

REVISED AND UPDATED

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO

Stress Management



Principles and Practice

Roland Trujillo



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Preface

In this small but foundational work, I have condensed over 20 years of research on stress into a few pages, making clear the nature of the problem for the reader to readily grasp.

By understanding the nature of the stress and its cause, the method of resolution becomes apparent.

More importantly, I introduce the psycho-spiritual principles that modulate the emotions and protect the mind, so as to permit recovery from emotional trauma and the maintenance of well being.

It is my sincere hope that the reader will take the important next step, which is to obtain and practice the meditation exercise referred to in this manuscript. It may be downloaded free at:

www.commonseccounseling.org

Introduction

Most of us would like to deal with life's problems with calmness and understanding. Instead we find ourselves reacting and becoming upset. The more upset we are, the more resentful we become toward others.

We become impatient with them and then we become impatient with ourselves. We usually end up blaming others for upsetting us, though the real cause is our lack of self control.

Of course, this is unfair to others. So they react to us. Soon family and relationship problems escalate. Once the process begins, we don't know how to stop it.

Either we explode at one another or we repress our hostilities until we are seething volcanoes. All this repressed material soon erupts in other symptoms.

When we can't control ourselves, then we look to experts to control us. Soon we are their subjects, paying dearly for their treatments which never really seem to make us better. Individuals, families, and the whole world are brimming over in anger and upset.

Fortunately there is a real answer to our problem. It focuses on the moment of reaction when we succumb to some stress.

Look at it another way. If you could learn to be calm in the moment of stress (without expressing or repressing impatience, anger or upset), you would not become upset in the first place. Nor would you add any fuel to the fire, escalating both internal stress and negative relational outcomes. Calmness and reason could be brought to bear, and you might even be amused rather than disturbed by the little things that used to upset you.

When the small incidents are handled with poise, they do not accumulate and escalate to become the overwhelming issues we feel we can't cope with.

In order to solve your problem, you must learn to have an attitude of alert preparedness. When the moment of stress arrives, you will thereby be ready for it, already graced with calmness and understanding. Now, you will have a twinkle in your eye as you meet the moment with understanding. You will now influence the moment instead of the moment influencing you.

The way to be prepared to meet life with understanding is through finding the state of consciousness you had just before you fell.

The author believes that the day begun with proper meditation assists the sincere person in finding this state of awareness, which can then be carried out into the world to deal calmly with what the day may bring.

While the focus of the first section of this treatise is on describing the nature of the stress problem, the author has already introduced the meditation and its possible benefits so that the reader can, at every point, compare and contrast the more elegant and sophisticated way of facing life with the emotional trauma inducing patterns of reacting that many, if not most, people fall into.

This meditation also teaches the practitioner how to become still, separating the consciousness from its involvement in thought and emotions, which is also important in dealing successfully with negative memories and ideas due to past failings.

The consciousness is stabilized by centering in objectivity and is able to observe rather than react to worries, fears, and fantasy.

The meditation also prevents emotions from rushing to the head and overwhelming the consciousness.

Without the energy and reinforcement of these emotions, negative notions lose their power to compel reaction.

Calmed down and centered, the person is able to bring intuitive guidance to bear on the situation he or she is facing.

This positive state of consciousness and well being is implemented by the proper meditation practice. By beginning the day with a few minutes of meditation (and refreshing it two or three times during the day), the meditator downloads (to use a computer analogy) enough calmness and understanding to meet the day's vicissitudes.

What most of us do, on the other hand, is go out into the world and react to something. The rest of the day is spent playing catch up. Plus, there is left over baggage from previous upsets which carries over into the next interaction.

Already upset and with adrenaline flowing, the reactive person feels anxious and impatient. When someone (such as a partner, child, or coworker) comes along with some issue, there is the usual impatience and over-reaction which, of course, upset the other person.

This leads to misunderstanding and a bigger problem.

It is much better to allow reason and patience to lead the way. When you begin the day with a commitment to knowing and flowing from what you wordlessly know in your heart in each moment, you become less subjective, less suggestible, and less prone to upset.

All that remains is to learn this marvelously simple ancient technique, coupled with a sincere desire to know the Truth which is greater than you are, and a willingness to admit your wrong.

Without the meditative technology to learn how to become objective to emotions and thoughts, the person remains subject to both intrapsychic and external press, and will continue to struggle with what he or she should be observing. Without the sincere attitude, the person remains defensive and both emotions and actions remain self protective or aggressive.

The mind set facilitated by the proper meditation may be the same “humility” often spoken of as an important aid to emotional management and a sense of well being by psychologists and faith based counselors.

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A Primer on Stress & Its Solution

Basically anything we react to is a stressor and causes us to experience stress. Dr. Hans Selye, the father of stress research, said there are two types of stress: so called “eu-stress,” or pleasant stress, and “dis-stress” or unpleasant stress.

We are all familiar with unpleasant stress and the toll it can take on our body. If you eat something tainted, it stresses your body to react. Cold, wind, rain, or excessive heat stress the body and elicit a response.

Spraining your ankle or falling off your bike is a stress that elicits response. Being mugged, robbed, or mauled by a dog cause us to react and undergo stress.

We also know that such events as divorce, losing a job, and being betrayed by another are unpleasant stresses.

These negative or unpleasant stresses cause a whole variety of bodily responses and changes, both specific (like swelling at the site of injury) and nonspecific

(affecting the whole body). These changes require energy and ultimately take their toll on the body. Stress is cumulative, in that it gradually uses up our life force.

Yes, some stresses are part of life (like a rain shower, a hot day, or a brisk windy day). They can't really be totally avoided (except the excessive ones). They are invigorating and without them we might become bored or stagnate.

Dr. Selye discovered that so-called eu-stresses such as going to a party, attending an exciting ball game, or starting new job are stresses too.

These stresses may be pleasant, but they also take their toll on the body just as much as obvious unpleasant stresses do.

Dr. Selye is not saying that we should avoid new or fun situations. They are part of life and have their place. Look carefully and you will see that the person who avoids life does so because of resentment and fear: so even in hiding and avoiding, they are reacting negatively and stressing.

What Dr. Selye is saying is that we should be aware that any stress ultimately wears us down. Too much stress, either dis-tress (like a divorce or being fired) or eu-stress (moving to a new house) will use up some of your stock of irreplaceable life force.

More stress wears you down quicker than less stress. Stress is cumulative.

Stress takes its toll. It may be invigorating, but it also drains us of life force. And our over-reactions (to whatever is, by definition, the stressor) lead to all manner of symptoms.

The bottom line is this: we must find a way to take things in stride, both good and bad.

In other words, over-reactions are not good. The author directs the reader to bear in mind that a reaction at one extreme can become its opposite. Because the

body tends to go to extremes in its quest for homeostasis, an over-reaction often results in the other extreme of suppression or inhibition. Similarly, long term stress on a cell, system, or organ can result in shut down.

