

# Understanding Stress



**A Bull Busters' guide**

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## **BullBusters' Guides**

I strongly believe that the best kind of guide is one that someone can read, watch or listen to in an hour or less. The people I talk with tell me that they are looking for concise solutions, not 10 hour video series. And my personal experience backs this up - if I buy something and find it's a 10 hour video series, I'll delay watching it "until a better time". The thing is, that time never seems to materialise, or I forget about the product!

## **Understanding Stress – Free Report**

Hence the BullBusters' Guides - as Dennis Becker is fond of saying "No hocus pocus, just focus". In other words, no padding, just actionable content to help you solve your problems.

And my promise to you - I won't sell your details, lie, cheat, disappear, pawn you off to a \$2 worker in some foreign country who can hardly write or speak English, or anything else you've seen other people doing.

Some Guides contain a Resources section listing products of mine that others have bought or that are relevant to the content of the Guide.

Once you buy from me, as a client of mine, you will benefit from receiving e-mails with details of new products before the public gets those details. Furthermore, when I launch higher priced products, you will be offered client-only discounts.

## **Understanding Stress – Free Report**

Welcome to this free report entitled “From Stress To Success”.

It contains some of the latest thinking about stress management, together with a number of self-help exercises.

I ought to just make it clear – in my opinion, these exercises and techniques are a good start and a great “first aid” treatment. However, they in no way replace the benefits you will get from working with a highly skilled life and/or business coach!

## Understanding Stress – Free Report

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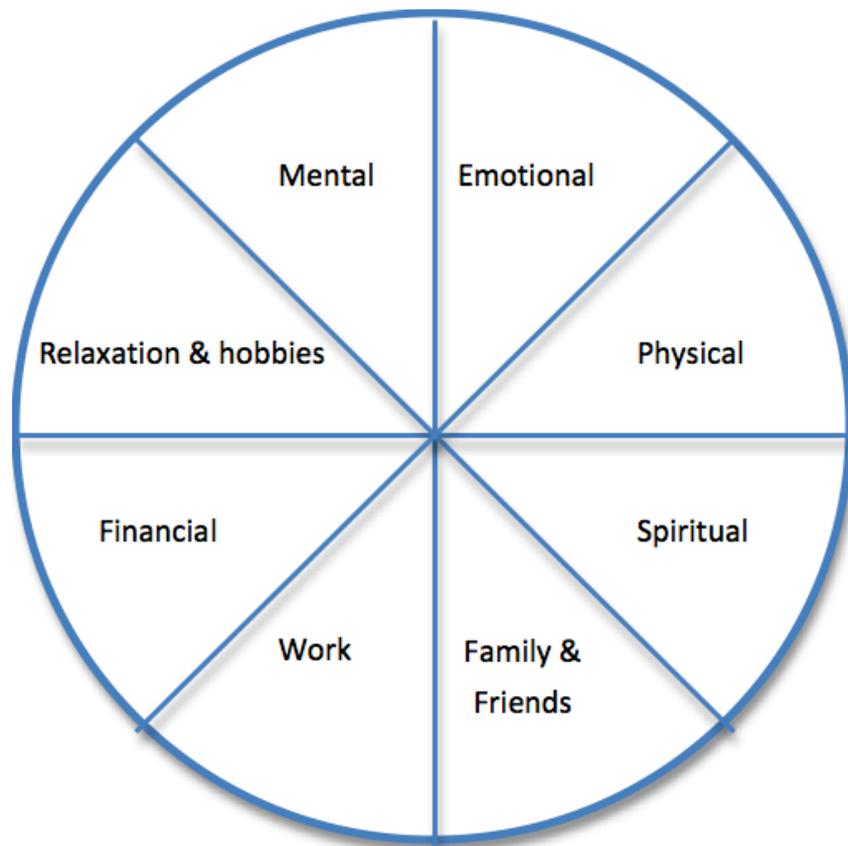
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## From Stress To Success

Let's start with a simple question: What does success mean to you?

Have you ever found yourself thinking: "What now? I've achieved my goal so why do I still feel empty?" This is where the Wheel of Life can be very useful in unleashing potential.

Think of a wheel with 8 spokes – each of the areas separated by the spokes corresponds to one of the 8 key areas of our lives.



