

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT STRESS AND MORE!

First part of a two part series.

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Seleyes Motto

*"Fight for your highest attainable aim, but
do not put up resistance in vain"*

Stress can kill, and if it doesn't, it often leads to burnout at work, conflict with your loved ones and unhappiness with yourself. People suffering from stress lose their sensitivity to the joys of life and lack enthusiasm in their daily living. The ability to adapt to pain, boredom, and excess burdens is often gone.

Yet, stress can be a lifesaver. Without the challenge to compete, our greatest athletes would fail to compete at their best levels. Artistic skills and creativity are fueled by stress to emulate or produce an original design, painting, or sculpture. The interpersonal stresses of learning how to work and play together is the melding factor that leads to great teamwork and great friendships. It is such healthy stress that leads to happy marriages and close-knit families. Stress can be handled in a very meaningful fashion and actively managed to attain the goals we have set for ourselves. We must learn to direct and manage stress, rather than have it rent us asunder.

Stress is inevitable. It abounds. Life is not being dealt a good hand, it is playing the poor hand well. We are hired . . . and we are fired. We are promoted... and demoted. Marriages begin and they end. Life is not fair; it is important to recognize the unfairness of it. In between, there are the necessities of living with someone, raising children, and making it all work. There is no way we can be alive and not experience stress. The true challenge, once again, is not stress avoidance, but making it work for us.

Obviously, stress can build. It has been said that the skill to win the wars of Europe was learned on the playing fields of Eaton. Sports, and the military, are good examples of ways to build people. Jogging, for instance, builds strong muscles and hearts. Yet unmanaged, stress can kill. It can cause headaches, high blood pressure, accidents, alcoholism, ulcers, heart attacks, and a whole host of unfavorable problems to those who invite it. These stress disorders cost industry over \$17 billion annually. Up to three quarters of a medical physician's time can be devoted to responding to the activation of the stress response. The key is to reduce the impact of

stress. We must learn to direct the stress response energy into activity that helps rather than hinders our psychic and physiological well-being.

Ravages of stress on bodies and psyches result from physiological changes activated by threats to our physical or psychological integrity. This is referred to as the "fight or flight" syndrome. In prehistoric times, these changes were needed for survival. Should Neanderthal Man feel threatened, his heart beat faster and his blood pressure rose as epinephrine (adrenaline) infused his body. His alertness increased and his body prepared for fight or flight. Like ourselves, he felt anxiety and fear as he sensed attack. Today, however, our options are limited by the available responses. Fight or flight is often maladaptive. We may feel our bodily functions racing out of control, but are unable to purposely respond to these signs as our world spins wildly out of orbit.

Myths about stress abound. One of the biggest is that stress is always harmful. Another is that it deters good performance. While many people try to reduce stress as a means of improving their performance, we now know that a modicum of anxiety is needed to study for an exam or to drive a car defensively. Without the stress of having to pay bills, many would sleep, rather than work. Some believe that stress comes only from negative life events, such as death, divorce, or illness. Yet such positive life events such as getting married, having a child, or inheriting a large estate can also produce stress, sometimes equal to or greater than many losses. For instance, job promotion brings not only increased status and money, but also increased responsibilities, deadlines, and loneliness. People at the top are more accountable for their failures than those at the bottom. When things go well, we all share in the feeling that we worked together to achieve a goal. When disaster strikes, we all search for the culprit, the person at the top. After all, doesn't the buck stop there?

Stress will never go away. Environments change, but we are human beings who have within us the physiology and the fears of our primitive forbears. The problem is not so much the stress we bear, but what we do with it when it infringes on us. How can we ride the stallions of stress, rather than have them trample us under? Mild to moderate stress generally enhances functioning. Chronic or intense stress, seen in many Vietnam veterans, causes detrimental chemical and physical changes to our bodies and our minds which may be irreversible.

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, absentee

END PART I

TREE MANAGEMENT ON GOLF COURSES

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As everyone involved with golf courses well realize, trees are extremely important in providing a pleasing landscape, forming backdrops to greens, outlining fairways, separating holes, and providing shade. Along boundaries of golf courses, trees can help keep golf balls from going astray and causing damage to people, vehicles and nearby buildings. No one enjoys playing on a treeless golf course even though it can be upsetting to hit a tree that redirects the ball into a pond or other hazard.

It has been my experience that golf course superintendents need to be experts in turf management in utilization of specialized golf course maintenance equipment, and in other matters such as personnel management and public relations. A club can not expect this person to be an expert on trees and their diseases, insect pests and all else that can go wrong with trees. In Minnesota we have a large number of people well qualified to deal with the primary factors but when it comes to trees, superintendents and the club members need assistance from a professional in that field. During the past couple of decades I have responded to several golf courses that have tree problems.

When Dutch elm disease came to Minnesota, golf courses were relying extensively on elms but suddenly they were losing many of these trees. Prize winning elms were dying, trees that were landmarks, trees that lined entry ways, or trees that marked greens and doglegs on fairways. At the time it seemed that people responsible

were able to deal with the problem and, in many cases, save some of these valuable elms. On the other hand, some clubs were enticed into programs that were expensive and of little value.

Currently oak wilt is causing tree losses at country clubs. Learning about the disease would help solve these problems or at least reduce the losses and worthless efforts would be avoided. This is only the beginning of a long list of problems that can occur to trees. I thin, in many cases, golf courses could well afford to retain a consultant to work with the superintendent on special problems. It is true that the University has extension personnel who could be of assistance, yet if there is a disease or diseases of considerable concern, extension personnel are limited in what they can do to help. News releases, brochures, and bulletins help but it has been my experience that direct attention by a qualified person is far more effective in solving problems.

Incidentally, oak wilt can be confused with anthracnose, a disease of little consequence, with chemical injury, and with other factors. There are also disease problems on conifers that can kill many trees. Occasionally Dothistroma blight can be a major problem but can be eliminated. Black knot of Canada red cherry is another disease which has been a problem on some golf courses but can rather easily be effectively eliminated. Rather than eliminate this attractive tree it would be better to eliminate the disease. All trees have problems and we should not avoid tree species because they have diseases. It's far more logical to effectively deal with the problems and maintain a wider range of tree species.

Ash yellows is now in Minnesota and although there is no substantive reason to assume that all ash will be killed, it is a disease that should be quickly identified and diseased trees removed.

As we educate more urban foresters we will have people available to assist golf courses with their tree problems. These people can also recommend what trees to plant and be sure these trees are cared for properly. Sometimes tree pruning has caused far more problems than it has solved; it is another area in which this new generation of urban foresters can be of value.

On occasion golf courses need to decide what trees to plant where, and again, a consultant may be of assistance in more wisely selecting the best tree species. They can also help in procuring quality trees and advising on how they should be planted.

