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Stress/Burnout Kit

How to manage the powerful force of stress

By Bill & Joann Truby

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consists of several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of blue and grey, creating a layered, architectural effect.

**Manage Stress
Prevent Burnout
Find Peace and Happiness**

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Working with Natural Laws

Working with natural laws is an almost effortless way to get quick results. Working against those laws creates pain, suffering and **STRESS**.

I (Bill) know this to be true because I have an unfortunate experience when it comes to **not** managing stress. More than once I became completely depleted without the strength to raise my arm and feed myself. I was in complete burnout. It took weeks of recuperation to build my strength again. Only after I completely crashed in burnout, more than once, did I take the time to learn how to manage stress. I learned how to listen to my body. I learned simple techniques to prevent stress from building up. I learned how to use tools for my mind and body that helped me to live in peace, happiness and health no matter what comes my way. It's from that experience and learning that I teach you.

I (Joann) know about stress too. Like Bill, there was a time in my life where the amount of stressful situations was enormous. Looking back I don't know how I even survived it. I experienced so much stress that it started affecting my health and well being. Being the strong person I am, though, it took awhile before the effects of stress snuck up on me. My positive outlook on life started to weaken. I had heart palpitations, my hair started falling out. One time I even found myself in bed for a couple of days hardly able to move. But I learned how to manage stress and can now live healthfully, in peace, no matter what comes. I'll teach you to do the same.

You don't have to suffer as much as we did. Our intimate knowledge with stress and its effects drives us to help you learn how to prevent and manage stress; and it's not that difficult. It's relatively simple if you work with natural laws.

Our philosophy at Truby Achievements, Inc. is to find the natural laws associated with anything you try to achieve. Work with those laws; and almost magically, you get quick and sustainable results. It's as easy, as easy as opening a door. Consider this illustration.

It's a beautiful day. Your house is comfortable but you want to step outside into the sunshine. You do a quick calculation of time, schedule, and consideration of others then decide to take a walk. Putting your hand on the door knob, you turn it, the door swings on its hinges and opens. Stepping onto the front porch you notice it's colder than expected. You reach inside, grab your jacket off the coat rack, and begin a happy, peaceful stroll into the beauties of the day.

This illustration exactly portrays the simple sequence of the natural laws we teach – the Five Laws of Achievement. You can read more about implementing these laws in all aspects of your life by going to www.TrubyAchievements.com. Here is a quick and informal treatment of the sequence and the intent of each of the laws.

1. **Perspective:** What is reality? It's a beautiful day.
2. **Others:** Who is involved? My spouse is still sleeping and doesn't like morning walks.
3. **Waymarks:** Where am I going? I think I'll go to the park and sit by the stream.
4. **Efficiency:** How do I get there? I'll use the front door and go through the front yard.
5. **Renewal:** Learn and grow along the way. It's colder than I expected, I'll adjust by grabbing a coat.

How do these laws apply to managing stress or healing burnout?

1. **Perspective:** What is stress? What is causing me stress?
2. **Others:** Who contributes to my stress? How do I affect others when stressed?
3. **Waymarks:** How do I want to live? How do I monitor my progress along the way?
4. **Efficiency:** How do I structure my life to manage stress? What tools and processes can I use?
5. **Renewal:** How do I cope with the unexpected stressful situations that will come? How do I learn and grow into greater peace and happiness?

Working with natural laws is powerful because the power is in the law. Not knowing this causes so many people to work against the laws. They may be working hard, but they are *pushing* on a door that doesn't open, because it is a door that's marked *pull*. Changing to work with the law opens the door easily.

The right knowledge makes all the difference in the world, and that's what we want to give you in this Stress/Burnout Kit. We'll show you simple ways to manage stress and heal yourself. We'll teach you about natural laws of cause and effect that give you quick and sustainable results. You will learn how to master your stress rather than be a slave to its effects. First, let's understand how stress works and how it affects us.

Understanding Stress and Its Effects

*Stress is not what you experience in life;
...it results from your reaction to what you experience in life.*

That sentence sums up the origin and the problem of dealing with stress.

The events and situations of life we encounter every day are called “stressors.” But the **amount** of stress you experience is completely subjective. It depends on your perception and response to the situation. That’s why different people experience different levels of stress from the exact same event. Each person’s perspective determines that person’s stress.

Some people don’t seem to handle very many stressors at all. They are agitated, jumpy, irritable and not very happy. Others seem to encounter an enormous amount of stressors yet remain calm, happy and peaceful. What makes the difference? It’s always *perspective* and *response*!

Let us tell you about an example of someone we worked with who had an enormous amount of stress in his life yet seemed to cope quite well because of his healthy perspective. That is, he coped well until the imperceptible effects of stress snuck up and tackled him.

We’re talking about John (not his real name) who owned a small company. John had a lot of stressful situations in his life. He had employee conflicts, family difficulties, financial struggles and business problems. Many stressors, yet, he said he felt no stress. How could that be?

When we questioned him about it he said,

“These things I’m facing right now? They’re not stress. I was in the war crouching in a foxhole, bullets flying by my head and my buddies getting killed – THAT was stress. This?” as he made a sweeping motion with his arm, palm up, *“This is nothing.”*

The Law of Perspective and Stress

The Law of Perspective states, “Belief determines attitude and action.” This law was the driving force behind John’s level of stress. It is for yours too. How you perceive a certain situation determines your attitude about it. That belief and attitude determine how stressed you are.

You can count on the fact that your stress is directly proportional to your perspective. How you perceive a situation, an event, or any other stressor determines your stress level. John encountered a huge amount of stressors. They were big enough to cripple a weaker person, yet his perspective caused him little or no stress.

Three Aspects of Stress

It is important to make a distinction between three aspects of stress. There is a difference between (1) stressors, (2) experienced stress and (3) felt stress.

1. A stressor is anything in life that can cause stress. This is reality. Anything that stimulates you positively or negatively can be a stressor. It is completely neutral however. This stressor is simply an occurrence, an event. It is input to your life experience.
2. Experienced stress is what happens in your body when you encounter a stressor. It is your body’s physiological response. If you work too hard, lose sleep, have multiple problems thrown at you in a short period of time, or encounter a host of other life events; these will all take a toll on your energy and well being.
3. The stress you *feel* is triggered at this stage. Your body responds to a stressor, but so does your mind. If you view the stressor and your body’s response as threatening, you will feel a lot of stress.

The impact of this stage rests purely on the shoulders of your mind's response to the situation.