The reader is also asked to bear in mind that the same phenomenon occurs with emotions. For example, excessive emotion can lead to withdrawal, or to a low after an excessive high. Fear of what anger can do often leads to suppression and inhibition. Please note that while the result in some individuals is suppression and inhibition, this does not obviate the fact that the dysfunctional stress syndrome began with the over-reaction.

Look at all the over-reactions which are at the physical level—such as asthma, allergies, rheumatoid arthritis, and auto immune disease—where the body's extreme responses are more harmful than what the stressor is doing. In other words, pollen cannot really hurt you, but an over-reaction can. Anaphylactic shock is a big over-reaction that can even kill a person.

But how about all of our emotional over-reactions: anger, rage, irritation, hostility, hyper excitement on the one hand and hurt feelings, disappointment and frustration on the other? These emotions are reactions that are stressing us (and ultimately killing us if we don't learn to be less emotional).

Psychoneuroimmunology is the field which studies the relationship between the brain, nervous and immune system. Researchers have found that the brain and immune system represent a single, integrated system of defense. In other words, our emotions affect our immune system. Researchers are also finding that negative emotions—such as anger, hurt feelings or fear—can suppress and dysregulate the immune system.

Simply put--both our mental and physical well being are contingent on emotional control.

Many people love to over-react and yell and scream at ball games. Other people take advantage of negative outcomes to play the "poor me, what have I ever done to deserve this" game. Both types of individuals are actually adding stress to their lives through these feelings.

People argue and quarrel all the time because they react angrily. Others react angrily and suppress it, but their reaction is still stressing their body.

Many people get irritated at others. They feel they have a right to judge others and complain. But their daily bouts of irritation take a toll on the body.

Some people habitually stay up late to party or study, depriving themselves of sleep. They are unnecessarily subjecting their body to stress. No wonder they feel tired and hung over the morning after the night before.

No wonder people come back from a vacation more drained than before they left. We may get away with such practices for awhile, especially when we are young, but sooner or later we pay the price for long term stress.

Just as partying and then cramming for a test are unnecessary stresses which we inflict on ourselves, so are our angers, secret hostilities, and impatient frustrations.

Take work for instance. Of course we have to work. But we should be able to work without becoming angry and upset at our work.

Though life will throw things our way, we should be able to go through life without reacting to everything.

What I am saying is that some stress is unavoidable, but too much stress is not good for us. Most of us heap an extra layer of stress on ourselves through our emotional over-reactions.

We must find the patience and faith to live life more calmly and less emotionally.

I believe there is a way of living where we can go through life without reacting emotionally and being stressed at all (as we have described it). It simply is not necessary to get angry over life's little set backs, nor is it necessary to get all worked up to accomplish something.

There is a way of living and moving and having our being where we go through life without life going through us. But this higher spiritual way of living is only available to the person who first learns the basic lessons of humility, patience, forgiveness and laying down the emotional ego life.

Many of us are experiencing huge amounts of stress unnecessarily because we are indulging emotions all the time, especially anger, hostility and resentment.

Work is one thing; working angrily is another. Encountering a traffic jam is one thing; becoming upset at it is another.

Here is the key to eliminating undue stress from your life. Let go of resentment.

Go back and take a look at the examples given of situations where most people react to with negative emotions.

You will notice that underneath the anger, rage, irritation, hostility, frustration, and dejection can be found resentment. In other words, resentment is the common denominator for many of our negative emotions.

Another thing: when we get upset, angry and frustrated, we also experience negative, hostile, and destructive thinking. Resentment is what initiates and sustains the negative thoughts.

There is a vicious cycle involved. The negative thoughts then spin more negative emotions, and so on.

Resentment is the “little” reaction that begins the cascade of negative thinking and unnecessary stress reactions that lead to misery and suffering. You must learn to watch for it and let it go.

The author does not intend this to be a comprehensive treatment of the subject, but wishes to make the reader aware of the role of resentment in exacerbating emotional issues.

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Over-Reacting is a Way of Life for Most People

We have outlined the physical responses of stress and introduced the reader to how emotions add another layer of reaction and complicate our physical responses.

We have seen that emotions increase stress reactions. Bear in mind that an inhibitory response is also a response (another act the body is compelled to perform).

In this chapter, let us direct our attention to the genesis of the emotional overlay contributing to stress, namely our ego attitude and the ego's use of emotions to support a reactive way of life.

These emotions are called into service primarily in defense of the ego's faithlessness, lovelessness, and stubbornness. These characteristics present themselves as impatience, resentment, and willfulness. Let us examine in more detail the interconnectedness of our attitude, emotions and stress.

To recapitulate--people actually complicate, increase, and sustain stress reactions because of emotional overlay.

There is story that illustrates the above concept. A man was driving on a country road when his vehicle got a flat tire.

He did not have a jack (which he needed to put on the spare tire), so he began to walk to find the nearest farmhouse so he could borrow a jack there.

As he was walking, he thought: "I hope there is a farm house around here." He walked some more and then thought: "What if there is a house but no one is home?" He walked a few more minutes and thought: "If someone is home, what if they don't have a jack?"

He kept walking and then thought: "What if they have a jack but won't lend it to me?"

As the man continued walking, he became more and more upset. Finally, he saw a farm house. He walked up to the front door and knocked.

When the resident came to the door, the man shook his fist at him and said: "You can take your lousy jack and go to hell!"

This story illustrates how we stress ourselves and work ourselves into an emotional state through negative thinking. What throws us into the negative thinking? It is resentment that wipes out patience and faith.

There is no reason why a slow grocery store line has to irritate, let alone make us angry. Yet many people *do* get irritated or angry at someone in line who is slow.

Why? Because our impatience feeds judgment. We can get a little high by judging the one who is delaying us. We can feel the resentment, which leads to more impatience, more judgment and hostility. The suppressed hostility leads to dis-ease and perhaps a headache or tummy ache. Then we can revel in blaming

the person for our discomfort and resent the person even more.

We might then use the discomfort and tension as an excuse to down some pills, smoke marijuana, or go to the bar!

When we become irritated or angry, we cause the purely biological type of stress, outlined earlier, to begin to run its course. We literally make the slow grocery line (or the person writing a check who is making it slow) into a threat and into a sort of ego enemy.

The body does its job of responding with hormones and various physiological changes, as if it were facing some sort of threat. By being irritated, you are literally forcing your body to react.

In the long run—after years of daily bouts of irritation—the damage to the body breaks out in serious illness. We tire and damage ourselves through indulging our emotions. In other words, we are literally killing ourselves a little at a time.

I am reiterating the point again not for mere repetition but for emphasis. Most of us are so used to reacting and over-reacting that we do not realize how reactive we are or what effect it is having on the body.

Sooner or later many people are told that stress is killing them. How much better it would have been if they had seen the light many years earlier. Is it really worth the wear and tear on your body, and the decreasing control (with or without painful suppression), just to get a little high from judging and resenting someone who is slow?

