

MANAGING STRESS

*Principles and Strategies
for Health and Wellbeing*

SECOND EDITION



Brian Luke Seaward

FREE
60-Minute
Stress
Reduction
Tape

Managing Stress

Principles and Strategies for Health and Wellbeing

Second Edition

Brian Luke Seaward, Ph.D.

*Center for Human Caring
University of Colorado*



Jones and Bartlett Publishers

Sudbury, Massachusetts

Boston London Singapore

Editorial, Sales, and Customer Service Offices

40 Tall Pine Drive
Sudbury, MA 01776
508-443-5000
800-832-0034
info@jbpub.com
http://www.jbpub.com

Jones and Bartlett Publishers International
Barb House, Barb Mews
London W6 7PA
UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Seaward, Brian Luke.

Managing stress: principles and strategies for health and wellbeing / Brian Luke Seaward. — 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7637-0233-1

1. Stress management. I. Title.

RA785.S434 1996

155.9'042—dc20

96-26129

CIP

Acquisitions Editor: Joseph E. Burns

Manufacturing Manager: Dana L. Cerrito

Design: Deborah Schneck

Editorial Production: WordCrafters Editorial Services, Inc.

Typesetting: Pine Tree Composition

Cover Design: Hannus Design Associates

Cover Printing: John P. Pow Company, Inc.

Printing and Binding: Rand McNally Book Services

Cover Photograph: Photograph by Daniel J. Cox/© Tony Stone Images

Credits: p. 3 © Tony Stone Images/David Young Wolff; p. 10 © Tony Stone Images/Kevin Horan; p. 19 (l.) North Wind, (r.) Dr. Albert Einstein licensed by the Hebrew University. Represented by The Roger Richman Agency, Inc., Beverly Hills, CA. Photo by Ozzie Sweet; p. 26 Vincent Perez; p. 38 Copyright © by Martin M. Rotker 1985. All rights reserved; p. 45 Alfred Hulstrunk; p. 65 © Johnny Johnson; p. 67 Universal Press Syndicate; p. 68 Corbis-Bettmann; p. 71 NYT Pictures; p. 75 Ken Ross; p. 77 Keystone/The Image Works, Inc.; p. 79 © Photography by Marybeth, Deerfield Beach, FL; p. 81 C. Steven Short; p. 84 Corbis-Bettman; p. 91 Franka Van Allen; p. 93 © Tony Stone Images/Ziggy Kalunzy; p. 120 © Bill Brooks; p. 128 © Dan Parent; p. 153 (l.) UPI/Corbis-Bettmann, (c.) © Topham/The Image Works, (r.) NYT Pictures; p. 161 © David J. Boyle; p. 167 © Tony Stone Images/Philip Habib; p. 180 © Larry Kolvoord/The Image Works, PO Box 443, Woodstock, NY 12498. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED; p. 184 Michael Weisbrot; p. 196 © Mark Antman/The Image Works, PO Box 443, Woodstock, NY 12498; p. 219 Big Apple Circus/Scott Thode; p. 221 The Denver Public Library, Western History Department; p. 223 (l.) Copyright © 1935 Turner Entertainment Company. All rights reserved. (r.) Copyright © 1954; p. 239 © The Walt Disney Company; p. 241 (l. and r.) UPI/Corbis/Bettmann; p. 253 © McLaughlin/The Image Works; p. 261 Bettmann; p. 267 © Tony Stone Images/Tim Flach; p. 270 © Pierre Tremblay; p. 276 Pierre Arsenault; p. 284 Ken Regan/Camera 5; p. 286 © Dion Ogust/The Image Works, PO Box 443, Woodstock, NY 12498. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED; p. 288 © Beringer-Dratch/The Image Works. All Rights Reserved; p. 297 © James D. Watt; p. 301 © Tony Stone Images/David Maisel; p. 308 Miron Borysenko; p. 312 © T. Michaels/The Image Works; p. 327 © Tony Stone Images/Caroline Wood; p. 339 Reprinted with kindness, from Bonnie Smetts/Pomegranate Publications; p. 348 © Tony Stone Images/Bob Thomas; p. 357 © Larry Williams; p. 362 © Jim Sulley/THE IMAGE WORKS; p. 399 Racquel Keller; p. 408 © Audra Geras; p. 423 (top l. and r.) Thought Technologies Ltd.; p. 423 (bottom) Tony Stone Images, Inc. © Charles Thatcher; p. 424 (top) Polar Heart Rate Monitors; p. 424 (bottom l. and r.) Thought Technologies Ltd.; p. 427 © Tony Stone Worldwide/Thomas Braise; p. 434 © Tony Stone Images/David Young Wolff; p. 447 © Tony Stone Images/Brian Bailey; p. 458 © Tony Stone Worldwide/John Running. All other photos are courtesy of the author.

