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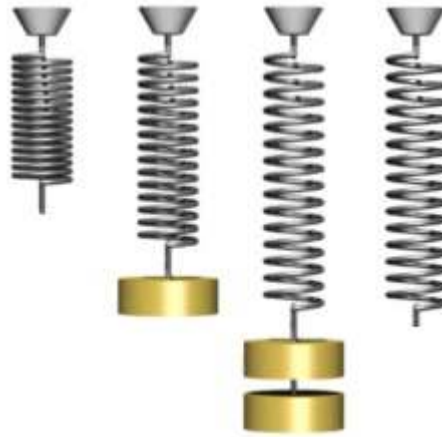


How to Manage **Stress**

Where does it come from?

John Miller

Fit and healthy online



The '**How to Manage Stress**' series of four ebooks covers the following topics:

- Stress, what is it?
- Stress, where does it come from?
- Stress, what does it do to you?
- Stress, how to get ahead of it?

This is the second book in the series.

How to Manage Stress – Part 2: Stress, Where Does it Come From

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Published by Fit and Healthy Online, November 2015

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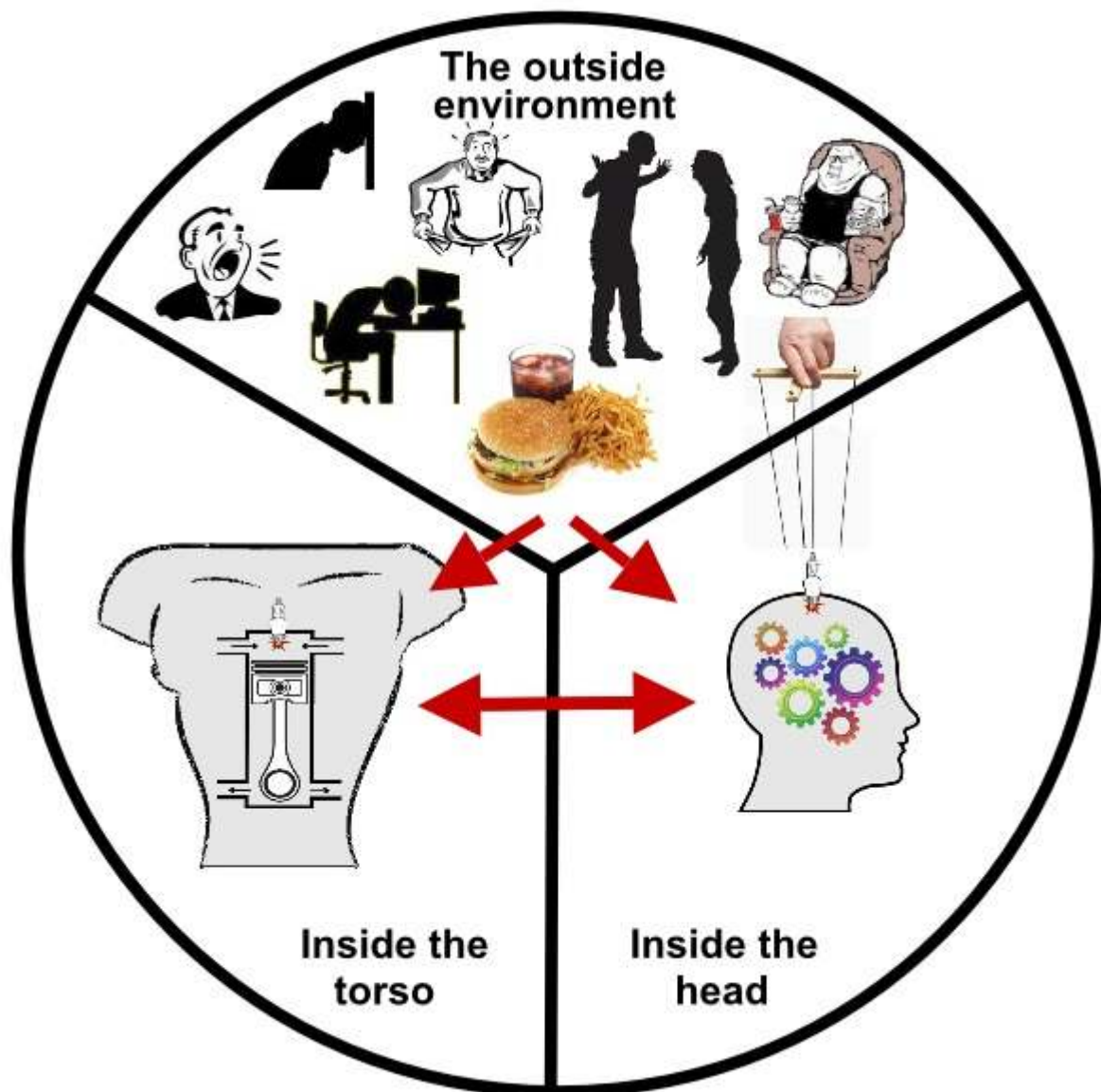
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2.1 STRESS, WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Good, bad or indifferent, stress comes from three sources,

- the outside environment
- inside the torso
- inside the head

... or combinations of all three.



2.2

METABOLIC DYSFUNCTION

When you get an upset mind, think of it as a warning sign, a symptom that there's something within your metabolic system that needs fixing.

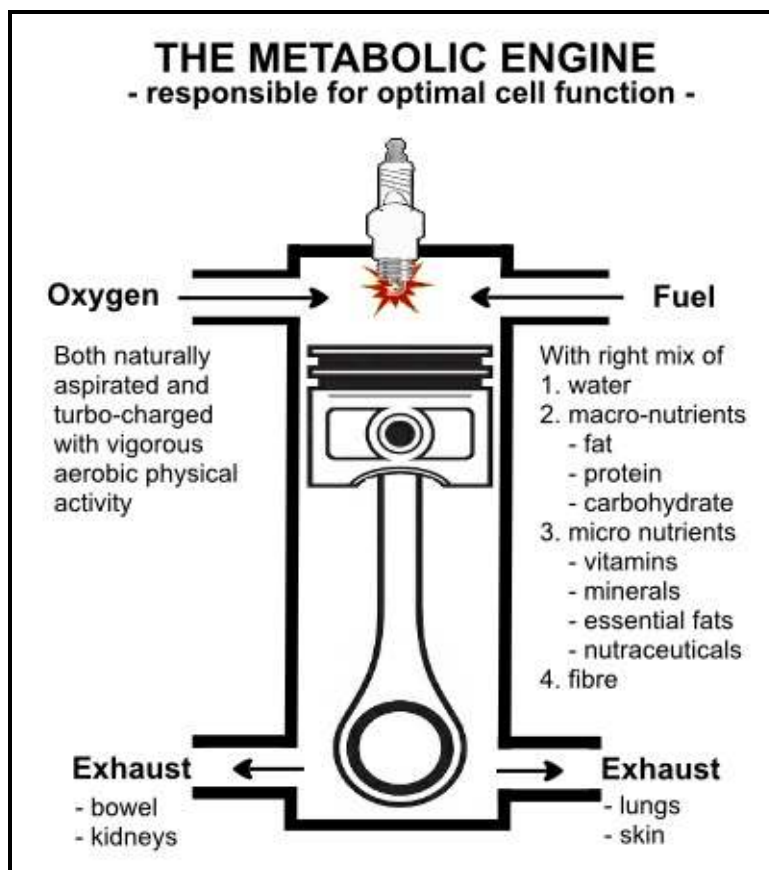
Our surgeries are littered with the bodies of people in just plain bad metabolic health, the symptoms of which are obesity, high blood pressure, sugar diabetes, cardiac insufficiency, reflux, piles, feeling anxious, lacking energy and vitality, headaches, insomnia, 'blue' and 'black' mood ... the list goes on and on.

THE METABOLIC ENGINE

Contrary to popular opinion, the mind is not separate from the rest of the key body systems involved in good metabolic health.

In fact the mind is an integral part of the metabolic engine that runs the system that delivers essential nutrients to cells and removes waste products from them.

If anything, it's the driver of this engine rather than a passenger.



The metabolic engine and its individual parts may become dysfunctional due to

- it being supplied with the wrong fuel or too much fuel
- a lack of oxygen
- a faulty exhaust system.

THE LAWS OF BODY SYSTEM DYSFUNCTION

1. **A body** in good condition stays in good condition unless acted upon by a force. In a modern society the body is under constant threat from both internal and external sources.

