



Pennsylvania - Delaware Chapter
Association for the Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired
www.penn-delaer.org

Penn-Del AER 2021 Virtual Leadership Series
Taking Charge: Restore, Refresh, Renew

Taking Care of Ourselves: Helping Us So We Can Help Others with Billy Brookshire

The Last Session in the Three-Part Series on Self-Care and Resilience
Session 2 Rescheduled to Wednesday June 23, 2021

Info Map of *Undress Your Stress* by Lois Levy (2005)

Information map created by Billy Brookshire (2008)

Note from Billy Brookshire: "Here 'tis folks! Lois included some great exercises!"

Introduction

- We've realized how depleted we feel physically & mentally.
- We are not designed to keep up with the technology we are smart enough to invent. But we still try.
- It's time to undress our stress and clad ourselves in contentment. How about dressing up in joy or happiness or passion?
- We have to make space in our lives just to "be."
- Each of us must take responsibility for finding "slow" places for ourselves. We must learn to make comfortable minutes. We must take our lives back a few minutes at a time.
- The good news is that undressing our stress doesn't have to be hard, expensive, or take a lot of time.

Techniques

Laugh

Be Silly: Wear Groucho Glasses; Blow bubbles; Laugh for at least 5 minutes a day.

Fake Smile: Wear it until it becomes real.

Mirror Smile: Look at yourself in the mirror. Say "Hello." And smile. Then "Good Morning!"

Quiet Time

Meditate: Empty your mind. Many people are in a “state of meditation at several times during a normal day. The trick is using it consciously as “time out.”

Breathe Well: The easiest way to take care of yourself quickly is to breathe deeply & slowly. Put your hand on your belly. Draw a breath in slowly to a 5 count. Let it out to a 5 count.

- Option: Turn your head left as you inhale & think: “Relaxed.” Turn your head right as you exhale & think: “Calm.”
- Or Andrew Weil’s technique: Hold your tongue to the roof of your mouth just behind the teeth. Exhale loudly. Then inhale to a 4 count. Hold your breath for a 7 count. Finally, exhale loudly thru your mouth for an 8 count. Repeat 4 times.

Take a bath: It’s spiritual

Write

Journaling: A way of talking to yourself.

Write “hateful” memos: Write them at home where you’re not tempted to send them. Then re-write them in the office when you’ve had time to de-emotionalize the issues.

Noisy Time

Groan: Groan fully, passionately, with attitude. Take a slow deep breath thru your nose. Then let the air come out through your mouth with an audible sound. Repeat 5 times.

Scream: Take the deepest possible belly breath & scream from your diaphragm.

Sing: In the car; in the shower

Cry: Crying is cleansing. It’s normal & natural, not a sign of shame or weakness. To accomplish it, think of poignant moments: sad moments in movies, in your life, etc.

Move Around

Exercise: Take the stairs. Park the car farther away from buildings.

Be Aware of Your Stress Triangle: Halfway in on left shoulder, halfway in on your right shoulder, middle of your forehead. In stress, muscles shorten causing pain. Pain is released when muscles lengthen and return to normal. The following simple exercises will help.

- **Neck Roll:** Right ear to right shoulder. Hold left shoulder down. Head down, chin on chest. Left ear to left shoulder. Hold right shoulder down. Do rolls from side to side.

- **Shoulder Shrug:** Draw a big circle with your shoulders, one at a time.
- **Pick Fruit:** With one hand, reach as high as you can. Draw it back. Repeat with the other hand.
- **Massage Yourself:** Use right hand on left shoulder. Left hand on right shoulder.
- **Standing Body Roll:** Roll head down to chest. Keep rolling forward to knees. Let hands hang outside knees for a while. Then roll back up slowly.

Elvis Pelvis: Roll your hips around in a circle while keeping your feet, your knees, and your shoulders forward and your hands on your hips.

Kundalini Hip Roll: Sit on the floor, legs crossed. Place hands lightly on knees. Roll your hips forward. Your back will arch. Now roll your hips back. Your back will bow. Inhale through your nose when you roll forward, exhale as you roll back.