Though your body experiences the effects of stress, it is your perception that affects how much stress you feel. And here is where it can get a bit dangerous. Even if you have a healthy perspective on the stressor(s) that are affecting your body, these effects can still sneak up on you. It happened to John.

How the Effects of Stress Can Sneak Up On You

Even though John didn't consciously feel stress, his body and nervous system did. He had a wonderful ability to maintain a positive perspective – but he took it a bit too far. Sometimes positive thinking and optimistic perspective can edge toward denial. Though John didn't *feel* stress, he was still experiencing stress.

Since John wasn't aware of the stress he was experiencing with his perspective of, "THIS can't be stress..." he therefore couldn't acknowledge it. Stress was building up in his body, and a body can only take so much.

How does stress sneak up on you? Let's use the metaphor of lifting a five pound weight to explain it. The weight is the stressor. The muscles in your arm experience the stress. The weight *feels* "heavy" or not depending on how strong you are; your strength contributing to your perspective.

Consider these three scenarios. A body builder would hardly notice the weight. A full grown adult may perceive weight or "stress" depending on the individual's level of strength. And a two year old toddler would feel an enormous weight, possibly buckling under the stress of the weight.

The body builder has no problem handling the weight. This person can take a lot possibly never feeling the small amount of weight. In real life, this would be like an experienced public speaker who is asked to give a short talk. No problem. Plenty of “muscle” to do it, so there is minimal stress.

We’ll come back to the adult illustration in a minute.

The toddler is immediately and noticeably overwhelmed by the weight because of the toddler’s *lack* of strength. In real life, this would be like a person completely inexperienced in speaking in public asked to give an impromptu speech at a rotary club. There aren’t any “muscles” built up to handle that weight therefore tons of stress.

Now back to the full grown adult scenario. Most people fit into this example. You encounter stressors that aren’t too heavy (after all, they’re only 5 pounds each) but you encounter *many* of them, sometimes in a short period of time. This can take a toll and the cumulative effects can sneak up on you.

Even taking the 5 pound weight illustration literally you can see how this can happen. If the weight had to be carried over a long distance or was held at arms length for a period of time, that small weight that initially didn’t seem like much would start to feel heavy and stressful.

Now let’s consider another scenario many people experience. This scenario more closely parallels John’s experience revealing how the effects of stress snuck up on him.

Imagine the weight that is symbolizing stress be less than 5 pounds. Make it a 2 pound weight or even 1 pound. No problem, right? But what if you are continuously given multiple small weights and can’t let go of the ones you are carrying as fast as you are given more to carry?

Pretty soon the amount of little stressors adds up to make for one big stressful situation. This is when that moment comes where a person inexplicably caves in over something that is seemingly so small. No one, maybe not even the person experiencing the multiple additions of smaller weights, saw it coming.

This quite literally happened to John. His calibration point of war time stressors made the small “weights” of his current life seem insignificant. Nevertheless, they **were** stressors and had an effect on his body – 1 pound weight here, 2 pound weight there....yet he ignored the effect of these smaller weights because “...this couldn’t be stress.”

Because he didn’t feel stress he didn’t replenish himself either. Over time there began to be signs, but he ignored those too. Eventually he began to suffer from inexplicable bouts of irritability and poor health. And he never saw it coming.

Stress Can Lead to Burnout

Stress can weaken your immune system, rob you of health, and zap your energy, and negatively affect your interactions. If stress is not managed, the end result is burnout. Burnout is when you are depleted. There is nothing left. You can’t cope and you simply collapse or want to run.

Burnout comes if the **amount** of stressors you experience is overwhelming, or from not managing your **response** to what you experience.

There is an irony surrounding the first situation of having an overwhelming amount of stressors. Like John, you may not *feel* any stress because you have a positive perspective about what you are experiencing. But the sheer quantity of stressful situations can lead to

burnout because your body only has so much stamina to cope with stress.

Burnout comes from a relatively small number of stressors if your perspective is that each situation is extremely stressful or threatening (whether that is true or not). That kind of perspective makes the event *feels* extremely stressful and can drain you. In either case you can experience burnout. Your reserves have been burned up so you burned out.

Let's push the envelope of symbolism to illustrate it this way. Let's say that you have 10 gallons of water in your personal reserve available to put out a stress fire. If you perceive a candle's flame as a very stressful situation and use all 10 gallons to put out that fire, you won't have any reserve left.

Or...let's say that you are in the presence of a huge fire, but don't perceive it as threatening or stressful. The heat of the situation still causes your water to evaporate. Your reserve subtly and silently vaporizes, often without you even noticing your strength (water) is dwindling.

In both of these scenarios, if you don't take time to fill up your reserve you will become empty leaving nothing available to fight the fire of the next stressful situation no matter how small it is. Thus the straw that breaks the camel's back.

What to Do?

Is the answer then to eliminate all stressors?

It is a fallacy to believe you will never experience stress. There will always be stressful situations in life. In fact, some stress is positive,

helpful or even necessary. A tree grows stronger as it experiences the stresses of storms. Muscles can only become stronger if they are stressed.

The key is to learn how to weather or avoid storms that are too strong and how to pace the building of muscles so they don't tear. So the real answer is to manage your *response* to the stressors of life and to learn how to help yourself if stress has unavoidably or imperceptibly built up in you.

The teachings in this Stress/Burnout Kit will become your "Stress Survival Kit" you can use for the rest of your life. In it you will find solutions to manage stress.

Here is some of what you will learn:

- You will learn how to identify stressors thereby monitoring and limiting if necessary the amount of stressful situations you encounter.
- You will learn how to work with the Law of Perspective to develop a healthy attitude toward stressors and limit the amount of stress you feel.
- You will learn how to keep stress from depleting or destroying you.
- You will learn how to manage stress to prevent burnout.

In all of this you will learn how to stay replenished and strong to have sufficient reserves to cope with the unavoidable, sometimes weighty, stressors life.

How to Identify Stressors

A stressor can be anything that stimulates your body or your mind. “Well *THAT’S* not very *helpful*,” you say. Nevertheless, it’s true. Anything that takes any amount of energy or strength to deal with, stresses us at some level. The ones we notice are the ones that stress us the most, real or perceived.

This means that positive events or situations can stress us too. A promotion, a new child, relocating, even a busy vacation; all are stimulating situations, therefore stressors, that stretch or strain us to some degree.

Naturally, the positive events are easier to deal with because our motivation is higher. But add a number of positive events to an already heavy stress load and your stress increases. If you don’t know what’s going on, this certainly can be confusing.