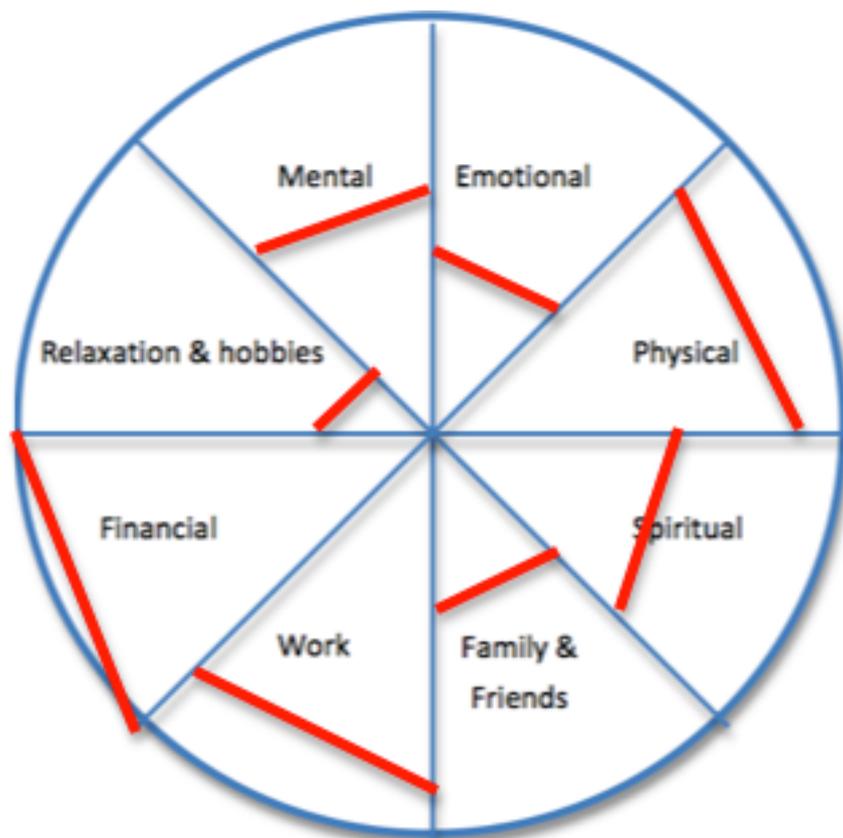
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The exercise is a simple one, and one that you should revisit regularly as your priorities will change!

Simply draw the wheel and if the outer rim represents 10 out of 10, or 100%, or whatever scale you want to use, take a pen of a different colour and identify where your life is currently.

## Wobbly Wheels & Unleashing Potential

If you look at the example below, you'll see a very wobbly wheel – one that is typical of someone who focuses on work and money and who has sacrificed pretty much everything else! At least they appear to have learned to release their stress though physical exercise or for whatever other reason, are in good physical health.



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This now gives you a lot of information that you can use in many different ways. My preferred approach is to simply reflect on how I would like my perfect life to be and ask myself "How would I like the wheel to be?" For a number of reasons, I may be happy in the short term with low scores in some areas, so never assume you want to be 100% in everything.

### Current and Desired Reality

Once you have an idea of what your current reality is (make sure that the first wheel focuses on how things are and not on how they "should be") and what your desired future reality is, you can reflect on bridging the gaps between the two. Or you can ask a coach to help you through the process.

A tip: It's often useful to think about where you want to start in addressing the gap. However, if it's obvious that you are ignoring something where there is a huge mismatch between the two wheels, ask yourself why you are avoiding tackling this one. There may be a valid reason. Equally, you may be avoiding the issue – highlighting and discussing this may provide insights for you.

This is where a coach or a skilled friend can help you - they won't let you off the hook!

### Wheels Within The Wheel of Life

You can construct these wheels for lots of different purposes.

For example, you may be thinking about a new job or even about setting up a new business. You could create a wheel where each spoke represents an important skill or area of knowledge relating to what the new job will bring you or about setting up and building a strong, sustainable business.

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Plot where you are for each spoke and it provides the basis for an action plan that will tell you what needs to be done, what you can/should do themselves, and where you may need help. A very simple wheel might look like the above example:

In this case, whatever your current wheel looks like, the next step is to create a new wheel for each of the three areas: Authority (your perceived area of expertise), Innovation (your offering and how it differs from your competition's) and Marketing and Sales.

## The Individual and Stress At Work

### Type A Characteristics and Heart Disease

In the late 50's two cardiologists, Meyer Freedman and Ray Rosenham, noticed that amongst their patients with coronary heart disease there were many who shared a common behaviour pattern. They called these people Type A's. Type A's were considered to be aggressive, competitive, impatient and in a hurry. They tend to speak rapidly and loudly, interrupted others, were poor listeners and were easily irritated. People without these types of behaviour were labeled Type B's. They are people with few of the above characteristics and were calmer, more relaxed and patient in their approach to life.

In a major study, Freedman and Rosenham showed that Type A's were twice as likely to have heart attacks than Type B's, even when risk factors such as blood pressure and cholesterol levels were taken into account.

Subsequent research has shown that despite the health risk they run, Type A's are more likely to hold senior positions in organisations and are likely to be successful at work. This is not matched in their social and domestic lives however. They are less likely to have happy marriages, will have fewer friends and outside interests, and in work are less likely to devote time to being with people. This is partly because they devote the bulk of their time to work itself.

### Recent Research

Recent research has shown the following:

Type A's who feel in control of their environment are likely to be healthier than those who feel very little control over their circumstances. In other words, when a person's competitive spirit is balanced by a sense of mastery, through good social skills, personal organisation and high self esteem, they may be much less

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susceptible to heart disease. Type A's who lack social skills, and feel repressed and hostile, are less likely to feel mastery and may actually feel the victims of circumstances which they try to fight against.

