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June 2012

This Month's Message:

**Freebie Stress
Fighters.**

Paths Forward

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Freebie Stress Fighters.

As I did a couple of months ago I will again focus on a quite popular topic that I am frequently called to speak on: stress management. Actually the term itself is somewhat of a

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misnomer as stress itself isn't really manageable. Stress is a fairly predictable response to certain situations. It goes back to caveman days when being hyper-alert to situations that might indicate physical risk was a useful survival mechanism.

Although our modern culture provides us with many things to worry about, it's helpful to observe how many of them are over-hyped by our alarmist media. Last week coffee was bad for you; this week coffee is good for you. This week the market is up; next week the market is down. You buy a car with a reputation for quality and the next thing you know it gets recalled for a safety defect. As a character created by the great comic Gilda Radner would say "Well, it just goes to show you, it's always something--if it ain't one thing, it's another." True enough but one thing it is *not* is worrying that any one piece of news or that any little rustle in the bushes foretells an attack by a saber-toothed tiger. We have all got to get our caveman (and woman) stress responses under control. Thus instead of Stress Management this topic should more accurately be called Self Management.

I've written before on the many benefits of taking all the vacation time that you have earned. (Go to www.drpaulpowers.com, click on [LifeMap Archive](#) scroll to 7/15/08 *Get Outa Town* or 7/15/09 *Take A Day Off.*) And I'll be the first to say there's nothing like a weekend getaway at a nice B&B, or sipping an umbrella drink on an island beach, or watching a beautiful sunset from the deck of a cruise ship. But what about everyday stress management? (Oops - I mean self-management.) Here is a quick series of low or no-cost ideas that you can use right now to de-stress your life. Breathe deeply and enjoy.

Paths Forward

* **Stayin' Alive.** Stress is not a minor issue. It is not just about both your emotional health; it also takes a toll on your physical health. Stress can increase a host of health risks including high blood pressure, heart disease, weight gain, gum disease and reduce immune response (which opens you up to host of medical issues right down to the common cold). You need to take your stress seriously.

Resource: [The Chronic Stress Crisis How Stress is Destroying Your Health and What You Can Do To Stop It](#) (Dec 18, 2008)

* **Silence Is Golden.** If you want to reduce your stress the 24/7 electronic collar is not your friend. Take some time each day (an hour minimum) to unplug. This means some defined no-email time, some no-voice mail time, some no-phone time, some no internet time, some no-radio time, some no-TV

time. This will help you retrieve the time you need to strategize, plan, think, prioritize and evaluate. This is the get ready part of "ready, aim, fire" and it will help you to focus on productivity versus busyness. (Oh - and in the car and at home monitor your "news" intake. How much sadness and calamity can you absorb in one day? And do you really think absorbing a bunch of it just before bedtime is really a good idea? Me neither.)

Resource: [Freedom from Stress: How to Take Control of Your Life](#) by David Gamow and Karen Gamow

* **Do As I Say** - - not as I do. That is: In the interest of full disclosure I must admit that I have never had much luck with meditation. I guess I sort of do a little of it just before I say my prayers at night but that's about it. But many articles from respected journals report the health- inducing and stress-reducing benefits of meditation so I would not be your impartial advisor if I didn't at least suggest you try it. If you are a person of religious faith you can utilize those practices in a similar fashion to lower your stress.

Resource: [Meditation: How to Reduce Stress, Get Healthy, and Find Your Happiness in Just 15 Minutes a Day](#)
[Paperback]

* **Get Moving.** Some folks enjoy exercise and that's great. Others of us (like me for example) believe in its benefits and give it an honest effort even if we don't always look forward to it. But this path forward is targeted to those folks who aren't there yet. What I have learned (the hard way, I admit) is that exercise not only helps with physical health, it fights stress in two ways. Working up a good sweat helps you unload stress. In addition, it better equips you to handle new stress that comes your way. If the word exercise causes you to clench your teeth try substituting phrases such as "get moving more" or "getting more active" or "being outdoors more" or "having fun with friends". Do anything you can to convince yourself that you can do it- because you can! See if your employer or health plan offers a gym subsidy. If not - a pair good walking shoes is all it costs for a healthful, daily walk around the block.

Resource: The No Sweat Exercise Plan: Lose Weight, Get Healthy, and Live Longer (Harvard Medical School Guides)

* **Laugh.** Everybody feels better - less stressed - after a good laugh. And this isn't exactly late breaking news. Thousands of years ago in Proverbs 15:13 some wise person wrote "*A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken*". Who or what makes you laugh?

A certain comic (such as Robin Williams or Rita Rudner)? A favorite humorous author (such as Carl Hiaasen or David Sedaris)? Favorite funny movies (such as those by the Marx Brothers or Steve Martin)? I hang certain comics on the 'fridge that always bring a chuckle. (Gary Larson's talking animals are my fave). Make a list of your own favorites and keep them on tap for regular, self-administered doses of healthful and de-stressing laughter.

Resources: [The Far Side Gallery](#) [The Far Side ® Gallery 2](#) [The Far Side Gallery 3](#) [The Far Side Gallery 4](#) [The Far Side Gallery 5](#) by Gary Larson

[The Complete Calvin and Hobbes \(Calvin & Hobbes\) \(v. 1, 2, 3\)](#) by Bill Watterson

* **Reminder:** June 22 is *Take Your Dog To Work Day*. Now there's a fun stress-reliever! For more details and how-to ideas go to www.takeyourdog.com.

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The best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. Revised Edition [Winning Job Interviews](#) by Dr. Paul Powers.

In this easy-to-follow, step-by-step book, Dr. Paul Powers demystifies job interviewing, explains why the process actually favors the job hunter, and shows how you can dramatically improve your interview skills.

Packed with solid, practical information and laced with both

humor and "kick in the pants" motivation, *Winning Job Interviews* is the book you wished you had before your last interview... and is mandatory preparation for your next one!

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