What Makes Identifying Stressors Important?

Though you can’t eliminate all stressors from your life, it is still important to assess the number and type of stressors you are experiencing from time to time.

The first reason for this is to monitor the quantity of stressors, especially if you don’t feel particularly stressed. The number of stressful events in your life can add up causing their cumulative effects to take an imperceptible toll. Knowing the amount of stressors can help you be proactive and prevent their cumulative effects from weighing on you.

The second reason for identifying the amount of stressors you are experiencing is for awareness and understanding, particularly if you feel a lot of stress out. When stressed, some people just keep pushing or

maybe even beat themselves up a bit believing they shouldn't be feeling so tired or discouraged. When they realize they are carrying a huge weight of stressors, it helps clarify perspective and can even suggest what to do.

Identifying your stressors and the amount of them in your life allows you to be proactive in managing stress. So how do you identify stressors? There are two ways. The first is an awareness exercise; the second is to take a stress test.

Awareness Exercise to Identify Stressors

The Awareness Exercise is the act of making a part of you become an observer as you go through your day. It's as if there is a part of you watching you and your experiences during the day. Sound crazy? Actually, this exercise simply creates a proactive approach to analyzing what's going on in your day. It's easy to get absorbed in what comes your way without acknowledging or analyzing it. This exercise allows you to assess what's going on rather than just experience it.

Here is what you do specifically: Any time there is a stressful situation or event, this "observer" part points it out. Then, assign a weight to the situation as to how stressful it feels. Give it a 1 to 10 where 1 means you don't feel any stress and 10 means that it is extremely stressful. You can then begin to tally up your stressors and how much they weigh on you.

You go to the bank; there is a mistake in the ATM; your card is not returned; you have to visit with the bank manager to straighten things out; this makes you late for a lunch appointment...**STRESS!** Your "observer" notes, "Stressor with a weight of, say, 7."

Listing these stressors on paper is very helpful since it allows you to review what is happening in your life over a period of a day or a week.

Carry a small note pad. Make three columns in it. Label the columns: Date, Stressor, Weight. In the bank illustration you would write the following in the three columns: x/x/xx; ATM card and late for lunch meeting; 7.

Analysis without action is a waste. Make sure you take the time to review your list. If you find you are experiencing a large quantity of stressors consider ways to reduce that number. We'll make some suggestions in the stress management section of this document.

Now let's look at a second way to identify stressors; that of taking a stress test.

Take a Stress Test to Identify Stressors

You can find many stress tests. Many identify the amount of stress you have, others identify the amount of stressors you are experiencing. The second type indicates the amount of stress you are under but doesn't necessarily tell how much stress you feel. There needs to be a second test to indicate that. We have both. (Both are automated on our website: www.TrubyAchievements.com).

The following Stress Test determines the amount of stressors you are experiencing. Later, we'll show you a second test called "Burnout Test" which is used to determine how you are coping with stress. It can also indicate much stress you feel and how close you are to potential burnout. We'll look at the Stress Test first.

As you look at the Stress Test you will notice that it focuses on a number of "changes" in life. This is significant. Change is often very stressful. We tend to handle familiar stressors better than new ones. The amount of changes you are experiencing is a good indicator of how much stress is weighting you down.

You will also notice that though the Awareness Exercise helps you assess *all* of the stressors you are experiencing, the Stress Test uses a limited amount of life situations that represent key events most people experience. These events include positive as well as negative situations, each weighted differently. Adding up your score will give you a relative number indicating your stress load.

This list of stressors is not all inclusive. John from our earlier example would say, “Hey, you didn’t include war on the list!” Our 11 year old grand daughter might say, “Where’s the math test listed?” The list is a *representative* list. The weightings are relative too. However, based on testing thousands of people, we are confident that your score will give a meaningful number that indicates your stress load.

Though we have confidence in the tests and have used them for many years, we are obligated to give a necessary disclaimer, so here it is:

Disclaimer: *No test in this document is intended to diagnose or treat stress, burnout or their effects. Use these tests as reliable indicators, but consult your medical or mental health care professional for diagnosis and treatment. These are self-test instruments to guide you on your journey of self help.*

Feel free to print out the Stress Test so you can use it repeatedly over time to check your stress load.

Stress Test:

Fill in the score for the stressors you have experienced in the past 12 months.

	Stressor – Event	Weight	Your Score
1	Death of a Spouse	100	
2	Divorce	73	
3	Marital Separation	65	
4	Death of a close family member	63	
5	Death of a close friend	37	
6	Marriage	50	
7	Fired at work	47	
8	Change in family member's health	44	
9	Pregnancy	40	
10	Difficulty being intimate with those close to you	39	
11	Addition to the family	39	
12	Significant positive or negative change in financial status	38	
13	Foreclosure of a mortgage or loan	30	
14	Change in work responsibilities	29	
15	Outstanding personal achievement	28	
16	Change in living conditions	25	
17	Change in residence	20	
18	Change in eating habits	15	
19	Vacation	13	
20	A holiday that is significant to you	12	
21	Marital reconciliation	45	
22	Change in number of arguments with spouse or significant other	35	
23	Obtaining significant mortgage or loan	31	
24	Trouble with boss	23	
25	Change in recreational habits	19	
26	Change in social activities	18	
27	Change in sleeping habits	16	
28	Personal injury or illness	53	
29	Son or daughter leaving home	29	
30	Trouble with in-laws	29	
Your Total:			

Interpretation of Your Stress Test Score

Read the interpretation next to the score range you received. This will give you an indication of your stress load. As we have already said, however, it may not give you indication about how much stress you *feel*. In any case, your score becomes an important bit of input that will help you as you read on to learn how to manage stress.

100 or less	The amount of stressors you experience is probably normal and in line with what most people experience in the course of living life.
101 - 200	This amount of stressors is moderate; however there are enough stressors present to cause you to begin sensing stress.
201 - 300	The amount of stressors in this scoring is extensive and will probably have an affect on your well-being.
301 - 400	The amount of stressors you are experiencing is significant. Without effective stress management techniques, health, well-being and perspective may be adversely affected.
400 +	Your amount of stressors is substantial. You may view your stress load as extreme and feel helpless to change anything that is causing the stress. You may begin experiencing signs of burnout.

You've learned how to identify stressors. If you scored high just keep reading. We've been there and will show you how to manage your stress. But first, let's learn how to identify Burnout.

