

STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR WELLNESS

THIRD EDITION

Walt Schafer

USED BOOK

Stress Management for Wellness



Third Edition

Walt Schafer

California State University, Chico

Harcourt Brace College Publishers

Fort Worth Philadelphia San Diego New York Orlando Austin San Antonio
Toronto Montreal London Sydney Tokyo

Publisher	Ted Buchholz
Editor in Chief	Christopher P. Klein
Developmental Editor	Cathlynn Richard
Project Editors	Annelies Schlickenrieder/Deanna Johnson/Melissa C. Evans
Production Manager	Debra A. Jenkin
Art Director	Jim Dodson

Cover Photo by Rich Iwasaki/Tony Stone Images
Back Cover Photo by Chuck Keeler/Tony Stone Images

ISBN: 0-15-502301-2
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 95-75065

Copyright © 1996 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Requests for permission to make copies of any part of the work should be mailed to:
Permissions Department, Harcourt Brace & Company, 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando,
Florida 32887-6777.

Some material in this work previously appeared in STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR WELLNESS, Second Edition, copyright © 1992, 1987 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. All rights reserved.

Special acknowledgments of copyright ownership and of permission to reproduce works (or excerpts thereof) included in this volume follow the index and constitute an extension of this page.

Address for Editorial Correspondence:
Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 301 Commerce Street, Suite 3700,
Fort Worth, TX 76102.

Address for Orders:
Harcourt Brace & Company, 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, FL 32887.
1-800-782-4479, or 1-800-433-0001 (in Florida).

Printed in the United States of America

7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 066 0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

This book is dedicated to my wife and best friend, Teresa Kludt, from whom I have learned much about playing, caring, appreciating beauty in everyday life, and balancing hard work with healthy pleasures.



◆ PREFACE ◆

Evidence is mounting that in several respects Americans are becoming healthier. For example, fewer smoke and more eat low-fat diets. Still, a substantial number of Americans continue to experience a high rate of illness-induced absenteeism from school and work, feel sluggish or depressed, and see their doctors regularly for one medication or another. And, often, those who are not ill within a medical framework are not truly well either, since they are hardly maximizing their potentials, enjoying daily life, or maintaining high levels of vitality and energy.

Evidence from epidemiological and behavioral medicine studies clearly tells that wellness is largely a function of our daily habits: sleep, diet, exercise, relationships, how we handle anger, our chronic and acute tension levels, work satisfaction, and the presence or absence of energizing visions for ourselves and our world. Studies also leave little doubt that how we manage stress vitally influences the degree of wellness we experience.

This book brings together two significant and challenging topics: wellness and stress management. Both have central relevance, for the ultimate values this book intends to promote are maximization of human potential, good health, and enjoyment of daily life. This volume contains few *I's* or *me's*, but it is a very personal book; it is, first and foremost, an expression of my own learning and search for wellness through wise stress management. I have learned from many sources, which I acknowledge later. Most of all, I have integrated information from others' experience and research studies with my own search for a lifestyle of true wellness—a lifestyle with a proper balance of work and play, giving and receiving, mind and body, intensity and recovery.

There is no better time to improve stress management practices than during the college years, although, even if you are beyond that stage, it certainly is never too late. Many of my cardiac rehabilitation students in their 60s and 70s have benefitted from the ideas and techniques presented here. My sincere hope is that, through this book, all will be aided in your personal quest for wellness through stress management.

Content and Approach

This book is distinctive in five main ways. First, the approach balances realism and idealism. I assume that life is and always will be difficult. There is no freedom from challenge, change, or conflict, but you can learn to confront, adapt, and grow by facing your problems. I also assume that personal change comes gradually through effort and patience. There are no magic pills or panaceas for everlasting bliss. Yet for most of us, greater happiness, vitality, and realization of potentials is possible. Idealism, in short, needs to be blended with realism.

Second, this book is distinguished by its integrated, whole-person, lifestyle approach to stress management. I believe wellness is promoted not by practicing any single stress management

method (such as meditation, deep breathing, positive thinking, exercise, managing time better, or assertiveness training), but rather by integrating a number of methods to control stress and tension. It is vital to find the unique combination that works best for you. As noted above, introducing these techniques into your daily life requires time, patience, and gradualism. There are no miracles. Treat yourself as an experiment-of-one, and see what works best for you.

