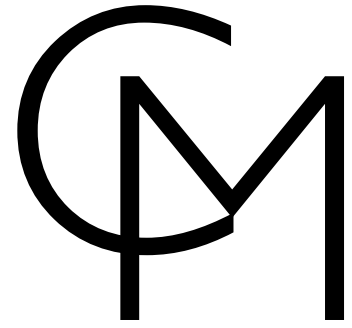


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Stress less: Ways to stay cool, calm, and collected amid chaos

By Michelle Stewart

During the past year and a half, many of us have undergone a time of acute stress. According to the Merriam-Webster tome, “stress is a state of mental tension and worry caused by problems in your life, work, etc.; something that causes strong feelings of worry or anxiety.”

Stress is not always a bad thing; some stress is normal and useful. Stress is the catalyst that can aid us in responding and reacting quickly and energetically. This is the fight or flight response that we need when we are in danger. It is useful and can also benefit us when we need a burst of energy to complete a task or athletic feat. However, the negative side of stress becomes apparent when we find ourselves in an ongoing pattern of stress. It becomes apparent when it affects our health—weakens the immune system, interferes with sleep patterns, causes overeating, headaches, stomach problems or back pain along with other ailments that affect good health and well-being.

Recent research by the American Psychological Association (APA) indicates that adults are getting fewer hours of sleep, skipping exercise, and engaging in unhealthy eating behaviors due to stress. In fact, 38% say they have overeaten or eaten unhealthy foods in the past month because of stress, and 43% say stress has caused them to lie awake at night in the past month.

To stress less, the key is to recognize what is creating your stress and how to manage it. Here are tips to jumpstart the healthy you program.



Sleep

As the research pointed out, nearly half of adults say stress causes sleep interruptions, so let's have a look at sleep. Seven to eight hours of sleep is recommended for adults. In order to get there; try making these all part of your daily routine:

- Keep your bedtimes and wake times on a constant schedule.
- Avoid spending time on the computer, smartphone or other electronic devices that are stimulating just before going to bed.
- Allow yourself 15 minutes of “quiet time” to wind down.
- Avoid eating a large meal late in the evening and balance out your intake of caffeine and alcohol.
- Reserve your bedroom for sleeping only, not as a combination

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Stress: Eat regular meals, get lots of sleep, go for a walk

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dining room, TV room, exercise room, and home office.

- Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet.
- Make sure your mattress is comfortable—they typically wear out in five to seven years.

Food

Stress impacts what we eat, how much we eat and when we eat. Below are tips to help avoid overeating and some of my favorite stress-reducing foods to stock up on:

- Eat several small meals throughout the day. Eating a small amount every three to four hours keeps the blood sugar levels even, keeping the mind and body calmer.
- When you feel hungry, try drinking a beverage and wait 20 minutes, often you're thirsty not hungry. And remember that all calories count, even in your beverages, so pay attention to what you drink, too! I'm a fan of water with a squeeze of lemon, but if you're looking for a bit more flavor, there are lots of low and no-calorie options out there like iced tea, vitamin water and diet soda.
- Make it a habit to eat breakfast because skipping this critical first meal often leads to overindulgence before lunchtime.
- Keep your cubicle stocked with pre-portioned snacks that satisfy, like a small bag of almonds or a granola bar. Rather than rule out favorites, seek them out in portion-control sizes like the Coke Mini or the Minute Maid Coolers.
- Science shows us that these foods and nutrients aid in managing stress:

- Vitamin B - green vegetables, potatoes, fresh



fruit, wheat germ, wholegrain cereals, sea food, poultry, peas, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds and dried fruit.

- Vitamin C - citrus fruits, blackberries, blackcurrants, fruit juice and fresh vegetables.
- Zinc - wholegrain cereals, seafood, dairy products.
- Complex Carbohydrates - potatoes, rice, and oats. These release glucose into the blood stream more slowly than refined carbohydrates.

Exercise

The APA survey also pointed out the impact of stress on exercise; 39% said they had skipped exercise in the past month when they were feeling stressed. It is critical to include regular exercise in your daily or weekly routine. It will help you relax, and you'll have more energy after the physical activity.