How to Identify Burnout

Stress is not burnout – burnout comes from stress. When you experience a set of stressors, if they aren't processed in a healthy way your energy is drained and the stress builds up. This continues with each new stressful experience until energy is dangerously low and stress becomes overwhelmingly high. This is the path to burnout.

Though “burnout” is often used in a work setting, it applies to anyone. Burnout is when a person cannot function adequately anymore; there is just not enough physical, emotional or nervous energy left. Burnout can also be called a nervous breakdown or emotional exhaustion. And you know when you're there – you collapse.

You can prevent a breakdown by paying attention to the physical, emotional and behavioral signs listed below. Everyone who is on the path to burnout experiences many, if not all, of these symptoms. The difference comes in intensity. The closer you are to burnout the more intense the sign.

For example, a *sign* of potential burnout as well as a *symptom* of actual burnout is to get away or escape. If you are on the first steps of the burnout path, the intensity of that desire is very low. You may just wish for an afternoon off or a weekend without the kids. The *sign* is weak.

If burnout is imminent, nothing matters but ESCAPE. You do anything to avoid stressful situations. You don't return phone calls. You walk on the other side of the street to not talk with that neighbor who keeps asking when you're going to get together for lunch. The *sign* is strong.

If you are in burnout and experiencing emotional exhaustion, you not only want to get away, escape is necessary. Escape has become a

symptom of burnout. You cannot function; you must get away so you can heal.

Following are the physical, emotional and behavioral signs of burnout:

Physical Signs of Burnout: You feel tired and drained, even when you wake up in the morning. Your immune system is weakened so you suffer from multiple bouts of colds or flu, maybe unexplainable aches and pains including headaches. Your libido is decreased. You become forgetful or can't remember what you were going to say. You have a difficult time concentrating. Appetite can fluctuate. If you aren't able to sleep because of your exhaustion, your sleep pattern becomes fitful, comes in short durations and is restless. Your sleep problem can be amplified if you drink a lot of caffeine to combat your constant tiredness.

Emotional Signs of Burnout: You feel helpless, trapped, defeated and don't have much hope that life will get better; and you can feel this way with the simplest of tasks. A sense of failure and self doubt is prevalent and you blame yourself for mistakes in your past that may have lead to your current state. You feel detached from the world around you and alone. Motivation is lacking and you carry a negative view on life; everything has a "yeah, but" (finished with a negative) associated with it. You have a hard time mustering up a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Behavioral Signs of Burnout: You withdraw from people and avoid responsibilities. You may show up late a lot for personal or work schedules. You procrastinate or take longer to do something than you used to. You may "call in sick" even if you're not, or not attend functions you used to enjoy. You isolate yourself and may overeat, abuse alcohol or drugs. Little things cause you to snap.

Sounds depressing, doesn't it? But strangely, a person who is experiencing the signs or symptoms of burnout actually finds these words helpful. The symptoms can drive you crazy. You begin wondering about yourself, second guessing yourself and wondering if you really *are* going crazy.

The list of symptoms can actually give you a sense of hope. You are NOT going crazy. What you are experiencing is real, it's predictable, others experience, and THERE IS HOPE! In fact, before we show you how to generally manage stress, we're going to show you how to heal from burnout. If you are in burnout you'd skip forward to that section anyway.

But before we show you some burnout remedies we'll give you our Burnout Test. This will help confirm your state of burnout.

The Burnout Test goes hand-in-hand with the Stress Test. You'll recall that the Stress Test reveals your stress load, the Burnout Test reveals your emotional load; in other words, how drained you are and how close you are to burnout.

The Stress Test was completely objective – did you have a certain event within the last 12 months or not. The Burnout Test is completely subjective – it allows you to answer how you FEEL and identify the level of intensity of that feeling. The Stress Test tells you what's going on in regards to a stress load, the Burnout Test tells you how you are coping.

Note: The Burnout Test on our website is a simpler version of the Burnout Test in this document. The first difference you will note is the more sophisticated computation of the score in this test. This calculation will return a more precise number that will give you a clearer picture of your state of burnout.

Burnout Test

Instructions:

- Think in terms of your recent past.
- Allow yourself to interpret the words and phrases however *you* want. This is a subjective test.

How often do you have any of the following experiences?

- | | |
|-------|--|
| _____ | 1. Being tired |
| _____ | 2. Feeling depressed |
| _____ | 3. Having a good day |
| _____ | 4. Being physically exhausted |
| _____ | 5. Being emotionally exhausted |
| _____ | 6. Being happy |
| _____ | 7. Being “wiped out” |
| _____ | 8. Feeling “burned out” |
| _____ | 9. Being unhappy |
| _____ | 10. Feeling rundown |
| _____ | 11. Feeling trapped |
| _____ | 12. Feeling worthless |
| _____ | 13. Being weary |
| _____ | 14. Being troubled |
| _____ | 15. Feeling disillusioned and resentful about people |
| _____ | 16. Feeling weak |
| _____ | 17. Feeling hopeless |
| _____ | 18. Feeling rejected |
| _____ | 19. Feeling optimistic |
| _____ | 20. Feeling energetic |
| _____ | 21. Feeling anxious |

Use the following scale and assign a number to each phrase in the list. Think of how you feel. There is no right answer.

- 1 = Never**
2 = Once in a great while
3 = Rarely
4 = Sometimes
5 = Often
6 = Usually
7 = Always

Computation of Your Burnout Score

Computing Your Score		Your Values	<i>Sample Values</i>
Follow each step in these instructions very carefully. A mis-read or a mistake can dramatically affect your score.			
Add the numbers you wrote for all of the statements 1 through 21	A		98
Add the numbers you wrote for the statements numbered 3, 6, 19 and 20	B		19
Subtract "B" from "A"	C		79
Subtract the value you wrote in "B" from the <i>number</i> 32 (In the sample values, 19 is the score for "B" therefore $32 - 19 = 13$)	D		13
Add "C" and "D" together	E		92
Divide "E" by the <i>number</i> 21 (In the sample values, "E" is 92 therefore $92 \div 21 = 4.38$).	F		4.38
		Burnout score	

One word of advice:

Double check your calculations. As you look at the interpretations on the next page and it doesn't seem "to add up," the very first action should be to check your math, especially if you scored a high number. Many times we've had a person feel quite anxious when he or she scored a high number only to find out that the math calculation was way off.

Interpretation of Your Burnout Score:

This scale rises rapidly. As the numbers get higher, the range for a given set of results narrows. The interpretation scale has a beginning margin of 0 to 2 whereas toward the higher reaches of the margin is 4 to 4.5. This is due to the statistical calculations that are a part of this test.