All aspects of a work environment which reduce the sense of control may cause problems for Type A's. For example over promotion, too much responsibility, work overload and low participation in decision making.

Type A's increase their risk of heart disease by ignoring the warning signs their body gives them. For example, fatigue and chest pains.

Other risk factors, such as smoking, obesity, raised blood pressure and raised cholesterol levels, compound with Type A characteristics to increase risk.

There is evidence that modifying Type A characteristics works. Use of relaxation exercises, time management and social support have been shown to lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure. Learning when it is inappropriate to be competitive and OK to relax helps, as does learning to slow down and take a more realistic view of time. The important thing is to modify Type A behaviours in a way that improves health and allows the person to maintain and even enhance their ability to success at a high level.

Included with this report is an MP3 recording you can download and listen to, to help you to relax and lower your blood pressure – enjoy!

## Characteristic Behaviour Patterns of Type A and Type B Personalities

### Type A Behaviours

Hurried Speech

Constant, rapid movement/eating

Thinking and doing several things at once

Vague guilty feelings during periods of relaxation, when doing nothing

No compassion for other Type A's

Open impatience with the rate at which things occur and how others operate;  
chronic sense of time urgency

An active attempt to dominate the conversation, to determine the topics and to remain preoccupied with one's own thoughts when others are talking

Over concern with getting things worth having – no time to become the things worth being

Characteristic nervous gestures – tics, clench fist and jaw, pound on table, grind teeth

Hate queuing, having to wait in line, having to wait generally.

Always in a hurry

### **Type B Behaviours**

Freedom from most if not all Type A traits

No sense of time urgency

No free floating time hostility

No felt need to display or discuss one's achievements and accomplishments unless the situation demands it

A belief that play exists for fun and relaxation not to exhibit superiority

An ability to relax without guilt and to work without agitation

### **Relationships at Work**

#### **Introduction**

Someone once said that relationships would be easy, were it not for the other person! Knowing where your support is coming from is a very important element in helping you to get results.

Conversely, you need to know who, if anyone, does not care about you or your needs, so that you can minimise any damage that they might do. Working relationships need to include trust, supportiveness, respect for each other, willingness to listen to each other and a willingness to use joint problem solving skills to help either of you as necessary.

If you find that your relationships consistently fall short of the above, then remember:

The only change you can bring about is to yourself.

Don't waste time trying to change the other person. You may be able to get them to agree that their behaviour needs to change, but it is not the role of the manager to try to change someone's personality. It is important when giving feedback, for

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example, to make it clear that you are addressing their behaviour, not them as individuals.

### **The Manager**

Major stress can occur when the problem relationship is with your manager. One of the things I have noticed as a consultant, is that everyone seems to have a 'bad boss'. Clerical staff complain, supervisors complain, first level managers complain, middle managers complain and senior managers complain.

By the law of statistics, since everyone in an organisation other than the CEO has a manager, some of those complaining must themselves be bad bosses! So think about yourself as well as about your manager as you read on. One of the 'bad bosses' may be you!

The effects of bad bosses can be seen in many workplaces: people's 'get up and go' has got up and gone, there's no drive, no creativity, high absenteeism, fear of taking initiative etc.

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### Exercise

How many of these behaviours, these symptoms, are common where you work?

Lack of delegation	Unclear Goals
People treated as costs, not as individuals	Managers not 'walking their talk'
Lack of praise or encouragement	People not being given credit for their ideas
A blame culture	Managers hide behind closed doors
Lack of discretion with confidences	Poor listening skills
A 'The Boss always knows best' culture	Quantity of work is more important than quality
Staff are seen as a cost, not an investment	Staff are never consulted; change is always imposed
Other:	

## Handling Conflict

If you need to confront your manager, and s(he) is one who often behaves in the ways described on the previous page, plan the encounter. The following may help you:

1. Try to think of something that the manager values, considers to be important.
2. Describe what (s)he has done, or what you need from her/him, in terms of the thing the manager values.
3. If necessary, describe the effect on you of not being able to deliver what the manager values, and if appropriate, how you feel about this effect.

Use language that is calm, that is non-judgemental. Don't be seen to be criticising, rather be seen to be concerned. The aim is to avoid putting the manager on the defensive.

## Self-Limiting Fears

Fear, one of the most debilitating of emotions, can either be focused internally (fear of your reactions) or externally (fear of the other person's reactions). It is important to be aware of both sources, since they can both inhibit assertiveness.

### Internal Fears

These are often based around ill-formed Internal Rules and Constraints comprising self-limiting 'cant's' and 'musts'.