Some people will say “I don’t get angry or impatient at a slow line.” Maybe not, but how about traffic, your boss, your kids, your husband, your wife, your neighbor, bills, or your mother in law?

The body is able to repair itself, if you could learn to be less emotional about things, so that the body has time and no new stresses to divert its resources.

Remember, it is resentment that separates us from faith and patience; and without patience and faith, the body is compelled to comply with the resentment and compensate with fight or flight stress reactions.

The aphorism “change your attitude, change your destiny” is literally true, especially when it comes to emotions, because of the stress reactions that emotions contribute to.

We cannot, nor should we try to suppress our natural biological reactions. We can’t stop ourselves from being startled if someone says “boo” behind us, for example.

But you *do* have control over whether you become resentful when they startle you. If you find yourself becoming angry or irritated at them (or at yourself), I guarantee there is resentment behind it.

As I will discuss later in this chapter, we can learn to have an attitude which is less emotional and resentful--so that our body is not compelled to react to stresses that we create for ourselves. We can learn not to *add* emotional reaction to the purely physical ones.

We are all aware that becoming angry at slow lines, irritated at traffic jams, angry at our husband, impatient with our children, or frustrated over money issues is harmful to our bodies. We are all also aware of headaches and tummy aches that follow on the heels of being upset.

But many of us are not aware that these and similar symptoms are just the tip of the iceberg. Underneath the obvious surface symptoms are thousands or millions of subtle changes in tissues and organs, all the way down to the cellular level.

That is why forgiveness and patience are not only words but are real principles that protect our body from

the tension, toil, wear, and draining aspects of general adaptive stress response. And the most insidious precursor (to the general adaptive stress response) of all is resentment.

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The Intimidation-Stress Connection

My 20 years of research has brought to my attention an often overlooked critical aspect of the inception of the general adaptation stress syndrome. This aspect is the role of intimidation and subsequent frustration in causing debilitating stress.

Becoming aware of and understanding this connection may be very beneficial to the person who suffers from this source of stress. Here's the story.

When we think of negative emotions, what comes to mind? Anger, rage, hostility, unhappiness, sadness, bitterness, resentment, depression, anxiety, misery, feelings of hopelessness, despondency, fear, or dread.

Notice that there are aspects of intimidation in each of these.

When we experience any of these emotions, there is almost always something in the environment, past or present that is intimidating us. *The emotion is a reaction due to sustained intimidation.* In other words, instead of

circumstance being subject to us, we become its subject due to the intimidation factor. Then intimidation, when dwelt upon, very quickly becomes frustration.

Dr. Hans Selye (and others have readily duplicated the study) found that laboratory animals subjected to artificial frustration (such as being tied down, or such as receiving a shock instead of the expected food) quickly experience frustration which manifests as the stress response: enlargement of the adrenals, shrinkage of the lymph glands and ulcerations and bleeding in the stomach.

When our ego experiences intimidation, it leads to frustration, followed by the subsequent physical symptoms.

When anything—be it circumstance, a memory, a mental notion, a negative emotion, an obsession, or person—is dominating us: we are its subject. It becomes the stressor, causing us to react and alter our pattern of behavior. It dictates our life, whether we are consciously aware of it or not.

If a memory keeps bothering you, it is continuing to intimidate you. There is something about it that continues to upset you; and there is something about it you can't accept or let go of. We call this "unfinished business," and it always contains an element of intimidation.

Soon the inability to get closure or to cope leads to frustration, despondency, despair and depression.

The main component in the lack of closure is resentment, which keeps the memory alive.

Resentment is the mechanism by which we are intimidated. It matters not whether it is a bill, a delay, a challenge, a tease, a setback, what someone said, a mistake made, a memory, a mental notion, a suggestion or even a mental image—resenting it sustains the intimidation. What happened 40 years ago can still

bother (intimidate) a person because he or she resents it in real time.

There are just too many possible situations to list them all, but here are a few examples. You will have to see the principle—how resentment reinforces and sustains intimidation—and then see how the principle applies to what is bothering you.

Here is the first example. A young lady resented her dad because he was never there to go to the father-daughter dance or other activities with her. She felt that he did not love her. She resented him, but she felt guilty and tried to deny her resentment, especially when he always had a “plausible excuse,” such as having to work late, being tired, or having a meeting to attend. She could not accept that he didn’t love her, but she felt that way anyway. She resented him, but tried to cover it up.

Later in life, she wanted to tell him how he had hurt her. But her resentment prevented her from being able to speak up. So she was intimidated by an idea she did not want to admit, a feeling she did not want to admit, and the resentment that prevented her from clearing the air.

Fortunately, when she got older, she became aware of the truth: *he did not love her*. He was like so many other dads: he was half way decent, but something was missing. He was prideful and compensated, and he just did not have the kind of agape love she needed.

He was a good provider and did have some good qualities, but he wasn’t there for her, in other words, because he did not have love.

Although this was painful to admit--now she could accept this fact. She forgave him, making it unimportant. It was easy to forgive him when she understood that he, too, was a victim. His dad had not been there for him. He was not being deliberately cruel.

She saw that he could not give what he did not have.

Next she was able to admit that she *did* resent him. Not having wanted to admit her resentment had intimidated her. She had wanted to be the good and perfect daughter and could not admit to having hated her dad.

She saw that this resentment was understandable, but also wrong. She admitted it, then let go of it. She also forgave herself.

Finally, having forgiven him, she was able to confront him. She told him in a calm and not angry way how he had failed her. She told him that she had resented him for it, but no longer did so. But she wanted him to admit what he did and be sorry.

Of course, he became angry, denied it, and accused her of being ungrateful. This was her next test. Were she to resent him for this (and for things not turning out as she had wanted), it would have ushered in more resentment and intimidation. Fortunately, she remained calm and impassive. She had spoken her piece, cleared the air, and had given him his chance to be sorry. She walked away with her head held high, and went on to lead a happy life.

Another lady had similar resentment, as described above, toward her husband. When she faced and let go of her resentment and judgment of him, she became unblocked. She became able to see that he did have some good qualities and she was able to appreciate those. She became free of depression and feelings of inferiority which had their basis in resentment.

Here is another example. A man had some unpleasant work to do, but resented it. He feared doing a mediocre job and exposing his inadequacies. So he procrastinated.

Every time he thought about the work, he resented it. Soon the work haunted and dominated his every

moment. Even during the night, he would wake up and start to get a stomach ache thinking of the work.

One day, he realized that it is foolish to resent the work. He had a change of attitude about his work. Now he does the best he can but accepts the fact that he could have done better.

He accepts reality, does his duty, takes his lumps, and finishes the job with a modicum of dignity. As a result, the work stops stressing him.

To assist the reader, here are a couple more examples.

