



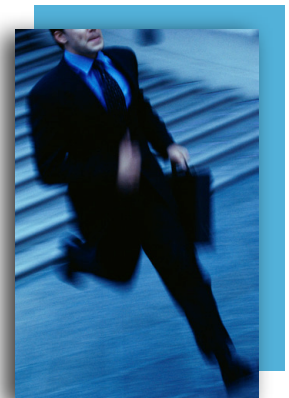
FREE from STRESS

Ten points for stress management



What is stress?

Faced with stress, we are inclined to see ourselves as victims, we feel as though we are stuck in a difficult situation with little or nothing we can do about it.



A bereavement, a serious illness, a war or a natural catastrophe – these are all situations that can “deal us a blow”. Yet the majority of those who claim to be stressed are not and have in fact never been confronted with these types of situations.

The stress that we complain about so often is, in the majority of cases, an incompatibility between our personal resources and the demands placed on us by the world surrounding us, an incapability of tackling the little

stresses and strains that daily life throws our way. In other words, it is a warning signal making us aware of the fact that our lifestyle is exceeding our resources.

It is at this level that stress management goes from an external origin (surroundings, work, family...) to an internal origin (thought and behaviour patterns, individual strengths and weaknesses, view of the world ...) and it is precisely this origin that we recommend you work on.

Obviously this document will not be enough to help you effectively combat your stress. Its objective rather is to guide you towards possible paths of serenity. If, upon reading this document, you find your interest kindled, you will easily be able to find further reading material on the subject in either a good library or on the net.

If, in your case, stress has already led to physical symptoms, do not hesitate to seek specialist help.

1. The objective



Without navigation, ships get lost at sea

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As children, we have dreams, and we know exactly what we want to do when we grow up. Yet gradually, over the years, these early goals get lost and are replaced by rational decisions, which sometimes have nothing left in common with our initial dreams and so slowly some slide into a life that is no longer theirs and in which they move without asking themselves too many questions. And with the daily routines come boredom and frustration! If you don't know what you are missing, you will never know what you want!

And so this is the moment to take stock:

First of all, define your goals. Where do you want to go? What do you want to achieve? Which obstacles will you have to overcome? If you have no goals in life, you will never enjoy the pleasure of achieving them.

What means do you have at your disposal? What do you still need to learn? Is this within your capabilities? Who or what can help you? How much time do you have? When do you want to have achieved your goal by? And above all, what does this goal look like? Some people have already achieved their goal but are not aware of this and thus remain dissatisfied.

Carefully prepare for your launch: when is a good moment in my life? What will I have to give up to achieve my goal? That will be the price to pay! Everything has

its price, you will thus have to define what your priorities are and what you can do without. You may not be willing to pay the price (e.g. moving abroad to progress in your career), in which case stop complaining and change your goal!

Give it your best shot: if you fail, see this as a lesson learnt. You will have learnt what not to do. Line up your target once again and continue until you have achieved your goal. If NASA had given up after its first unsuccessful launch, man would never have set foot on the moon!

Also be aware that life is made up of several little decisions. Learn to make every single decision with your goal in mind: what decision will bring me closer to my goal? It's the quantity of decisions that counts. Step by step, they lead us to our goal and one day you will find yourself taking the final step and achieving your goal.

2.Time!

Time exists only within ourselves

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This applies to our daily working life as well as our private life. Don't think in terms of time but in terms of priorities. Make a list of your priorities featuring all your projects and the dates by which you want to achieve them. Be realistic in drawing up this list and allow enough scope in your calculations. And, above all, be indulgent towards yourself! Try not to cut corners or do things too quickly or else have too many projects on the go. Grasp all, lose all!

Think of yourself and those close to you. Pay attention that your work time does not encroach on your leisure time and put time aside for your personal upkeep. To perform well, you need to be in good physical condition and a good physical condition cannot be acquired while sitting on an office chair!

Also learn how to say no: you cannot do everything! And you must not accept everything. There is a world between willingly offering to lend a helping hand and being taken for a ride! Focus on what is essential in your work and try not to spread yourself too thinly.

Never lose sight of the fact that our time on earth is limited! Try and incorporate your time management into your goals. You cannot delay everything until later: your children will grow up, your health will change, your life is never protected from the unforeseeable...

So don't forget to do those things that matter to you now as who knows what tomorrow will bring!

Efficiency can be learnt: apparently we spend 80% of our working time on not very important matters and only 20% on truly essential matters. Which leaves us with a margin for getting rid of some of these!

3. Beliefs

We always end up being who we believe ourselves to be

Everyone has beliefs, some help us move forward, others hold us back. Learn to develop those that help you advance in life and get rid of the others!



The greatest deterrent no doubt is the belief that “I can’t do it!”. If you believe this for long enough, you will indeed find yourself incapable of doing it. Yet the same can be said for the opposite: if you believe in your capabilities for long enough, the day will come when you can do it.