Printed in the United States of America

00 99 98 97 96 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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*To all my friends and family, and
the many great people I have encountered
who have served as a dynamic inspiration in my own life journey.
Thanks for making this a better planet to live on.*

*A portion of the royalty derived from the sale of
this book will be donated to several nonprofit
organizations dedicated to environmental conservation
and health promotion.*



Foreword

"After ecstasy, the laundry!" This ancient saying can be applied to our current understanding of health and illness. During the past fifty years, we have discovered that, beyond doubt, the mind has an enormous impact on the body. Our emotions, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors can affect us for good or ill. Now that we have glimpsed these lofty insights, it's time to get down to practicalities and apply them. It's time, in other words, to do the laundry. But the task isn't simple. How, exactly, can we bring mind and body into harmony? How can we alleviate the stressful effects of modern life? How can they be turned to our advantage? Can we learn to benefit from these changes? Can we become wiser and healthier in the process? Advice is not difficult to find: self-proclaimed experts abound. They shout the latest formulas for stress-free living and personal transformation from tabloids, talk shows, and a plethora of self-help books, giving the entire area of stress management a bad name.

It is refreshing, amid all this blather, to discover Dr. Brian Luke Seaward's *Managing Stress: Principles and Strategies for Health and Wellbeing*. In clear, uncluttered language, he takes us on a gentle walk through the territory of mind-body interaction. From cover to cover you will find

that he is a very wise guide and possesses a quality almost always missing in stress-management manuals—humor. Dr. Seaward knows the field well—he has taught it and lived it—and he provides scientific documentation at every step. But perhaps most important, Dr. Seaward daringly goes beyond the usual approach to the subject to speak of the soul and of human spirituality because he realizes that stress management and maximal health are impossible to attain unless the questions of life's meaning are addressed.

As a physician who has long advocated the integration of mind and body for optimal health, I find it a pleasure and honor, therefore, to recommend this work. It is a fine contribution to the field of stress management and will serve as an invaluable guide to anyone seeking harmony in his or her life. A new day is dawning in medicine and health promotion, and Dr. Seaward has awoken early to watch and share the sunrise.

LARRY DOSSEY, M.D.

*Co-Chair, Panel on Mind/Body Interventions
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September 9, 1993
Author, *Recovery of the Soul,
Meaning and Medicine,
Healing Words.**



Preface

During the last week of 1994, I received a letter from a student in the Midwest thanking me for writing *Managing Stress*. "The book," he wrote, "changed my life, and I cannot thank you enough for this." He went on to explain that at the end of the fall semester he had changed majors and was now considering graduate school in health psychology. The next day I received a similar letter from a premed student in Washington, D.C., who said she was committed to exploring the mind-body-spirit dynamics in medical school. Two weeks later I received a phone call from a student at the University of Vermont, also thanking me for writing *Managing Stress*, especially the chapter on stress and spirituality. I have received many comments on the relaxation tape as well. In the three years since *Managing Stress* was published, I have received hundreds of letters, comments, and accolades from students, professors, nurses, physicians, and various health care practitioners who have said that *Managing Stress* has had a tremendous influence on their lives. I'm gratified because that was my intention in writing it. In one regard, I felt that my publisher and I were taking a bold step introducing in depth the concept of human spirituality into a college health textbook. Not knowing how it would be accepted, my feelings were overwhelmingly validated by scores of people who indicated that "It's about time!" Thanks to all of you who shared your responses with me.