The trick is to find physical activity that you enjoy. Make it a priority,

scheduling time to exercise on your calendar. Consider these other ways to keep active:

- Get a buddy, teaming up can help you stay committed and motivated.
- If you cannot set aside a 30 to 45-minute block of time, do several 5-10-minute segments daily.
- If exercising at home, minimize distractions.
- Avoid vigorous exercise about three hours before going to bed, although gentle stretching is OK.
- Always have an alternative activity that you can do, such as riding a stationary bike at home or doing an aerobics video if you can't get to the gym or weather limits outdoor exercise.

You may not be able to do all of these immediately, but give your health a higher priority by taking steps to manage and lower stress in your life.

Takeaway: Stress affects physical and mental health. Take a timeout; enjoy 15 minutes of quiet time for you. Eat regular meals with ample fruits and vegetables, drink plenty of fluids, and exercise regularly. These small changes will have a big impact on your well-being.

Michelle J. Stewart is a Registered and Licensed Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator better known as the Nutrition Planner who has been leading the way to a healthier you for more than 25 years. Michelle is a Certified Wellness Coach whose motto is "EAT LESS MOVE MORE". She is a consultant for the food and beverage industry and offers expertise in corporate wellness, weight loss surgery, menu and product development. All opinions expressed are her own. Sign up for her Free Report 10 Weight Loss Tips for Life when you visit thenutritionplanner.com.

Emergency alerts: Are you getting them?

In this time of changing climate and health dangers, disaster preparedness is more important than ever. Luckily, modern technology has made it easy to get the warnings you, your family, or your workplace may need in case of emergency.

The Warning, Alert and Response Network (WARN) Act established the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) system in 2008 and it became operational in 2012. WEA is an essential part of America's emergency preparedness. Since its launch, the WEA system has been used more than 61,000 times to warn the public about dangerous weather, missing children, and other critical situations—all through alerts on compatible cell phones and other mobile devices.

WEA is a public safety system that allows cell phone users to receive text-like messages alerting them of imminent threats to safety in their area. Wireless companies volunteer to participate in WEA, which is the result of a unique public/private partnership between the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the FCC, and the United States wireless industry in order to enhance public safety.

Authorized national, state, or local government authorities may send alerts regarding public safety emergencies—such as severe weather, missing children, or the need to evacuate—using WEA. WEA alerts are sent through FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) to participating wireless carriers, which then push the alerts to compatible mobile devices in the affected area.

Citizens don't have to sign up or do anything to receive WEA alerts on their phones. Government officials can send emergency alerts to all subscribers with WEA-capable devices if their wireless carrier participates in the program.

For more information on WEA, visit www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/wireless_emergency_alerts_wea.pdf.

If you are not receiving WEAs on your phone:



- 1 Check the settings on your mobile device and review your user manual (you may be able to find this online too). Older phones may not be WEA capable, and some cell phone models require you to enable WEAs. Some mobile service providers call these messages “Government Alerts,” or “Emergency Alert Messages.”

- 2 Check with your wireless provider to see if they can resolve the issue. All major phone providers and some smaller providers participate in WEA.

Local alert systems

What about closer to home? For emergency alerts specific to your county, visit <http://calalerts.org/signup.html> and click on your county of residence (or work, or whatever location you'd like to receive alerts for). County links take visitors to a sign-up page for alerts specific to that county. A mobile phone number and email address may be required to sign up.

Other alert systems

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a national public warning system that allows the president to address the nation within 10 minutes during a national emergency. State and local authorities may also use the system to deliver important emergency information such as weather information, imminent threats, AMBER alerts and local incident information targeted to specific areas.

The EAS is sent through broadcasters, satellite digital audio services, direct broadcast satellite providers, cable television systems and wireless cable systems.

The President has sole responsibility for determining when the national-level EAS will be activated. FEMA and the FCC are responsible for national-level tests and exercises. The EAS is also used when all other means of alerting the public are unavailable.

For weather-based alerts, NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) (<https://www.weather.gov/nwr/>) is a nationwide network of radio stations that broadcast continuous weather information from the nearest National Weather Service office based on your physical location.