With respect to stress, the threats to the mind are numerous, coming from outside the body, from inside the body and coming from the mind itself

2. **A body part** in good condition stays in good condition unless acted upon by an **external force**.

Two examples:

- a. the liver may become dysfunctional due to an inability to cope with an excess of poisons entering the body
- b. The mind become becomes stressed by external events – violence, bullying ...

3. **A body part** that's in good condition stays in good condition unless acted up on by **another body part** that's in poor condition. Here are two examples:

- a. a gut that's under stress may cause the mind to become dysfunctional. The gut has a mind of its own, in fact it's called the enteric mind.
- b. a mind that's dysfunctional may cause other organs, for example, the gut (irritable bowel) the vascular system (high blood pressure), and the skin (itchiness) to become dysfunctional.

4. **The mind is capable of causing its own dysfunction.**

5. An extension of 3 above, the symptoms of a body in poor health may show up in multiple body parts.

6. The cause of a particular organ dysfunction will often not be at the site where the dysfunction is manifest. In fact, some dysfunctions, like essential hypertension are classified as idiopathic – ie the medical industry doesn't know what causes it. But all metabolic dysfunctions have causes – you just have to know where to look for them.

7. Form follows function. What this means that if a person can do the things that people in good metabolic health can do, they'll know they're in good metabolic health! The 20m run test of aerobic fitness is just about the best measure of metabolic function around.

8. The efficiency of the metabolic system is equal to the efficiency of the sum of its parts.

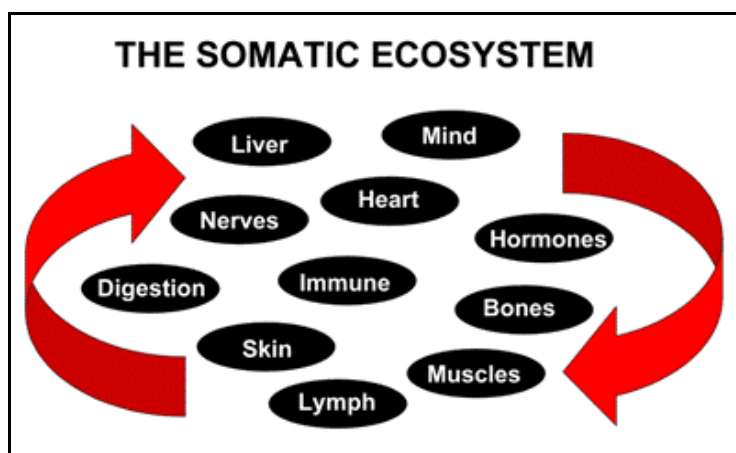
9. Poor health is ruled by the law if too much and too little - what do I eat too much or too little of, what do I do too much or too little of and what I think too much or too little of.

We are familiar with the **psycho-somatic response**. When the mind becomes dysfunctional, symptoms may appear in other key body organs. This is a well known relationship. You get stressed; your blood pressure goes up, you get sweaty palms, a crook gut etc. etc. The mind even works on the mind, you feel 'blue' or 'back'.

What's less well known is that the process works the other way – the **somato-psychic response**. When other organs of the body, particularly the gut, liver and hormone systems become dysfunctional, the symptoms may appear in the mind in the form of anxiety, low mood, insomnia or headaches.

THE BODY – SOMA

The Greek word for the body is '**soma**'. The term 'body' does not just mean 'torso', it means the whole body, head, torso and limbs. Here's the diagram – again.



The Greek word for the mind is '**psycho**'; the mind is as much a part of the body as any of the organs located inside your torso.

Because the head (that contains the mind) appears to be disconnected from the rest of the body, we have this idea that it is not a part of the body at all. Hence we talk about 'mental health' as though it bears no relationship to 'body health.'

In philosophic terms this way of looking at the body is called dualism, meaning that what's going on in the mind has little or nothing to do with what's going on in the rest of the body. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The medical industry is riddled with dualists. In fact the medical industry has divided the body up into compartments, with specialists making a lucrative living out of dysfunctional individual organs.

The general practitioner is meant to be the physician who treats the body as a whole. But what do they do when someone presents themselves as being stressed, anxious, 'blue' or 'black'? They give them a pill to mask the symptom. Rarely will they say, 'Let's get the ball rolling by getting you back into rude metabolic health. Let's send you on a holiday to get away from some of your current stresses. Let's send you to a yoga class, teach you how to meditate – and send you to a counsellor and a personal development program.'

When it comes to the black mood of depression, modern medical practice presumes that there is something wrong with brain chemistry – which it may well be – but brain chemistry is intimately connected with body chemistry generally – ie metabolic health.

Trying to fix brain chemistry without addressing metabolic dysfunction may be a tough assignment.

This is the evidence that low mood is indeed a metabolic health problem, one that a pathologist should be able to verify with a metabolic test. Rarely are these tests carried out. The prescription precedes the diagnosis.

All of your cells and the metabolic processes that 'feed and water' them require a variety of vitamins, minerals, amino acids and micro-nutrients to function effectively. Without these nutrients, essential body functions and processes won't work effectively, resulting in a variety of body system dysfunctions, including brain dysfunction.

The precursors of the chemicals that ensure healthy brain function are either ingested, or synthesized within the body. So when we get back to first principles: we are, indeed what we eat.

When chemical dysfunctions are manifest in the mind, the medical industry will prescribe aryloxypropylamine and zolpidem tartrate without checking on whether there is a deficiency in brain serotonin, melatonin or gamma aminobutyric acid levels. 'Blue' and 'black' moods are not caused by a lack of aryloxypropylamine and zolpidem tartrate.

THE CASCADE OF DYSFUNCTIONS

In fact these types of relationships are going on between key organs all the time. When one organ becomes under stress it may cause a cascade of dysfunctions in other organs. Instead of treating the organ of first cause, likely as not the treatment will focus on the dysfunction that is most apparent. The loudest noise attracts the attention even if cause of the noise lies elsewhere inside the torso. It's the case of replacing an unevenly worn tyre without realigning the front end.

With metabolic dysfunction, it's likely that the ultimate cause of the 'cascade of dysfunctions' may well be external to the body. It may be a case of the law or too much and too little.

To give you an example: as a culture we're addicted to nicotine, panadeine, caffeine, aspartame and alcohol. We consume vast quantities of food additives, preservatives, flavourings, colourings, emulsifiers and surfactants. The side panels on cardboard boxes on supermarket shelves are crowded with names and numbers of food additives.

We absorb pesticides, fungicides and herbicides without knowing it. We breathe in petrol fumes and pollen.

We eat foods and drink drinks which may contain poisons or ingredients to which we are intolerant and allergic. The next time you're in a supermarket, have a look at the list of ingredients on the side of the packet of frozen banana cake. You'll roll your eyes through to the back of your neck.

When we eat these foods we end up with a liver and a gut that are stretched beyond their functional capacity. As a result we may break out in a skin itch. All that we treat is the itch – with a topical cream. That it should come to this.

In the case of an upset mind, the dysfunction may be caused by a system overloaded by 'toxic' foods, dietary insufficiency, dietary excess, a lack of oxygen and an inefficient exhaust system.

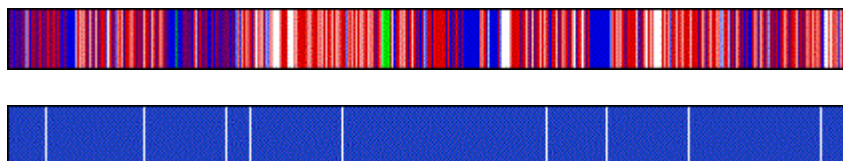
This leads us to the principle that the cause of a body system dysfunction may not be at the site of the dysfunction. It's why only treating the organ that appears to be dysfunctional may not be the wisest thing to do. The itch or blue mood goes, but the liver remains under stress, the body is still craving essential nutrients and/or unable to manage the intake of 'poisons'.

When it comes to 'blue' and 'black' moods, eating too much of the foods that are not good for us and eating too little of the foods that supply essential nutrients to the body as a whole, may lead to a dysfunction in the mind. Does anyone think that taking a headache, anti-depressant or a sleeping tablet is the best long term solution to the problem?

While the messenger has temporarily been knocked out, the underlying cause of the problem persists. As soon as the medication stops, the symptom re-appears. The treatment has not restored poor function to good.

THE METABOLIC DEFRAG

When it comes to stress and low mood, it's highly likely that we're dealing with a system problem and it's the system that needs fixing. In computing terms what's called for is a **metabolic defrag**.