Third, the book weaves together information and application. The ultimate goal is not abstract learning for its own sake, but rather its application to the pursuit of higher-level wellness for yourself and others.

Fourth, this book's approach is constructive. Its goal is to assist you in learning to control and channel stress rather than succumb to it. Stress (arousal of mind and body in response to demands placed upon them) is unavoidable, and can, in fact be highly useful in order to meet performance demands, deadlines, and physical emergencies. This is positive stress. On the other hand, distress (harmful stress resulting from too much to too little arousal) can do untold harm to your health, career, relationships, and emotional life. It can be very costly to your family, to your employer, and to society.

Fifth, this book places personal stress within social context. You are not an island unto yourself, and your experiences with stress are not entirely unique. In many respects, they are shared with others. Furthermore, personal problems do not emerge in isolation—they are the product of larger social forces. This means that understanding the dynamic interplay between self and society is vital in managing stress. Seeking to improve social conditions out of which distress flows becomes just as important as dealing with personal problems, and caring for others as valuable as caring for self. Thus, this book focuses on balancing self-care with social commitment.

A key assumption here is that wise stress management is a kind of preventive medicine—you will reduce the risk of illness to the degree that you succeed in harnessing stress. This book is designed to assist you in living wisely, thereby enhancing your wellness and preventing illness.

Organization of This Book

This book is organized into five parts. Part I presents an overview of stress and wellness. Part II elaborates by presenting variations in the stress experience, the physiological dynamics of stress and relaxation, early warning signs of distress, and a review of distress-induced disorders.

Part III focuses on distress-prone and distress-resistant influences both within the person and in the external social environment. In Part IV, we turn to applications of stress management strategies and methods. Included are chapters on coping; self-talk, beliefs, and meaning; health buffers such as exercise, nutrition, sleep, and healthy pleasures; relaxation methods; managing time; and giving and receiving social support.

Part V presents applications and issues related to college-related stress and the broader challenge of blending personal wellness with commitment to the common good. As the nation reels from the tragic bombing in Oklahoma City, we are challenged as never before to look not only at ways we can enhance our personal well-being, but at ways we can ensure that we live together with mutual respect, tolerance of diversity, and concern for the well-being of "us" as well as "me." The book ends with the author's personal philosophy for blending personal wellness with social commitment.

Changes in the Third Edition

Readers of the Second Edition of *Stress Management for Wellness* will note several key changes here. First, additional emphasis is placed on wellness at both the individual level and the social level. This is reflected in the new Chapter 2—Wellness: Beyond *Normal* Health. Second, additional emphasis is placed on social roots of stress and wellness and on linkages of personal distress with social influences and public issues. Examples of this new emphasis are the ideas of cultures of wellness and distress-preventing social influences in Chapters 2 and 10. Third, research studies are updated, especially in burgeoning fields related to mind-body-behavior interaction. Fourth, Part III, Distress-Prone and Distress-Resistant Social Influences, is mostly new material, adding richness to coverage of both internal and external influences on the stress experience.

What has not changed from the first and second editions is blending of learning with application. I believe this blend will be enhanced in this edition through placement of all Application Exercises at the end of chapters, creating a smoother flow throughout the chapters themselves, while allowing the reader or instructor easily to sort and select those Application Exercises which seem most relevant and useful. My hope is that after having used this book, you will not only have a better understanding of stress and wellness, but you will already have begun to take steps to improve your own wellness lifestyle.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to many people for their contributions to this effort. Some who have influenced and inspired me the most have done so at a distance through their research and writing. Most important among them are the late Hans Selye, Kenneth Pelletier, Kenneth Cooper, Herbert Benson, Redford Williams, Meyer Friedman, Ray Rosenman, Robert Eliot, Donald Ardell, Joe Henderson, George Sheehan, Richard Lazarus, and Albert Ellis.

Ideas in this book have taken shape through my interaction with several groups of people. First, I am most grateful to former students in my Human Stress and Occupational Stress classes at California State University, Chico, with whom I have shared many of the ideas expressed here. These thousands of students have been invaluable in challenging me to formulate and present my ideas coherently and usefully.