Known as the “Voice of NOAA's National Weather Service,” NWR is provided as a public service by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), part of the Department of Commerce. NWR includes more than 1000 transmitters, covering all 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the U.S. Pacific Territories. NWR requires a special radio receiver or scanner capable of picking up the signal. Broadcasts are found in the VHF public service band at these seven frequencies (MHz):

162.400

162.425

162.450

162.475

162.500

162.525

162.550

In an emergency, every minute counts. Be prepared by making sure you receive the information you need, when you need it.

Perfectionism kills the entrepreneurial spirit

By Donna Gunter

No, I'm not ready to release my...(fill in the blank here with ezine, ecourse, ebook, blog, website, etc.) because it's not quite ready. I need to...(fill in with your excuse here: do more work on it...have it edited....review the copywriting, etc.)"

How many times has a statement similar to that come out of your mouth? I know for me that it's happened more often than I care to recount. I am a recovering perfectionist who used to utter some variation of the above sentence with great regularity.

What I've discovered in my time as an Internet entrepreneur is that my need for perfection in my products or marketing materials is simply another excuse to procrastinate. Yep, when I try and convince myself that the ebook needs more copy editing or that my website needs just a few more pages to make it say just what I want it to say, all I'm doing is creating plausible excuses to put something off for a few more days, or even weeks or months. Why? Because inaction is safe -- you're not putting yourself out there to the world to face possible criticism. The longer you excuse yourself from taking action, however, the more difficult it becomes to build a business and create the kind of life you want for yourself.

Don't let yourself fall for your own fabricated excuses. Stop waiting for perfection. It's never going to arrive. Better to release something that may not be perfect than to release nothing at all. How much money can you make on an ebook that no one knows about? Last time I checked, it wasn't much!

Sure, you may fall under the scrutiny of other perfectionists in the Internet world who are gleefully waiting to tear you apart by pointing out your errors. Thank them for their constructive feedback, create a correction log, and let the criticism fall off of you like water off a duck's back. In my experience, those critics who have the leisure time to point out the flaws of others really aren't doing much with their own lives and businesses. That's why they have



the free time to correct the errors of others.

The whole notion of how perfectionism was holding me back was aptly illustrated at a Coachville conference I attended several years ago. The late Thomas Leonard, founder of Coachville, had brought up on stage a very successful Internet entrepreneur to speak to us about how he had found a great product to sell online and the process he used to uncover the hungry target market who would pay handsomely for the material he was selling. We were all given the 12-page handout of the long sales letter that was used to sell the product, and many of us were taking copious notes.

However, I noticed the guy next to me, an engineer, wasn't taking notes. Instead it appeared he was going through the sales letter and was making grammatical and punctuation corrections. He disappeared during our next break, and when I returned to my seat afterwards, I discovered that he had returned as well, but seemed to be highly agitated.

Without waiting for an invitation, he proceeded to tell me what had happened over the break that had gotten him so upset. He showed me his copy of the sales letter and the corrections he had made and said that he'd gone up to the speaker during the break and offered to

give him the corrections to the sales letter. The speaker took a look and told him, "No, thanks."

The engineer couldn't believe that this speaker wouldn't take advantage of all the work that he (the engineer) had done to correct the sales copy. The engineer thought the speaker was being rather foolish and apparently told the speaker that he was being short-sighted not to take advantage of the offered corrections.

The speaker informed the engineer that the sales letter in question was making him \$67,000 per month in sales and that he had no intention of "fixing" a good thing. Furthermore, the speaker explained that because he had worked so hard on crafting the wording of the sales letter and that the letter was bringing him so many sales that he'd be foolish to tinker with any portion of it.

Apparently the engineer left the conversation with the speaker in a huff and returned to his seat, still steaming, and still convinced that the speaker was making a grave mistake by not taking his copy editing advice. The engineer was so blinded by the need to be perfect and be right that he was blocking his path to online success. I bet today that he's still tweaking his sales copy or his product and has yet to do anything with coaching business.