Meanwhile the doctor, detecting a 'blue' or 'black' mood, homes in on the mind, not the

- cascade of dysfunctions that lie somewhere inside the torso or the mind and
- external factors

that maybe the **first cause** of the problem.

The 'noisiest' part of the body gets the attention, not the system.

In a nutshell, mood is enhanced when we eat better and when we exercise more. In fact low mood is probably as much related to metabolic dysfunction as anything else. Twelve months of regular vigorous physical activity is a more effective remedy for depression than a twelve month course of Prozac.

Always remember that your mind is as much a part of your metabolic system as the key organs that are located under your skin, somewhere between your shoulders and your crotch.

Normal healthy people think normal healthy thoughts. They think logically and rationally.

Normal healthy people have normal healthy bodies. They're in great shape.

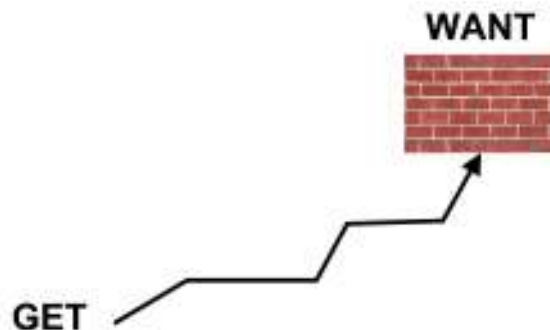
The first signs of stress may be either mental or physical. Certainly there is a good chance that both your body and your mind will be 'talking' to you, giving you clues about your level of stress. Your job is to listen, to pick up those clues and do something to restore the body to good working order.

As a rule, it is easier to recognize the symptoms of stress in others than it is to recognize them in ourselves.

2.3

NOT GETTING WHAT YOU WANT

Stress is the distance between what you're getting and what you want.



If you know what you want and you're on the way to getting it you feel great. When you get there you feel absolutely fantastic.

If you know what you want and you're not on the way to getting it you feel stressed out of your brain.

For most people life has the expectation of getting worse. At age 70, 95% of people are either on their own, sick, broke or dead.

So, you've got two choices.

1. Working out how to cope with things getting worse.
2. Working out ways to make things get better.

Choose!

Distress and unfulfilled commitment

We feel distressed when

- we don't have a clear idea of what we want
- we're not getting enough of the things we want
- there is an imbalance between the demands of life and our capacity to deal with them.

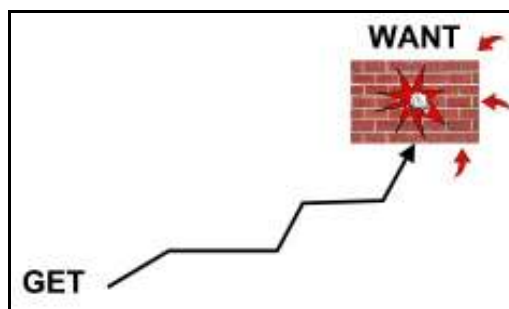
If you don't know what you want you're stuck in the headlights. If you don't go after what you want, you'll never have it. If you don't ask the question, the answer is always no. If you don't step forward you're always in the same place.

2.4

BEATING YOUR HEAD AGAINST A BRICK WALL

If you know what you want but don't know how to get it, or if there is something stopping you from getting it, you experience the feeling of beating your head against a brick wall.

If you want the want badly enough and you genuinely believe it is within your ability to get it then you're going to have to work out how to get past the brick wall - crawling under it, around it, over it, or crashing through it.



Getting past the brick wall, by crawling under it, around it, over it or crashing through it.

If that doesn't work and you still don't know what to do, get help from someone who does. Put yourself in the hands of an expert.

Some time ago, I was giving a man a health assessment and found that his blood pressure was up a bit, he was getting fatter, his face redder and he scored poorly on the Health, Fitness and Wellbeing profile.

I said, 'Mate, you've got all the evidence of being stressed', and showed him the stress model. He said that he knew what he wanted. He said 'A year ago, my company had brought me in to do a job, but they just won't let me get on with it.'

I said, 'It sounds like you're beating your head against a brick wall'. He agreed. I asked, 'Can you get around it, over it or under it?' He said 'I don't think so'. At that point our interview ended, but I saw him a couple of weeks later and he said he'd worked out what to do.

He said 'I'm going to go on a holiday for four weeks. Then in the few months before Christmas I'm going to take it easy and work from 8.30am to 5.30pm, rather than from 7.30am to 6.30pm, because I know that sooner or later a crack will appear in the wall and I'll get through to get what I want.'

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE WANT DISAPPEARS

Have you ever had the sack? All of a sudden the want disappears. Guess what most people say a year after they'd had the sack? *'It was the best thing that ever happened to me!'* This is often a response to a lot of disappointments.

In the case of the sack, after the initial shock and going through the stages of grief people sat down and worked out what they really wanted to do (something that suited their training, interests, intelligence strengths and personality) and went for it. It didn't come without some time, thought, effort, discipline and persistence. You have to actually sit down and write out the job application. You have to actively start ringing people up.

There are not many people who haven't had a disappointment in love. When that happens, again the 'want' suddenly disappears. You're left stranded. After a while you start looking and sooner or later there's a good chance that something better will come along - and eventually it does. Unless you're Miss Havisham, you're better off than when you started.

Maybe you've had a better offer and instigated a relationship break up. The person you've broken up with is left stranded, but based on the logic in the previous paragraph after a few weeks, months or years they'll have found their ideal match.

List some of the things that are stopping you from getting what you want and what you plan to do about it

WHAT YOU WANT	THINGS BLOCKING YOU	STRATEGY TO GET AHEAD

People who are healthy and developing as human beings don't
need to be motivated, they motivate themselves.
Werner Erhard

2.5

NOT KNOWING WHAT YOU WANT

Most people aim at nothing in particular in life and achieve their aim with remarkable accuracy.

If becoming stressed is a manifestation of the anxiety that accompanies not getting enough of what you want, it gets worse if you don't know what you want. When that happens you have to put up with what you're getting.

If you don't like what you're getting you'll experience stress.

It's the same thing as, 'If you don't know where you're going any road will get you there.'

**WHAT DO YOU WANT?**

Until you know what you want, it is not easy to move forward with any great confidence.

List six things you need and want in order to live a rich and fulfilling life, and your strategy to get them?

THINGS I NEED	STRATEGY TO GET THEM

One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. Which road do I take? she asked. Where do you want to go? was his response. I don't know, Alice answered. Then, said the cat, it doesn't matter.

Lewis Carroll Alice in Wonderland

2.6

THE REBELLION OF THE SELF

If you're stressed there's a good chance you're not giving back to your Self the things your Self needs.



If you're stressed find the time to do the things unstressed people do. They take time for themselves.

They get a good night's sleep.

They have a varied exercise program that included vigorous activity and relaxed activity.

They plan their holidays ahead of time so they can get away for a series of short and at least one long break every year.

They pamper themselves. How long since you had a massage or indulged yourself in the luxury of a day in bed?

They have hobbies, like reading, going to the pictures.

They have a good romantic life.

They keep in touch with their family and friends.

On the next page you'll be able to complete the **Stress Risk Profile** which is based on the habits of unstressed people. If you want to eliminate stress from your life do the things unstressed people do.

There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.
William Shakespeare

2.7

STRESS RISK PROFILE

1. Rate your ability to manage the stress of your life. The more stressed you are the lower the score

Low											High
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. Do you get a good night's
- sleep**
- ? Do you get enough sleep, do you get to sleep quickly, do you sleep like a log and wake up refreshed in the morning?

No											Yes
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. What was the longest number of
- consecutive days holiday**
- you had away from home the last 12 months?

			7			14				21
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. Are you keeping yourself
- fit and healthy**
- to the best of your ability?

No											Yes
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. Is there
- balance**
- in your life? Do you have good
- distractors**
- that switch you off from being busy and miserable and which give you great pleasure?

No											Yes
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. Do you
- take time off**
- at lunch time to get away from your desk and get some fresh air? Score high if you exercise with vigor at lunch time.

No											Yes
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. What is the average number of
- hours you work**
- each week - include work-work and domestic work, particularly if you have young children?

	65		60		55		50		<45
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10

8. Are you good at giving back to your
- Self**
- ? Do you spend time thinking about your
- Self**
- ? Do you give your
- Self**
- the time and attention it is craving?

No											Yes
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. How many times a week do you
- meditate**
- , for 10 minutes or more?