The angry guy in the slow grocery store line is dominated by the situation. It upsets him and makes him angry. He reacts, and because there is nothing he can really do about it (other than run or make a fool of himself), he becomes frustrated and tense.

So he stands there and becomes increasingly irritated and frustrated by a situation that makes him angry but which he can't do anything about. His body is churning in conflict: Part wants to run from the threatening situation, part wants to fight. Part of the body is building up fight or flight, while another part is repressing and suppressing the reaction which is going overboard.

To be free of this stress and its symptoms, this man just needs an attitude adjustment. He must learn to take little delays in stride.

A lady resents her husband. Her resentment renders her subject to the environment. She finds it increasingly difficult to be calm. She becomes increasingly sensitive to little things in the environment that before would not have fazed her. She even starts to develop allergy like symptoms to things around the house. Worse, she finds herself becoming sensitive to little things her husband does (how he eats, how he breathes, how he coughs). Soon everything he does irritates her.

She feels like she is in a pressure cooker. Everything bothers her and she is now dominated by external stresses. She is no longer in charge of her world and in charge of her emotions. She is out of control.

In this lady's case, she became free of the oppression by forgiving her husband, and letting go of resentment.

A boy was playing baseball and struck out three times in one game. The last time he struck out, a teammate commented: "you're a loser. You always find a way to lose." The boy experienced a huge resentment toward the comment and the teammate.

He formed a memory that continued to haunt him for years. Every time he was in a situation where he had to perform (give a speech, make a free throw, or even find a parking spot) the old memory came back, haunted him, and he resented it again.

He became subject to that negative suggestion, and whenever things didn't work out, it seemed to confirm the prediction.

The solution to this dilemma came when he became aware of the resentment and saw the ego-resentment connection. He was able to let go of the resentment against the boy who made the comment and against the comment itself. He also had to see and let go of resentment toward himself and yes, even resentment and accusatory blame against God.

In new situations, he became aware of the tormenting thought. He stood back and observed it without resenting it anew. He bore the torment without adding more resentment, and let it pass. In this way, he became free to do things without it becoming a matter of struggling against the curse.

The suggestion had been able to torment him because of his resentment. When he let go of the resentment, he could be more philosophical.

In other words, he had to learn to bear the torment without adding resentment. He had to learn to make the outcome unimportant even if it seemed to confirm that the suggestion was true.

He had to see that he had a big ego, and he had to realize that his preoccupation was selfish.

Such a person has to learn how to be humbled, even humiliated, *without resenting it*. When he can do this, he can be free of the subjugating torment.

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The Solution

Either you are the master of the moment, or everything is your master. Beware of resenting anything. When you are not resentful and when you don't want something too much, you are close to your center of dignity and your powers.

In other words, when you are not resentful, angry or ambitious, you are close to your higher power.

At this point, the author wishes to introduce a metaphysical description of what has been discussed in psychological and physiological terms. The language of metaphysics runs parallel to and is another way of stating the realities, forces and reactions involved in our psycho somatic experience of emotional and physiological state of distress or well being.

Can you see that anger and ambition are compensations for a lack of patience and faith? When our willfulness fails, the ego employs excuses and blame. Then resentment and withdrawal are to save face. Resentment is the denial of truth and the booby

prize for the ego that does not want to admit its failing and inadequacy.

When you are resentful, angry or ambitious, you become separated from your inner ground, and thus stand alone, prideful, and inferior to what is intimidating you to have or to do something. You are never more powerless than when you are resentful. When you are resentful, you are separated from your powers. In the *Star Wars* movie, we hear the greeting and blessing: “May the force be with you.” The force is with you when you are patient and not resentful.

But you are alone and the force is not with you when you are resentful. Since no one can stand alone, a malevolent spirit comes to your “assistance,” feeding your mind with tormenting doubts or thoughts of glory or revenge. It supports you in your pride, and eggs you on to conflict even with God. It masquerades as you and you think that its thoughts are yours. This permissive voice is in us all. It supports us in our ambitious thoughts and angers, and it generally tells us what we want to hear. It gives us suggestions, which we follow (thinking we originated the thoughts).

These suggestions always turn out wrong, leading us into more error. It then consoles us and eggs us on to more emotion-based actions to get out of our mess. Again we don’t realize these thoughts do not originate with us.

When it has had its way with you and totally corrupted you with its guilt producing suggestions, it feeds you negative self-destructive thoughts (you know, the old “everyone would be better off without me” or “God hates me” sort of thing).

That is why you must learn to be objective to “your” thoughts, so that you can stand back and observe these thoughts without responding to them. When you stand back and dispassionately stare at the thoughts, the dark

forces will see that the game is up, and feeling observed, they will eventually leave you alone.

Can you see that it was resentment that made you subject to this sort of thing in the first place? You had a big ego, and temptation merely found out your weaknesses. Now just let go of resentment; and learn to meditate for objectivity. Let what is not you be realized out of existence.

When you want to do God's will, and when you are willing to forgo the pleasure of resenting or hating someone; and when you are willing to let go of what you want in favor of what is right, you are no longer subject to the world. You are subject to God.

The world gets to you through what you care about the most. When you no longer care about the pride sustaining perks or material gain the world entices you with, you will be free.

Beware of challenge. The world will tease, goad, and challenge you to perform ambitiously. If you don't go along, it will accuse you of being lazy or bad. It will call you stupid and tease you to rise to some challenge intellectually. False religious leaders, who get power through leading the lost sheep astray, will even challenge you to be good.

Never take the challenge. Never rise to a dare. When under pressure, stand back and silently inquire of God.

Move in your own time and space toward what you *realize* is right. If you don't know what to do, then wait until you do know. Flow from intuition instead of reacting to external tease.

The Good Lord wants you to prosper and have the good things of life; just remember "Put first the Kingdom of God and His right way and all other things will be added unto you." The world is always pressuring and challenging you to do the opposite. And when you go after a goal (which is not really your goal, but one

that was suggested to you), you set yourself up for guilt and frustration.

If you are unsuccessful at attaining “your” goal, you become frustrated and then strive even harder, throwing good money after the bad. And should you happen to be successful in this goal-driven willful path, you will feel guilty and will not be happy with what you get.

Dr. Hans Selye, the great stress researcher, found that animals that were frustrated developed ulcers. He also found that long term stress suppressed their immune system and depleted their adrenals.

Beware of resentment because resentment will cause something to stick in your craw and intimidate you.

When you are intimidated you are not only subject to that which is intimidating you, but you are also subjecting yourself to long term frustration, the result of being intimidated over and over by the situation, the person, *and the memory of the situation.*

If you keep reacting to a negative suggestion, it is because it is intimidating you in your mind. Look alike situations come along, and the memory of the original fall comes to mind. Resenting the memory anew, it is reinforced and the intimidation is kept alive. Remember—resentment will make you subject, and when you are subject you are intimidated.

Intimidation (by way of resentment) is the little talked about component in frustration, depression, worry, and feelings of inferiority.