So, which do you want to be? The engineer with the grammatically correct sales letter that never sees the light of day, or the Internet entrepreneur making \$67,000 per month off a product that has a sales letter with grammatical and punctuation mistakes?

Don't let your need to be perfect hold you back any longer from taking the action you need to release your product or service to the world. In most cases, taking action, even though it might be a bit flawed, is always better than no action.

Donna Gunter is an online business coach at www.OnlineBizU.com. Ask Donna an Internet Marketing question at <http://www.AskDonnaGunter.com>.

Polite? Try this business etiquette quiz

By Lydia Ramsey

Have you ever thought about how much rudeness may be affecting your bottom line? What is the cost to your company when you or the people who represent you lack proper manners? Do you know how many clients are turned off by employees who would rather carry on a conversation with each other than with the person who came to purchase your service or product? Can you count the number of people who hang up and call someone else because the person who answered your phone put them on hold without asking permission? How does the client rate your professionalism when the employee who welcomes him to your office looks as if she is dressed for a day at the beach? Do your employees understand that it is more offensive than friendly to call the client by first name unless asked to do so? Are your employees treating each other with courtesy and respect? Do they honor the invisible walls of each other's cubicles? Do they work as a team and help each other or do they act like cast members on Survivor?

In today's fast-paced business world where too many people claim that they don't have time to be nice, it's easy to overlook the details that can help you grow your business, increase your profits and build long lasting client relationships.

Try taking this quick true/false quiz to test your own business etiquette expertise. Then run it by your employees.

1. Business etiquette is based on rank and hierarchy. True/False
2. If the information on your business card is incorrect, draw a line through it and write the correct information on the card. True/False
3. Business casual means dressing down one notch from business professional. True/False
4. In today's relaxed business



environment, it is not necessary to ask your clients' permission before using their first names. True/False

5. Callers do not mind holding for information as much as holding for a person. True/False

6. You don't have to smile or make eye contact with your customers unless you feel like it. True/False

7. Handwritten notes are out of place in the business world. True/False

8. A man should wait for a woman to put out her hand in business before offering his. True/False

9. When composing an e-mail message, complete the "To" line last. True/False

10. Small talk around the office is a waste of time. True/False

11. People can hear you eating, drinking and chewing over the phone. True/False

12. If you receive a call on your cell phone when you are with a client, look to see who is calling, but don't answer it. True/False

Answers:

1. True. In business, you always defer to the senior or highest ranking person, regardless of age or gender.

2. False. Handing out business cards with information that is outdated or crossed off is unprofessional. Have new cards printed immediately.

3. True. Business casual is not an excuse to wear your favorite old clothes to the office. It is still business, and everyone needs to look professional.

4. False. Don't assume because our work world has become more informal that you can call clients by their first name. Use their titles and last names until they ask you to do otherwise.

5. True. Clients will wait contentedly while you search for information, working on their behalf. However, if they have to wait more than thirty seconds for you to come to the phone, they begin to wonder how much you value them or want their business.

6. False. This is only true if you are planning a going-out-of-business sale. Every client deserves a genuine smile and eye contact.

7. False. Handwritten notes have become almost as extinct as the typewriter. You will stand out from your competition every time you send off a short note written in your own hand.

8. False. Every woman should be prepared to shake hands as soon as she

Please see ETIQUETTE, page 8

Improve customer rapport with improv!

By Craig Harrison

As we look for ways to improve our rapport with customers, clients and prospects let's cast our gaze to improv — improvisational behavior popularized by those whacky folks seen in drama classes, theatre troupes, on the entertaining television show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* It might surprise you to learn that even in something as spontaneous as Improvisation there are rules at play. Three in particular have direct relevance to our customer and client interactions.



Make Your Partner Look Good.

Improv is a collaborative effort. So too are customer relationships. You are partners with your clients, customers and prospects on projects, contracts, campaigns, programs and special events. When you help customers get what they want, you get what you want. Always ask yourself how can you help them look good, excel and succeed. When Improv games work most effectively each partner's actions help the other look good. As a sales and service professional your work shouldn't just be about making yourself look good. First, help your clients look good and you'll shine in the process.