#### Musts

I must be:

- nice
- self-effacing
- liked
- feminine/masculine

I must not:

- get into conflict
- hurt others
- say 'no'
- seem vulnerable
- show anger
- show liking
- make a mistake
- show vulnerability
- admit to a mistake
- take risks
- fail to meet her/his expectations

## Can'ts

I can't handle:

rejection

conflict

uncertainty

causing pain

being disliked

liked

getting what I want

the future

change

intimacy

letting go of the past

## **5 Techniques For a Fulfilling Life.**

These are some effective techniques, based on NLP, that will help you change your behaviour if you want to do so. They do not replace the experience you will get from working with a high quality coach but they will act as a first aid treatment, helping you to get better results and attract more positive experiences:

### **1. Dissociation**

People tend to react to something in a negative way, causing stress, depression or other negative emotions. First, identify what emotion you want to get rid of. Then, see yourself encountering the situation from start to finish, as an observer. Play the same mental movie backwards, then fast-forward it and then play it backwards. Repeat these steps several times, with funny music added to it. Now, picture the same event like it was happening to you now. You should have lesser of the initial response. If you still feel some kind of negative emotion, repeat this exercise until the negative emotion has completely disappeared.

### **2. Content Reframe**

This is basically looking at the situation at a different angle when you are in a one which makes you feel hopeless, angry or other negative emotions. Thus, your focus is not on the negative aspects of the situation but the benefits of the situation. For example, you have just got fired from your job. Think that this is an opportunity for better positions and you will be able to explore different kinds of areas of work that will let you develop your other skills.

### **3. Anchoring**

Anchoring is based on the Pavlovian response & is mainly used to elicit some kind of emotional response to something that you do or say. For example, it is possible for the person to start unconsciously smiling when you touch his/her shoulder. To do this, first identify the state you want the person to experience, be it happiness, courage or something else. Do whatever it takes for the person to get into such

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state. In that target state, touch him/her and hold the position for a few seconds. Remember the exact area that you've touched.

Then take your hand off the other person and say something unrelated to take the person's mind off the subject. Then, after a few minutes, touch exactly the same area again and monitor the response. If the process has been successful, the person should have the same emotional response as the one you wanted him/her to have.

### **4. Rapport**

Rapport is a very important and quite easy skill to master that enables you to get along with any kind of person. There are many ways to create rapport with people. You can follow the breathing patterns of a person, you can mirror his/her body language (not too obviously, of course) or you can use similar words that the other person uses. You can also assess the person's main sensory perception, be it visual, kinesthetic or auditory and then use the same perception yourself. You can do that by simply talking to the person and paying attention to what kind of adjectives the person uses.

If you then use the same or similar adjectives, the other person will feel you are both on the same wavelength.

### **5. Belief Change**

If you had some negative experience and you dwelled on it, you would then start attracting more similar experiences that would reaffirm your rightness about the situation. In such situations, it is best to straight away do a content reframe and not focus on the negative aspects of it. Another way is to spend five minutes a day affirming a completely different belief to your current one. You should give it your full attention without any distractions. Focus on your words and understand their true meanings.

## Are You Your Own Worst Enemy?

Obstacles. Hurdles. Barriers. Roadblocks. These are all common sights along the road to achievement.

If you have ever worked towards a goal that most people would label as “unrealistic”, or even better, “impossible”, then you have undoubtedly faced one challenge after another. In fact, when you reach the point where you feel like giving up, that is usually when things get even tougher.

Believe it or not, these external obstacles are actually the easy part. They are obvious. We can examine them and devise a plan to work through them or around them. For example, if you want to start a business but lack the funding, there are a variety of tangible action steps you can take to resolve your funding issues.

The real barriers to success are the internal roadblocks. This is where it gets difficult. This is where you battle your own self-doubts, worries and feelings of unworthiness.

You may have the best work ethic in the world. You may have the strictest discipline and self-control. But if your mind is listing all of the reasons why you shouldn't have what you truly want, you are fighting a losing battle.

For many of us, these negative tapes have been playing the same disempowering messages in our minds for years.

In my business, I hire a lot of writers for various projects. Some of these people have incredible talent. They can weave words together and communicate a powerful message with ease and grace. But they spend all of their time ghost writing or freelancing for other people. Many have never published their own book.

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Why? For one reason or another they don't believe in themselves. They don't think they are ready. They choose to sit on the sidelines watching other people publish successful work while they maintain the status quo.

They are waiting for some defining moment to give themselves permission to finally publish their own work. The problem is, this moment will never come as long as they remain blind to their capabilities.

The only way to cross the invisible line from feeling unworthy to feeling powerful and capable is to change the internal dialog. Instead of repeating patterns of thought telling you why you can't do something, you flip the switch. You spend time every day reprogramming those internal tapes. When an old disempowering message begins to play, you train yourself to switch it to a positive.

Slowly but surely you forge a new path; a new way of thinking; a new internal dialog. Instead of being your own worst enemy, you become your own cheerleader. It is in that moment that everything in your life changes.

## **Why Being Realistic Holds You Back**

If you want to be certain that you will never face a challenge or find yourself in a difficult bind, then it is very important to have tame and realistic goals. Goals that you know you can achieve with minimal effort and no hardship. Or sleep 24/7!

However, if you want to have any degree of excitement and experience real growth in your life, then you're going to have to make plans and set goals that other people will very likely label as unrealistic.

These kind of goals often come with a high degree of risk. You rarely know how you are going to achieve them until you get started. And more often than not, the results you achieve will not be exactly what you set out to do in the first place.