0		1		2		3		4		5
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. Are you happy with your
- family**
- (and romantic)
- life**
- ?

Not at all											Very
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

To better manage your stress, do the things that unstressed people do!

TOTAL

If you scored more than 70 there is a good chance that you're doing a good job at looking after your Self. If you scored less than 70 take a good look at those items for which you scored less than 7 and resolve to improve the score over the next few months. If you scored less than 40, give serious consideration to going and having a chat with a counsellor. Life is meant to be better.

Just getting yourself fit might make a huge difference to the way you feel. Taking a holiday will probably do the same, but make it at least 21 days away from home. The people who meditate and keep themselves fit usually score highest on this profile.

2.8

ABSENCE OF INTEGRITY

When it's all said and done (and there's usually a lot more said than done), stress is the mental and physical condition we experience when we're out of integrity with ourselves, when we don't do what we say we're going to do, when we don't get what we say we're going to get and when we do things we shouldn't have done.

It often comes as a rude shock when someone pulls you up on your integrity. But shock can turn to enlightenment when the penny drops and you make this realization for yourself.

As soon as you realize the cause and then the extent of your anxiety, vitality begins to increase.

Today's vitality score (out of 10)



LIFE'S BAROMETERS

Fill in the 'barometers' to represent what sort of condition you're in. If it's 100% you'll reach the top of the scale.

ENERGY AND VITALITY



HEALTH AND FITNESS



HAPPINESS - success, goals, victories



JOY - the achievement of your potential



POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS - emotional responses



SELF ESTEEM



2.9

THE LAW OF TOO MUCH AND TOO LITTLE

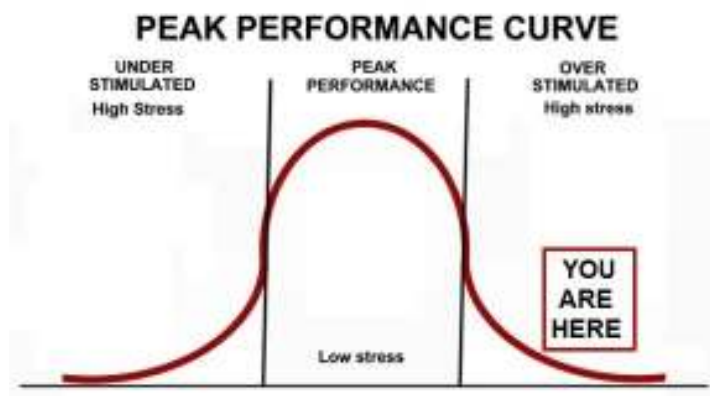


You've got too much on your plate.

You spend your life promising but not delivering.

You jump from one thing to another but never finish any of them. You get side-tracked. It frustrates the hell out of people. Your stress level goes up another notch.

You're on the highly stressed end of the peak performance graph.

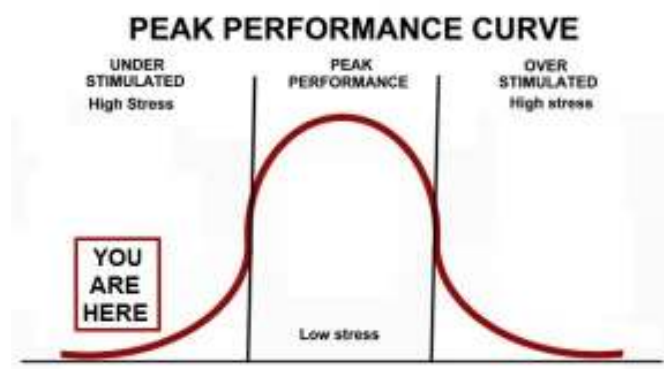


There's not enough on your plate. You stress out over nothing.

You're always tired. You lack energy and vitality, you don't get a decent sleep - at least not in bed.

You need a bigger challenge.

You're down the under-stimulated end of the peak performance graph.



2.10

A LIFE THAT'S A MESS

YOUR LIFE IS A MESS

Your office is a mess.

You can never find what you want and you waste hours looking for things. That stresses you out.

It frustrates the hell out of you. It frustrates the hell out of everyone else.

You're give people the appearance that you're too busy to clean up the mess, but you procrastinate and keep putting off the things that are most important.

Being too disorganized or lazy to clean up after yourself is not a very good excuse for being stressed.

Your kitchen looks like a cyclone has just passed through it.

The sink is clogged up with dirty dishes because the dishes in the dish washer haven't been put away.

There are cups and glasses strewn all around the house.

Here's a tip for stress-free living; tidy up and clear the decks before you go to work. You'll be rewarded when you come home to a clean kitchen.



Your fridge is empty, so when you come home from work you have to scratch around for the next meal, or rush off to the corner store to grab something in a tin or cardboard box – and a chocolate for a treat!

Most nights, if you don't eat fish fingers, peas and instant mashed potatoes you end up living on bread and peanut butter.

In the morning you get up late, rush out without breakfast and by 9.30am you're washing down a muffin with a cappuccino.

Your bedroom's a mess. The bed's not made, the sheets and pillow cases haven't been washed and aired for six weeks.

There's a wet towel, clothes and shoes all over the floor; the washing basket's full of dirty tights, socks, underpants, hankies and shirts.

The bin in the ensuite is overflowing with used cotton buds, face wipes, tubes and jars. Empty shampoo bottles litter the floor of the shower cubicle. There's black mould between the tiles. The shower screen is clouded over with soap scum.

Here's a tip for stress free living; make your bed before you go to work.



You garden's a mess.

Don't even think of going outside, you'll get lost.

You never get a sweat up on the end of the pick, the shovel, the chain saw and the rake.

You never experience the joy of effort that comes at the end of an afternoon's gardening.

'Fie on 't, ah fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden that grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature possess it merely.'



You're always late.

You go to bed late.

You get up late.

You stress out in traffic on the way to appointments because you know you're late.

You stress out when you get there because you know you've kept people waiting.



Sorry I'm late. I only just got here!

2.11

NOT THINKING



'I don't think, therefore I'm not'.
(With apologies to Descarte.)

If you could target only one source of your stress, it is a fair bet that it would be the stress generated by your own thinking, or more precisely your lack of thinking.

You feel good when you're well supported by your thinking. When you're thinking logically, rationally, creatively, optimistically and frequently.

Werner Erhard said 'Most people don't think, they just have thoughts'. And it's usually random thoughts at that, often in reaction to thoughts that come into our head from over the wireless or the idiot box, or from a magazine or newspaper. We live in a junk society. We listen to junk, watch junk and read junk.

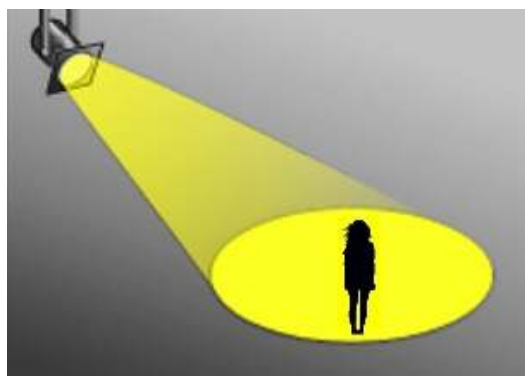
The first thought that many people have each morning is the thought implanted by a radio announcer or pop singer, journalist or media commentator. It's usually a random, irrelevant, serendipitous thought, generated from somewhere else. It's not a thought they have generated from inside their own head, like, 'What do I have to do today', or 'Gee, I'm thankful to be alive' ...

We tend not to allow ourselves the necessity of thinking, particularly about what we want and how we intend to get it. We get sucked in to thinking about the thoughts of other people at the expense of thinking our own.

And then we rationalize it all by saying 'I don't have time to think, I'm too busy'.

When we accept responsibility for being in charge of our thoughts and the consequences of not being in charge of our thoughts, then we're ready to make progress.

We don't have time to think because we don't have time for ourselves.



2.12

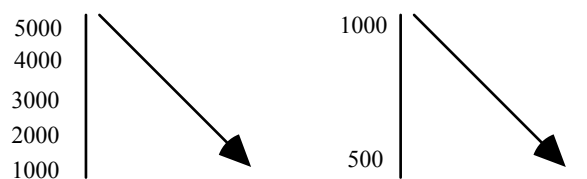
ILLOGICAL THINKING

Despite the vaunted effectiveness of our education system, it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking illogically.