Be Spontaneous. So often we are bound by rules and regulations, restrictions and proscriptions. Sometimes we're so bogged down we can't respond to the issue at hand. There are times our colleagues and customers expect and deserve our abilities to think and act on our feet in a spontaneous manner. In a world where we are quick to champion an "adapt or die" philosophy we must not forget the ability to be spontaneous, making decisions by feel and impulsively as the case may call for. Be ready, willing and able to eschew guidelines and apply creativity to solve problems and your clients succeed. Give yourself permission to be spontaneous and admire the results.

Say "Yes, AND..." So often we are apt to respond to comments, suggestions and inquiries with some variation of "Yes, but..." The impact is immediate: whatever "offer" being advanced is now qualified, mitigated, diminished or

otherwise muted. Your customer's world of possibilities has just been restricted. The idea in question, once ripe with potential, has now been shackled. When we instead respond "Yes, and..." it builds on what has been said, allowing for both parties to co-create a solution. Instead of a competition between ideas or a zero-sum game where just one point of view prevails, now both parties are actively creating solutions and future success scenarios.

Teaming With Success

Teamwork is the lubricant of success in the marketplace. Spontaneity and a sincere respect for your clients facilitates teamwork. Your spontaneity is a gift to your customers. "...As in any artistic endeavor, we must learn to trust our impulses and be ourselves." So says Kat Koppett, co-founder of StoryNet, LLC (thestorynet.com), and author of the new book *Training To Imagine*.

Kat continues: "Improvisers learn that bypassing the little judgment voices in their heads — daring to be obvious, for example, staying present and reacting naturally — will always stand them in better stead than trying to do or say the 'right' thing. Kat helps employees learn to be in sync with the reality of the moment. She believes that just as a live audience knows the difference between real and contrived, so too does your co-workers.

I too am a strong proponent of the use of Improv techniques for improving

team building, listening and overall communication skills, to say nothing of sharpening your sales and service orientation. I invite you to take an Improv class, employ Improv techniques in meetings and off-sites, and look again at *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* for its value in stimulating your creativity and enhancing the tools in your sales and service tool kit.

Toastmasters are Masters of Improv

Another great place to sharpen your improv skills is through Toastmasters International, the communication and leadership program with thousands of clubs worldwide. Since 1924 members have been engaging in Table Topics, a form of extemporaneous speaking where participants are given a topic and expected to think and speak on their feet, without prior preparation, for 1-2 minutes at a time. It's simultaneously scary, fun, and fulfilling. Find a club near you to experience the magic of Toastmasters: toastmasters.org or call 1-800-YWE-SPEAK. Now it's your turn to impress...through improv!

San Francisco Bay Area-based Professional speaker Craig Harrison's Expressions of Excellence!™ provides sales and service solutions through speaking. For information on keynotes, training, coaching, curriculum for licensing and more, call (888) 450-0664, visit www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com or E-mail excellence@craigspeaks.com for inquiries.

SAFETY ... IT PAYS



Ladder inspections for a steady safety record

There are a reported 136,118 ladder related injuries in the United States annually! During a recent year, work-related falls from ladders resulted in approximately 119 fatalities and an estimated 17,540 serious injuries.

Not all these incidents are due to defective ladders; however, that can certainly be one of the factors. It is important that ladders are inspected regularly. OSHA requires it in several instances.

OSHA 1910.25(d)(1)(x) - Ladders shall be inspected frequently and those which have developed defects shall be withdrawn from service for repair or destruction and tagged or marked as "Dangerous, Do Not Use."

OSHA 1910.26(c)(2)(vi) - Ladders are to be inspected:

(c)(2)(vi)(a) If ladders tip over or

(c)(2)(vi)(d) If ladders are exposed

to oil and grease

OSHA 1910.27(f) – Fixed Ladders - All ladders shall be maintained in a safe condition. All ladders shall be inspected regularly, with the intervals between inspections being determined by use and exposure.

These required frequent inspections must be documented. Perhaps the easiest way is to have stickers or tags directly on the ladder itself and to have a ladder log to ensure they are all inspected as required.