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Many of the famous entertainers, doctors and scientists that we admire in our society today became well known because they achieved unrealistic goals. They had the courage to set the goals and the perseverance to bring them into reality. Unrealistic goal setters tend to be happier, more positive people. They have high levels of energy because they thrive on challenge and love the thrill of achievement.

Setting and pursuing unrealistic goals is not always a walk in the park. You are going to face resistance.

Many people abandon some of their biggest goals and dreams after well meaning friends and family talk them out of it. There is a very good chance that the same thing will happen to you once you start changing your life and setting big, unrealistic goals. When this happens, it is very important to look at the source of advice.

If you are being talked out of an exciting idea by someone who lives a boring, risk-free life, realize that if you choose to accept their advice and abandon your dream, you are also very likely going to create a boring risk-free life.

If you want to keep your biggest goals and dreams alive and build momentum to start putting them into action, seek advice from other like-minded goal setters and get feedback that encourages you to go for it. Spend more time hanging around people who are less concerned with risk and failure and are more interested in living an exciting life.

Once you become a setter of unrealistic or impossible goals, you will never look back!

## Riding the Wave of Momentum

When I think back to my school days, one of my best memories is the time I spent in playing field hockey. I was by no means a star but I just loved the game and thrived on the competition.

My father had been a goalkeeper and I'd followed suit; but I could also play as an outfield player. My hockey teacher was quite dismissive of my goalkeeping. I stopped playing in goal for over 15 years until I was playing in a game where our goalkeeper got injured. I volunteered to take over and really enjoyed it.

The thrill & excitement of being under pressure and knowing that a mistake would probably lead to conceding a goal gave me a real buzz. I set myself the target of playing top level hockey, even though I was approaching my mid 30s. Within a few seasons, I'd played in goal for our first team (never got close to it while playing on the pitch!) & then for the West of England.

Finally, in 1998, I played for England, at the Masters (Over 40s) World Cup where we won the Gold Medal! If I hadn't set that target, I'd never have achieved those outcomes!

This concept can play a huge role in our lives if we apply it at new levels. The good news is that in most cases, there is more room for error than when playing in goal!

If there is an area of your life where you are currently unhappy with your results, you can use this momentum principle to shift your direction immediately.

Let's imagine that you are an entrepreneur, running your own business, or a key manager in someone else's business.

You gradually realise that running the business is becoming so demanding that you are spending all of your time on daily demands and investing almost no time in your personal development.

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You work with a coach and as a result, you decide to start a new routine of waking up at 4am to get some quality study time in. Initially, this would be way outside of your comfort zone. You'd probably feel tired for the first few days and even question if this was really a good idea. But you try it for a few days. A few days turns into a week. A few weeks turn into a month. After that, you discover you're feeling great and want to keep the streak going.

Before you know it, you've forged a new identity. You are now the one who gets up at 4am to get a head start on the rest of the world. You feel proud of myself. And more importantly, the extra hours you were investing in training your mind and motivating yourself were paying off. Friends tell you your mood is better, your performance has sky-rocketed and new ideas were flooding into your mind all of the time.

One day at a time is a useful approach in dealing with so many issues – when I gave up smoking I did it with no patches, no inhalers, no e-cigarettes. I just did it one day at a time, until I suddenly understood I had no intention of breaking the run of days/weeks/months/years without smoking a cigarette.

## Do You Love Or Hate Your Work?

Back in my early days of employment, I worked for a huge organisation where it was easy to become just another face in the crowd. It was your typical bureaucratic setting where you would find many people who truly hated being there.

There was one man in particular who I shared an office with for a while. Nominally he was my immediate boss. Almost all of the time, he would be reading the newspaper or a book or gossiping on the phone with a friend. If managers were in the area, he would quickly perk up and look busy. When the coast was clear, back he would go to the time wasting.

I also remember him being negative and cynical a lot of the time. I actually felt really bad for him.

As someone who dropped out of working for a large organisation to pursue something with more meaning for me, I can see with hindsight exactly what was going on. He hated his position and did not want to be there. But another part of him believed that he must keep this job because there was no other option.

Thinking back, I'm sure he wasn't a lazy person by nature and I bet he had hobbies or other interests outside of work that made her feel alive and positive. He could immerse herself in these activities for hours and feel like no time had passed at all.

This is the kind of engaged, focused activity that makes people feel genuinely happy. For me, I know I always feel my best when I have put my heart and soul into a project that has meaning for me and that I am passionate about. Its even more powerful if you can get paid for it!

The challenge then becomes, how do you align your entire life so that you spend the majority of time engaged in the kind of work that makes you come alive? How do you find something that you are already good at, already enjoy, and want to become the best at?

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All it takes is the willingness to try something new. If you are in a job you hate and have passion for something totally different, you don't have to quit your job and risk the farm. But you can take on a small project you are passionate that devote your weekends to it. And these days with the internet, many people have started a small business in the evenings and carried on working until the new business gave them sufficient earnings.