Dr. Selye’s mouse will escape from the frustrating circumstance. The mouse will quickly forget the whole thing. When it encounters a look alike setting, it will flee and then quickly get over it.

The human being who resents some circumstance or suggestion will carry it around as a memory (just like the mouse does). But the difference between the man

and mouse is that the man resents the memory. The new situation triggers the memory and a new round of resentment.

Each time something triggers the memory, he resents it over and over again. And thus the memory is reinforced and made stronger through its being renewed over and over.

Even lying in bed at night, he may awaken to resentment, anxiety, worry and quiet rage. The resentment means that the memory is intimidating the person. And so the memory becomes a source of frustration. Thinking about it over and over with no way of dealing with it (other than resenting, repressing, or running) leads to frustration, mental anguish and physical stress.

I say it again: resentment is the emotion that underlies frustration and the kind of long term stress that saps our strength and demoralizes us.

In some of my other writings, I emphasize the importance of speaking up, rather than resignation and suppression. It is also important to meditate for mental distance, and then to go through life with a care-free spontaneous attitude. If you meet each moment properly, there is nothing to resent or stick in your craw. If nothing sticks in your craw, there is no traumatic memory.

Again: if we become frustrated, it is a sure sign of having risen to a challenge, and it is a warning that we are in danger of making the situation into a long term issue and source of frustration. Nothing should frustrate us. It is only when we make something too important or when we respond angrily or resentfully to criticism that we set ourselves up for frustration.

When people are bitter, morose, absorbed in worry or dwelling on the past—more often than not they are

intimidated and continue to be intimidated in their mind through resentment of some long ago event.

When the memory arises and they resent it anew, it now contaminates the present.

Nothing should irritate us in the slightest. Irritation is a sign of anger, hostility, resentment, and impatience. It means that our ego is involved. We wish our will to be imposed, and when our will is not done, we become angry, resentful, and then frustrated.

When you become irritated because you are resentful, you make yourself subject to the environment. No longer a noble soul with potential powers for good, you become an animal, and a resentful one at that.

I am trying to make you aware of how resentment leads to becoming subject to people, situations, and memories, and then intimidated by them through repeated reactions of resentment. Intimidation is akin to frustration, and long term frustration leads to suppression, physical symptoms (such as the mouse's ulcers) and exhaustion.

There are many negative aspects of intimidation I could mention; but for now I just want you to see how resentment leads to long term intimidation, frustration, and stress.

If you can learn to not resent—to observe a painful circumstance, memory or haunting suggestion, without resenting it—then it remains at a mental distance and it cannot harm you. If you do not resent it, it cannot make you act or feel inferior. Learn to watch tormenting, teasing thoughts without reacting and resenting. Stand back, get some mental distance. Watch it from the neutral zone until it goes away. It cannot harm you.

When you are not standing in the wrong place, you are standing in the right place. If you are not resentful or preoccupied in worry or trying to get out of

something, then you are close to intuition and the center from which the power to deal with things comes.

If you do not resent and do not fall for the tempter's ruse, you stand under the authority of God. By not reacting and resenting, you are not subject to the suggestion. A deep spiritual principle is involved.

You see, by not reacting and resenting, you remain obedient to the Creator Who instructs us to trust in Him and to not resent others. By remaining faithful and forgiving, you are obedient to His instructions. When you react, you are disobedient. And the error and evil operating in others knows this. It wants you to be disobedient to the good by resenting and reacting. And when you take the challenge it dangles in front of you, you are obeying its will.

- 5 -

Reminders to Help Yourself Remain Centered

1. Meditate for objectivity. Seek a slight mental distance, which proper meditation facilitates, so that you can stand back and observe thoughts and situations without reacting to what you see.

2. Admit the truth. Acknowledge truth whenever you hear it or see it, regardless of the source. Whether it come from a friend, foe, or even from a little child (“out of the mouths of babes”), acknowledge truth immediately when you become aware of it. If you deny it or resent it, it becomes a threat and a guilt producer instead of a friend.

Later, in order to try to get rid of guilt, you might be forced to resentfully admit the truth or do so to placate the truth—this robs truth of its magic.

3. Watch for and let go of resentment. Don't resent others, don't resent a memory, and don't resent yourself. Don't resent feeling helpless. Just see your helplessness, but don't resent it.

4. Never rise to a dare or challenge.

5. When you find yourself getting emotionally involved and pulled into something--whether it be an argument, a movie, or a piece of music—stand back. When you are made aware that you were pulled into something, just stand back and get your bearings.

6. Move at your own pace. Never allow others to rush or pressure you into moving in an untimely way. If others are pressuring you, just be aware of the pressure, but don't respond.

7. Watch out for anger. Realize that anger is the animal emotion that supports the prideful ego. Anger signifies the weakness of a prideful person who uses it to defend pride. Yes, there is such a thing as righteous anger. But most of our angers are unrighteous--tinged with defensiveness and resentment. Take note of how resentment leads to anger and suppressed hostility.

Resentment and hostility are weaknesses. See anger and resentment for what they represent: the emotions of a wrong trying to be a right.

See that impatience is a petty tyrant's way of condemning and intimidating someone weaker or smaller. See resentment as the loser's way of sneakily hating and blaming that which has defeated or intimidated it. By resentment the victim of the intimidation secretly judges and feels superior in his or her mind to the intimidating source.

Watch negative thoughts and see how they try to goad you into conflict with God. Observe them and they will flee.

8. Don't *try* to be good or *try* to be a good person. If you do, you will be frustrated and resentful. Others will see what you want and perhaps try to frustrate you.

Worse yet, they might rush in to praise and support you. If you fall for this temptation, you will be cut off from the inner Ground of Good. You will also grow dependent on their support.

Do not become upset over criticism. Be grateful for constructive criticism, even if it comes from someone who is mean or seeking to degrade you. Do not take umbrage.

Do not take praise to heart. Its purpose is to weaken you. Do not resent it either. Simply let it go in one ear and out the other.

When it comes to helping others, do what you can without emotion or fanfare. If you can do a kindness, do so. If you can't, don't worry about it. Acknowledge good, but don't try to be the good.

9. Understand that after a lifetime of being resentful and over-reactive, your ego life is composed of millions and millions of reactions. During that time great stress has been put on your body. So don't try to change overnight. Meditate and live simply and quietly.

Be grateful for being given the opportunity to calm down and begin to live with some equanimity. Give yourself time, lots of time.

10. Don't become angry and frustrated at yourself. It's just another round of resentment directed at yourself.

When we resent, judge, or try to change ourselves, it is another way in which the ego avoids the scrutiny and condemnation of the inner light of conscience by rising above conscience to judge itself! This is sheer folly.

When you become aware of personal wrong, observe it quietly. Don't try to do anything about what you see. Regret what you see without trying to change yourself. Bear the pain without seeking any remedy. Wait to be

repented by the Light. After the process is complete, time will pass, and one day you will suddenly notice that you have changed without any effort on your part.

