roles you have in your life, the positive or negative qualities you have, your skills and attributes, etc.

WHO AM I?

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<td>10.</td>
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When you have completed the exercise, rank your “I am” statements from 1 to 10, with 1 being the statement with which you identify most strongly. Then, think of what you would be like if you had to systematically eliminate the lowest five statements. Write a brief statement of who you would be and what you would look like to yourself with the lowest items removed.
IDENTIFYING PERSONAL VALUES

**Definition:** values are those principles and beliefs which drive your and others’ decisions and behavior.

Examples:

1. Knowledge
2. Health
3. Wealth
4. Pleasure
5. Justice

Every value we hold translates into one or more behaviors. Your personal values guide how you interact with others. When our personal values and our workplace values are in alignment, there is motivation and productivity. When they are not in alignment, there is frustration and conflict.

Some real life questions that may be used to help clarify our values are:

1. What is most important to me in my life?
2. What do I stand for?
3. What am I most proud of?
4. What beliefs would I fight to retain?
5. What is most important in the workplace?
6. What are the criteria that we use to make decisions?

In the space below, list some of the personal values that are important to you:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
CLARIFYING PERSONAL VALUES

**Step 1:** From the following list of 46 values, check the 15 most important to you.

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<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Personal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement (attaining goals, sense of accomplishment)</td>
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<td>Advancement (progress, promotion)</td>
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<td>Adventure (new and challenging experiences)</td>
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<td>Affection (being included, connecting to others)</td>
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<td>Altruism (good will, charity)</td>
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<td>Authenticity (genuineness)</td>
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<td>Balance (between work and play)</td>
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<td>Beauty (aesthetics in nature, art, or life)</td>
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<td>Calm (peaceful, mild, relaxed)</td>
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<td>Competence (capable, effective)</td>
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<td>Commitment (loyalty, dedication, dependability)</td>
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<td>Competitiveness (winning, taking risks)</td>
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<td>Cooperation (collaboration, working with others)</td>
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<td>Courage (risk-taking, toughness)</td>
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<td>Creativity (being imaginative, innovative)</td>
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<td>Discipline (perseverance, focus)</td>
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<td>Economic Security (steady, adequate income)</td>
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<td>Equality (egalitarianism, opportunity for all)</td>
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<td>Fame (renown, distinction)</td>
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<td>Family Happiness (close relationships with family)</td>
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<td>Flexibility (agility, ability to adapt)</td>
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<td>Forgiving (tolerance, patience)</td>
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<td>Freedom (independence, autonomy)</td>
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<td>Friendship (close relationships)</td>
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<td>Health (physical and mental)</td>
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<td>Inner Harmony (at peace with self)</td>
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<td>Integrity (honesty, sincerity)</td>
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<td>Involvement (belonging, participating with others)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loving (affection, tenderness, intimacy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objectivity (rational, logical)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Openness (approachable, accessible, vulnerable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Order (organized, structure, systematic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passion (energy, excitement about life)</td>
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<td>Peace (harmony, conflict-free)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Development (learning, personal growth)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pleasure (fun, enjoyment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power (influence, authority)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognition (prestige, respect of others)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Respect (self-esteem, sense of personal identity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service (assisting others, improving society)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spirituality (faith, religious belief)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Status (level in society)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stewardship (responsibility to the whole)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision (clarity, seeing the way)</td>
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<td>Wealth (abundance, getting rich)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisdom (understanding life, insight, enlightenment)</td>
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</table>
Step 2: Finally for each of the top 5, write a personal definition of what that value means to you. My top value, for example, is freedom, and my definition is “The freedom to explore both my inner and outer world so that I can grow to my fullest potential.”

1. __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

4. __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

5. __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
DEVELOPING PERSONAL MISSION

1. List some personal characteristics you feel great about. These should be nouns.

*Examples:*
- technical expertise
- energy
- courage
- strength
- enthusiasm
- creativity
- sense of humor
- insight
- patience

I have _____________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________

Some characteristics might be coach, facilitator, servant, challenger, and creativity.