Sometimes, all you have to do is start and you will create the momentum you need to remap the entire direction of your life in a new, more exciting direction.

To look at this from the opposite direction, if you don't take the risk and step out of your comfort zone, you will end up miserable and stressed! **Do you want to be one of the millions of people who get to the end of their lives and regret the things they haven't done?**

## Ignore the Minutia

I recently returned from a two week stay in South Africa with my wife, mother-in-law and family. I'd only just returned from South Africa 3 weeks earlier but this time, I wasn't on holiday. My father-in-law had died and I was there to support the family and to help with funeral arrangements.

As you can imagine, just because I run my own business does not mean I can suddenly ignore my work responsibilities for a break. Especially not 3 weeks after a 2 month break! And indeed, without the internet, it would have been impossible.

Even so, it reminded me of the importance of letting go of the minutia – I could delegate it or ignore it. I had to let go of worrying about email. I had to trust those around me, so I could free up my time for the most important tasks of looking after the family.

And yet, I found myself constantly dwelling on all of the details of the business and worrying about what I might have forgotten to do. As each day went by, I worried less and began to enjoy the power of Now with the family.

By the end of the first week, I had finally given myself permission to fully let go. Not only was I far more relaxed but I was a more engaged and present with my family and we were able to create some amazing memories together. In addition, it helped to get things into perspective, to re-focus on what really matters.

When I got back home, things were by no means plain-sailing; a company that owed me a lot of money hadn't paid, in spite of promises to the contrary. However, it didn't stress me as it would have done in the past. And as I wasn't stressing, my mind came up with several strategies for dealing with the situation.

Sometimes all we need to do is let go, detach from worry and trust others who play a role in our lives. Everyone learns, grows and benefits from the opportunity.

## Remove The Fear Of Mistakes

When you start a new project or take on a new task in your life, do you spend a lot of time worrying about making mistakes? Write this on your soul: “You can learn without making mistakes!”

Then, adopt the following, simple process:

**Take Ownership:** Listen to people around you – how often do you hear: “it wasn’t my fault”, “it’s xxxxxx’s fault” (insert “my parents’/my teacher’s/my boss’s/my background/the government” ... whichever is the person’s favourite scapegoat.

Many people, too many people, play life in victim mode, playing the blame game. Take ownership – it’s your life. How will you feel if, towards the end of your life, you are full of regrets at the things you didn’t do?

**Focus On The Solution:** People who play the blame game usually focus on the problems. Instead of getting frustrated, upset or panicked, force yourself to only dwell on potential solutions. You’ll get better results and a reputation for being a problem solver rather than a whinger!

**Go Above And Beyond:** Once a solution is determined, it’s a great idea to not only implement and test the solution, but to do anything else beyond the call of duty that proved to the customer that you care about doing a good job (whether that customer is internal or external).

It could be something simple like writing a process document on how the problem was resolved or something more complex like adding features to their system that they didn’t pay for (as a bonus). Just keep an eye on the bottom line!

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In many cases, you will be able to turn the once frustrated/upset customer into a raving fan. Which will make for a much more pleasant interaction next time you deal with each other.

Learn to accept the fact that you are going to mess up at some point (in life or in business). After all, when you were a baby and learned to walk, you fell down many, many times. Yet nobody criticised you for it; you didn't beat yourself up because of it. You tried over and over again until you could walk and a whole new world opened up to you!

When you commit to excellence and do what it takes to correct mistakes when you make them, you not only pick up a ton of technical skill, you also earn the support of the people you deal with.

## Dissolve Your Self Doubt

All of us have great skills and abilities that we have been born with or that have come to us very naturally. Some people tap into these talents and use them to create exciting opportunity in their lives. Many people, however, never fully express themselves and their own capabilities and they pay a great price for it.

Take a close look at anyone who has suppressed themselves in at least one area of their life. They had a talent of some sort but decided not to pursue it any longer for one reason or another; failure, ridicule, pain and so on. In essence, they gave up on a dream.

What you will notice is that people who have gone through this kind of experience tend to carry some kind of burden with them. There is a part of them that always wonders what might have been if they had not given up on their dream. The entire dilemma has been caused by one root issue and it debilitates huge numbers of people all of the time. That issue is self doubt.

When you doubt yourself or your ability to persist in the face of adversity, you immediately cut yourself off from the internal strength and the resourcefulness required to succeed in life. At the end of this report is a link to a guided imagination/self-hypnosis recording that addresses self-limiting beliefs.

Think about professionals, in any arena, who are at the top of their game. They are admired and respected by everyone and you know by watching them, that there isn't a shadow of doubt in their mind that they have what it takes to accomplish their goals. Even when they miss the mark or have a temporary set back, they have conditioned themselves to move forward with the knowing that their next attempt will be successful.

The key word here is "conditioning". These elite professionals have carefully and repeatedly programmed their mind with thoughts of success, winning and self confidence. Very often it was done deliberately with the understanding that peak

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confidence comes as a result of practice. Just like you practice if you want to be a better singer, athlete, speaker or business person.