Second, I wish to acknowledge several thousand community members with whom I have experienced reciprocal learning at the N.T. Enloe Memorial Hospital Stress and Health Center, which I founded and, for a number of years, directed. Especially useful have been my interactions with them in my five-month stress management class, Reducing Perfectionism, Irritability, and Hurry Sickness. Ranging in age from early 20s to early 80s, these colearners have sharpened my awareness of the positive and negative features of stress, which techniques seem to be most effective, and what the personal change process is really like.

Third, my interactions with colleagues have been rewarding and instructive. This especially includes my fellow instructors of Human Stress at California State University, Chico (Walter Zahnd, Laurie Wermuth, Robert Dionne, Sharrie Herbold-Sheley, Debbie Powers, and Janell Campbell). My colleagues at The Pacific Wellness Institute have been most helpful, especially Michael King, Melissa Oltman, and Linda Zorn. I also am grateful to my close colleagues and friends, Bruce Aikin, Terrence Hoffman, Darrell Stevens, David Welch, and Manuel Esteban.

In preparation of the book, I have enormously benefitted from feedback, criticism, and suggestions from several exceptional reviewers: Robert Bramucci, Washington State University; Sharrie Herbold-Sheley, California State University, Chico; Mark Kittleson, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale; Laurie Rotando, Westchester Community College; and Fred Stickle, Western Kentucky University.

The editorial, design, and production staff at Harcourt Brace College Publishers have provided superb guidance and support. Special thanks to my editors, Cathy Richard, Annelies Schlickenreider, Deanna Johnson, and Melissa Evans, for helping to distill and integrate feedback from reviewers and for ably managing the design and production process.

My daughters, Kimberly and Kristin, who were teenagers when I wrote my first book on stress nearly two decades ago, have witnessed firsthand the evolution of these ideas in my own life and work. Over the years, they have participated in my personal quest for a balanced lifestyle. I am grateful for their support. My special friend, Clinton, whose amazingly effective stress management practices I have carefully watched and learned from, and who has been truly “with me” during the writing, also deserves credit.

Finally, Teresa Kludt, my wife, best friend, and kayak partner, has been a source of ideas, caring, energy, and good humor throughout this project. She has been most patient during my many days at the keyboard. She also has helped me avoid sexist language in my writing. To her I am most grateful of all. This book is dedicated to her.

◆ CONTENTS ◆

Preface iii

PART I Stress and Wellness: An Overview 1

Chapter 1 The Stress Experience: Myths and Reality 3

- The Nature of Stress 4
- The Social Context of Stress 14
- Dispelling Common Myths about Stress 16
- A Whole-Person, Lifestyle Approach to Stress Management 17

Chapter 2 Wellness: Beyond Normal Health 32

- Introduction: Worseness versus Wellness 33
- What Is Wellness? 33
- A Wellness Lifestyle 37
- Cultures of Wellness 39
- Energy: A Vital Component of Wellness 44
- Personal Benefits of Wellness 52

PART II More about Stress 61

Chapter 3 How the Stress Experience Varies 63

- Distress from Overload and Underload 64
- Anticipatory, Current, and Residual Stress 66
- Zones of Stress 70
- Eight Common Stress Difficulties 73
- Six Ways of Relating to Stress 76

Chapter 4 The Dynamics of Stress and Relaxation 86

- The Interplay of Mind, Body, and Behavior 87
- The Stress Response: A Psycho-Physiological-Behavioral Perspective 91
- The Relaxation Response and Homeostasis 107

Chapter 5 Distress Symptoms: Monitoring Early Warning Signs 116

- Caution: Over-Concern with Symptoms 117
- Emotional Distress Symptoms 117
- Cognitive Distress Symptoms 125
- Behavioral Distress Symptoms 126
- Physical Distress Symptoms 126

Chapter 6 When It Eats Away at You: Distress-Related Illnesses 141

- Causes of Death in America 142
- Stress, Wellness, and Health Care Reform 143
- Stress-Related Disorders 146

PART III Distress-Prone and Distress-Resistant Influences 181

Chapter 7 Distress-Prone Personality Patterns:

Type A Behavior and Hostility 183

- Introduction: Distress-Prone and Distress-Resistant Influences 184
- The Type A Personality Pattern 185
- Tips Managing Type A Behavior 198
- Hostility 201

Chapter 8 Other Distress-Prone Personality Patterns 216

- Perfectionism 217
- Procrastination 220
- The Type E Woman 221
- The Worrier 225
- Learned Helplessness/Learned Pessimism 226
- The Addiction-Prone Pattern 230
- The Codependency Pattern 232
- Distress-Seeking: The Common Thread among Distress-Prone Personality Patterns 235

Chapter 9 Distress-Resistant Personality Patterns 247

- The Type B Pattern 248
- The Trusting Heart 250
- Learned Optimism 252
- Hardiness 254
- Sense of Coherence 257
- The Survivor Personality 258
- The Type C Pattern 261
- Self-Esteem 263
- The Self-Actualized Person 265

Chapter 10 Distress-Prone and Distress-Preventing Social Influences 276

- Linking Personal Distress and Social Influences:
 - The Sociological Imagination 277
- Distress-Preventing Social Influences 304

PART IV Managing Stress: Strategies and Methods 321

Chapter 11 Your Coping Response 323

- Understanding the Coping Process 324
- Coping Options 328
- Extinguishing Maladaptive Reactions to Distress 332
- Strengthening Adaptive Reactions to Distress 340
- Thriving under Pressure 343

Chapter 12 *It's How You See It: Self-Talk, Beliefs, and Meaning* 364

- Self-Talk and Stress 365
- Turning Self-Talk into a Positive Force 371
- Applications of Reprogramming 379
- Managing Anger 382
- Meaning and Purpose: The Spiritual Dimension of Wellness 386

Chapter 13 *Health Buffers: Exercise, Nutrition, Sleep, and Healthy Pleasures* 405

- Aerobic Exercise 407
- Nutrition 419
- Sleep 430
- Healthy Pleasures 433

Chapter 14 *Quieting the Mind and Body: Relaxation Methods* 446

- The Relaxation Response: Antidote to Distress 447
- Relaxation Methods 449
- Making Relaxation Part of Your Life 468

Chapter 15 *Pacing and Balance: Managing Time* 479

- Time, Stress, and Health: A Universal Challenge 480
- Managing Time: Guidelines and Techniques 485

Chapter 16 *Social Support: Giving and Receiving* 504

- Social Ties: A Stress-Resistance Resource 505
- Two Relationships of Social Support to Well-Being 508
- The Challenge of Building and Using Social Support 510

PART V *Applications and Issues* 541**Chapter 17 *Passing the Test of College Stress* 543**

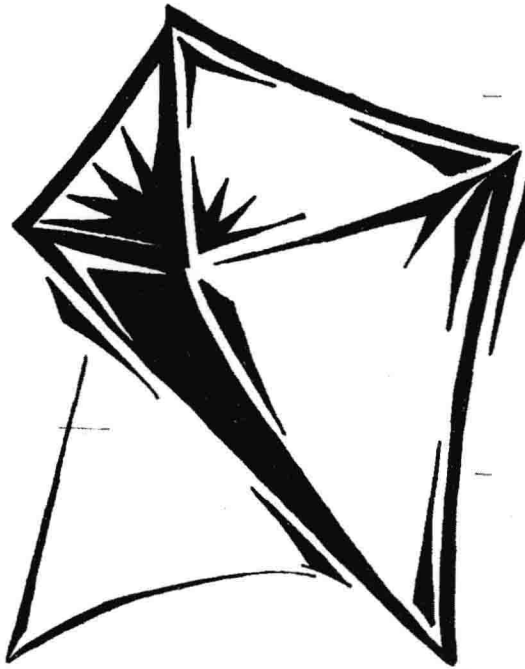
- Challenge and Opportunity During the College Years: The 1990s 544
- Coping with Stressors of the College Years 545
- Life Scripts, Identity Formation, and Career Choice 562
- Coping and Success in College 563

Chapter 18 *Personal Wellness and Social Commitment* 582

- Constructive Maladjustment 583
- Altruistic Egoism and Egoistic Altruism 584
- Helping and Wellness 587
- Heroism and Social Responsibility 589
- Looking Ahead 594

