



Oh NO's



Coffee AND donuts??

Stress- Do's and Don'ts

Ever watch a scene in an old Humphrey Bogart or Robert Redford movie where the hero suddenly realizes he's in dire straights, and struggles to pull himself together before meeting the challenge? He goes through these behaviors that we all recognize as stress-related. He might light a cigarette and inhale it in three long drags. There's plenty of coffee in Styrofoam cups, or perhaps a quick shot or two or bourbon instead. Eating is forgotten, or perhaps reduced to something sweet while on the run. Sleep is sporadic, and decisions are made on the fly. The hero, of course, has what it takes to save the day.

While we recognize that movies are fictional, a surprising number of us engage in the same behaviors as our heroes in the movies. When stressed, we smoke harder, drink more caffeine and alcohol, and increase our sugar intake while skipping regular meals. We stay up late, sleep little, and exercise not at all. Occasional quiet moments to reflect on what seems to be happening and what our goals might be are deemed a luxury. But although we may behave like the movie hero, our real-life movie doesn't always end so sweetly. Here's the punch line - if we do succeed, it is *despite* these stereotypical behaviors, not because of them. Let's take a look at why.

Our bodies just weren't built to handle stress every day of the week. Bodies need vacations from stress in order to remain healthy. In fact stress needs to be the exception, not the rule (sounds nice, doesn't it?). But coffee and nicotine are powerful *stimulants*, and boost the excess of adrenaline already coursing through our veins. We get a pleasurable but very short burst of energy from these stimulants, but at a high price to our

health. Our hearts beat faster, our blood pressure goes up, sleeping is difficult, thinking gets fuzzy, and digestion is disrupted. We crave sugar and starchy foods for the same reason – there is a very quick burst of energy. But then the blood sugar rollercoaster takes over. The sugar and insulin levels begin swinging from high to low to high again in an unpleasant cycle. There's no stress vacation for your body in that package, and it doesn't help you to solve your problems in the least!

When we choose alcohol instead of stimulants, we don't get that rush and its consequences, but alcohol comes with its own baggage. To put it mildly, while alcohol may provide a brief sense of relief from stress, it is not known for promoting clear thinking in most folks, and it actually robs you of restful sleep by causing early morning insomnia (not to mention a hangover). A disruption in sleeping patterns lowers the ability of the mind to problem solve and the body to remain energetic and healthy during a crisis. Insufficient sleep is a disaster during times of stress, since adequate sleep is one of the best things we can do for ourselves when we need to cope with a difficult environment.

Can anybody tell me if movie heroes exercise when they're stressed (besides Sylvester Stallone in *Rocky*)? They may not, but *we* should if we can! Besides regular sleep and a healthy diet, moderate aerobic exercise is one of the best things you can be doing for yourself to cope with constant stress. Getting your body moving at a moderate (not heroic) pace for 20-30 minutes once a day helps keep your heart rate, blood pressure, adrenaline, blood sugar, insulin, digestive system, stress hormones, immune system, neurotransmitters and sleep cycle at or near normal values (*Whew!* Is *that* all...can you imagine how rich you would be if you could bottle that and sell it?).

In the story of the [*Caveman and the Bear*](#), we learned about the chemistry that goes on in our bodies during times of stress, and why it's so important for staying alive in emergencies. In [*Stress over Time*](#), we saw that even though short-term stress reactions can save your life, long-term stress reactions can end it early. (If you in haven't had a chance to read these yet, click on the titles and they will take you to the stories). Now we can see that by carefully and deliberately changing some of our favorite knee-jerk reactions to stressful periods in our lives, we can dramatically improve our ability to cope with that stress. It's almost like being a new you! To review:

Don't smoke more often (or at all!).

Don't drink more caffeine (coffee, tea, soda pop, chocolate).

Don't drink more alcohol.

Don't eat more sugar and/or empty carbohydrates (junk foods in particular).

Do eat foods that break down to sugar slowly (proteins, moderate fats, complex carbohydrates, foods with lots of fiber).

Do everything you can to get to sleep at the same time each night (and get enough of it).

Do everything you can to get the most convenient moderate aerobic exercise into your schedule each and every day - no matter how busy your schedule gets (or you'll discover plenty of time to count hospital ceiling tiles as you recover from a heart attack, stroke or ulcer – it's your choice!).

Now the surprise: deliberately schedule time to do *nothing*. For at least 15-20 minutes out of every day, find some quiet and private place where you allow yourself to do

nothing. Don't think about what happened earlier in the day, don't think about current problems, don't plan a single thing for later – simply remember what it feels like to let your mind and body both be quiet and perfectly still at least once every day. Why? Because this brief time will have tremendous healing energy for you (far out of proportion to the time spent doing it), and never more than during times of stress. It's a very difficult exercise for busy people to do at first, but if you persist, it will be the best spent 20 minutes of every day. But don't take my word for it –try it for yourself and see (give it at least a week's honest effort). You will never be the same person coming out of that few minutes of actively doing "nothing" as you were going in, and you will always like the difference.