When you learn how to dissolve your own self doubt and replace that doubt with a strong, confident inner voice that tells you to keep going in the face of adversity, you allow all of your natural talents flow. When you reach this level of life, you automatically feel happier and you look for more opportunity to get even better at what already comes naturally.

## Annex 1: Sources of Stress

I've set out below some of the common sources of stress. Go through the list and identify which sources of stress cause you problems. Think of ways you can remove or address that source of stress.

- Accidents
- Bills
- Illness
- Work load
- Work Insecurity
- Family Illness
- Family Conflict
- News and Media
- Sports
- Relationship Problems
- Parental Duties
- Finances
- Physical Health
- Social Pressure
- School Pressure
- General Worries
- Body Weight
- Boredom
- Deadlines
- Doubt
- Gambling
- Grief
- Technology
- Guilt
- Hopelessness
- Taxes
- Lack of Goals

## **Annex 2: Comfort Tricks And Distractions - Short Term Ways of Coping With Stress**

There are long-term, beneficial ways of dealing with stress, and there are methods designed to help us short term. If you find that you deal with your stress using any of the below techniques, you should stop at once and find more healthy ways to cope.

- Smoking
- Consuming too Much Caffeine
- Drinking too Much Alcohol
- Other Recreational Drugs
- Over Eating
- Eating Junk Food
- Compulsive Spending
- Taking it out On Others
- Physical Violence to Others
- Physical Violence to Yourself
- Internalizing It
- Ignoring It
- Denial
- Over Working
- Insomnia
- Uncontrollable Anger
- Gambling
- Withdrawing From Friends and Family
- Procrastinating

## Annex 3: Ineffective Coping Strategies

Faced with excessive pressure at work, you can adopt one of four broad strategies:

1. Ignore it
2. Flee from it
3. Fight it
4. Manage it.

In the short term, any and all of these are possible and will protect you from the negative effects of stress. In the long term, however, they void both confronting the issue and dealing with the stress.

Before looking at healthy ways of managing the negative effects of stress, let's look in more detail at 6 of the most common less effective methods people employ.

### **1. Withdrawal**

One way is to withdraw from the situation, either literally or metaphorically going off and hiding from the situation. Absenteeism is one example of a withdrawal strategy. It may help temporarily in dealing with the effects of overload – however, when you return to work, the overload is likely to still be there.

Holidays are meant to be the positive use of withdrawal but increasingly, people are finding that the office still contacts them during holidays, or they feel compelled to look at their e-mail box and even answer e-mails.

Having a sport or hobby that is completely different from “the day job” helps many people to mentally withdraw, at least temporarily.

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### **2. Denial**

It's much easier to recognise denial in others than in oneself. People will often deny that they are suffering from the negative effects of stress even when it is blindingly obvious to others. Sometimes, this is because people misguidedly believe that admitting to feeling stressed is a sign of weakness and/or an admission of an inability to cope with the situation.

Many ambitious managers adopt the denial approach. To make it even worse, when stress starts to have a negative effect on their performance, these managers respond by trying to work even harder!

If denial seems to be an approach you use, recognise that stress is not a sign of weakness and each of us has situations that we find difficult to cope with.

### **3. Projecting Your Problem Onto Other People**

Projection simply means attributing your problems onto other people. Typically, you might say things like "Everyone else is suffering from stress except for me! This approach creates misery for other people and doesn't help the projectors to improve their situation.

Another version of projection is the person who plays the victim game – they blame everything and everyone else for their problems.

In both cases above, the solution is to take ownership of your situation, your feelings and your response.

### **4. Becoming Obsessive About Routine Tasks**

It is tempting to bury ourselves in routine tasks so that we can avoid the major source(s) of stress. It's another form of avoidance and you need to regularly check your priorities so as to avoid this tactic.

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### 5. Working Harder

I mentioned above that some people do this as a form of denial. It's a vicious cycle that, unless interrupted, can only lead to burnout. It's a cliché but the only way to deal with it is to sit down and think how you can work smarter, rather than harder. The graveyard is full of people who thought they were indispensable and indestructible!

## Annex 4: Healthy Ways of Coping With Stress

One of the key ways to deal with stress is through healthy lifestyle skills, that will make you feel better. For example:

- Go For Walk
- Meditation
- Visualisation
- Deep Breathing Exercises
- A Fun Hobby
- Family Time
- A Night Out
- Blog/Journal
- Work Out on Punching Bag
- Watch a Comedy
- Go Dancing
- Get Enough Sleep
- Eating Healthy
- Get Rid of Stressful Relationships
- Set Goals
- Schedule “Me” Time
- Read a Great Book
- Browse Internet for Motivational Material
- Clean The House
- Un-clutter Your Desk
- Talk With a Close Friend
- Relax
- Study Your Religious Book of Choice
- Temper Your Expectations of Yourself & Others

## Annex 5: The Menu is Not The Meal!

I can't end this e-book without a brief discussion of a very important concept – the menu is not the meal. If you go for a meal at a restaurant, you obviously wouldn't eat the menu, no matter how attractive it might be! The menu is, after all, only a representation of the meal – it's not the meal itself.