Various aspects in the field of stress management are constantly being explored, researched, and augmented, particularly as we explore the dynamics of the mind-body-spirit

equation. Emina McCormick, one of my colleagues who had learned that I was working on this second edition, said to me, "*The first edition has everything in it. How could you possibly make a great book even better?*" I smiled at her comment, but one thing I've learned in this field is that there is always something new on the horizon. Teaching a course titled *Nutrition, Health, and Performance* at the University of Colorado-Boulder in 1995, I became acutely aware of the symbiotic relationship between stress and nutrition. That topic became its own chapter (27) in this edition of *Managing Stress*. Moreover, as I continued to synthesize articles, books, and workshop presentations during the past three years, I knew I had to incorporate the highlights of this new material to which I was introduced. As a result, new information has been added to nearly every chapter, including the following:

- A section titled Stress in a Changing World, looking at stress through the life cycle from the college years to retirement, has been added to Chapter 1.
- The most current information on stress and disease, including an update on various components of the human energy field, based on the work of Carolyn Myss and Christiane Northrup, M.D., has been added to Chapter 3, as have new research findings about ulcers.
- New information from the best seller *Emotional Intelligence* has been synthesized throughout Chapter 5, The Stress Emotions.

- Insights about self-esteem from national bestselling author Nathaniel Branden have been added.
- Two new perspectives of spiritual wellbeing, from the wisdom of mystic Hildegard von Bingen and Deepak Chopra, have been added to Chapter 7, Stress and Spirituality.
- A new section covering neurolinguistic programming (NLP) has been added to Chapter 8.
- New material from Cameron's book, *The Artist's Way*, has been incorporated into Chapter 12.
- Many new ideas for successful time management, including insights from *Time Shifting* by Stephan Rechtschaffen, have been added to Chapter 15.
- Two new sections have been included in Chapter 22, Massage Therapy: Myofascial Release and aromatherapy.

In addition, a series of self-assessments have been created to engage the reader by processing the information learned from each chapter and applying it to one's own life. Thanks to all who have contributed to the current field of knowledge of mind-body-spirit medicine, mind-body-spirit healing, and behavioral medicine, thus making this edition even better than the first.

This book was written primarily as a textbook for courses in stress management with a holistic focus, as it balances and integrates the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of wellbeing. Moreover, it emphasizes theoretical concepts regarding the causes of stress, physical symptoms stress may produce, and practical modalities employed to deal with each. Although there are several stress-management textbooks on the market, I have found that they tend to lack balance. Some seem bottom heavy in the physiological aspects. And none of the books adequately addresses the issue of human spirituality.

As a result of my students' questions in the academic setting and the corporate and commu-

nity wellness workshops I have conducted over the years, it has become clear to me that there is a need to address many emotional concepts, especially anger and fear; the role of the unconscious mind; cultivation of inner resources; and the spiritual dimension of stress. Thus, Parts I and II of this book are a synthesis of concepts of mind-body-spirit unity as they relate to stress management. These parts provide a balance of both psychological perspectives and the much-emphasized physiological approaches to stress. Chapter 3, for example, is a comprehensive view of psychoneuroimmunology; Chapter 4, a review of several psychological theories of stress, including those of Freud, Jung, Kübler-Ross, Frankl, and Maslow; Chapter 5, an exploration of the stress emotions of anger and fear; and Chapter 7, a discussion of several perspectives of the relationship between stress and human spirituality.

In Parts III and IV, a number of familiar and novel coping strategies and relaxation techniques are presented: cognitive restructuring (Chapter 8), behavior modification (Chapter 9), journal writing (Chapter 10), art therapy (Chapter 11), humor therapy (Chapter 12), creative problem solving (Chapter 13), communication skills (Chapter 14), time management (Chapter 15), diaphragmatic breathing (Chapter 17), mental imagery (Chapter 20), music therapy (Chapter 21), massage therapy (Chapter 22), progressive muscular relaxation (Chapter 24), autogenic training (Chapter 25), biofeedback (Chapter 26), nutrition (Chapter 27), and exercise (Chapter 28). And because student populations today can represent as many as 120 different countries and cultures, I have incorporated the collective wisdom of the centuries from nonWestern sources as well: meditation (Chapter 18), hatha yoga (Chapter 19), and T'ai chi Ch'uan (Chapter 23). Although several of the techniques herein are called "therapy," they are in no way meant to replace clinical therapies for those diagnosed with significant stress-related problems.