Like the Stress Test, even if you have a high score, you can still beat the effects of stress by immediately practicing the burnout remedies and stress management techniques in this document.

Score	Interpretation
Under 2	Excellent – You are experiencing a normal response to life and handling stress well. You are not subject to burnout at this time.
2 - 3	Very Good – Though you may begin to experience a very mild amount of burnout signs. Use stress management techniques to prevent additional steps toward burnout.
3 – 4	Borderline – You may have a moderate amount of burnout. Your perspective may begin to be affected causing you to see issues as worse than they are. Be proactive in using stress management techniques.
4 – 4.5	Be Concerned – You may have a significant amount of burnout. Your perspective, positive attitude and sense of possibility may be limited. Your energy, stamina and ability to function may be limited as well. Seek help from a friend or professional to gain possibility perspective and to assist you in practicing stress management and stress reduction techniques.
Above 4.5	Dangerous – You probably have such a significant amount of burnout that you feel limited as to the possibility of anything ever changing. Though there is hope and help, it may be difficult for you to see it. Reach out to get assistance from a medical professional or counselor. Be aggressive with stress reduction and stress management techniques.

The reason scoring high is “dangerous” is because, at that level few people see any hope for change so they do nothing thereby perpetuating burnout until there is complete exhaustion.

The more stress you experience, the more exhausted you become. That leads to more and more symptoms of burnout. We’ve always found (and experienced) that a person’s perspective of possibility and choice drastically narrows as you approach burnout. The greater the stress the less likely it is that a person can make changes alone. That’s why we recommend talking to a physician or a counselor if you scored high in the burnout test.

Immediate Burnout Remedies

The stress management techniques we will teach certainly help with burnout. Definitely put them into practice. But if you scored high on the burnout test it would be important, possibly necessary, for you to use the following techniques to prevent a nervous breakdown or complete emotional exhaustion.

1. Practice a perspective shift

Increasing stress decreases perspective. We’ll say more on that later. People in burnout or close to it believe there is no hope, life will not get better **and** there seems to be no alternative. Begin repeating the fact, over and over, that there is hope. How can you say that?

The fact that you’re reading it this means you are looking for help so there must be a flicker of hope somewhere deep inside you. The fact that we and others have been through it and not only survived, but live a happy and healthy life now can give hope.

Begin believing that if it's possible for others to get help, it's possible for you.

2. Take some time off

This is the escape part that is embedded in the signs and symptoms of burnout – and is necessary. Continuing to do what you've always done will only perpetuate your path. The closer you are to burnout the more you need some “get away time.”

Taking time off for a complete day or weekend, possibly a 3 or 4 day weekend, is most helpful. Do it more than once if you can. If you can't do that, find **some** time off that is just for you, even if it is only 5 minutes at a time. Find a few moments where you can do something that is peaceful and fulfilling. Step into a garden, look out the window; take a break! And that's the goal, to take a *break* from the stress-filled flow to allow your body and mind to begin to heal.

3. Pay attention to your physical health – structure, nutrition, exercise

Rearrange your life as much as you can to have more structure. Have beginning *and* end times to activities such as work or other obligations. If you can't do this for your entire life due to pressing stressors such as taking care of an elderly parent or some other unavoidable task, at least arrange as much structure as you can. This kind of “compartmentalization” allows you to tackle one event at a time, and have one focus at a time. This helps manage the feelings of being overwhelmed.

Schools, mental health hospitals, even churches find that there is a greater sense of security and stability when a person has

structure in their life. Going to bed at the same time, eating at the same time, planning and scheduling your day; all help to give your body and mind a bit more peace because of the structure.

Good nutrition and gentle exercise are important too. Talk to someone who knows about physiology to get an appropriate nutrition and exercise program for you. Typically stressed out people are depleted and need a bit more protein, B vitamins and certain minerals such as potassium, calcium and magnesium. Body movement through gentle exercise helps strengthen the body too.

4. Get some counseling to find perspective and gain control

Since increased stress decreases perspective, it is imperative that you talk to someone about what you are going through. It would be extremely helpful to talk to a physician or a counselor since they would be able to offer more advanced remedies. Sometimes medication can help break the stress cycle. A counselor may offer support, provide a step-by-step road map of what you can do or have therapeutic remedies to your burnout.

“Getting it off your chest” is a wonderful benefit in talking to someone. If you are not able or willing to talk to a professional, talk to a supportive friend. That friend can provide support and a different perspective. Talking to another human is an extremely important element in the immediate remedies for burnout.

5. Engage in diversions or different challenges

This remedy is especially good for active people who need to do *something*. It does apply to everyone, however. People on the path to burnout continue to face the same stressful challenges

and the same routine of activities. The repetitive monotony of this in and of itself can weigh on you because there doesn't seem to be any apparent hope or immanent change.

Doing something different that you enjoy, be it a challenge or simply a diversion, brings out a new energy. It changes your perspective and can generate new motivation. Enjoyable, playful diversions can even give your mind and body a mini-vacation because it is fun and mentally absorbing. This will help your mind to generate healthy hormones that combat the stress hormones.

6. Lessen responsibility

As much as you can, lessen your responsibility load. When you are heavily stressed, even small responsibilities and obligations can seem huge. Notice how many times you think or say, "I should..." or "I have to..." during the day. This is evidence of the load of obligation you carry. Also notice how many times you finish the sentence with something that is relatively small. "I have to take out the trash." The trash becomes just one more item on a long list of obligations and can become that proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back.

Delegating or asking someone to help can lighten your load. If there is something not urgent or important on your obligation list, stop doing it for awhile. The important aspect to this remedy is to take as many items of the "to do" list as possible. Eliminating even a few small items can feel like a huge benefit. The camel could have remains standing had it not been for that one little piece of straw.

7. Practice relaxation exercises

In burnout, the body responds to most moments in a stressful way. This habit causes the muscles, hormones and other chemicals in your body to respond in the classic “fight or flight” response; further stimulating your body in addition to the stressor that is stimulating it. This is very draining and often unnecessary – your body just *thinks* it needs to respond this way.

Practicing relaxation exercises can provide you with a new response to the moments of the day. You can rarely do this on your own if you haven’t had training or if you are close to burn out. Get instruction from a person who practices yoga, meditation, tai chi or other forms of relaxation. They can teach you the tools you need. Getting relaxation massages can help too.

(There is more written on the relaxation response later in the stress management section of this document).