Glossary 606**Index 626**

Part I



Stress and Wellness: An Overview



Chapter 1

The Stress Experience: Myths and Reality

THE NATURE OF STRESS

STRESSORS AND DISTRESSORS

STRESS DEFINED

THREE TYPES OF STRESS

Neustress

Distress

Symptoms of Distress

Stress-Related Disorders

Distress and Disharmony

Costs of Distress

Positive Stress

Examples of Positive Stress

Personal Growth Through Pushing Your Limits

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF STRESS

DISPELLING COMMON MYTHS ABOUT STRESS

A WHOLE-PERSON, LIFESTYLE APPROACH TO STRESS MANAGEMENT

WHAT DO GOOD STRESS MANAGERS DO?

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT STRESS MANAGEMENT

STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR WHAT? A WORD ABOUT WELLNESS

Birds sing after a
storm. Why shouldn't
we?

Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy

◆ THE NATURE OF STRESS ◆



Brian: A Case Study of Stress

Brian's mounting tension was increasingly apparent to him, his family, and his co-workers. His hands trembled as each day wore on, his stomach churned, his shoulders were tight, and his lower back hurt. He felt edgy and anxious and was often depressed for days at a time.

Communication became increasingly difficult, thinking more fuzzy, and speech sometimes staccato. He snapped at secretaries, boiled inside as business sales slowed, then blew up at colleagues. Working lunches usually included one or two stiff drinks to dull the tension. His wife and children became targets of irritability and short-temperedness.

Brian knew that tension was inevitable in his work. He even had found in the past that some anxiety was useful before a difficult meeting or speech. Yet chronic tension was getting out of hand. Something had to change and soon. Already his body showed signs of breakdown, his work was inefficient, his business partnership was threatened, and his family was becoming progressively alienated. Finally, his drinking was nearly out of control.

Following a series of stress-management consultations, Brian was determined to take positive steps.

During the next several months, he began a daily running and deep relaxation program. He improved his diet. He learned new techniques of mental and physical relaxation (on-the-spot tension reducers), which reduced the frequency of destructive stress build-ups. He developed new communication skills for coping with colleagues and for supervising subordinates. He decided to eliminate alcohol consumption completely for at least the next year. Finally, he learned to accept moderate tension as a fact of life and sometimes even as a positive force.

As a result of these steps, Brian's quality of life markedly improved. His energy level rose, and he felt better. His productivity increased, and his relationships at work and home improved. A key difference was his moderate reaction to stressful events, compared to his previous overreactions. These improvements were as apparent to him and others as his distress symptoms had been earlier.

Brian's experiences taught him a great deal. They also illustrate a number of key concepts related to stress. Each of these concept terms is a building block for a thorough understanding of the stress experience—including its helpful and harmful sides.

Brian's emotional and physical symptoms clearly suggest too much stress. In order to bring his stress under control, he had to learn more about it. Understanding several key terms was a first step, beginning with **stressor** and **distressor**.

Beliefs about Stress

Below are ten common beliefs about stress. With which do you agree or disagree? Later in this chapter you will read more about them.

1. All stress is bad.
2. The goal of stress management should be to eliminate stress.
3. The “good life” should be free of stressors.
4. The less the stress, the better.
5. A person can always successfully adapt to difficult circumstances if he or she tries hard enough.
6. Some people are destined by their heritage to be highly stressed.
7. Distress has only harmful effects.
8. Physical exercise drains energy that otherwise might be used to cope with stress.
9. Meditation is cultish, anti-Christian nonsense.
10. Stress affects only adults.

STRESSORS AND DISTRESSORS

Like you and me, Brian finds his life to be a constant process of responding to stimuli, pressures, and changes. Like Brian, you do not live in a vacuum. Rather, you are an “open system,” continually exchanging energy, information, and feelings with the environment. You also place demands on yourself. Thus, you are always dealing with stressors—demands on your mind, your body, or both.

Viewed this way, stressors are ever-present. Adaptation is a continuous process. Most of the time, you respond to these demands with ease and familiarity. That is, stressors remain facts of life with no ill effects. But adjustment can exact a toll in wear and tear on mind or body. Physical upset or emotional turmoil often result. When this happens, stressors become distressors.

