THE POSITIVE SIDE OF STRESS

Not all stress is bad. A certain amount of stress is necessary to keep us together. Often the lack of stress is a stressor in itself. If correctly handled, stress can be used as a positive force. Here are some suggestions to make that happen.

1. **GET TO THE SOURCE.** Most people deal with the symptoms of stress and not the source. Ask yourself why you are having an emotional reaction. Once the source is identified you can eliminate, bypass or alter the stressor.

2. **PRACTICE ENERGY CONSERVATION.** Do what you can and don't worry about the rest. Don't do someone else's work. Learn to work smarter, not harder.

3. **PLAN YOUR TASKS.** Don't take on more than you can handle. Refusing tasks is less stressing than having a number of unfinished ones hanging over your head. Unfinished tasks are very stressful.

4. **REWARD YOURSELF.** Do an easy task if you need a stroke for achievement. Allow yourself a small reward for a job well done. Being internally motivated is less stressful than depending on someone else for positive strokes.

5. **STAY LOOSE.** The game isn't always played according to the rules. Detail plan but always be prepared to chuck it and go with whatever feels right at the time.

6. **DETERMINE PRIORITIES.** Do what is important. Ask yourself, "Am I doing what I really want to do now?" If no, ask yourself why.

7. **HAVE A SUPPORT BASE.** Find someone with whom you can mutually share thoughts and feelings. Don't be surprised if this turns out to be someone other than your spouse. Talk is good medicine for stress.

8. **DEVELOP A WINNER ATTITUDE.** Be positive about yourself and your choices. If something turns sour, think about it and accept the results. Positive thoughts are not destructive to your mind and body. Negative thoughts promote illness.

9. **WIN THE WAR.** Often it's okay to lose a battle. It doesn't hurt to give in once in a while. Ask yourself if your position is really worth the energy to defend. Losing a battle may help you win the stress war.

10. **PRACTICE TIME MANAGEMENT.** There are only 24 hours in a day - no more, no less. Again, work smarter, not longer. There are a number of good books that can tell you how.

11. **OPERATE IN CONTROL.** Stay in charge of your affairs. When the tasks get too large it reminds one of eating an elephant--one bite at a time. Break big jobs down into little jobs. Each little task can be rewarding in itself.

12. **ACCEPT WHAT CAN'T BE CHANGED.** Don't fight the inevitable. When a final decision is made, you must pick the ditch you want to lie in. Is the issue worth the stress?

13. **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.** Eat correctly and get enough sleep. You cannot cope with personal or organizational stressors if you're in a physically exhausted condition.