What you have just read is a list of immediate remedies for burnout. If you identified with the signs and symptoms of burnout, or scored high on the Burnout Test, PRACTICE THESE REMEDIES TODAY!

We’ll now teach you more ways to manage stress. These will be important parts of a complete stress management program. First we’ll teach you about the two most important stress management tool; a mind based tool and a body based tool.

Mind Based Stress Tool: Changing perspective to lower stress

If stress comes from your perspective about a stressor, then changing your perspective changes the level of stress.

Last night we were holding our one-month old grandson, Jayden. The news was on television. The reporter talked about many issues that could affect us and cause us stress including a winter storm, economy problems and political issues. Jayden wasn't stressed at all about those reports. His only stress came from his diaper and tummy.

You will only be stressed about that which you are aware. And, when you become aware of something stressful, the *level* of stress you feel is equal to the level of threat you perceive. Awareness and apparent threat are both a part of the perspective that gives you the feelings of stress.

Let's say your husband announces that his friend is coming over for dinner. That awareness brings a bit of stress. "Why so sudden? Why didn't you consult me first? We don't have many groceries on hand?" are all a part of the thought process that contributes to the stress associated with awareness.

Then your husband says "We're discussing a promotion and I promised him your famous lasagna and your homemade bread as a setting to talk. He's used to eating in gourmet restaurants but I told him he would have the finest meal ever right here in our home." Though your husband needs a bit of talking to so as not to put you in this kind of situation, his promise to his boss remains and raises the perceived threat level. You may feel that you need to create a perfect scenario or it could reflect negatively on your husband's promise. This belief is an added threat which increases the amount of stress you feel.

The stressors you are *aware* of and your perceived *level of threat* create your stress response. But where does this perspective come from and how can we change it or at least manage it?

The real answer is a big answer and way beyond the scope of this writing. Though we *will* teach you how to use your mind to manage your perspective and therefore reduce stress; it is important to know where your perspective is coming from. You may need to go beyond the tools we offer and engage a professional to deal with the bigger issues we raise now.

Your perspective on life and its stressors begins to formulate when you are a small child. You begin learning what to believe about all sorts of issues. You learn these beliefs from your parents, your teachers, your friends and other authority figures.

Beliefs you formulate about self-esteem, family dynamics, spiritual destiny, politics, your purpose in life, how to survive – and many more topics is directly related to your perspective about a specific stressor.

There are many other “big” issues that affect your perspective. You may be physically sick or suffering from depression. Your life may be out of balance. Your priorities may be misaligned. You may not have any sense of direction or purpose. All of these can affect your perspective.

(By the way, we have specific help for these issues and more on our website; help that is separate from this Stress/Burnout Kit www.TrubyAchievements.com).

Everything we’ve listed so far, (and more), creates your belief systems. One philosophy which makes quite a bit of sense, says that these belief systems can either be fear based or love based. This basic undertone can affect all aspects of your life including your perception about stressors.

If your belief systems are fear based you would probably be a fearful person. You may have feelings of entitlement or defensiveness. This

could increase the amount of stressors you become aware of because a fearful person becomes more vigilant and wary. A fear based perspective can also increase the level of threat you experience too. A stressor that might be neutral to one person could have a lot of *potential* threat associated with it, thus increasing stress.

If your belief systems are love based you are more peaceful in nature. You won't be bothered by a lot of stressors because they aren't threatening and because of your accepting, loving nature. And when you do become aware of a stressor that has threat, it may not carry the significant threat that a fear based person perceives.

In short, a healthy person can handle stressors far better than an unhealthy person. The mind based tool we'll teach you next works, but it may be limited by a broader, unhealthy perspective. If you want to deal with stress holistically and completely, go to our website to learn more personal growth tools (www.TrubyAchievements.com). You may also want to talk to a counselor, a spiritual advisor or a coach.

Changing Perspective

The most powerful, mind-based tool that manages perspective and therefore stress is attitude that *everything is input*. Let's discuss it in concept first, then apply it to stress.

If you heard us tell you, "You are a tree," that phrase would not cause you any stress (except if you began wondering about any hidden agenda we had in saying it). "You are a tree" is input, it is not truth. Your mind hears it, weighs it, then rejects it – the input is not valid.

That sequence of reasoning can be used for all input. After receiving input ask the question, "is it valid?" then respond to the input based on the validity of it, not on its initial presentation. The problem is we don't

often do this. We have a conditioned response or a reactionary response to input.

If you heard your boss say, “You are a failure,” that phrase would probably cause you great stress *whether the input was valid or not!* The phrase, “you are a failure,” is still just input. Granted, it can have consequences if your boss really believes that and your job may be at stake. But if you look at the statement as input it gives you a chance to do something about it. Finding out what the boss means, allows you to proactively deal with the issue rather than just falling victim to conjecture and worry.

So many times we encounter a stressor and immediately react to it without checking out the validity of it, whether we can do something about it, how threatening it really is, or if the threat is indeed imminent.

Financial warnings on the news may not apply to your particular type of loan. Your friend who tells you that “everyone” is out to get you may not mean *everyone*. (All of us tend to generalize all the time...oops; see what we mean?). Your friend may be talking about only two co-workers who are intimidated by you.

Keeping in mind that “everything is input” allows you to assess the validity of a particular stressor, determine its level of threat and decide whether you can do something about it. This objective, proactive approach can dramatically reduce stress.

One of the by-products of this mental posturing is to keep you in control. Issues in life where we feel we have no control produce more stress. And truly, everything **IS** input and you **DO** have choice about that input. No one has the right or ability to take away your power of choice. At least you can always choose your response to any situation in life no matter how heavy or life-threatening. Your response is yours!

Your mind is the most powerful tool for handling stress. Change your mind and it will change your stress level. Next time you encounter a stressor stay in charge. Speak the truth to yourself, “This is input!” Then assess the validity of the input. What is truth? Then respond to the truth that surrounds the stressor not reacting to the stressor itself. Keep your power. Don’t give it away to the stressor.

Physiological Stress Tool: Using Relaxing Conditioned Response

Changing your perspective is the most powerful psychological tool you can use to manage stress. Relaxation is the most powerful physiological one.

We could launch into pages of physiology lessons where we teach you about what your body is doing when stressed. Suffice it to say, your body’s core response to stress is the “fight or flight” response. Adrenalin and other stress hormones increase. This causes many bodily responses. Muscles tighten, blood pools around your vital organs, your heart rate increases, your breathing rate increases, you become tense and hyper vigilant. This fight or flight response literally helps you engage or get away from a perceived danger. It is a normal response, an important response, a necessary response – *to real threat*; but not the “threat” (stressor) that the copier stopped working.