Illogical thought takes many forms, among them myth, superstition, bigotry, most of the 'isms', long held (and usually untested) beliefs of the culture or the family. We get sucked in by statistical and political misrepresentation. As Adolf Hitler said, 'The broad mass of a nation ... will more easily fall victim to a big lie than a small one.'

LIES, DAMN LIES AND STATISTICS

It is easy to scare people through statistical misrepresentation. In October 1997 stock exchange indices in Asia started to plummet. The Australian All Ordinaries Index also started to fall. The graphs in some papers made it look as though the Australian fall was as bad as that in Asia.



FALLACY

One branch of illogical thinking is the fallacy of division, where we ascribe to a group the characteristics of individuals, or vice versa.

Indians are disappearing. Tonto is an Indian. Therefore Tonto is disappearing.

In the fallacy of composition, one argues that since each and every one of the members of a class has a specific attribute, therefore the class itself (collectively) has that attribute.

Some cats wander away from home. Therefore all cats wander away from home.

The post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy where if 'A' occurs before 'B', 'A' must have caused 'B'.

It is paradoxical that there is so much illogical thinking in our community considering the emphasis on the teaching of mathematics in schools, (based on the premise that maths is supposed to teach people to think logically).

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE!

That's all well and good, except for the fact that the truth is usually only in the eye of the beholder and we can even make the truth appear not to be the truth and vice versa.

For instance there was ship's captain who had an intense dislike for the first mate. One day he found the first mate drunk on duty, so he wrote in the ship's log book, 'First mate drunk today'.

The first mate tried to get the captain to delete the record because he knew that he would be sacked the moment the owners saw it, but to no avail.

However he got his revenge several days later when he was in charge of the ship. He wrote in the log book, 'Captain sober today'.

Most jokes are based on illogical thinking. When you see past the illogic you laugh. However, when life is playing a joke on you it is not so funny.

2.13

CONFINED THINKING

People confine their thinking to what they already know. They have a fixed frame of reference which is very difficult to break out of.

For instance, if you asked a group of engineers to help solve problems relating to the health of the community, they'd have a much different response to a group of doctors or nurses. (And, of course, history shows that engineers have had far more impact on the health of the community than doctors or nurses, simply supplying homes, offices and factories with fresh water and deep drainage. Despite the enormity of the impact it now goes un-noticed and rarely appears on any list of public health concerns or achievements.

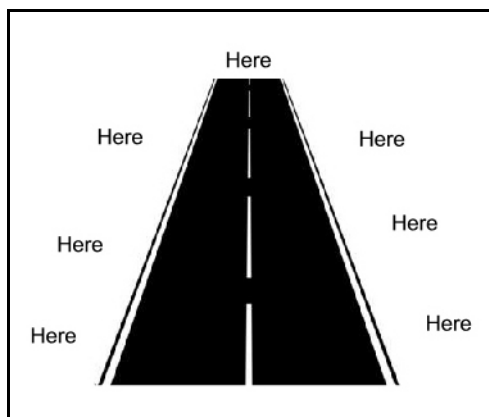
So, despite all the money that's thrown at a problem, the answer may lie somewhere else.

William Blake described it best when he wrote:

'If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is: Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.'

We may be so focused on what we think is the solution of a problem that we fail to see it altogether.

Einstein said it well, 'No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.'

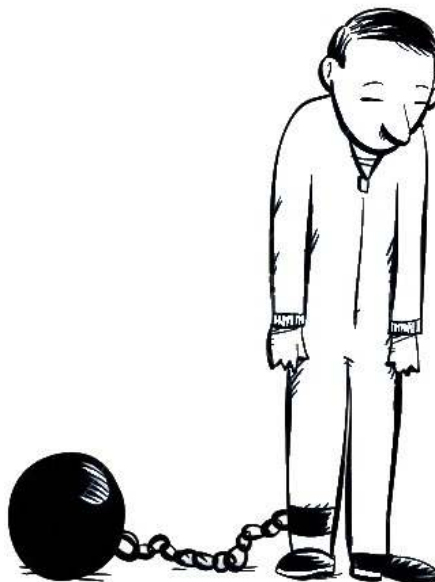
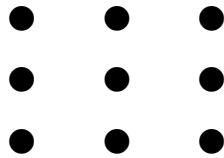


Do you know what you're looking for - and are you looking in the right place?



THINK OUTSIDE THE SQUARE

Join all the dots together without taking your pen off the paper and using only four straight lines.



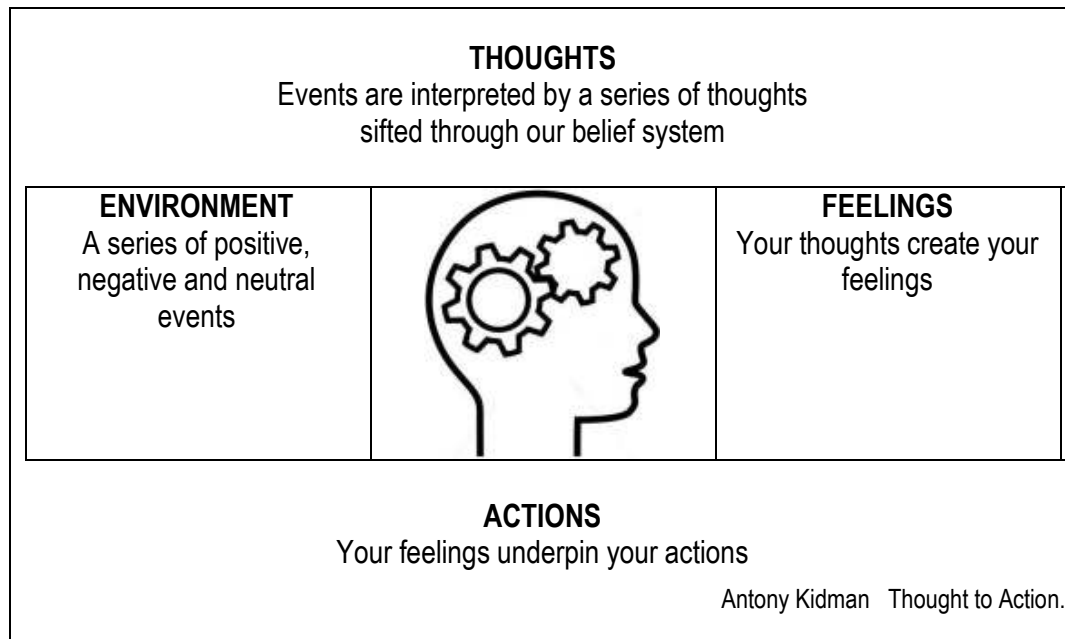
2.14

IRRATIONAL THINKING

INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS - internally driven stress

Most stress is internally driven by irrational thinking. Much of it comes from our peculiar interpretation of events.

We interpret events according to our habits, attitudes, values and beliefs, particularly beliefs about our self worth. For instance depressed people tend to have a negative view of themselves, the world and their future.



The typical thinking errors that sad and miserable people have are

- exaggeration - things are worse than they really are
- over-generalization - everyone hates me, I'm hopeless.
- focusing on the negative and ignoring the positive.

External stressors

According to Antony Kidman there are three main external generators of stress: -

- Physical - drugs, infections, trauma, heat, cold, noxious fumes ...
- Social - grief, redeployment, down-sizing, property and stock market down-turns, divorce ...
- Psychological - frustration, anxiety, fear, guilt, anger, low self worth ...

How we respond to these generators determines the degree to which we become positively or negatively stressed.

New York psychiatrist, Albert Ellis identified a number of irrational ideas by which we run our lives. Using the cognitive behavioral approach Ellis argues that people's belief systems determine their response to external events. The environment generates thinking, thinking generates feelings and feelings generate behaviour.

According to Ellis, if you're getting stressed you need to go back to your own thinking and your interpretation of events, as opposed to blaming other people.

COMMON IRRATIONAL IDEAS - tyranny of the shoulds

Score yourself up on Albert Ellis's list of irrational thoughts. Score yourself out of 10. Score highly if you adopt this type of thinking on a regular basis whether you know it to be irrational or not.