2. List ways you successfully interact with people. These should be verbs.

*Examples:*
- teach
- serve
- lead
- support
- inspire
- motivate
- collaborate
- produce
- plan

I _____________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________

Key words might be inspire, motivate, awaken, serve, and challenge.
3. Visualize what your perfect world looks like. What are the people doing and saying? Write a description of this perfect world

   My perfect world

   Example: “Everyone has awakened to their inherent basic goodness and they are authentic in being that in the world.”

4. Combine two of your nouns, two of your verbs, and your definition of your perfect world.

   My life purpose is

   Example: “I use my coaching and facilitating skills to awaken everyone to their inherent basic goodness and inspire them to be that in the world.”
DEVELOPING PERSONAL VISION

Writing Down the Bones
(Personal Journaling Technique)

• First thought, best thought

• Keep hand moving

• Don’t cross out

• Don’t worry about punctuation, grammar, or spelling

• Lose control, don’t edit

• Don’t think or get logical

• Go for it!
PERSONAL VISIONING QUESTIONS

1. What do I believe in so much that I am willing to take a stand on – no matter what the cost?

2. What are my skills, energies, and leadership traits?

3. What would a “perfect” world look like?

4. How do I want to contribute to my world?

5. What do I need to feel free and healthy?

6. What do I want to learn?

7. What brings joy to my life?

8. What is my unique calling or purpose?

9. Five years from now, I am proudest of . . .

10. The thirty things I want to do before I die are . . .
PREPARING A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

**Definition:** A set of values, principles or philosophy that provides the basis for making major, life-directing decisions, and the basis for making daily decisions in the midst of constantly changing circumstances and emotions. It empowers individuals as their source of personal strength and conviction.

**Values:** Values are your true motivators. Not just what you think is right or wrong, but what you consider worth pursuing in your life. Your values determine your sense of personal worth. Your purpose and your vision will stand on the foundation of your values.
- Set of beliefs or principles that guide our decisions
- Lead us to regard some goals or ends as more legitimate than others

**Purpose:** A powerful purpose is based on deeply held values and becomes the standard for empowering and giving timeless strength to an individual. When looking at the lives of people who have made an impact on this world, they have been very conscious of a driving purpose that has given them the energy and commitment to achieve the extraordinary.

**Vision:** If purpose is the course you have set for your journey, then vision is the destination. A specific, powerful, personal vision creates energy, motivation, and commitment. It is a powerful picture that we carry in our hearts and our minds. It is an expression of our purpose and values. It is a tangible, challenging, vivid and inspiring picture of the future.

- A picture of a purpose achieved
- A view of the future
- Dreaming and thinking ahead
- An imaginative conceptualization of the future

You may find your mission statement to be more balanced and easier to work with, if you break it down into the goals that you have for the various roles you have in your life such as a colleague, parent, friend, and change agent.
PERSONAL MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

MISSION
A mission statement contains the primary purpose or reason for your existence. As such, it serves to give direction and meaning to your life. Based on the roles and values outlined above, write a mission statement or statement of purpose for your work and life.

VISION
A vision is a succinct statement of what you passionately are striving to become. Based on your mission, write a vision statement of what you would like to become in the next three years.
Additional Resources

The Truth About Burnout
by C. Maslach & M. P. Lieter
1997

Managing Transitions:
Making the Most of Change
by William Bridges
Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.
1991

Transitions: Making Sense Out of Life’s Changes
by William Bridges
Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.
1991

Managing at the Speed of Change
by Daryl R. Conner
Villard Books
1994

Integrating Work and Life
by S. Friedman, J. Degroot, P. M. Christensen
Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer
1998

The Changing Nature of Work
by Committee on Techniques for the Enhancement of Human Performance
National Academy Press
1999

The Wisdom of the Ego
by G. Vaillant
Harvard University Press
1997

For free assessments of your personal happiness see website by Dr. Martin Seligman at: http://www.authentichappiness.org/

For exercises on building personal resilience see: http://www.reflectivehappiness.com