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New Job?

To Be Successful, Develop Resiliency and Relax (New Job Stress/Anxiety, Part 3)

Change is stressful. Starting a new job is stressful. Stress related to change can be positive [eustress] or negative [distress]. Both eustress and distress challenge our physical, mental and emotional reserves: we are challenged to stay balanced and healthy and not exhaust our energy and optimism.

We can react to the stress of our new job with maladaptive coping mechanisms [over-work, power plays at the new job, alcohol, drugs, gambling, over-spending, marital arguments, etc.]. Or, we can respond to this new job stress by developing attitudes and skills that enhance resiliency as well as relaxation in the face of multiple new challenges, relationships and stimuli.

In The Resilience Factor, Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte share the ‘good news’ results of their research: resiliency can be developed by consciously nurturing the following characteristics:

1. Make Connections: develop healthy relationships by sharing, asking for help, assisting others
2. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems: develop optimism
3. Accept change is part of life: don’t be rigid, be flexible with goals and expectations
4. 1.Assess what seems best, 2.decide, 3.take action
5. “If it doesn’t kill me, it will make me stronger”: choose to be stronger and wiser
6. Take care of your Self: daily, attend to physical, mental and emotional needs

In the Midst of New Job Stress: Relax (Herbert Benson, MD, Harvard Medical School)

---Set aside 10 or 15 or 20 minutes to practice this technique once or twice each day; don’t worry at first about being successful in reaching a deep level of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and let relaxation to occur at its own pace.

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position
2. Close your eyes
3. Deeply relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face
4. Breathe slowly through your nose. As you breathe out, say a word or phrase that is meaningful to you that day [‘one’, ‘peace’, ‘relax’, ‘let go’, ‘love’, ‘gratitude’, etc.]
5. Continue breathing slowly, saying the word-phrase you have chosen for 10-20 minutes. OK to open your eyes to check the time (don’t use an alarm).
When you finish, sit quietly with your eyes closed for a minute, and then slowly open your eyes, staying quiet a minute or two longer.
Do not stand up for a few minutes.
6. Each day, continue to patiently practice. Let the relaxation response occur at its own pace.