Do not resent yourself or what you observe about yourself, as the resistance of resentment permits stress to continue taking its toll on your body, and it keeps you separated from your center of dignity.

Don't loathe or become disgusted with yourself when you see yourself still reacting, getting upset, or messing up. Just stand back and observe what is still wrong with yourself. If you resent yourself, it is your old ego way of trying to change things. Patiently bear with what you cannot change.

If you are messing up, then just see that you are. That's all. Wait for grace. The power to change resides in the objective state. In His own time and space, God will change you without effort on your part. Wait. You will see.

11. Be ready to cut back on your commitments. If you have been overworking, then cut back. If need be, tighten your belt and live with less for a while. Take time to get to know yourself.

Learn to bear torment without resenting it. Bear pain without resentment. In other words, feel the hurt, without the hate.

12. Watch out for irritation. This is often a sign that you have judged someone or resented something. Learn to face life's little delays and issues without resentment.

Watch for resentment and let it pass. Learn to observe another's wrong or error without condemning them for it. In other words, observe the error without resenting the person. See the razor's edge between discerning and judging. Discern error without adding a pinch of resentment.

If you have no resentment or judgment, then any remaining irritation or tension is probably a hold over

from prior resentful reactions. Just watch the irritation or tension and let it pass.

Learn to bear persecution without resenting it. If you are persecuted for righteousness sake, and you do not resent it, you are being persecuted without a cause. This permits you to demonstrate love. The persecution will actually permit you to grow in character and grace, as long as you do not resent it.

- 6 -

Understanding Resentment and its Traumas

We all begin life as happy go lucky free spirits. Little children are naturally full of joy and happiness. But as the years go by, we increasingly become nervous, stressed out, preoccupied, and even depressed. What has gone wrong? Obviously we lost what we once had.

We tend to blame others for this loss of happiness. We blame our parents, our partner, society, our job, and finally we might even blame ourselves. What has gone wrong?

What has happened is that there has been an evolution of misery, beginning at a certain point and then spreading to blanket our whole mind. Let's look at what happened, so that you might discover what the key to recovery is.

You see, where you lost your carefree spirit was in a moment of upset, resentment, or shock. It began in a moment where you reacted to some external circumstance. In that instant, the outside got inside. And then from its new home on the inside it gradually began to take you over.

This process is replicated every time we become upset and resentful, when we lose faith, or when we lose loving-kindness. Now, understand this: it is not just upset alone that ruins our happiness. Upset or even trauma to the body does not have the power to ruin your state of mind.

What ruins your blessed and carefree state of consciousness is when some outside event gets to your soul. How does something or someone get to you? It happens when you fall from faith or fall from love. It also happens when you fall from a detached viewpoint and get pulled into something that is becomes too important to you.

I will look at each aspect in detail from different perspectives with the hope that the process of falling and the reversal of that process will become clear to you.

I'm sure you've heard that it is not so much what happens to us that affects us, as how we react to it. You know this by now through actual experience. Things happened to you that didn't bother you at all. Yet other things, even seemingly small and inconsequential, continue to bother you. Some things that should have been long forgotten may have haunted you for years. This should not be.

Let me restate the important point: physical trauma or injury cannot, of itself, harm your state of mind. Nor can mere words, of themselves, harm your state of mind.

What harms our state of mind is when things get to us through our reaction. At first we may not realize that they got to us. But later it becomes obvious when we fret, worry, relive the past, dwell morbidly on it, fantasize about how we will get even, or when we become dejected and depressed.

Along with the mental and emotional upset, unhappiness and depression are associated physical symptoms such as headache, stomach ache, high blood pressure and so on. In simple terms, you can get a tension headache or indigestion from a bout of anger toward someone.

The more recent depression and physical symptoms are the result of a chain of reactions going all the way back to the very first one. Once we reach the final stages, it is already late in the process. It becomes increasingly difficult to recover, as our condition and symptoms grow more advanced.

It is much easier to recover earlier in the process. But if you are like most people, you have been reacting wrongly all your life, that's how you got to where you are now.

What is needed is to learn the secret of remaining calm in the moment of stress, so that you won't over-react in the present, creating more issues. You also need to apply the same principle of remaining calm in the moment of stress to observing your symptoms. Because if you react wrongly to your own symptoms you worsen the problem.

Remember what we said: it is our conscious reaction that results in the life damaging hang ups, addictions, bad memories, post traumatic stress disorder, depression, and loss of confidence.

Our spiritual, mental, and physical fall begin with a loss of love, due to resentment and judgment, and by a

loss of faith, due to the collapse of trust in right and the triumph of good.

Now you can see why we must meditate for the objective state--where we are slightly distant, where we have a gentle attentiveness to the wordless guidance of intuition within. This is also where we can touch bases with and re-establish a rapport with the inner truth and love that will sustain us through life's trials and tribulations.

When you are in this objective state, events do not sneak up on you. And even if something unpleasant should occur, it remains outside. You sense it and perhaps are puzzled by it, but it does not get inside.

In this blessed state, we may be concerned about something (but not worried). We also realize that we don't know what to do about it, and this innocent wondering and true concern is the silent cry of the soul to God. In this state, the soul is above temptation, being subject only to God.

While we are yet in the flesh, our bodies are subject to the natural stresses of life. Plus, we will surely encounter cruelty, betrayal and deceit. We may encounter physical injury.

But none of these need affect the soul. We can feel pain without resenting the pain. In fact, any bad we encounter will work for the good. It will cause the truth loving soul to cling even closer to the Creator.

The marvelous practice of being slightly distant to temptation (another word for stress) is available to the sincere seeker who learns the proper meditation.

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The Power of Awareness is also the Power to Love

"Within the power of awareness is also the power to understand. And when we understand, we can love. When we have love, we share in the solidarity of humankind. No longer hating and resenting, we are free to be kind and to bear each other's burdens."

We all have a tendency to get lost in thought.

Daydreams, worries, plans, schemes, and imaginings are powerful and suck us in. We lose awareness and get lost in the daydream before we even know it has happened. We can be so lost in daydreaming that we drive right past our freeway exit.

God is not realized or experienced in thinking or imagination. God is realized in the aware state. The aware state is the state we had just before we fell into the hypnotic daydream state.

By practicing the meditation, you can learn to observe thought. Then when you temporarily fall into excessive

thought, you will be made aware that this has happened. This permits you to effortlessly snap out of it, and you are once again above thought—the observer of thought instead of subject to thought.

We are all born as fallen creatures, and compulsive about our worries, doubts, and pipedreams.

Some of us want to remain aware of what is right, but emotions and thoughts carry us away. We forget what is right, and we make mistakes under the influence and suggestions of others.

The beauty of the meditation is that you don't have to TRY to remember or TRY to not get lost in thought.

The very act of trying is a thing of the ego and leads to frustration.

