

## **CONTROLLING STRESS**

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, EM

Stressed families are unhappy families. Controlling stress will improve family relationships to help insure a measure of happiness. Our bodies and minds are gifts from God. He is the owner. We should be careful caretakers of His property. Every effort should be made to take care of ourselves and remove whatever impedes good health and pleasant relationships. This includes controlling stress.

Stress impedes good health. Classic symptoms include a rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, and a burning hot face. Uncontrolled stress can generate chronic fatigue, anxiety, irritability, concentration/memory difficulties, sleep problems, stomach aches, indigestion and/or weight loss or gain.

SHORT TERM STRESS does have a positive feature. It prompts us to get things done and be our best. CHRONIC STRESS, however, is devastating. It generates constant fear, frustration, worry and that frightful feeling of being out-of-control.

The reduction of stress will improve overall health, improve relationships and help maintain stable families. According to a report from Blue Cross/ Blue Shield, the control of stress will enable (1) a stronger immune system; (2) a more resilient heart; (3) better management of diabetes; (4) healthier skin; (5) a brain boost for concentration; (6) healthy digestion; (7) better sleep. When you feel good about yourself, you're more inclined to feel good about others. This will certainly benefit the quality of family life.

### **CREATIVE WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS**

- \* Set attainable goals
- \* Set realistic deadlines
- \* Start projects well ahead of schedule
  - \* Exercise
- \* Engage an enjoyable hobby or activity
- \* Talk to others about pressures and concerns
  - \* Laugh
- \* Be flexible with expectations
  - \* Forgive and forget
  - \* Relax to recharge

In addition to the above, an effective, creative way to manage stress was shared by a pastor who successfully survived the throes of "burn-out" ... LET GO - LET GOD!

The Scriptures tell us: "Peace of mind makes the body healthy." Proverbs 14:30 (TEV) "A happy mind is good medicine." Proverbs 17:22 (BAAT)

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For additional information contact the American Institute of Stress at [www.stress.org](http://www.stress.org) or by phone at 914-963-1200. For an inter-active stress management tool visit [www.bluecrossmn.com/blueprint](http://www.bluecrossmn.com/blueprint).