The problem is our subconscious mind doesn’t know the difference between the threat of a real attack and the threat associated with a broken copier. All it senses is “threat” and releases the response associated with fight or flight.

Remember, you just learned that your *conscious* mind **can** sense the difference and lessen the perceived threat by treating “everything as

input.” But even though your conscious mind can do this, there will still be some level of fight or flight response associated with a stressor.

There is an additional problem to this fight or flight response. If there truly is a serious threat or attack, you *will* fight or flee. Although it can drain you in a rather healthy way (like how you would feel at the end of a race), the actual fighting or fleeing uses up the adrenaline that is flowing in your body. It allows your muscles and organs to live out what they have been hyped up to do.

If the threat is a broken copier, except for the person who kicks, screams and otherwise attacks the copier, (which we don't recommend doing) our bodies don't use up the excess stress hormones. Our bodies remain tense with our heart rate increased. That causes us to be hyper vigilant and respond to the next perceived threat with even more of a stress response. And thus it builds.

The relaxation response directly combats the fight or flight response. The key is to learn how to do it and carry that response into your daily life, specifically when you encounter a stressor.

When I (Bill) was learning how to manage stress I went to a biofeedback session. This is where your body is hooked up to monitors similar to an EKG with additional sensors for muscle tension and temperature. The equipment measures your level of stress by measuring your parasympathetic nervous system's functioning. Your nervous system is what fires the fight or flight response.

The technician told me to relax. I said, “I am” yet the needles on the gauges that measured my stress response were pegged. Though I thought I was relaxed, I wasn't. Using the biofeedback equipment, I was able to learn how to relax while still awake. I then learned how to take that “relaxation response” into my everyday life.

You can do this too. Use our relaxation exercise tools or learn from a professional in your area who deals with stress or teaches yoga or other meditative practices. Have someone teach you how to relax. Then, while in a relaxed state, create a reminder. Use a small stone or something you can keep in your pocket or on your desk. “Anchor” the feeling of relaxation to this reminder piece. Keep that piece with you at all times and it will remind you how to relax in the face of a stressor.

Additionally, practice the relaxation state in your entire day. The more you do this the healthier you will be. You’ll have greater peace and be able to handle much more in life.

Menu of Methods to Manage Stress

We have taught you the two most important tools for managing stress; changing perspective and the relaxation response. There are many other ways to manage stress.

Different methods work better for some, less effectively for others. Following is a menu of stress management and stress reduction techniques. Try them all, then choose the ones that give you the best results. Practice them often, especially if you are in a stressful situation. These techniques are remedial and preventative approaches to stress.

1. Develop a positive attitude about stress

Recognize that there will always be stress in life. It’s normal. You can never wipe your brow and say, “I’ve made it, no more stress.” Instead, you can be the master of your stress not the slave to its effects.

The important aspect to this stress management technique is to be accepting. Fighting against life only makes it your enemy. Accepting the inevitability of stressors and keeping your personal power is the attitude that can allow you to be proactive and not become a victim.

Embrace the stressors that come your way, roll with the flow, engage with the stressor and use the techniques in this document to win your freedom, your peace, and your happiness.

2. Take mini-mental-vacations

Your mind can become absorbed with stressors without ever taking a break. Giving your mind a “breather” has many benefits. Like a vacation, when you give your mind a break you can return to the stressor invigorated and energized. Taking a break allows you to rebuild and refuel. It also can give you a more objective perspective when you return to the stressful situations in life.

How do you do this? Real vacations would be helpful, but that’s not what we’re talking about. Small amounts of time during the day where you take a mental break by focusing on something else are sufficient.

One person set his watch to beep every hour. When it beeped, he stopped what he was doing, sat back, dropped his shoulders, relaxed and closed his eyes in visualization for 60 seconds. Another person made a practice of stopping by a certain window every time she walked by it. She focused on the beauty of nature for a brief moment, and then carried on.

Notice; the key elements are to stop; focus somewhere else, and relax.

3. Use humor

Scripture (and the Reader's Digest) tell us that laughter is the best medicine. There have been many studies that prove the benefits of laughter and humor. Positive hormones are released, certain muscles are stretched in healthy ways, and attitudes become more positive. Humor has been used to help heal people of serious illnesses and promote better health.

This stress management technique can be manifested in two ways; (1) you possess and express a sense of humor as you encounter the stressors of life, and (2) exposing yourself to humor so you can laugh.

If you have a sense of humor already, number one is easy to do. But not everyone can find the humor in life easily and readily. That's ok. If you can't, then find ways to entertain yourself so you can laugh. Watching comedians or funny movies was used in one study of patients with serious illness. They had quicker and better recovery than a control group. Maybe the poet wasn't too far off in telling us to live, laugh and love.

4. Look beyond the immediate and temporary toward a long-term perspective

There is a Perspective Exercise we have used where the person visualizes looking at a particular stressor from outer space. Not only does our world and life itself seem small and insignificant, the stressor all but disappears. Of course, the stressor doesn't truly disappear, but it sure changes the person's perspective about it. And, as you know by now, changing perspective is powerful.

This technique of looking beyond the immediate and temporary involves looking at a particular stressor in the context of a bigger perspective or longer time frame. One way to use the bigger perspective is to ask, “How does this issue look in the light of eternity?” It may be a bit of a spiritual perspective but it does put the stressor in context of what is truly important.

A way to look at the stressor in the light of a longer time frame is to view it in the light of an end goal. The stress of repairing a “fixer upper” house may pale as you see your tasks in the light of selling the house for a profit. Understanding the purpose and context of a given stressor can help. Purpose is why it exists. Context is how it fits into the bigger picture.

5. Exercise

Be sure and check with your doctor to determine the level of exercise that is right for you, and then engage in an exercise program. Exercise always decreases stress and the effects of stress on your body.

Exercise allows you to use up the stored fight or flight effects in your body. Additionally, exercise increases your health and well being both of which are foundational to approaching stressors with a positive attitude.

One word of caution; if you make exercise super challenging or competitive it can be stressful in and of itself. We’re not talking about winning a race, we’re talking about a walk in the woods – or whatever exercise best suits you and keeps you healthy and fit.

6. Get proper nutrition

Stress zaps energy, strength and physical reserves. It's important, then, to refuel. The greater your stress load, the greater your depletion.