1. I must be loved or approved of by every significant person in my life.
(My father didn't love me, therefore my life is ruined.) ☐
2. I must be competent, adequate and achieving in all respects if I am to consider myself worthwhile. (Justification for workaholic behaviour.) ☐
3. When people act unfairly or badly, I blame them and they should be severely punished. (Therefore we won't have a heroin trial in Australia.) ☐
4. It is terrible and catastrophic when things are not the way I would very much like them to be. (This is the behaviour of a 6 month old child. 'I'm hungry and I want food, NOW!') ☐
5. Human unhappiness is caused by external events and people have little or no ability to control their sorrows and disturbances. ('The lift slammed into my shoulder five years ago. My life is ruined and I'm going to sue the people who own the building!') ☐
6. I must feel anxious if something is or may be dangerous or fearsome and keep dwelling on the possibility of its occurrence. ('I can't let go of the past.') ☐
7. It is easier to avoid than face certain life difficulties and self responsibility. ('If I sweep it under the carpet, it will go away!') ☐
8. One should be dependent upon others and I need someone stronger than myself on whom I can rely. ('My husband treats me poorly, but I can't leave because he earns a good income.') ☐
9. I should become quite upset over other people's problems and disturbances. (My country, family, party ... right or wrong!) ☐
10. The world should provide me with what I need and when it doesn't, it's a terrible place and I can't stand it. ('I want it. I want it now. And if I don't get it I'll blame the Government!') ☐

Total

Most people confess to a certain amount of irrational thinking. The score of a 'normal' irrational person is 30 or less!

This is the true joy in life - being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one; being a force of nature instead of a feverish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world does not devote itself to making you happy.

George Bernard Shaw

2.15

RUNNING RACKETS

Werner Erhard, founder of Est and the Forum, developed the concept of 'rackets' and the effect that those rackets have on our lives and the lives of other people.

A racket is a 'fixed way' of being that we use to justify ourselves.

Rackets include (meager) payoffs such as:

- I get to be right and make others wrong
- I validate myself and invalidate others
- I get to dominate others and avoid domination.
- I win and you lose.

We get stuck in a racket, justifying our condition instead of changing it. In that context, the costs of staying locked into a racket can be high, expressed by a lack of

- self expression
- love and relationships with others
- vitality and well-being
- satisfaction, self fulfillment, self expression
- happiness.

A good example is stress in the workplace. 'Why should I have to put up with the new supervisor who is bullying me?' Why indeed. 'I want to be compensated for my stress.' Why not.

If we work on the premise that changing what management thinks of you is a tough assignment, the easiest option is to change yourself. Maybe your time is up at that organisation. Based on the assumption that one door never closes before another door opens, you could be being presented with the opportunity to move to the job that you'd really love to be doing, the job that suits your intelligence strengths and your personality.

Or take the sack. If you ask people about the experience twelve months after they've had the sack, they will invariably say, 'It's the best thing that ever happened to me.'

Ask someone about their marriage breakup and they'll often say the same thing. Or they'll say, 'I'm much happier now.'

Keep in mind Erhard's maxim, 'At all times and in all circumstances we have the power to transform the quality of our lives.' But it's not just going to happen. You have to make it happen. 'The world only moves for you when you act.'



Create your future from your future, not your past.
Werner Erhard

2.16

FOCUSING ON THE EXTERNAL

**The more we focus on things
external to us the more they
dominate us.**

2.17

THINKING PROFILE

1. Are you using your intellect to get what you want for your life?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. Do you think, logically, rationally, creatively, optimistically and frequently?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. Do you spend time and effort on introspection, contemplation, reflection and meditation?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. Are you using the power of your imagination to the full to get what you want for your life?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. Are you aware of your intelligence strengths and weaknesses?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. Are you aware of your personality strengths and weaknesses?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. Do you spend much time, effort and money on personal development?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. Do you spend much time, effort and money on career development?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. Do you read, listen to and watch thought provoking, motivating and intellectually stimulating books, tapes, films and plays?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. Do you mix with stimulating people?

No										Yes	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

TOTAL

2.18 ANXIETY ABOUT THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Stress is the reaction inside our mind which shows up in our behaviour and in our bodies in response to anxiety about the past, the present or the future.

We get stressed when we can't let go of the past.

We get stressed when the life we're living at present is sad and miserable.

We get stressed and feel anxious and insecure when we don't believe we can accurately predict an optimistic future for ourselves, or when it looks like the future is going to end up as sad and miserable as the past.

COMPLETE THE PAST

In order to move on we have to complete the past.

List three things that are worrying you about the past and what you need to do to stop worrying, clean up and move on.

WORRYING THINGS FROM THE PAST	STRATEGY TO GET AHEAD

LIVE THE PRESENT

Successfully living the present means making the most of what we have, finding some enjoyment in life and cleaning up what's causing sadness and misery. People who live happily in the present usually have activities in their life (often programmed) which switch them off from work, busyness and misery.

Several months ago I was interviewing a young man. I was behind with my schedule and the next client was awaiting. I said to the man, 'Can we meet later, at say 5.00pm'. He said 'No, I've got footy training'.

What he was really saying was that he had a programmed distractor. Nothing was going to interfere with it.

The people who I see who are most stressed don't have programmed distractors.

List three things that are worrying you about the present and what you plan to do about them.

WORRYING THINGS ABOUT THE PRESENT	STRATEGY TO GET AHEAD

CREATE THE FUTURE

We live the future we create for ourselves. As we sow, so we reap.

List three things that are worrying you about the future and what you plan to do about them.

WORRYING THINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE	STRATEGY TO GET AHEAD



2.19

**FOCUS ON THE PAST AND THE FUTURE,
AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PRESENT**

You get stressed when your focus on the present is distorted by a negative, destructive or inappropriate focus on the past or the future.

13 STRAIGHT LOSING POINTS

This story, told by Rod Laver, is about a situation where his focus, firstly on the future, and then on the past prevented him and Roy Emerson from winning the 1969 French Doubles Championship. It is also a story that where the focus on games, not points leads to disaster.



Newc and Tony led two sets to one, but we won the fourth set, got an early service break in the fifth and were moving right along to the championship. At 4-3 the serve came to me and we won the first three points for 40-0.

That should have been that, to put us in excellent position, either with a chance to break and finish it, or for Emmo to wind it up with his serve. We never got another point. It was pretty clear how I blew it, and anybody can do it. It was a beautiful case of ignoring all the musts. I succumbed to the great temptation of thinking 40-0 was the same thing as game. It's very close, but you still have to get the last point. I was thinking automatic 5-3, and I never got the next point. Nothing is automatic. I turned off my brain. I remember now I was going for big first serves, finish off the game with a bang. Look splendid. Be a hero.

And I got a trifle casual. You have to get into the net right behind your serve, but I wasn't snappy at all at 40-0, thinking that one of those triple-game points would fall by itself.

With my second serve to look at constantly, Newc and Roche got a little edge. When they got to deuce Newc and Roche knew they had a real chance. They were off the hook. They knew it ... I knew it. I got fumbly. When that happened so did Emmo. Hysteria was in season. With the match even at 4-4, Newc and Roche doubled their concentration, while I was still kicking myself mentally about the last game.

As the thought 'Forty-love, you idiot!' flashed over and over in my brain they were taking us apart.

There is just no use in replaying a game like that, until later. You've got to make yourself forget it and just say, 'Okay, next point. One point at a time is the way you've got to discipline yourself.'

Rod Laver. 1971 *The Education of a Tennis Player*, Pelham, London 1971.

Losers think in games. Winners think in points.
Charlie Holst

2.20

LACK OF CONGRUITY BETWEEN CONSCIOUS AND SUB-CONSCIOUS

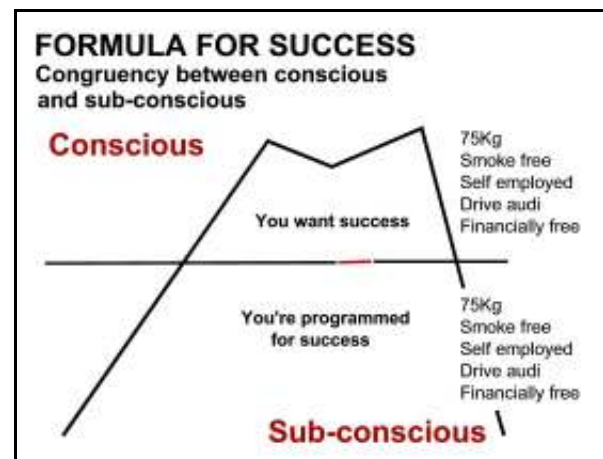
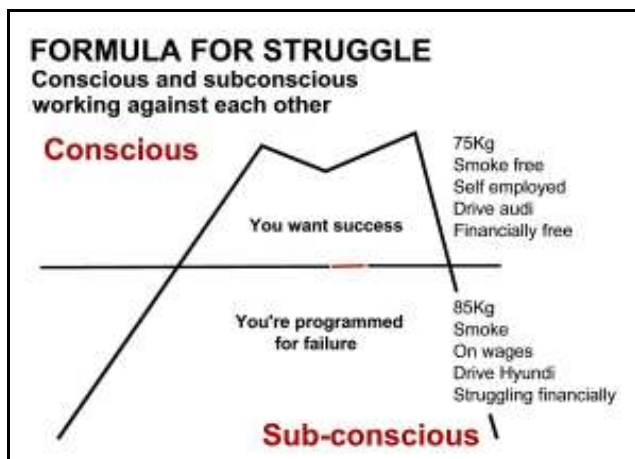
You get stressed when there is a lack of congruity between what your conscious mind wants and what your sub-conscious mind will let you have.