The Mountain: Stand straight, feet together & spine straight. Gently engage muscles of your feet, legs, butt, and abdomen, but make sure shoulders are relaxed. Raise arms over head and interlock fingers with index fingers pointing upward. Stretch tall without tensing shoulders. On exhale, bring arms back to your sides & relax.

The Half Moon: Stand in the Mountain pose. Stretch to the right, pushing your left hip to the left and stretching hands and arms to the right. Count 3 breaths in this position, then on inhale, stand up straight. On exhale, stretch to the left. Count 3 while you stretch. Up straight Repeat.

Cat & Cow: Get down on your hands & knees with back like a table top. On an inhale, arch your back and look up. Pull your shoulder blades together and be careful to not strain your back. On an exhale, round your back and look down, pulling your abdomen in and stretching your spine. Inhale and arch, exhale and round.

Dance: human beings have been dancing since they stood upright. Dancing is joy. Put on music you like. Close the curtains. Move to the music. Close your eyes if you want.

Kindergarten Magic

Play: with Tinker Toys, play dough, etc.

Read Aloud: Children's books are best.

Color & Cut: Use crayons and scissors to color and cut creations. Do it instead of watching TV. For groups, give them an 8-minute warning before you want them to stop.

Talk

With Someone Else: Ask someone to listen to you for 5 minutes without interruption. It gives us great freedom to talk about what's important to us and hear ourselves as we think something thru. It's good if you can make this reciprocal. (Don't give advice. Say: This is what I think...).

With Yourself: The most negative things we hear about ourselves are mostly things we ourselves think. Surround yourself with positive thoughts. Find a single sentence or phrase that is true about you or that you want to be true about you. Whenever the negative tapes start, replace them with the new recording.

Prayer: People who pray regularly seem to be happier, calmer, healthier, and more grateful for what they have.

Escape

Waste Time: Time is artificial. Technology has made us slaves, not liberated us. Waste some time with a snooze, a walk, a silly movie, a trashy book. Everything will be waiting for you when you resurface.

Go Outside: Take short walks outside several times a day. Or stand on the porch and watch whatever nature offers you. Cut off fluorescents. Take in the wonder around you. Feel connected.

Go Home: Leave work on time at least 2 or 3 days a week.

Go Away: Vacation comes from the Latin word "vacatio" meaning freedom, a scheduled time when activity is suspended. For the folks left in the office, if trouble arises, tell them: "Just do what you'd do if I didn't exist."

Sleep

Get Enough: Well rested folk are more productive, vital, and energetic.

Avoid at bedtime: chocolate, coffee, tea, cola, nightly news (TV, radio, & papers). The latter increases your anxiety and tendency to worry. Don't do exercise right before bedtime.

Take a Nap: Set timer for 25 minutes.

Stop the Madness

TV: Turn off your TV. Studies show people do not feel more relaxed or satisfied by watching TV.

Sugar & Caffeine: These substances create “jolts” in your body. They are associated with depression, anxiety, and stress.

Stuff: Stuff holds you down. You have to earn a particular amount of money to support it all. How much of what you have is necessary? Does it serve any purpose? What would your life be like if you had less stuff?

Worry: Worrying is always about things in the future that we can't do anything about at the moment. What if a meteor hits? I wanna be having a great time, owe people lots of money, and be 30 pounds overweight. Why not do it now? You can't do anything about future catastrophes.

Take Your Pick: Life is about choices. You chose your way here.

Re: work: Who makes you come here every day? When we begin to take charge of our lives by recognizing that everything we do is a choice, we liberate ourselves. We cast off the role of victim.

The Power of Happiness

The great mistake most of us make is looking for our happiness somewhere else. When I'm happy it ripples out to others.

An Attitude of Gratitude

Be grateful for something. Anything. Then go color for a while.

The Last Hurrah

Find ways to enjoy your life as it is.

The Pennsylvania-Delaware Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) supports professionals who provide education & rehabilitation services to people with visual impairments.

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