By finding the aware state, you will have awareness when you fall into excessive thought and will be able to effortlessly pull back.

In essence, it is the power of awareness itself that reminds you and lets you stand back. Awareness has an awakening quality, and it is a powerful antidote to excessive thinking.

It is not that thinking is wrong. Thinking has its place. But thinking should come from realizing. Thinking and imagination were not meant to over-ride realization.

Therefore, take heart, sincere seeker. You have tried to live in an aware moral way. You have sensed something wrong with your emotions and your angry or glory seeking thoughts. But you did not know how to deal with them properly. You always struggled with them, which only involved you more in the process of failing and falling.

Use now the meditation. Learn the secret of objectivity. It will permit you to effortlessly become aware when you are too involved in emotion or thought, and will permit you mentally stand back without effort, struggle, or willpower. All that is

necessary is the attitude of wanting to be aware, combined with the proper technology of the meditation.

“All who sin are slaves” said the Messiah.

Therefore, it is not surprising that there would also be a state of consciousness that corresponds to the enslaving of sin and is a result of sin.

And that state of consciousness is the lower state of various levels of hypnosis. The higher state of awareness is the one we fell from and to which we must return if we are to find freedom and find salvation from the enslavement to our worries, preoccupations, and compulsions.

Without realizing it, the average person is entranced in various levels of hypnosis most of the time. It is ironic that the person who is entranced does not even realize s/he is (because s/he *cannot* realize in this fallen condition).

Moreover, he thinks he is free. This because each new excitement and each new fixation seem to free him from guilt and anxiety. He finds a false peace apart from God and from the truth (which he may now only recognize as anxiety).

True hope is from faith in God and an abiding awareness of His providence.

But the hope of the entranced is in some new excitement or love that will make them feel like the god they think they are or that will free them from the pain or consequences of their aberrant lifestyle.

The false faith of the damned is in those who recognize them as gods or who promise to make them great or cure them.

So, you see, there is a true faith and a false faith; a true hope and a false hope. Only the soul who is ready and willing to face the truth can meditate properly.

Most people want to be saved *from* awareness of their sins. The last thing in the world they want is to be made aware of their wrong. With this kind of an attitude, they cannot meditate properly. They make it into a hypnotic thing and get caught up with technique or personality.

But the sincere soul does not mind seeing his wrong, even though it is painful, because he wants to come completely clean. This person will be able to meditate and find the blessed aware state.

I believe that it is this humble repentant inclination of the soul which ushers in the Heavenly state of mind which Christ spoke of in the Beatitudes. The benefits and blessings of this Heavenly attitude are gifts from God to those who yearn for truth and who are willing to admit wrong.

If we see ourselves and other people from this perspective, how can we not be patient and more forgiving? How can we not see and regret our wrongs? How can we not abandon pride and some sort of false notion of our own goodness or cleverness?

In the aware state, we inherit faith, and we inherit understanding. The Presence of God's redeeming Light causes us to see our wrong and permits us to be sorry.

Without awareness and objectivity, we can only deal with our own faults egotistically. We may see our wrong, but not the reason for it. And even if we see the wrong and the reason, our egotistical struggle with it is just another response to temptation (as it now embodies itself in our error or infirmity).

The aware state is the only state in which we can realize truth and realize God. Prior to learning the proper meditation, we think we are aware when we are at best merely awake. Mostly we walk around in some level of trance. Bear in mind that the trance state is

virtually imperceptible. People are entranced and do not even know it.

When you see someone lost in a cell phone call (and unaware that they are driving erratically) or someone screaming at a ball game, they are obviously entranced.

When you observe people watching television or the computer screen, you can often sense they are caught up. When you see someone who is head over heels in love with some person, they are hypnotized.

But less obvious are the momentary fleeting levels of hypnosis we fall into and walk around in all the time.

Most of the day, our attention is captured by one thing; then it is captured by another. Our attention is ever fixated from one thing to another. Sometimes you will observe a person at the doctor's office who is about to get a shot fixating on and studying a picture on the wall. They are attempting to have their attention captured by the picture in order to take it away from the looming shot. They are self hypnotizing, just as others self medicate.

When a person escapes from one bad relationship into another, they are trading involvements. People can be lost in the meal they are eating and simultaneously dreaming of desert. They never allow a moment's respite where they would realize guilt and the ignominy of their habits. Some people go from the bottle to church, and then from church back to the bottle again.

When people are caught up with some leader or idol it is because his or her powerful distracting presence and seductive lies make them feel good about themselves, remove awareness of their wrong, and give them direction in their entranced state. They will follow that person all the way to hell, as long as he remains believable and keeps them in their trance. But they will hate him when he falters. When their leader falters and fails to keep them hypnotized and direct them, they

begin to wake up from the security of their trance. They will remain trapped by their hatred of him (another fixation) or find a new idol to which they transfer their allegiance.

Once again, understand the principle. When people do not want to realize truth (because it brings shame, humiliation and pain), they simply will not wake up.

When they are forced to wake up and see their mistakes, they resort to excuses and justifications for whatever they did in their trance state.

Most of us have occasional moments of clarity when we see things as they are. We are coming out of the hypnotic trance. It is in the aware state that real positive change can occur.

I recently read the true story told by a professional athlete about how he had struggled with alcohol addiction for years. He told of endless cycles of going into rehab and then falling off the wagon and abusing alcohol again.

Nothing worked until one day he was on the freeway, heading toward a bar where he was going to drink with his buddies (instead of going home to his wife). All of a sudden in a moment of clarity, he said “this is crazy.”

He got off the freeway at the next exit, turned the car around, went home and never touched another drink again.

Without realizing it, he had come up to the aware state in which he saw his error clearly, saw that it was wrong, and was free to choose to let it go.

Anyone who had dealt with addicts of various kinds knows that real change only happens when the person really sees the need to change and really wants to change.

Many of us have experienced the shock of suddenly getting a glimpse of the dark side of some person we had trusted, thereby seeing what they are really like. In a

lighting flash we are warned by what we see. We back off and are safe.

Others of us have suddenly had a profound sense of danger or a sense that we should not do something. By heeding this wordless hunch, we are saved from some dangerous involvement.

I also believe that many bystanders who rush to rescue someone are in this elevated aware state.

Afterwards, they are called heroes, but they always say: "I don't feel like a hero, I just saw something that needed to be done and I did it."

It is in a moment of clarity, of clear seeing, that our soul flashes on reality and is able to make a simple move that saves us or another from something awful.

It is comforting to know that God does grant us access to this protection, even in our unaware entranced emotional state. Awareness is always there, just above thinking, daydreaming, and imagining. It is in the aware state that God touches the soul and through the soul, to do good or avoid evil and danger.

We have all had close calls, whereby we had a wake up call just in time to avoid the fatal error. We then experience gratitude and relief. But even the best of us usually soon starts to slip back into the old emotional thinking and feeling, as we fall back into being affected by the stresses and temptations around us. And before you know it, we are back in our comfort zone trance state.