These are the old stories and rackets we run on ourselves. There are family patterns that keep on repeating themselves, some of them constructive, some of them destructive. To turn the famous saying around, the sins of the sons (and daughters) are revisited on their fathers and grandfathers back to the fourth generation!

We find it difficult to move forward because we're held back by the habits, attitudes, values, beliefs and fears locked into our subconscious. We want something, but find we never seem to get it. We'd like to be smoke free, yet for some reason we smoke. It is amazing that about half the people who smoke took it up because their parents smoked and it was an acceptable thing to do, and the other half took it up because their parents didn't smoke and taking it up was a form of rebellion. The diagram below provides examples of expectations that never seem to be met.

STRUGGLE VERSUS SUCCESS

Until there is congruity between what conscious wants and sub-conscious is willing to let happen, life remains a struggle.



Once you can work out what it is in your sub-conscious that's holding you back you can address it and begin to move forward.

List six things that you want and what's stopping you from getting them.

WHAT I WANT	WHAT'S HOLDING ME BACK

2.21

PROCRASTINATION

The road to hell is paved with good intention.

Gurdjieff said, 'Why is it that I find it easier to do the things I don't want to do than it is to do the things I do want to do.'

Here is a list of excuses gleaned from people who are masters of the art of creative avoidance.

- I don't have the time
- I'm too busy, lazy ...
- It's too early, late, hot, cold, wet ...
- I don't have the money
- I've got a headache, sore leg, crook back ...

In Canberra you can't exercise in winter, 'It's too cold.' In Cairns, in summer you can't exercise, 'It's too hot.'

NO TIME FOR YOURSELF

'I don't have time' is the greatest of excuses. People don't have the time to do the things they need and want to do. Or should that read, people don't make the time to do the things they need or want to do.

The average Australian spends three and a quarter hours each day watching television and then complains 'I don't have time'.

We've all heard of the saying, 'Give a job to a busy person.' Busy people make time to do the things that are important to them.

The reason you don't have time is that you don't have time for yourself. You can't find time to exercise. You can't find time to meditate. You can't find time to clean up your life. You can't find time to set goals. You can't find time for yourself.

Until you can find time for yourself you'll have to put up with what you're getting.

LAZINESS

Laziness is the second most common excuse people give for not getting on with their life.

As a disease there don't seem to be many good cures around, except to say that there is a time to be lazy and a time to be active. You need to be able to distinguish one time from the other.

PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is the antithesis of action. We keep putting things off. We even create 'very good' excuses to convince ourselves that we can procrastinate - eg. a headache, tiredness, having to watch the news ...

Are you one of the people that goes out into the study to do some work and then find yourself cleaning up, or reading emails, looking at Facebook and then following every crazy post down every alley it takes you to?

MOTIVATION

Here's the secret to becoming motivated. You don't motivate yourself to do something; you do something and then become motivated.

2.22 THE DESIRE FOR INSTANT GRATIFICATION

We get stressed due to our inability to delay gratification. We put other things ahead of the things we need to do. We get distracted. We're not prepared to knuckle down and finish what we've started.

We live in a generation that wants to put last things first; to reap before sowing; to receive the reward before the effort.

We call it the 'I want it now' generation. We do the easy work first, rather than what needs to be done. We put things on credit rather than saving up for them. We then get upset when the Visa statement arrives. We make lots of phone calls and then complain about the size of the bill. We go on a diet to lose weight and half way to our target start eating chocolate and ice cream again. We buy gym memberships and don't use them. We buy books on the internet and never read them. We have a couple of drinks over tea and then wonder why we fall asleep on the couch when it was our intention to do some work.

We set targets we'll never achieve, because a bright light of some sort attracts and diverts our attention.

Goethe said, 'Things that matter most must never be at the mercy of things that matter least.'

Stephen Covey in 'Seven habits of Effective People,' says that the first effective habit is to 'Put first things first'. And having put the first thing first, stick to it until you achieve it. Sometimes the things that matter take a little longer to achieve. The reward will be worth the effort.

In his book 'Emotional Intelligence', Daniel Goleman reports on studies done with children showing that success in childhood and adolescence depends more on an ability to delay gratification than it does on intelligence.

THE STANFORD MARSHMALLOW EXPERIMENT

The Stanford Marshmallow Experiment was a study on deferred gratification conducted in 1972 by psychologist Walter Mischel of Stanford University.

The study took place at the Bing Nursery School located at Stanford University, using children aged between four and six as subjects. The children were led into a room where a treat of their choice (Oreo cookie, marshmallow, or pretzel stick) was placed on a table, by a chair.

The children could eat the marshmallow, but if they waited for fifteen minutes without eating the marshmallow, while the researcher left the room, they would be rewarded with a second marshmallow.

Of the 600 children who took part in the experiment, only a third deferred gratification long enough to get the second marshmallow.

It was the results of the follow-up study that would take place many years later that surprised Mischel. He discovered there existed a correlation between the results of the marshmallow test, and the success of the children many years later. The first follow-up study, in 1988, showed that "preschool children who delayed gratification longer, were described more than 10 years later by their parents as adolescents who were significantly more competent".

A second follow-up study, in 1990, showed that the ability to delay gratification also correlated with higher university entrance scores.

A 2011 study of the same participants indicates that the characteristic remains with the person for life.

2.23

COMPARISON

A sure-fire way of feeling stressed is to compare yourself with others. It leads to jealousy, judgementalism and thanklessness.

In this country, we are currently experiencing an epidemic of avarice as we constantly compare ourselves with those who have more (usually of the material things) than we do, rather than with those who have less. We're a thankless lot.

We forget that old aphorism -

'I complained I had no shoes until I
met a man who had no feet.'



2.24

FEAR

Fear knocked on the door. I opened it and there was nothing there.

There are two great fears, the fear of failure and the fear of success. We can understand the former but are less likely to recognize in ourselves the latter. As Paul Simon said 'The closer your destination, the more you keep slip-sliding away'.

Without a clear and powerful vision of what we really want we oscillate between the past and the future, fearing both.

Sport provides wonderful metaphors for understanding fear.

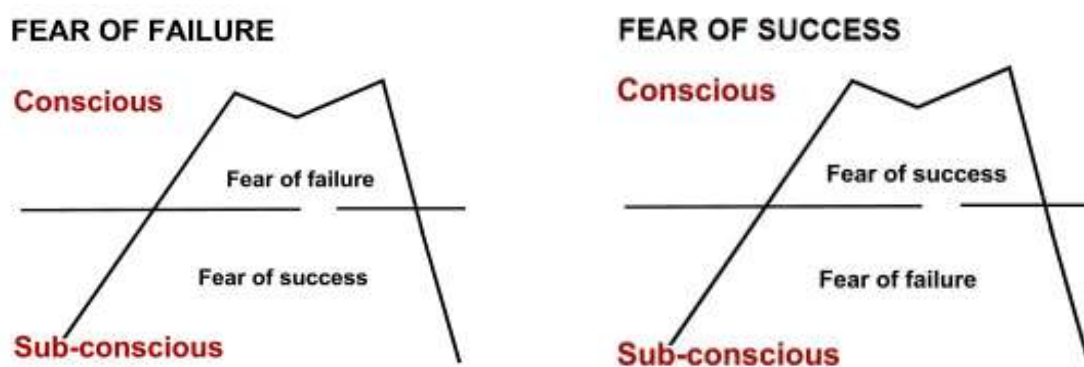
'A tennis player is engaged to play in an important match. He wishes of course to win, but fears that he will lose. Even before the day of the game his fears begin to realize themselves. He is nervy and 'out of sorts'. In fact the unconscious is creating the conditions best suited to realize the thought in his mind - failure.