In keeping with the holistic approach to wellness, a hologram may be used as a meta-

phor to describe the contents of this book. Alone, each chapter is both a part of the whole understanding of personal stress management and simultaneously contains elements of the entire picture. Such issues as split-brain research, the conscious and unconscious minds, and the beta endorphin connection, among others, are mentioned in several different chapters, and these are underlying themes to the many complex concepts of the mind-body-spirit relationship.

Researchers and scholars agree that the most effective method of learning includes the use of both the right and left hemispheres of the brain: the creative with the factual, the intuitive with the analytical, synthesis with verbal acuity. With this in mind, *Managing Stress* was written to stimulate both hemispheres of the brain for better information processing and retention. The writing style is a balance of standard expository writing and some of the cadences of natural speech. The goals are to be informative, factual, and to the point, but also to be enjoyable and easy to read. The use of scenic photographs, poems, and selected cartoons is designed to access right-brain functions in conjunction with left-brain faculties to reinforce the many concepts of stress reduction and put these to good use.

In addition, there are several features to entice the reader to interact with the material, including boxes, surveys, exercises, checklists, and case studies entitled "Stress with a Human Face." Each chapter also has a comprehensive summary and a list of key concepts; many chapters have a Self-Assessment. A glossary of terms (set in bold-face in the text) concludes the book.

Having taught the stress-management course for many years, I have found that students respond very enthusiastically to the idea of keeping their own creative journals. *Managing Stress: A Creative Journal* consists of a number of thought-provoking themes that are designed to get students to explore their real feelings and thoughts about the tension and stress in their lives. Journal writing has proven to be a formidable coping technique used by psychologists

and health educators as an awareness tool for self-exploration. The writing experience opens the doors of the conscious mind to examine emotions, unresolved conflicts, and impediments to personal growth and development.

Also available to the student is a ninety-minute audio tape providing coping strategies and relaxation techniques for stress reduction. Mental imagery, meditation, and progressive relaxation methods demonstrate mind-body harmony concepts that are essential for achieving total wellbeing. The audio tape material demonstrates the actual methods of relaxation and coping techniques that are explained in the text. By listening to the tapes, students are shown how to apply stress reduction techniques as they are taking the course.

The fields of body-mind science and stress management are new and unfolding. Researching and writing this book have shown me just how much is not yet known about human stress and effective methods to deal with it. Several of these theories are discussed despite the fact that they have yet to be proven "scientifically." But I have included them because I believe that we are on the verge of exciting discoveries and that the field of clinical medicine is going to experience some radical changes in the years to come. It is my hope that the information in this book will spark students' interest in development in stress research and serve as an invitation to try out the coping strategies and relaxation techniques, with the assistance of certified professionals as necessary, to determine what works best for them.

Finally, I am always interested in readers' suggestions for making this book better. If you would like to share your thoughts, please sent them to me care of my publisher:

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To the Instructor

In order to save time and aid the instructor in the teaching of the course, the publisher has provided instructor resources, which consist of the following: an instructor's manual, overhead masters, and a videotape on stress-management concepts. These materials are free to all instructors who adopt the text for classroom use.

The instructor's manual consists of 1,000 questions, which are divided among multiple choice, fill-in, matching, true-false, and essay. The instructor's manual also contains a number of overhead masters of charts, graphs, and tables taken from the text that illustrate key concepts. Also included are a list of additional multimedia resource and instructional materials.

A complementary videotape on stress-management concepts is also available to those instructors wishing to enrich the course with a visual dramatization of stress-producing scenarios. The videotape portrays stressful situations encountered in daily life and shows how the individual can effectively manage tension and anxiety in the home, school, and work environments through effective coping strategies, relaxation techniques, and time-management skills.

