

Managing Stress

Principles and Strategies
for Health and Wellbeing

3rd EDITION

Brian Luke Seaward

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for Health and Well-being

Third Edition

Brian Luke Seaward, Ph.D.

University of Colorado–Boulder



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*To all my friends and family,
and to 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 in which to live.*

*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.*

*Great spirits have always encountered
violent opposition from
mediocre minds.
—Albert Einstein*

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 Well-being*. 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.

Since *Managing Stress* first came out in 1994, the pace of life has certainly quickened, yet with this change, Americans have begun to embrace a host of complementary healing modalities, which underscores the importance of seeking a sense of inner peace from the winds of change.

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.

Executive Editor, *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*. Author of *Reinventing Medicine* and *Healing Words*.

Students Praise *Managing Stress*

"The information I have learned from this book is definitely something I will remember and use the rest of my life. I found the exercises on breathing, yoga, and aromatherapy most beneficial."

—Christine S., University of Northern Colorado

"The chapter on time management was the best. Before this class I was extremely good at wasting time. Now I realize that time is an important resource that I need to make the most of. I do this by keeping a day-timer, prioritizing, and cutting out a lot of television. Thanks!"

—Jason A., Indiana University

"Just from reading the first chapter, I knew this was a book I wasn't going to sell back at the end of the semester. This book has been my saving grace. Thanks!!!"

—Bill G., Richland College, Dallas, Texas

"The most valuable thing I got out of the whole book was dealing with my anger. I never knew I was holding it in. I now know how to let it go and not let my feelings ruin my life. The chapters on music therapy and breathing were excellent."

—Melanie B., University of Northern Colorado

"By far the most significant aspect of this book was the chapter on Human Spirituality. Even though I had heard most of the information before, it has never been presented to me in such a broad yet concise manner. It refreshed my desire to continue to grow spiritually."

—Ivette B., University of New Mexico

"I had no idea how beneficial keeping a journal is to help ease the tension that occurs in everyday life."

—Emily B., University of Vermont

"It is a great comfort to know there is more than one way to deal with stress. Many times in college, I have found myself very stressed out and in need of relief. I now have many techniques to promote a less stressful lifestyle."

—Aspen V., University of Maryland

"Like most textbooks, I thought this one was going to be boring. Boy, was I wrong! I learned a great deal about my body, my mind, and my spirit. As an athlete, I now have skills for a lifetime. The chapter on humor therapy was the best! Keep those jokes coming."

—Will C., University of Utah

Preface to the Third Edition

In April of 1999 Littleton, Colorado, found itself in newspaper headlines and television sound-bites around the world. Although the impact of the shootings at Columbine High School affected everyone across the country, the ripples of stress from that event washed ashore in my life in January 2000, when I learned that several students in my stress management class at the University of Northern Colorado had been seniors at Columbine High School that spring; some of them had witnessed the shootings firsthand. One student wrote this on her course evaluation:

“My life was turned upside down last year. I never thought I would get it back together. This book has done more good than six months of therapy and counseling. Thanks a million.”

The wonderful feedback I received about this textbook (as well as the accompanying journal workbook) from these students made it very clear how essential a holistic approach to dealing with stress really is. I continually receive cards, letters, and e-mails from students, nurses, social workers, psychologists, and health educators from around the country sharing similar sentiments as the former Columbine students.

I would like to say that since the first edition of *Managing Stress*, the world has become more relaxed and peaceful, but in truth, it hasn't. If anything, the “global village” we call home has become more stressed, which is all the more reason why this can make a difference in your life. As we begin a new century and millennium, I reflect on 1994, the year that this textbook was first published. Many of the ideas and concepts presented in the first edition of *Managing Stress*, such as T'ai Chi, art therapy, Chakras, and human spirituality were considered at the vanguard of health. Less than a decade later, many of these concepts, techniques, skills, and theories are now fully ingrained into American society, and I take great comfort in watching their acceptance grow.

Web exercises that support the information in each chapter can be found at www.jbpub.com/managingstress. I think you will find these interesting and entertaining (learning should be fun, right?). Feedback from my students has been nothing less than excellent. As they say, the Web exercises really help the learning process as the information is presented in a different way so as to reinforce the material.

Because so many people consistently say how well this book is referenced, I have included as many current references and resources at the end of nearly every chapter as room allowed.

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. Like the second edition, new information has been added to nearly every chapter. Here are some highlights:

Chapter 1: A section titled Technostress has been added to highlight the problems that arise from the rapid pace of technology.

Chapter 2: Information regarding DHEA and other hormones involved with the stress response has been added as a sideline box.

Chapter 3: A section was included on the emerging topic of cell memory: particularly regarding people with organ transplants who retain memories of the organ donor.

Chapter 5: Some new ideas on anger and aggression were added as well as more information on depression.

Chapter 7: A section on Joseph Campbell and the hero's journey was added to the collection of luminaries regarding the power of myth and legend in human spirituality. Likewise, Joan Borysenko and Deepak Chopra have new insights on the topic from their recent books, which have been summarized in their sections as well.

Chapter 12. I included some new jokes and cartoons in the humor chapter.

Chapter 15. There are always new ideas about managing time, so I have included some of these here, particularly with a focus on technostress.

Chapter 16: With the interest in prayer research, several students (and professors) have asked to have this section expanded, and I have done so in chapter 16.

Chapter 28: I felt it was important to address the issue of genetically modified foods and include a few more herbs as well in this chapter.

Epilogue: Many people have asked if I would expand on this section of creating a personal stress management program, so I did.

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. I also want to express my thanks to Drs. Myrin Borysenko, 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, Tim Petersik, Alison Fisher, Cindy Conn, 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-Maresh, 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. For this third edition, I am ever so indebted to Amy Austin and Suzanne Jeans, my editors at Jones and Bartlett, who have helped groom this edition to its level of excellence. Special thanks to my assistant Marlene Yates and my research assistant Rita Bohn. Special thanks also 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 Stevens 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 twentieth century: 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, and 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, including bodily damage. Studies now indicate that between 70 and 80 percent of all disease is strongly related to stress. So-called lifestyle diseases, such as, 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 twenty-first 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 well-being.

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 well-being 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.

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 ToolKit CD-ROM with a Computerized Testbank, chapter outlines, PowerPoint presentations and teaching tips. This CD is free to all instructors who adopt the text for classroom use.

The computerized testbank consists of multiple choice, fill-in, matching, true-false, and essay questions. Also included is a list of additional multimedia resources and instructional materials.

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, Second Edition, is also available as an optional supplement to the course. The journal contains more than 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 complimentary 60-minute audio CD that provides four relaxation techniques for stress reduction found in the back of each new book. Mental imagery, meditation, progressive relaxation, and autogenic training are taught with a professional mix of voice and restful music. Through listening to the CD, students are shown how to apply stress-reduction methods to their own lives.

Instructors and students using the third edition of this text can access the web site using the username: **bls3e** and the password: **managing stress**. The URL of the web site is www.jbpub.com/managingstress.

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