When the game begins his skill seems to have deserted him. He summons the resources of will and tries to compel himself to play well, straining every nerve to recapture the old dexterity. But all his efforts only make him play worse and worse. The harder he tries the more signally he fails. The energy he calls up obeys not his will but the idea in his mind, not the desire to win but the dominant thought of failure. ...

Success is not gained by effort but by right thinking.'

Harry Brooks, Autosuggestion.

There is more than one way to lose a game.



In the book 'Rich Dad, Poor Dad', Robert Kiyosaki says that fear of losing money is one of the main reasons why most people never become rich. Kiyosaki says, 'Winning means being unafraid to lose. For winners, losing inspires them. For losers, losing defeats them.'

At his inaugural address in March 1933, Franklin Roosevelt said, 'Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.'

It has been estimated that 90% of the things that people fear and worry about never happen. So don't worry, be happy!

Here is a list of fears. It was put together in response to a survey in which thousands of people were asked what they feared the most.

Place a tick in the box next to the two things one list that you fear the most.

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Dogs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Loneliness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Flying | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | Death | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | Sickness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Deep water | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | Financial problems | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | Insects and bugs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | Heights | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | Speaking before a group | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The greatest fears of the thousands of people surveyed are listed in reverse order. The two things people fear the most are speaking in front of other people and heights.

When you look at them you just have to concede that we don't have a lot to fear and that what we do fear we can quite easily overcome.

MAKE A LIST OF SOME OF YOUR FEARS

COMPETENCE

There are four levels of competence.

1. Unconscious incompetence. You don't know you're incompetent.
2. Conscious incompetence. You know you're incompetent.
3. Conscious competence. If you concentrate really hard you'll achieve a measure of competence.
4. Unconscious competence. You achieve competence without thinking about it. They say it takes 10,000 to achieve this level of competence.

2.25

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

Data is not information. Information is not knowledge. Knowledge is not wisdom, or understanding, insight, discernment , awareness or action.

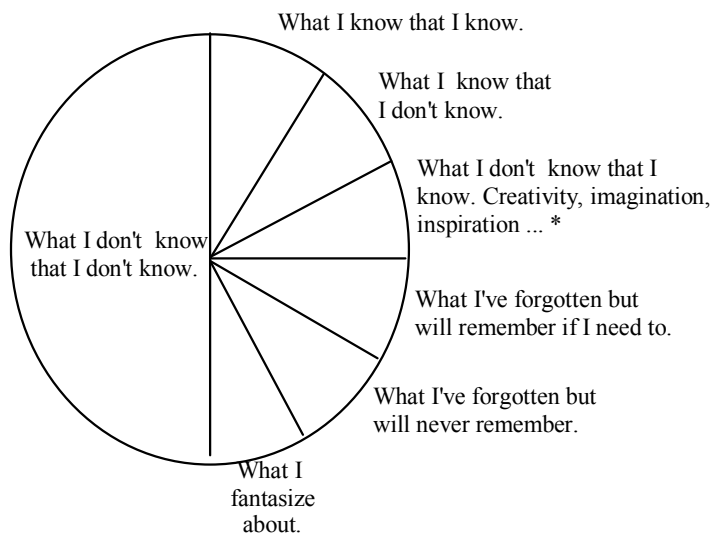
We get stressed when we don't understand what's going on, when we don't understand how the world works, when we ignore the laws of the universe.

We live in a culture that values remembering knowledge over understanding. And one of the great dilemmas of our lives is that despite all the data, information and knowledge we've accumulated, we don't know and we don't understand.

Most of the knowledge that we feed ourselves is irrelevant to an understanding of how life is supposed to work. We don't know what the main game is. We don't understand what's going on inside us or around us.

We have this feeling that as the world moves in one direction, we're moving in another. There is a lack of congruency between how we act and what appears to be the natural laws of the universe.

And of course, even if we did have some understanding, would we use it to live rich and fulfilling lives? We'd fall asleep, procrastinate, forget or become distracted.



Knowledge without understanding is the root of all kinds of evil.
George Gurdjieff The Study House Chateau du Prieure Fontainebleau

2.26

BELIEFS THAT HOLD US BACK

We get stressed because we have great difficulty discerning what is true from what is not true. During our lives, particularly as children, we take on board beliefs that eventually hold us back from living the good life.

We believe in myths, superstitions and fairy tales handed down through the generations, but which appear to be in conflict with the prevailing belief systems of our culture and community. For instance, the gods have never been leaders in technology. The Gatling gun and the cruise missile would have come in very handy in the Middle East in 3000 BC!

We have values and attitudes about things that are more appropriate to the days when they buttoned up boots and milked cows with a bucket.

Our ability to change our beliefs, whether it be about ourselves and our abilities or about other people has failed to match the change in thought and technology which has expanded at an exponential rate.

Half the time we haven't a clue what's going on, who to believe, who not to believe, which opinion to embrace, which opinion to take notice of.

The other half of the time it's easier to switch off and go to sleep.



WHEN SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING

We search for meaning but fail to see it when it's staring us in the face. We get upset when we don't know what the game is.

Man is a very complicated machine.

With an ordinary man most of his time is occupied with considering; one association stops, another begins. He goes out in the morning glad, and in a few minutes he becomes sad, another few minutes and he is resentful and angry - he is at the mercy of hundreds of useless associations; the machine works all the time.

George Gurdjieff

2.27

PERCEPTION DEFICIENCY DISORDER

According to Ouspensky in Tertium Organum, we are surrounded by a vast unknown universe, and that our assumptions and presuppositions cut us off from this world of reality. Our perception is prejudiced and what we see is often what we expect to see, not what's actually there.

We perceive things in different ways. The mind plays tricks on us in ways that lead us to become stressed.

If you have trouble reading 'Paris in the spring', or counting the number of 'f's in a sentence, or seeing the young woman and the old woman in the drawing, imagine what else you're failing to see that's going on around you.

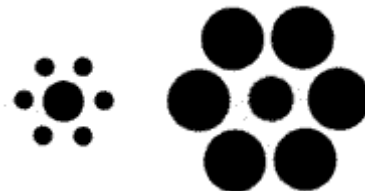
PARIS IN THE THE SPRING

**Finished files are the result of years of scientific
study combined with the experience of many years.**

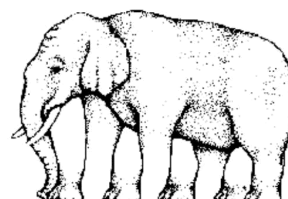


And now for your amusement.

1. In which cluster of dots is the centre circle the largest?



How many legs does the elephant have?



2.28 NEGATIVE, JUNK AND TURBULENT ENVIRONMENTS

THE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENT

We live in a pretty negative environment. In a society with 95% employment we are continually bombarded by the fact that there is 5% unemployment.

Our mass media delights in reporting the very worst of news, as though good news is no news. And if it is not bad news it is inane news or bizarre news.

It's 9am on January 1st 1998, the start of a new year. Just when you'd expect the news to be optimistic here's how it came across, via the ABC news in Brisbane.

Queensland has recorded it's first road deaths for the year.

Many Australians may be waking up this morning to a sore head.

There was a tragedy at Lorne on Victoria's west coast.

Police in northern Ireland say five people have been injured in a shooting ...

An Australian Army medical team stationed in Papua New Guinea is doing it's best to ...

The Israeli security service has been forced to disclose details of ...

A 25 year old man will face court today after surrendering himself to ...

In swimming, Australia's newest superfish, Grant Hackett says he'll be ...

The weather: scattered showers and thunderstorms over the northern tropics.

THE JUNK ENVIRONMENT

We live in a junk environment, which if you take it too seriously could lead you to becoming stressed. In circa 1793 Queen Marie-Antoinette of France said 'Let them eat cake'. In the 20th century successive people have made a fortune out of encouraging others to watch junk, read junk, listen to junk and eat junk.

THE TURBULENT ENVIRONMENT

We live in turbulent times. Imagine what it would be like to be a cork drifting lazily off shore somewhere in a gentle swell. Suddenly you're trapped in the surf near the shore. It is a turbulent environment. You keep getting dumped and then taken back out to sea, only to drift in and get dumped again.

Sooner or later you're going to have to make a decision to do something to stay back out of the turbulence, or surf it in to the shore. Either way it's going to take some action.



What man needs is an organ by which he can be constantly aware of the exact date of his own death. This would stop men wasting their lives as if they were immortal.

Martin Heidegger

2.29

STRESS REDUCTION KIT



DIRECTIONS

1. Tape kit on wall
2. Follow directions in centre of kit
3. Repeat until pain goes away
4. If pain persists hit harder