

STRESS CARE/ANXIETY CARE

Dan Bagby/BTSR

The relationship that will most affect you is with yourself.

One Minute For Myself. Spencer Johnson

TEN MAIN STRESSORS (C. Leslie Charles, Why Is Everyone So Cranky?)

1. Compressed time: Frazzled from hectic daily schedules
2. Communication overload: Information glut (cell phone/texting)
3. Disconnection of significant relationships
4. Cost and enticement: What it costs to live
5. Competition: for adequacy/place/recognition
6. Depersonalization: Rudeness, loss of respect
7. Dependence on technology: pace requires flawless perform.
8. Change: Happens at quicker pace; out of our control
9. Struggling with expectations
10. Complexity: Balancing more demands than ever

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Feel continually bewildered about how to use time?
2. How long since you did anything fun?
3. Become more irritable or impatient as the month progresses?
4. Neglecting your health in any way?
5. Feel dissatisfied or discontent with how you are coping?
6. Feel apprehensive about the family/congregational expectations?
7. Anticipating a change in your life you've been resisting or avoiding?
8. A relationship in your life that needs attention?
9. Plagued with the nagging sensation that something is missing in life?
10. Headaches/anxiety/muscular tension/sleep/stomach/spending/appetite/irritability/tight, clenched jaw/worry/distracted/resentful

HOW TO FIND "SHABBAT"--AND PEACE

1. Focus on the day's priorities. Save time for a grief, read a psalm
2. Dinner table self-awareness & sharing: In what ways do you need hope, peace, joy, and love? Share with family, a colleague, friend
3. Monitor your commitments and schedules (we include too much).
4. Explore your expectations: What is "adequate" right now?
5. Make selective & intentional choices about initiatives/family
6. Combine reflection with exercise (gently) three times a week: What can I "birth" in my life? In what ways can I show the "Gift of Presence" to someone else?
7. Surround yourself with support; choose safe people/limit time with naysayers: *Who raises your stress level--and who reduces it?*
8. Schedule some sacred music into your routine, and at least three meditative reflective times. Listen to your self-talk: Target preoccupations
9. Connect with three persons a day: Invest in relationships by blessing them with a phone call, an e-mail, or a written note; watch the isolation
10. Choose compassion: Contempt and kindness are hard to hold together
11. Take a nap periodically: It's sacred care of the soul

When stressed, ANSWER two questions: (1) Is this a small, medium, or a large annoyance? (2) How upset do I want to get, and for how long?

Resource: David Elkind, Family Ties That Stress. Tad Tadlock, Rush Hour Every Hour. Robert Hemfelt, We Are Driven. Dan Bagby, Healing Our Hurts: Coping With Difficult Emotions.

IMPACT SCALE FOR CHANGE/STRESS EVENTS

(Adapted from Thomas H. Holmes, M.D.)

Death of a Child	100	
Death of a Spouse	92	
Divorce	73	
Care of an Aging Person	65	
Jail Term	63	
Death of a Close Family member	63	
Personal injury or illness	53	
Marriage	50	
Loss of job (termination)	49	
Marital reconciliation	45	
Retirement	45	Accumulation of
Pregnancy/ Broken Relationship	45	300 points or more
Geographical move	42	precipitates Geographical
change/starts work	40	dysfunction or
Sexual adjustments	39	paralysis
Gain of a new family member	39	
Business readjustment	39	
Change in financial status	38	
Death of a close friend	37	
Change to different line of work	36	
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35	
Mortgage over \$200,000 dollars	31	
Foreclosure of loan or bankruptcy	30	Main stressors:
Son or daughter leaving home	29	finances
Trouble with in-laws	29	fatigue
Outstanding personal achievement	28	grief
Wife begins or stops work	27	abandonment
Begin or end school	26	isolation
Young person secures driver's license	23	self-doubt
Trouble with the boss	23	depression
Youngest child starts to school	21	disengagement
Local change in residence	20	
Change in number of family get-togethers	15	
Loss of a pet	12	
Christmas	12	

1) Stress activates the body's "fight or flight" immune system; symptoms include hyperactivity of adrenal cortex, shrinkage of the thymus gland & lymph nodes, and appearance of gastrointestinal ulcers.

2) The primary cause of stress responses is an internal (self) evaluation that a situation(s) is exceeding one's capacity to cope. Rapid change can challenge people's confidence; responses are physiological, but also emotional: anxiety, depression, irritability, rapid mood swings. Lower immune system protection.

3) Physical stressors: noise, crowding, etc. Organizational: group demands and expectations. Interpersonal: angry, demanding, aggressive, pessimistic persons. Intrapersonal: demands on oneself (irrational guilt, unrealistic expectations, distorted evaluations of self and situations).

4) Stress management: Body has restorative powers. Relaxation and exercise help much (three times weekly); meditative prayers are significant; nutrition balance; assertiveness, time management, and self-conversation are essential.

Faith integration: confession, grace, hope, empowerment, presence