One stress expert has written, “The most elementary acquaintance with history, with anthropology, and above all, with literature—be it the Bible, the Greeks, Shakespeare, Dante, or Dostoyevski—reveals the rarity of tranquility in human existence” (Antonovsky, 1979, 87).

This rather gloomy opinion about the possibility of human peace may or may not be valid, depending on one’s point of view and definition of tranquility. We do know that the history of the human species is marked indeed by considerable misery, illness, and struggle. In part, this results from humankind’s continual need to adapt—to a changing physical environment, to ever-shifting technology, to neighboring tribes and nations, and to the life cycle itself. At a more personal level, human unhappiness results from sharp disagreements in points of view, from blocked-up emotions of hurt and frustration, and even from intentional acts of emotional or physical violence. In short, stressors become distressors. Demands no longer are neutral. They result in effects harmful to the individual.

Charlesworth and Nathan (1984) have presented an informative list of types of stressors:

A stressor is any demand on mind or body. A distressor is any demand resulting in harm to mind or body.

See Application Exercise 1-1 for an opportunity to write about your reactions to the beliefs about stress presented in the box.

Change stressors	Commuting stressors	Pain stressors
Chemical stressors	Decision stressors	Phobic stressors
Environmental stressors	Disease stressors	Physical stressors
Family stressors	Social stressors	Work stressors

College students deal daily with a host of stressors, including the following:

Exams	Noisy neighbors	Career decisions
Term papers	Conflict between job	Sexual encounters
Conflicting demands	and school	Parental pressure
Meeting new people	Parking problems	College bureaucracy
Too little money		

See Application Exercise 1-2 to assist you in identifying a number of ways stressors and distressors can vary.

Be aware that demands do not *cause* harmful effects. Rather harmful effects result from the person's *interpretation* of those demands.

It is important to note here that awareness of stressors can itself be a deterrent to turning them into distressors. As Hans Selye, a pioneer in the stress field, has said, "It is well established that the mere fact of knowing what hurts you has an inherent curative value" (Selye, 1976, 406). This is illustrated by both animal and human studies showing that the greatest harm results from stressors that are unknown and therefore unpredictable. When stressors are perceived as predictable and manageable, they seem to be less threatening.

STRESS DEFINED

Like many other ideas in the behavioral sciences, the concept of stress had its origins in the physical sciences (Hinkle, 1977). Dating back at least to the last century, *load* referred to an external force on, say, metal or wood. *Stress* was the ratio of resulting internal forces to the area over which the external force acted. The term *strain* was applied to disruption or distortion of the material being acted on, such as a building beam or a floor.

In the nineteenth century, first applications of stress to human experience began to occur in the medical literature. For example, the mind-body pioneer Sir William Osler made this comment about Jewish businessmen:

Living an intense life, absorbed in his work, devoted to his pleasures, passionately devoted to his home, the nervous energy of the Jew is taxed to the uttermost, and his system is subjected to that stress and strain which seems to be a basic factor in so many cases of angina pectoris. (Hinkle, 1977, 30)

Note the direct connections here between mind and body and between lifestyle and health. Of course, this quote also represents a sweeping ethnic/religious stereotype that modern research has called into serious question. Nevertheless, it is an old version of the modern concept of Type A behavior (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Definitions are neither right nor wrong. They are useful in varying degrees according to scope and clarity. Definitions can be inclusive or narrow, fuzzy or clear. The following definition of stress has several advantages: **Stress** is arousal of mind and body in response to demands made on them.

First, the definition makes clear that stress is ever-present, a universal feature of life. Arousal is an inevitable part of living. We constantly think, feel, and act with some degree

Stress is arousal of mind and body in response to demands made on them.

of arousal. Stress cannot and should not be avoided. Rather, it is to be contained, managed, and directed.

Second, this definition points to the multifaceted nature of stress. The stress response (arousal) involves virtually every set of organs and tissues in your body. Thoughts and feelings are clearly intertwined with these physiological processes. Anxiety and depression, for example, are not only feelings but also inseparable mental-physiological states. Body influences mind, and mind influences body. Behavior often is an outward expression of stress—for example, short-temperdness, fast talking, accidents, and hurried movement.

