

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT STRESS AND MORE!

Second part of a two part series.

by John P. McNamara, M. D.

Editor's Note -

Publication deadlines cause stress to editor's too, affecting our performance adversely. Our apologies to Dr. McNamara and readers for dropping the last sentence of part 1. The last paragraph of part 1 is repeated below along with part 2 of this fine article.

Studies of top executives suggest that those in high-pressured jobs are often more able to handle stress than others. Perhaps this is due to the fact that those with the most skills in adapting to stress rise to the top-a Darwinian survival of the fittest. It is my own studies that suggest that the persons who face persistent and frequent stress, suffer the most stress-related damage in their jobs. The top executives may have high pressure jobs, but they also have unlimited resources (other people, committees, consultants) at their disposal. They can delegate away their pressures. They can achieve victory in their workplace. For those of less lofty position, there is no delegation of duty or responsibility. No matter how hard they work, nor how perfectly they complete their tasks, will they see victory. They rarely are commended and bonuses are unheard of. Crime and crisis prevails as policemen continue unrewarded. Gifted teachers are stressed to depression and illness by over crowded classes and unappreciative parents. The lack of recognition and reward coupled with the inability to escape job pressures through the delegation of responsibility naturally results in stress. Accidents, absenteeism, and alcoholism all arise from the inability of the body to adapt to such chronic and intense stresses.

PART II

In part I, Dr. McNamara discussed stress and how it affects us. Part II will define stress, identify its symptoms, and offer resolution of its effects.

DEFINITION OF STRESS

Stresses are social, psychological, or physical conditions to which we cannot readily adapt. This results in psychological or physiological tension that can lead to ill-

ness or death. Changes in our bodies or psyches are complex, but nevertheless the same regardless if the

perceived threat is physical (e.g. a bear is about to attack us) or psychological (e.g. we lose our jobs because the greens died). Bodily response is automatic and in most instances unconscious. The longer the wear and tear on the body and the emotions, the greater the chance of burnout and permanent damage. Temporary or transient rises in blood pressure due to intermittent stress may lead to sustained elevated blood pressure and vascular changes that reduce the ability of the person to adapt to future stress.

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

How we feel stress varies by age, sex, background, genes, social-cultural makeup, and the accumulated effects of the multiple and varied "wear and tear" stresses on our minds and bodies. Illnesses associated with stress range from heart attack and ulcers to depression, trauma, suicide, anxiety disorders, and chemical abuse. Even cancer can be caused by stress. Stress also leads to smoking and heavy drinking which in turn causes lung cancer and cancers of the throat, esophagus, and stomach. By impairing our bodies immune responses, stress not only limits our ability to reject these cancers but also limits our ability to fight infection and disease as well.

Stress creates vicious cycles. It often causes social isolation leading to depression causing more stress. People begin to skip meals, failing to ventilate their problems with others. Many of us subsequently fail to use this opportunity to discuss our problems with others, unaware of how often we do so in our daily lives. Our inability to let off steam at lunchtime, in our share-ride to work, or between lines at the bowling alley leads us to accumulated stress pressures which leads to unexplained anger or rage. This process causes strain at work and with our loved ones, increasing the amount of stress related problems in our lives. Impaired judgement and poor concentration soon follow and bring about accidents at home, on the highway, and at work. Intentional suicide behavior is not uncommon. Such chronic states of tension and frustration often lead to hypertension which likewise leads to heart attacks, disease, accidental injury, and highway fatalities.

STRESSORS

Stresses vary depending upon each individual's personal coping skills, personal history, and available resources. A business loss of \$200,000 is obviously not as much stress to a multimillionaire as to a golf course manager who has borrowed it to improve his 18 hole course.

Stresses are not simply life events that are negative or positive in nature. There are continuing subtle pressures

that envelop and devour us, testing the fiber of which we are made. Crowded cities, noise and air pollution, isolation, loneliness, and the constant bad news reported daily in the media presses in on us and takes its toll. These, coupled with the threat of AIDS, nuclear holocaust, and health worries, all add up. All are stresses that may one day break the proverbial camel's back. We then find ourselves shouting, "Stop the world,... I want to get off!", but most of us don't. Why don't we succumb to these pressures?

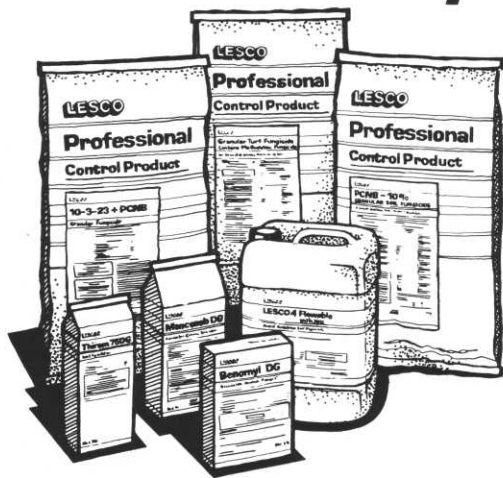
The Chinese sign for crisis is a combination of two characters; one is the character for DANGER and the other is the character for OPPORTUNITY. In fact, there is an old Chinese proverb: "Welcome Crisis". Crisis and stress allow us to see in bold relief that which creates who we are... what our needs are, what our vulnerabilities are, and what we could become if we are able to make stress work for us rather than against us. Freud stated that stress to the personality allows us to better understand ourselves, much as a crack in fine china delineates its structure. At a time of stress, we better comprehend the biological, psychological, social, and existential parameters that combine and converge to define us. This allows an understanding of ourselves that would not exist if not for stress. Our challenge is to seize the opportunity for growth and actualize what would have never been possible if the crisis had not occurred. Bernard Shaw

taught us the lost opportunity is life's greatest hell. We must learn to savor the opportunity afforded by an entangled marriage, a complicated merchandising task, or a life-threatening illness to learn more of why we act as we do, and with such knowledge obtain more of what is consistent with our goals and values.

This can be done. Successful people will tell you it is their secret. Emotional fires that cause burnout can also fuel success. The effect depends on how well we handle it. Expending maximum energy to master challenging tasks increases wear and tear on the body and mind, but it also enhances self-esteem, self-respect and a feeling of control over our lives. Competitive, hardworking, ambitious people respond to the positive aspects of stress. The trouble with stress success is that the formula is often the same for a nervous breakdown or a heart attack. We must learn to recognize stress and use it to our advantage. We must learn how to vent the negative aspects of stress through other people and learn how to delegate responsibility. Stress is all around us. Recognition and management is the key for survival!



We are family!



If turfgrass disease is the problem, turn to the LESCO family of proven performers for broad spectrum disease control.

LESCO fungicide products are available in liquid, granular and water dispersible granule formulations - for convenience and broad-spectrum control.

Enlist the help of the LESCO family for protection of fine turfgrass. Order today!

LESCO. Quality name. LESCO Fungicides. Quality products.

Call: (800) 321-5325 Nationwide

LESCO

LESCO, Inc. 20005 Lake Road, Rocky River, OH 44116
(216) 333-9250

Dale M. Parske
Sales Representative
LESCO of Minnesota

Always read and follow label instructions before using any chemical product.

Build your Pythium control program on a firm foundation.

Chipco® Aliette®



RHONE POULENC AG COMPANY
P.O. Box 12014, 2 T. W. Alexander Drive
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
919/549-2000