

Stressed Out?

By Nick Arnette

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, *three-fourths of employees believe that workers have more on-the-job stress than a generation ago.* Next time an older person tells you how easy you “young whipper-snappers” have it, tell ’em it ain’t necessarily so!

Also, job stress is more strongly associated with health complaints than financial or family problems. Look at the bright side, you might be so stressed out at work that you forget all about your personal and family problems. Okay, bad joke. Moving on.

The total health and productivity cost of worker stress to American business is estimated at \$50 to \$150 billion annually according to the National Institute for Health and Safety. Dr. Herbert Benson of Harvard Medical School writes in his book *Timeless Healing* that 60 to 90 percent of all visits to doctors are stress-related.

One study even suggests chronic *stress* also harms the brain, literally shrinking the hippocampus. I don’t know what a hippocampus is, but I don’t think it’s something we want to shrink. Too bad the hippocampus isn’t located on the waistline! Hey, I looked it up. Evidently the hippocampus is thought to be the center of emotion, memory, and the autonomic nervous system. I told you it’s something you don’t want to shrink! □ It doesn’t matter if your stress is caused by your job, your lack of one, or too many time and family commitments. Stress doesn’t make us feel good, and it’s not good for us.

Sonia Lupien, co-director of the Centre for Studies on Human Stress at the Douglas psychiatric hospital in Montreal, has some surprising news. Most of us think the opposite of stress is relaxation. Right? If I could just finish this project at work, or if I could just persuade the grandparents to take the kids for the weekend, then I could relax and I wouldn’t be at my breaking point. But Lupien says the opposite of stress is *resiliency*. “A person who is resilient is less likely to suffer from the adverse effects of stress in the long run,” she says. □ Did you highlight that? I think you could rephrase it by saying a person who is *proactive* rather than *reactive* is less likely to suffer the adverse effects of stress.

The preceding article is an excerpt from *Me, We and Glee: How to have a great attitude, work as a team and keep your sense of humor*, by Nick Arnette. Known as *The Feel Good Funny Guy*, Arnette is a popular keynote speaker at business meetings throughout the United States and Canada. You can contact Nick Arnette at www.NickArnette.com, email: nick@nickarnette.com

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