Unfortunately frequently is a very subjective word. Truly each ladder must be evaluated on it's use and exposure to damaging influences. You will want to inspect a ladder utilized daily that is in a high exposure area much more often than the office step stool used every now and then. There are also rules for use of all ladders:

- Maintain ladders free of oil, grease

and other slipping hazards.

- Do not load ladders beyond their maximum intended load nor beyond their manufacturer's rated capacity.
- Use ladders only for their designed purpose.
- Use ladders only on stable and level surfaces unless secured to prevent accidental movement.
- Do not use ladders on slippery surfaces unless secured or provided with slip-resistant feet to prevent accidental movement. Do not use slip resistant feet as a substitute for exercising care when placing, lashing or holding a ladder upon slippery surfaces.
- Secure ladders placed in areas such as passageways, doorways or driveways, or where they can be displaced by workplace activities or traffic to prevent accidental movement. Or use a barricade to keep traffic or activity away from the ladder.
- Keep areas clear around the top and bottom of ladders.
- Do not move, shift or extend ladders while in use.
- Use ladders equipped with nonconductive side rails if the worker or the ladder could contact exposed energized electrical equipment.
- Face the ladder when moving up or down.
- Use at least one hand to grasp the ladder when climbing.
- Do not carry objects or loads that could cause loss of balance and falling.

OSHA CORNER

Please visit the following address on the web to download helpful safety posters, guides and pamphlets for a safer workplace.

<https://www.osha.gov/publications>



Etiquette: Give employees what they need

Continued from page 5

meets someone in business. For either a man or woman to hesitate could indicate a lack of confidence.

9. True. You can send e-mail without inserting an attachment, without checking for grammar and punctuation and without a subject line; but you cannot send e-mail without an address. If you wait until you have carefully proofed your message and added all attachments before you complete the "To" line, you will never be embarrassed or have to apologize for your mistakes.

10. False. Small talk carried on at

the right time, in the right place and on the right subject is a great way to build relationships among co-workers.

11. True. Mouth noises are even louder over the phone. Just because your clients can't see you eating those potato chips doesn't mean they can't hear you munching on the other end of the line.

12. False. It is just as rude to pull out your phone to see who called as it is to have it on and take a call in front of a client. Turn your phone off and check your messages later in private.

If you had trouble with any of these questions, your employees will, too. If you want your employees to be at ease

in business situations, to represent you well and help build your business, give them the information they need. If you haven't done basic business etiquette skills training lately, do it now. Don't let rude behavior cost you business.

Make sure that your employees know how to handle clients over the phone, that they understand the importance of being attentive and alert to clients' needs, that the value other people's time and that they can deal with difficult people and situations with grace.

No one is born with good manners. People have to be taught, and from time to time, they need to be reminded of what they already know.

Take care of your eyes at the computer

As more people use computers in the workplace and home, complaints of eye fatigue, difficulty focusing and discomfort have become commonplace. Especially today, when so many are having video meetings and conferences, taking care of one's eyes in regards to screens is even more vital.

Computer video display terminals don't damage vision, but you might still experience eyestrain. Fortunately, rearranging your computer workstation, taking more frequent rest breaks, or getting proper glasses can often relieve these symptoms, says Academy spokesperson Ruth Williams, M.D.

To pinpoint the cause of your discomfort, first get an eye exam by your ophthalmologist, who can rule out the possibility of eye disease as the cause of your symptoms. You may find you need glasses when working at a computer, or that your prescription needs updating.

Next, take a look at your computer workstation:



- Screen distance: You should sit about 20 inches from the computer monitor, a little farther away than reading distance, with the top of the screen at or below eye level.
- Equipment: Choose a monitor that tilts or swivels. Adjust them appropriately for the lighting in the room. Use a glare reduction screen on the monitor if needed.
- Furniture: An adjustable chair is best. The top of the monitor should be at eye level. Place the monitor on a stand if needed.
- Rest breaks: Take periodic rest breaks, and try to blink often to keep your eyes from drying out. Every 20 minutes, take a 20 second break, and look away 20 feet to give your eyes a rest. Move them up, down and to both sides focusing on something at least 20 feet away.

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