In order to create their menus, restaurateurs use words and images to represent their food. They would never stick the real food to the menu. Nevertheless, people are happy that the menu is a representation of the food, not the food itself.

Similarly, our perception is merely a representation of reality, not reality itself. Our heads aren't big enough to carry a 1:1 model of our reality.

Instead, we leave out information we don't consider to be important or that is inconsistent with our current beliefs, we generalise from specific examples and we distort information to better reflect our existing values, beliefs and experiences. What we end up with, we assume to be reality.

However, our perception is our reality, it's our representation of reality and to us, therefore, it's real.

Which, if you think about it, is “kinda cool” as youngsters say. Why? Because if you're not happy with your reality, all you have to do is change your perception! I go into this in a lot greater detail in “The Ultimate Stress Busting Masterclass” but for now let me offer you a simple clue by telling you a story.

When Ronald Reagan was standing for president for the second time, his opponent suggested before one of the televised debates that the President was perhaps too old to stand for a second time.

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At the next debate, the presenter asked the President about this and turning to the camera, Mr Reagan replied that he didn't want his opponents relative lack of experience to be debated and could they please focus on the issues!

This is called "Reframing" and is a great way of managing any potential negative effects of stress. I've been fortunate enough to represent England at a hockey World Cup and before the event, I worked on reframing the stress of competition from being a barrier to performance to enhancing performance.

I now understand that this is one of the things that often separates the successful sportspeople, actors and others in the performing arts from others who, while more talented, continue to under-perform.

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### Exercise: Stress Test

Please find below a test that could help determine your condition(s) of stress. This test requires you to tick those symptoms that you suffer from. At the bottom, total the number you ticked. The next page will give you your results.

#### **Stress Test:**

Suffer from frequent headaches or migraines	
Often feel fatigued or worn out	
If awakened you find it difficult to fall asleep again	
Experience regular digestive upsets	
Grind your teeth	
Often engage in finger drumming	
Frequently catch colds or flu	
Drink more than 4 cups of tea or coffee a day	
Suffer from chest pains	
Regularly experience tension in back of head or neck	
Mental attitudes are generally negative	
Easily get confused	
Make negative statements	
Find it difficult to concentrate	
Mind is often a whirl	
Frequently suffer from forgetfulness	
Experience of sense of isolation	
Suffer from loneliness	
Lash out at others	
Feel uncomfortable in interactions with others	
Often distrustful	
Often feel anxious	
Worry a lot	
Become easily discouraged	
Suffer from nightmares	
Easily become irritated	
Lack sense of humour	
Feel frustrated	

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Feel no one cares	
Experience a sense of inner emptiness	
Life has no meaning	
The future looks bleak	
See very few positive things in life	
Have self-doubts about your work	
Constantly need to prove yourself	
Doubt your ability to succeed	
Have a morbid fear of death	

**Total**

### **Results**

- 0-7**            You are managing your stress level well.
- 7-15**            Stress is starting to manifest itself. You should try to prevent your unproductive stress from progressing any further.
- 15-22**            Your stress level could be a problem. Find ways to reduce your stress levels.
- 22-37**            You have a critical level of unproductive stress. You may wish to seek stress counselling or talk with an experienced coach.

## **Summary**

So, to summarise:

1. Stress is neutral, it's how you manage it that matters.
2. There are 2 aspects to stress management: prevention and remedy.
3. Type A and Type B people manage stress in different ways.
4. Your perception is your reality – if you don't like your reality, change your perception!

## Resources

### [Coach in a Box Volume 1:](#)

The page linked to above explains the background. Volume 1 contains guided imagination/hypnosis recordings addressing:

1. Inner Peace
2. Positive Attitude
3. End Procrastination
4. Self-Confidence
5. Money Mindset

These usually sell at \$10 each but are discounted at \$27 the set for readers of this report.

### [Coach In a Box Volume 2](#)

Volume 2 contains guided imagination/hypnosis recordings addressing:

1. Boosting Your Self-Esteem
2. Eliminating Self-Limiting Beliefs
3. Pain Reduction/Healing
4. Motivation
5. Finding Your Life's Purpose/Passion

These also usually sell at \$10 each but are discounted at \$27 the set for readers of this report.

### **VIP 1:1 Coaching with Me**

I'm the author of Radical Coaching (available at Amazon in both paperback and Kindle formats). As a celebration of my father-in-law's life, I have opened up a few places in my practice to people wanting business or life coaching.

Let me ask you 5 important questions:

1. Where you are at in your life **right now**?
2. What does **success** mean to you?
3. Are you achieving the **results** you truly desire and deserve?
4. What do you want to do with **the rest of your life**?
5. What steps have you taken to **develop yourself** and your life?

If you would like to work on these and similar big questions, the first step is to [e-mail](mailto:nic@nic-oliver.com) me ([nic@nic-oliver.com](mailto:nic@nic-oliver.com)) so that we can set up an initial consultation.

I look forward to hearing from you soon, as places are limited!