For the student, each chapter of the text has a number of pedagogical devices designed to aid in the mastery of the material, including boxes, surveys, exercises, and checklists. Case studies

entitled "Stress with a Human Face" illustrate how people deal with a variety of stressful situations. Each chapter concludes with a comprehensive summary of the main points in the chapter along with a list of key terms and references for further study. Key terms are also clearly defined in a handy glossary of terms at the end of the text, which can be useful in studying for examinations. In addition, at the end of almost every chapter there is a Self-Assessment to help relate the content to the reader's life.

Managing Stress: A Creative Journal is also available as an optional supplement to the course. The journal contains over 75 thought-provoking, soul-searching themes designed to engage the student in writing about personal stress, unresolved conflict, and tension-producing emotions. Journal writing has proven to be a formidable coping technique used by psychologists and health educators as an awareness tool for self-exploration and discovery. Also available to the student is a complementary 60-minute audio tape that provides four relaxation techniques for stress reduction. Mental imagery, meditation, progressive relaxation, and autogenic training are taught with a professional mix of voice and restful music. Through listening to the tape, students are shown how to apply stress-reduction methods to their own lives.



Acknowledgments

When Maureen Stapleton won her Oscar for Best Supporting Actress in 1982 for her role in the movie *Reds*, she walked up to the podium and said, "I'd like to thank everyone I ever met." At times when I was writing this book, I felt much the same way. In fact, I would like to include many people whom I have never met. While I would like to share my gratitude with everyone—and you know who you are—there are some people who deserve special recognition for making this project a reality, from the seeds of inspiration to making the dream come true in my lifetime. My thanks, applause, and standing ovation are for all of you:

Dr. Joseph Pechinski, my undergraduate advisor, for inspiring me to enter the field of health promotion and wellness; Dr. Ben Massey, my graduate advisor, who encouraged me to follow my calling and be a free spirit; and Dr. Dave Clarke, my graduate advisor, who as my boss in the Lifeline Wellness program never once said no to any programming idea, including massage therapy. To my mentors, Drs. John Burt and Alan Fertziger, my appreciation for guiding me on the path of enlightenment during my years at the University of Maryland. To Joseph Burns, my editor at Jones and Bartlett, my gratitude for being open to my ideas. When you said it would take two years to write a book, I thought you were kidding. Thanks for the humor therapy and every ounce of support, Joe. Thanks also to Amina Sharma, Paula Carroll, Mary C ervantes, and Helen Pultz, who were extremely helpful in assisting with this project. I also want to express my thanks to Drs. Myrin Bory-

senko, Avery Spencer, Candace Pert, and Richard Gerber for taking the time to personally explain their theories to me. Thanks to Dr. Larry Dossey for his support and for sharing some great cartoons (we need more physicians like you!); to Carl Simonton, Roger von Oech, Sam Campagna, Tim Petersik, Alfred Hulstrunk, Alan Jakubek, Racquel Keller, Alison Fisher, Cindy Conn, Lisa Carey, Rachel Swarrow, Steve Pearlman, Still Point Press, the Big Apple Circus, and Creative Media Services for allowing me to use their wonderful pieces of work in this book.

Thanks to Drs. Mike Felts, East Carolina University; Cathy Heriot, Medical University of South Carolina; Patricia Hogan, Northern Michigan University; Joan Keller-Mareh, Viterbo College; Mark Kittleson, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale; Emina McCormick, University of Vermont; Bob Russell, Southern Illinois University; Kathleen Zavala, University of Northern Colorado; and Bruce Ragon, Indiana University, who reviewed the entire manuscript and gave many excellent suggestions. Additional thanks to Patricia Norris, Steve Grebe, Teri Denunzo, Betsy Meholic, Andy Frank, Brien McCarthy, Steve Pearlman, Susan Luff, Bob Hetrick, Thomas Droege, Judian Breitenbach, Carolyn Nelka, Adam Dodge, and Brian Dalrymple, who read specific chapters to ensure accuracy within their areas of expertise. A hearty thank you to Martha Day at the University of Vermont, who helped me reference so many quotes and resources. Special thanks also go to Drs. Bernie Siegel and Larry Dossey for their wonderful endorsements; to my friends and colleagues at The