Make no mistake: you can carry on believing that you will run 100 m in under 10 seconds for another 100 years, yet you will never get there! But if you set yourself a realistic goal, for instance taking part in the New York marathon in 5 years’ time, you can achieve this. Develop your posi-

tive beliefs, these are the ones that will make you move forward.

Uncover your negative beliefs and change them! As in the previous point, a key issue here is to not cut corners. Don’t change everything in the space of a day, proceed as described: set your goals, define your priorities and take one step at a time. But always in the positive direction.

A great help is to draw up a list with all the things you have already achieved. You will be surprised to discover that this list is already quite substantial. The problem lies in the

fact that we tend only to consider the things that we don’t have or that we don’t know how to do – leaving us dissatisfied. Learn to be satisfied and grateful: it’s the only way to be productive and to build upon the foundations you already have.

Not having something doesn’t mean not having anything at all. Build up your self-confidence by telling yourself each day what good you have done instead of spending the night brooding over the one situation of the day that you messed up.



4. Image

We are but the reflection of others

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Our way of being is in fact defined by those who surround us, by the image they give us of ourselves. Learn to approach other people, listen to them, respect their desires and their ideas, even if you don't share them. Do not judge! Rather try and behave as you feel and leave a margin for the others to develop their own approach. Don't ever forget that we speak to others how we speak to ourselves.

The messages we give out are registered by those we deal with not only in terms of their content but

also in terms of our gestures, our expressions, our tone and several other signals that we emit and that are sometimes more telling than the simple content of a sentence. Be aware of this and try and control your body language.

Do not hesitate to voice your opinion, but never be hurtful. Minimise the “yes, but...” statements that can be extremely destructive! Train yourself to say “yes, and” which comes across much better!

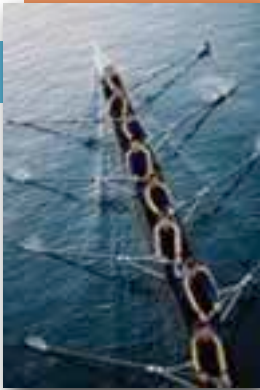
Do not define yourself through another: you will not lose in value if the other gains in value and vice versa. Define yourself with regard to your goals and with regard to what you knew yesterday: have I developed, have I learnt

something new, have I progressed?

Do not hesitate to admit your weaknesses and your mistakes. You cannot work on your weak points if you have not identified and acknowledged them. There is no point in trying to hide your weak points for an entire lifetime. You are better off using the energy this is costing you to beat those weaknesses and to develop your assets. In any case, others know our weak spots better than we ourselves do!

Also learn to master your body language: give off an energetic, decisive and pleasant air and others will see you as such and automatically treat you as such. And then, as a result, you will truly become such!

5. Relationships



Strength in numbers

Everyone needs a helping hand. And lending a helping hand is just as rewarding as being on the receiving end.

Surround yourself with a circle of acquaintances: someone you can go to the cinema with, someone you can accompany to the theatre, someone you can exchange cooking recipes and discuss your children's school issues with, someone you can talk to about the latest technology or the motor industry...

Rare are those with whom we share all of our interests. But often we meet people who share one of our key interests. Take advantage of this!

Don't go looking for the perfect friendship each time, this usually doesn't happen! And even if you are lucky enough to find such, do not fall into the trap of the one-and-only relationship, namely that if you lose this connection, you lose EVERYTHING and will be on your own. It is great to have very good friends whom you can always turn to, but in addition to these take care to look after your relationships with others.

If you know several people with several different interests, you will never be alone and you

will always have something to do. If you end up losing out on one activity, you will always have another hundred to choose from!

One golden rule must prevail in all your relationships with your surroundings: that of give and take! You cannot call on your friends only when you need them! You must extend the same to them by taking the initiative from time to time and making suggestions... Think back to our first point: the price to pay!

6. Responsibility

Problems don't exist, only solutions do



Trying to change things rather than condemning them is a constructive approach and encourages personal development while giving those who surround us the same freedom.

Don't place the responsibility for your life into the hands of someone else! Distance yourself from beliefs that place the blame for your failures on a third party! Don't allow your happiness to be dependent on another individual: if you hand over the power to make you happy to someone else, you are automatically also giving them the power to make you unhappy!

Have you ever been jealous? Jealousy is a negative feeling and impedes your development. To envy someone for something means not wanting that

person to take advantage thereof. Yet the fact of taking something away from someone does not automatically equate to you appropriating it for yourself!

Rather ask yourself the question of what you are jealous of? In what respect is this person "better" than you? Does he or she have more capabilities? More material goods? Try and understand what makes you envy them... and then try and achieve the same goals! Don't try and knock the person you envy but rather try and emulate them. This will enable you

to grow!

You will sometimes find that the reason for your discontent is out of your sphere of influence. In which case you will need to draw your conclusions and attempt to find your happiness elsewhere!

This formula can be adapted to all situations. Take responsibility for your actions, don't wait for others to make decisions on your behalf. Take responsibility for your life and you will live your life. Give it to others and you will end up living the life of others.