Third, this definition is neutral. Arousal of heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension intrinsically are neither helpful nor harmful. Most often, arousal is simply a fact of life.

But stress can become positive or negative. This neutral feature of our definition is significant because it calls attention to a wide range of experiences with stress, from the positive tension of the Wimbledon tennis tournament finalist to the recurrent colds or flu of the unstable college student who plans time poorly.

It is useful to compare my definition of stress with two other prominent definitions in the field: one by Selye, the other by Lazarus and Folkman.

In the 1920s, the late Hans Selye, a young medical student then at McGill University, became fascinated early in his studies with the body's response to illness. He later stated, "In my second year of training I was struck by how patients suffering from the most diverse diseases exhibited strikingly similar signs and symptoms, such as loss of weight and appetite, diminished muscular strength, and absence of ambition" (Selye, 1982, 9). Selye called this generalized response "the syndrome of just being sick."

His curiosity about the "sick syndrome" led him to a detailed study of the stress response in laboratory rats. In the course of this research, Selye discovered a curious thing: Whatever "noxious agents" (stressors such as hormone and tissue extracts, electrical shocks, heat, and cold) he introduced into the bodies of rats, the response always seemed the same.

Three types of changes were produced: (1) the cortex, or outer layer, of the adrenal glands became enlarged and hyperactive; (2) the thymus, spleen, lymph nodes, and all other lymphatic structures shrank; and (3) deep, bleeding ulcers appeared in the stomach and upper intestines. Being closely interdependent, these changes formed a definite syndrome. (Selye, 1982, 9)

Selye's well-known definition of stress, based on his research, is "the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it" (Selye, 1974). My definition has one important similarity to Selye's: Both have to do with the person's response to demands, rather than to the demands themselves. However, the two definitions also differ in one important respect. While Selye limits his definition to the body, mine focuses on the mind as well. By including mental arousal, we attend to a much wider range of human experience under the category of stress.

Lazarus and Folkman define stress as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (1984, 19). This definition is more restrictive than my definition, since it focuses on only the negative side of stress, which I define as distress later in the chapter. However, it has a number of advantages.

First, attention is directed to the interplay between the individual and the environment, rather than to the person as an isolated entity. Second, the key role of appraisal or

Gallup Poll on Distressors and Distress

A recent Gallup Poll commissioned and published by *Health* magazine revealed the following responses by a nationwide random sample of adults to the question, "Which of the following sometimes or frequently cause you stress?" Note that Gallup uses "stress" in the way we use "distress" in this book. Figures are the percentages of respondents to whom the question applied.

Your job	71%
Money problems	63%
Family	44%
Housework	37%
Health problems	35%
Child care	20%

Source: Paulsen (1994, 46)

interpretation in the person's response to demands is implied in this definition. Third, stress is seen as a dynamic process in which the human body and mind actively respond back, engaging in continuous efforts to adapt and restore balance or homeostasis. In other words, adaptation is active, not passive, and continuous, not static. Fourth, attention is directed to intervening with the environment, as well as the person, in managing stress. It becomes clear, then, why Lazarus and Folkman believe stress can best be understood from "a transactional, process, appraisal- and coping-centered approach" (1984, 19).

THREE TYPES OF STRESS

Neustress

Neustress is neutral stress—arousal with neither harmful nor helpful effects on mind or body.

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, Brian usually responded neutrally to internal and external demands. His mind and body were aroused, but he moved along with little impact from these demands one way or another. In short, most of the time, his stress was neutral, neither particularly helpful nor harmful. Morse and Furst (1979) refer to this as **neustress**.

Distress

Distress is too much or too little arousal, resulting in harm to mind or body.

When arousal is too high or too low, **distress** ensues. The challenge is to identify your own zone of positive stress and to maintain a perspective and lifestyle that will enable you to stay within that zone most of the time.

An advantage to this definition is that it calls attention to individual meaning and perception. As Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have pointed out, whether a person experiences an event as "harmful" depends on the degree to which a stressor is perceived as exceeding her or his resources to cope with it and whether personal well-being is threatened. A theme throughout this book is that events are not intrinsically distressing. They