

COPING WITH STRESS

In the modern pressure-cooker world, stress and fatigue are daily problems. The tension starts to mount when we tackle the morning paper, and, for some people, it never lets up.

Many executives and people in management positions feel that they have learned to live with stress. Some even claim that they need it to work at peak efficiency. However, a recent study produced these statistics on the effects of stress on businessmen earning more than \$40,000 yearly.

-One out of five suffers a heart attack.
-Two out of five are divorced.
-Three out of five die before their wives.
-The average life expectancy after retirement is only four years.
-Most are asked to retire five years before the mandatory age.

If pressure is indeed necessary for these people to succeed in their jobs, they pay a high price for success. In fact, experts say that pressure and the fatigue which results from being constantly on edge are responsible for mistakes, oversights and generally lowered efficiency. We become more susceptible to disease; we forget important steps in complicated processes; we ignore safety procedures and our personal relationships suffer because we don't have time to properly maintain them.

For example, headaches are the most common of all physical complaints, with an estimated 42 million chronic sufferers in the United States alone, and tension is a factor in all but a few types of headaches.

There are ways of fighting stress. By learning to live with it, you can anticipate upcoming problems, have time to avoid them and escape the ultimate stress-personal failure.

These four suggestions are ways supervisors can deal with the pressures of everyday life:

- 1) Keep your mind outwardly directed. Under stress, we lose the ability to see problems for what they actually are. By staying in touch with the people around us, we can get a clearer picture of problems and can anticipate future ones.
- 2) Ask questions. Don't do all the talking. You must seek out problems and their causes for yourself.
- 3) Keep your sense of reality. Try to read between the words and into the true meaning of what people are telling you.
- 4) Schedule your time so that you concentrate on stressful activities when you are at your peak and try to include plenty of time for less stressful activities. Be sure to get plenty of sleep!

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