



C.H.A.N.G.E. To Deal With Stress!

No one will argue that we live in a stress-filled society. Is it more stressful on this generation than any before? Hard to tell, but each individual thinks their problems are worse than most others'. Studies have always indicated that Air Traffic Controllers have the most stressful jobs, but many people feel their situation is the worst. So what do you do under stress? How do you deal with tense situations? How is your coping ability?

To deal with stress we need to focus on four areas: Problem Solving, Communication, Closeness and Flexibility.

- How is your **problem solving** ability? Do you put things off, separate people from the problem, separate out emotions, have a desired outcome?
- How well do you **communicate** under stress? Do you actively listen, blame others, focus on the message received, speak with a purpose?
- The amount of **closeness** we feel with others greatly affects our ability to cope. Do you make relationships a priority? Do you find quality time with others, share your personal feelings, and give praise?
- How **flexible** are you? Are you open to diverse ideas? These four areas will help you deal with stress you are under, but what can you do to prepare for the future? Is there a key to dealing with stress that you can use effectively to consider making new goals and positive changes in your life?

Below is an acrostic using the word "CHANGE" to help you develop an action plan to deal with stress. The six letters in CHANGE anchor six important steps for making and maintaining positive movement in your life.

For the six steps to "***C.H.A.N.G.E. To Deal With Stress***" go to the link below.

Commit yourself to a specific goal. Set an attainable goal that helps you deal regularly with the stressors of life that lead to tension and anxiety. For instance, you might want to improve your communication skills at work by using reflective listening. This involves paraphrasing the speaker's ideas to the speaker's satisfaction. "I hear you saying that..."

Habits...break old and start new. Decide today that the habits of the past are just that; the past. For instance, focus on future goals instead of dwelling in the past. Often we are diverted from our goals by problems in the present. Keep

both eyes on your personal, work and family goals. Don't let anything deter you from focusing on them.

Action...take one step at a time. Do something...today! Take "baby steps" with your actions but start your new action plan right away. For instance, read a book on self improvement, start your new habits now, take a friend, colleague or family member out to eat and practice your new plan.

Never give up...lapses might occur. Every book I've ever read about marketing says to never quit on your marketing plan. When we back off from our direction or goals, we forget and apathy sets in. If you don't succeed today, try again tomorrow. Winston Churchill gave a speech at t commencement exercise that is widely quoted: "Never, never, never, never give up

Goal-oriented...focus on the positive. Look at ways you have advanced your plan, not the ways you have failed. For instance, get a close friend to affirm your actions. Keep the eventual goal in sight. Start praising yourself for what you can do, not what you can't. Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics said, "If you think you can, you can. If you think you can't , you're right."

Evaluate and reward yourself. Once a week, do something for yourself to mark the progress you've made. Treat yourself to something that is special. Do an activity that brings you great feelings for the goals you have accomplished. Give yourself a "bonus" for a job well done.

The CHANGE model format is appropriate for developing Action Plans in each area of life. Refer to it as an on-going guide for creating positive change, and keep looking up!

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