The secret is to find the aware state *and hold on to it*.

Thereby you have protection, enlightenment, intuitive guidance, and wisdom all the time. The only way I know to accomplish this aim is with the help of the meditation exercise. And it only for those who are ready. It takes a special kind of soul (one which I hope you are becoming) who is finally willing to see his or her own wrong, and who welcomes the redeeming

purging pain of conscience. A sincere yearning to be a right person, combined with a willingness to see our own faults permit us to meditate properly. The prize is awareness.

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The Metaphysics of Spiritual Recovery

This study has looked at the psycho-biological basis of emotional stress and provided some basic principles to assist in recovery from emotional trauma, as well as maintain a more well balanced state of being. A simple meditation technology has also been suggested which may assist the practitioner in finding his or her calm center of dignity and preventing stress inducing over reactions.

For the reader who opts to read it, the following is an introductory discussion of the metaphysics of the human condition in which we find ourselves subject to trauma inducing emotional over-reactions. This lecture is excerpted from the book *Becoming a Friend of God* (available at commonsensecounseling.org).

The basis of all our problems is separation from God. The symptoms of this separation are our wrong relationships with other people. We look for things from them that are not good for them to give (if indeed they could). Then, when other people fail us or betray us, we resent them. This resentment is another form of

selfish use, so we become guilty before other people and before conscience (God).

Avoiding the humbling encounter with conscience, we are instead extra nice to people in order to make up for our guilt feelings. We want them to take away our guilt. This only makes us guiltier because we are using them to avoid conscience. When they take advantage of our need, we again resent them.

If we could relate to God, He would show us how to relate to others properly. But without His guidance, we remain lost and confused. We look to outside people for advice, and because they do not have understanding either, their advice fails us and makes us worse off.

Perhaps now you can see that the pain we feel when we have problems with others has a purpose. It awakens us to the fact that something is wrong. If we heed the warning and remain aware without reaching for symptom removal, and if our attitude changes to a willingness to admit the part we play when things go wrong, we will begin to realize our wrong. If we do not resent the realization, it will bring us to repentance and start our recovery.

God is always there. His mercy and forgiveness are there. And His guidance is there. We fail to realize His Presence because we seek comfort from others. We seek their love instead of His. We seek other's approval instead of His. We seek their forgiveness instead of His.

When people fail us or we grow too guilty to continue using them, we look to food, drugs, work, entertainment, or possessions to make us feel good (and take away awareness of conflict with conscience).

Of course, when our food makes us fat, our drugs give us side effects, and our possessions become a burden, we make the same old mistake of resenting them as if they were the cause of our suffering. The

problem is that we attempted to use material things to help us forget conscience.

The proof that we have made others our gods is that we are afraid to speak up to them. We shake in our boots before worldly authorities. Our heart beats faster before worldly indulgences that we have looked to in order to make us feel good.

We have become externalized, so much so that we do not even notice our conscience anymore. If we do, it is felt as a vague anxiety. And if our conscience does bother us, we quickly try to dismiss it or cancel it out with distraction.

Little do we realize that conscience is our closest link to God—that the conscience we feel is the hindsight we experience when we stray from the guidance of the Light of Truth that could inwardly silently inform us, if we would but be still and pay attention to its admonishments.

If it is true that God's forgiveness is there waiting for us to accept it, and if it is true that His guidance is there in the form of wordless intuition, why do we not grasp them instead of erring and suffering?

The answer has to do with our own nature—we have a secret desire to play God and to do whatever we want.

We are prideful and rebellious. We would rather be God than know God. Therefore we shy away from a real encounter with His Truth, lest our pipe dreams be dashed, our illusions broken and we be forced to tow the line and do His will.

Another aspect of pride that works against us is our stubborn unwillingness to admit we are wrong. We remain tied to error and subject to sin until we are willing to admit we are wrong.

The answer also has to do with the selfishness and greed of others. They unconsciously prefer that we be lost, confused, and making mistakes. Were we to

become right, the contrast of our newfound light would force them to be aware of their own darkness and in the presence of the light they would be forced to repent before their time. This is an agony no unrepentant soul can bear.

They also gain power over us through our wrong. Our need and error permits them to play God over us.

There is also power and big money to be made in helping people who are confused and needy. If everyone were self reliant and intuitively guided by wisdom from God, there would be no more need for external problem solvers.

Everyone knows about the truth, even bad people. But because everyone is guilty of playing God, we all shy away from complete honesty, lest others pull the rug out from under us and point out our wrongs too.

When it comes to standing up for principle, most of us are unwilling to go all the way. We cop out, preferring to be popular rather than principled.

However, some of us reach a point where we yearn for the truth so much that we are even willing to see our own wrongs. When we reach this point, our soul softens, and we are ready to have our attitude changed from one of pride and defensiveness against truth to one of humility. This occurs as the Truth begins to dawn, lighting our darkness and beginning the long process of salvation.

As Truth dawns, the first thing we see are our own wrongs. Mourning over what we see, we regret the way we are, but we also realize in the Light that we cannot make ourselves good. When we are repented by the Truth, we become friends with Truth. When we are friends with Truth, there is no more need for the methods we used to employ to escape conscience.

Remember--if it is true that we have access to the inner Light of Truth, this Light of Truth would contain

wisdom, and by its very nature would be a solution to the problems we have acquired during our separation from the Light.

If this is true, then instead of dwelling morbidly on problems and instead of spending our time seeking face saving answers in imagination or rationale, we should devote ourselves to finding that inner Light and conforming to it.

Proper meditation, which we teach here at the Center for Common Sense Counseling, is the way to this noble end. All that is needed is that it be combined with a sincere desire to know the truth. When we make knowing the purpose for which we were created more important than anything, we will be able to meditate.

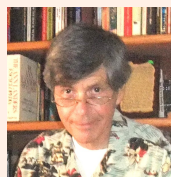
A Brief Introduction to Stress Management

Principles and Practice

We have all suffered the consequences of excessive stress. We know how stressful moving, losing a job, or dealing with a major illness can be. But could it be that we are adding to our stress load by over-reacting emotionally? Could it also be that we are making our body undergo stressful reactions by our attitude and mindset toward people and circumstances around us?

In this concise but profound treatise, Roland Trujillo informs the reader about the basics of stress. Grasping the basics of stress, the reader is now prepared to understand the psycho-spiritual principles that permit a person to face stressors more calmly. This could be one of the most important treatments of this issue you will ever read.

Roland Trujillo is Director of the Center for Common Sense Counseling. He has written eighteen books and authored hundreds of articles and postings on stress reduction, emotional control, and principles of harmonious living. His California-based radio program has brought thought provoking ideas and practical advice to his listeners for 25 years. Roland continues to research and lecture on positive empowered living.



The Center for Common Sense Counseling

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