

PRACTICING STRESS MANAGEMENT

by Jeff Davidson, MBA, CMC

Managing stress while trying to achieve great success is a difficult balance. I asked men and women who are highly respected in their fields how the typical working man and woman could become a high achiever while keeping stress in check. Each made comments to the effect about not going along with the crowd, particularly when it means taking a seemingly easier road that results in less than acceptable outcomes. Sometimes, sub-optimizing ends up creating more problems than it solves, and a lot more stress!

Here's what else they said:

- * Pace yourself, especially if you've got big goals.
- * Don't be afraid to aim high, but at the same time, make sure that you approach tasks with a realistic notion of what it will take to be successful.
- * Take frequent breaks, however short in duration.
- * Anticipate setbacks. Nearly everyone faces a long and winding road, on occasion, on the way to real breakthroughs. Everyone is subject to mistakes. Those who recover quickly are the ones who achieve success.
- * Follow-up. When it looks as if you're near the goal line, don't make the mistake that so many people do and coast in the rest of the way. Put in a little more time and effort to make sure that your quest will pay off.

In closing, and for your enlightenment, here are some of my own "Eternal Truths" in regards to handling stress:

Eternal Truths Related to Managing Stress

- * The hardest step is simply doing something differently from the way that you have always done it.
- * You don't know how a stress reduction technique will work for you until you commit to putting it into practice.
- * The best results start to come a day or two after you thought they would.
- * You never quite get all the time you want to engage in a technique.
- * It's hard to feel stressed when you're looking good.
- * The quiet space that you've found will soon be found by others. So, find many.
- * A break feels best when you need it the most.
- * Working with stress, day after day, is an unnatural act, but it doesn't stop you from doing it.
- * The less you enjoy doing something, the more potentially stressful it can be.
- * No one wants to hear about your stress, unless you pay them to do so.
- * A stressful day seems the worst in the middle, when it feels like it's never going to end.
- * When your mother says that you look tired, it actually means that you're highly stressed.

Reducing stress is a stage that you pass through on the way to becoming a balanced person; however, you don't necessarily get better at handling stress with age, it all depends on what you learn and put into practice.