7. Subconscious

Learning to listen to our body once again



Our subconscious talks to us and sends us messages which over the years we have forgotten how to unravel

Our heart, our spirit, our subconscious – regardless of what you want to call this force that resides in us and shows us the correct path in life – tries to send us a signal when we have made a wrong choice. Unfortunately, throughout our life, we tend to ignore this internal compass a little: our circumstances, our social environment and our interpersonal relationships all contribute to us making decisions in disagreement with our inner voice and so eventually it goes quiet.

But one thing is certain: our subconscious always finds a way to make itself heard. Be it sleeping troubles, feelings of irritation or, in extreme cases, illness.. it will always find a way to draw our attention to our needs.

Learn once again to listen to your internal voice. If you feel you have not yet found your true vocation, it might be interesting to take a little trip down memory lane: what were your dreams and your desires when you were really young, when you were at

school, then later when you hit puberty, what did you want to achieve, what were your interests, your hobbies? With a bit of luck, you will be able to narrow things down to what you really want. Once you have worked it out and decided you want to achieve it, simply go back to point one... set your goal! Don't forget that life does not change overnight but only as a result of thousands of little steps!

8. Risk

No risk, no fun



Taking little risks now and again is stimulating and opens up new perspectives for us.

This need not encourage you to take up bungee jumping first thing tomorrow morning! But it would be good to take small risks from time to time, to try and push your boundaries a little each day. Making discoveries and learning new things keeps those little grey cells active and boosts your self-confidence. It is also the best remedy against boredom and depression.

Don't get stuck in your comfort zone. Always be ready to adapt to new si-

tuations and to exploit them in your interest.

Nothing in life lasts forever, don't ever forget this. As soon as you try and hang on to something nice, you are already on the losing side. This is not what makes us happy, but rather the awareness that happiness awaits those who seek it. Think in terms of challenges and not in terms of battles. He who seeks a challenge goes to the Olympic Games, he who seeks a battle goes to war!

Don't be sad about things that are over. Instead look forward to what is awaiting you and always look ahead. Don't forget: the path is the goal (Dalai Lama).

A recent study showed that those who constantly pursue intellectual efforts, those who seek challenges, those who read a lot... succumb to Alzheimer less frequently than others. Therefore, on your marks...

9. Selfconfidence

Have confidence in yourself and you will inspire confidence in others

Confidence in oneself is the path that leads to personal development. Only those who are in harmony with themselves can be in harmony with others.



Do everything with enthusiasm and full commitment. Halfway measures lead to nothing but frustration. Get away from the belief that you don't count in this world. Everything and everyone counts. Your opinion, your actions and skills, your thoughts, your way of being – everything has its place and significance. Only those who act with enthusiasm and passion can move mountains. Where would Steven Jobs (founder of Apple) be if he had not been so enthu-

siastic about his vision? Probably still and forever in his garage (where he built the first personal computer)!

Replace those negative beliefs such as “nobody listens to me anyway” or “what's the point in me saying my piece” with “my opinion counts” and “my contribution is important”. You will be surprised how this will soon confirm itself.

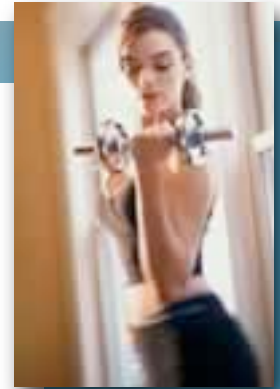
Hold on to your dreams. Each great discovery was once someone's

dream. Maintain your confidence and the enthusiasm of your childhood when all the doors were wide open and you thought the world was waiting for nobody but you.

If you have a confident approach, those surrounding you will place their trust in you and approach you in the same way. And you will notice that it is much easier to develop in a world that is confident than in a world that is distrustful and hostile. The choice is yours!

10. Upkeep

Stay in physical and mental shape



To tackle life, you need to be in good physical and mental shape. This can be built up and in particular maintained over the years.

We wouldn't dream of not having our car maintained, of not giving it a regular oil change or warrant of fitness. We wash it, maintain it and – at the slightest inexplicable noise – we're off to the repair shop.

Our psyche, on the contrary, gets less well looked after than our car. It has to be losing oil, with smoke pouring out of it or else running on its rims for us to maybe admit that somewhere something isn't quite right!

Yet in order to feel good in yourself, it is im-

portant to maintain your psyche to the same degree that you maintain your car. You need to motivate it, shake it, stimulate it, challenge it.

In the same way that a muscle atrophies when it is not used, your brain withers when not being stimulated. If we expose our brain to routine things only, it wears out and no longer processes new impulses, making us anxious and vulnerable in the long term.

The same applies to our body. Good health is a precious treasure. Don't

wait until you have lost it before becoming aware of this fact: take care of yourself, eat balanced meals, keep moving, get enough sleep, take time off.

It's great to be earning a good living, but it's even better to be able to take advantage thereof.

Each time you catch yourself thinking "I will do it later", make sure you remind yourself that you cannot buy "later" at the supermarket and that you never know how much time you have left!

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