Next month, we'll look at some of the tools we can add to our "coping with stress" toolbox to keep us from becoming overwhelmed with stress in the first place. Thanks for walking with me again through this newsletter. See you then!

Be well-
Timothy

Dey Group Teleclasses in the month of August

Free teleclasses:

[Coaching vs. Therapy- Knowing When to Refer the Client](#)

Class # 2119 with Dr. Timothy Dey

Class Description:

This class is intended to provide an introduction to how mental health disorders (with depression used as an example) are recognized, and to provide guidelines coaches can use to know when a mental-health referral may be appropriate for a client. Coaches will learn how the DSM-IV (the "bible" used by mental health professionals) is used as a tool to standardize definitions of mental illness. Coaches will also learn how to distinguish "eccentric" client behaviors from true mental health issues. The course concludes with how to bring up the subject of mental health referral with clients in an appropriate and non-offensive manner, and where further resources can be found.

Wednesday, August 6th from 5 – 5:55 PM NY/Eastern time
and

Thursday, August 14th from 7 – 7:55 PM NY/Eastern time

These two teleclasses are being made available to all interested persons at NO CHARGE courtesy of the folks at CoachVille <http://www.coachville.com>

Membership to CoachVille is free, and you can register for the classes by putting the class number 2119, my name (Timothy Dey) or the class title into the teleclass registration page <http://www.thomasleonard.com/teleclass/default.lasso>

FREE CLASS LECTURE HANDOUTS

Class notes in .PDF format are also free (you *don't* need to take the teleclass to benefit from reading them) and are available at for download by clicking this link: [Knowing When to Refer – Class Notes](#)

(If this doesn't appear as a clickable link for you, please go to www.deygroup.com and click on the Teleclasses button on the left to take you to the notes.)

If you enjoyed

[Coaching vs. Therapy- Knowing When to Refer the Client](#)

and would like to join us for a series of in-depth classes on the subject of mental health, consider taking

[Understanding Six Common Mental Health Disorders](#)

(click on the class title for information on how to register or go to www.teleclass.com and request info for class number 6906)

This class is ideal for anyone seeking to gain a basic understanding of the mental health issues most often affecting individuals and their families in society today. Six commonly encountered disorders are presented over the course of six one-hour teleclasses. Topics to be covered will include depression/bipolar, anxiety, personality, substance abuse, eating, and obsessive/compulsive disorders. No previous background in the health professions is required for these classes, and all who are interested in the subject matter are welcome to participate. Classes will have both an informational and question-and-answer component for each of the topics, and Dr. Dey will strive to address those issues of greatest interest as indicated by the members of each class within the context of the course.

Class Number: 6906 www.teleclass.com

Six consecutive Tuesday evenings: August 26, September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 from 7-8 PM Eastern/NY.

Tuition: \$99.00

Registration Instructions:

Call (313) 383-0582 to register by credit card. We will take your e-mail address and give the bridge line phone number and send you the URL for the class notes at that time. Bring plenty of questions and an appetite for learning... we look forward to having you in our class!

For those folks who are members of the CoachVille School of Coaching / Graduate School of Coaching

Dr. Dey has been asked to teach another section of the elective

[Recognizing and Coaching Your Client through the Effects of Chronic Stress](#)

Class: 2625 Section: 2

Wednesday, August 13, 2003, from 12noon to 1255pm Eastern/NY time

Registration instructions:

Registration is through the CoachVille / School of Coaching website (members only)

Class notes:

Lecture notes for this class, as well as audio files of previous sections of this class are available at <http://www.deygroup.com/stressresources.html>

Dr. Dey will also be on a live call-in interview show with Nancy Gerber of the Educational Teleclass division of [Practice Pay Solutions](#) on

Wednesday August 20th 4-5 PM Eastern/NY time

The topic of discussion will be:

[When to Refer the Client: A Coach's Guide to Mental Health Disorders](#)

Registration Instructions:

Registration is through the [Practice Pay Solutions](#) website and is \$10.00 for PPS members and \$20.00 for non-members. The show will be recorded in RealAudio and will be available for download to registrants afterwards.

As always, [*The Dey Group*](#) wants to hear from *you* about the needs you have and the things you would like to see. Write us anytime at info@deygroup.com or call us at 313-383-0582 and we'd be delighted to chat with you about anything at all.

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