American University, who learned a new meaning of the word *maverick* when they invited me to join the faculty of the Department of Health and fitness; to Dr. Jo Safrit, who demonstrated an unyielding faith in my work; to Franka Van Allen and Jennifer Kakstis, who as my research assistants spent many hours assisting me in the search for research articles, books, verification of references and copyright permissions; and to Guy Hadsall for his creative artwork. My appreciation as well to Nien Cheng, Bruce Laingen, Art Buchwald, Naomi Judd and her manager Laurie Kelley, James Owen Mathews, Patch Adams, Harley Goodbear, Susan Ulfelder, Mietek and Margaret Wirkus, Chris Flannagan, Ann Dieters, Anne Tongren, Roger Mursick, Sanford Markley, Suzie Hurley, Mary Ellen Metke, David Bergstein, and all the splendid guest lecturers who have come to my class, bringing to life what a textbook can never do justice to and

making me look really good as a teacher in the process. In this second edition, I would like to add my thanks to Suzanne Crane, Judy Songdahl, Nadine Fitzwilliam of Jones and Bartlett; Linda Zuk of WordCrafters; my assistant Susan Griffin; and special thanks to Jean Watson and Karen Holland at the Center for Human Caring at the University of Colorado–Denver, and to Carol Sheehy at the University of Colorado–Boulder. I would also like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of Linda Chapin and the entire staff of The National Wellness Institute in Steven’s Point, Wisconsin; the Institute of Noetic Sciences in Sausalito, California; and the International Society for the Study of Subtle Energy and Energy Medicine in Golden, Colorado—thank you for being so supportive of my work. And finally, to all my students and clients, you have been marvelous teachers in your own right! Thanks!



Introduction

During the Renaissance, a philosophy shaping the direction of medicine in the Western world started taking hold. This philosophy, promulgated by René Descartes (1596–1650), stated that the mind and body are separate entities and therefore should be examined and treated differently. This dichotomy of mind and body advanced the understanding of the true human condition. Albert Einstein's revolutionary unified field theory, which at the time was regarded as ludicrous, began to lead Western science back to the ancient premise that all points (energy and matter) connect, each significantly affecting all others, of which the human entity (mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual components) is very much a part.

Only recently has modern science taken steps to unite what Descartes separated over 300 years ago. The unity of the body, mind, and spirit is quite complex, especially as it relates to stress management. But one simple truth is emerging from the research of the late 20th century: that the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the human condition are all intimately connected. Mental imagery, entrainment theory, *pranayama*, divinity theory, split-brain research, Jungian psychology, beta endorphins—all approach the same unity, each from a different vantage point, and each supporting the ancient axiom that “all points connect.”

Stress is a popular topic in American culture today. Its popularity stems from the need to get a handle on this condition; to deal with

stress effectively enough so as to lead a “normal” and happy life. But dealing with stress is a process, not an outcome. Many people's attitudes, influenced by their rushed lifestyles and expectations of immediate gratification, reflect the need to eradicate stress rather than to manage, reduce, or control their perceptions of it. As a result, stress never really goes away; it just reappears with a new face. The results can and do cause harm, even bodily damage. Studies now indicate that between 70 and 80 percent of all disease is strongly related to stress. So-called lifestyle diseases, for example, coronary heart disease and cancer, are leading causes of death; both seem to have direct links to the stress response. As the United States enters the 21st century, and with health care reform having become a major national issue, the ability of and the need for individuals to accept responsibility for their own health is increasing. But knowledge of the concepts of stress management alone is not enough. Continual application of this knowledge through both self-awareness and the practice of effective coping skills and relaxation techniques is essential for total wellbeing.

Thus, this book was written to acquaint you with the fundamental theories and applications of the mind-body phenomenon. More specifically, it offers fifteen coping strategies you can use as tools to deal more effectively with the causes of your stress, and eleven relaxation techniques to help you reduce or eliminate potential or actual symptoms associated with the

stress response. It is my intention that collectively they may help you to reach and maintain your optimal level of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing in the years to come. For this reason, I would like to suggest

that you revisit the book again and again as time goes by: what may appear today to be “some theory” to memorize for a final exam could one day take on great relevance in your life.



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