Speaking generally, stress needs protein B vitamins and certain minerals such as potassium, calcium and magnesium. When we are helping a person who is maxed out in stress, taking supplements and gentle exercise tend to give quick return – usually within 36 to 48 hours. Not everyone wants to take supplements.

If you would rather, make sure to eat foods that contain the vitamins and minerals mentioned. Check with your local health food store, physician or nutritionist to know what foods to eat. A free resource may be your local hospital. Every hospital has nutritionists associated with their food services. They often have printed information they use for patients which they can give to you. The information matches the needed supplements with the foods that provide them.

7. Take time to talk with someone you love

Human contact is so important, especially contact where you can be authentic, genuine and vulnerable. Talking to someone about life, about what you are experiencing, is not only therapeutic and cleansing, it is energizing. And the best situation is to talk to someone you love and who loves you. It will build your bond and the love will bring support.

However, it is so important to talk to someone that some people pay counselors to have someone to talk to. A spiritual leader in

your religious organization may be a free resource. Though these people don't fit the criteria of "someone you love" at least there is human connection which is extremely important.

Of course, a friend who will listen to you is extremely valuable. Be careful, however. If the person is judgmental you may feel worse having talked to them. If the friend you choose to talk to takes on your problems and feels some degree of responsibility to fix them for you, that's not good either. Choose a safe friend who will neither judge nor take undue responsibility.

8. Take time to do things that are enjoyable and/or self-fulfilling

Creating diversions is a wonderful stress management technique. Fun diversions are the best since you can experience joy or humor in the context of the diversion. And, if you can experience a diversion that is fun as well as self-fulfilling, that's the best.

By self-fulfilling we mean something that feeds you in some way; something that makes you feel good about yourself or what you have done. If you love children, volunteering for a community carnival may serve all three elements of this stress management technique: diversion, fun and fulfilling.

Diversions can take on all sorts of forms, and they don't have to take much time. You could read 10 minutes a day out of a book you enjoyed immensely. Going to an ice cream parlor now and again to get that favorite flavor could be a fun diversion. Inviting friends to a pot luck dinner could be fun and serve as a diversion.

9. Exercise your options wherever possible to change your environment

Never be a victim. But we can feel like one as time goes by.

Life flows so fast. Obligations, responsibilities, necessary tasks build up quickly over time. Life takes on an inertia that's hard to interrupt or stop. As this happens we find ourselves burdened with a lot of items we didn't sign up for. If we don't take time to assess what's going on and make some choices about what we carry, we will become a victim.

This stress management technique is to simply stop and look at your life, your environment and all of its contents including your obligations and responsibilities. Ask yourself, "Where are you going?" Clarify your direction in life then proactively choose to include or exclude the "to do" list that accompanies your days and weeks. You may have more options than you think, but you won't know until you take time to look at your life.

10. Breathe

We say "breathe" both symbolically and literally. When you are stressed, threatened or otherwise attacked, you might find that you're holding your breath. It's a natural response. It's protective in a way, but it's limiting. You need oxygen to live.

The symbolic aspect to this suggestion to "breathe" is to take time to relax and breathe...breathe in the joys of your life. Enjoy them. Step into the sunshine of your life and inhale in its blessings.

There is a literal aspect to this suggestion too. Stressed people don't breathe deeply. Exercise helps you breathe more but there is something else you can do too.

Make an agreement with yourself that every time you encounter "X" you will take a deep breath. "X" could be every time you walk through a door, or every time you get a glass of water, or every time you see a window, or... whatever you choose. Take a deep breath. Fill your lungs, then exhale slowly.

Here is a breathing exercise we've used successfully:

- A. Sit comfortably. Take a deep, deep breath. Fill your lungs completely. Then hold that deep breath while you count slowly to 4 (1....2....3....4).
- B. When you reach "4" exhale slowly, about the pace you'd use if you were humming. Push out all the air in your lungs and relax. Don't take the next breath until you feel you need to (which could be several seconds).
- C. Repeat this two more times for a total of three deep breaths, then resume breathing normally.

Notice how you feel before you do this exercise. Re check how you feel after you take these three breaths in the prescribed way. Most people report feeling more relaxed and alert.

Stress Prevention

Stress prevention comes from proactively living life. People who are not in control of their life or are always reacting without a planned response or direction are ripe for a stressful life.

Proactively practice the stress management techniques whether you feel stressed or not. These techniques help prevent stress; and they just make sense. For example, taking breaks, good nutrition, and living in balance are healthy practices for anyone, no matter what.

When you practice the above listed techniques in the context of stress management or stress reduction, your mind is focused on the stress you are addressing. Using these techniques to enhance your life allows you to positively, proactively, grow and experience more peace and happiness.

You Must Take Care of You – No One Else Will

This is an important point. No one will take care of you but **YOU!** Though you may need some help in putting a stress management plan in place, *you* must take responsibility for it. Own your life. Own your plan. Allow yourself to exercise the God-given power of choice that resides in all of us. Choose to be whole, healthy and happy. Use these techniques and teachings and you will open the door to a life of health, peace and happiness. It's simple when you know what to do.

You are the most important person you will ever love. If you don't take care of you, you can't take care of anyone else. Stop, breathe, enjoy THIS moment – it is the only reality that exists...it is the place and time for you to live, and be, and choose...choosing how you will live out your peace, joy and love in the next moment and those beyond.

Peace.

Bill & Joann Truby

Action Plan

- A. Choose one step you will take today. Identify at least one technique you will put into practice today.
- B. After you've chosen that initial step, reflect on your life in the context of this document. Where are the weak spots? What do you need most? Where can you change?
- C. After your analysis in "B" write a plan that includes the following:
 1. Write a clear description of what you will look like and feel like when your stress is managed and you are healthy, peaceful and happy. Be detailed in your description. Visualize it often. What you can't see in your mind is hard to achieve in practice.
 2. Identify the sequential steps you will take to manage your stress and achieve your goal. Include as many of the stress management techniques as are necessary or desired including the immediate steps necessary if you are close to burnout.
 3. Even if you don't use a support person, tell someone about your plan to increase its sense of reality and your sense of accountability.
 4. Create a monitoring plan such as a notebook or a calendar where you can place notes to document progress.
 5. Choose a "reward" (something to look forward to like an afternoon at the beach) that you will share with someone close to you when you've found your relaxed state of being and are on top of your stress. During this time reflect on how you progressed to this new state of being. Celebrate and choose how you will live from this time forward.