How to Stay Calm in a Crisis

Whether you witness a catastrophic event or discover that you must give an unprepared speech in the next 30 seconds, crises happen. And regardless of magnitude, the “recipe” for responding to any of them is the same. The first step is the most important—avoiding panic and emotional confusion by staying in the moment and focusing only on what is directly in front of you. This is easier said than done, because most crises instill immediate fear—fear of what’s coming next. If you can detach quickly from this dynamic, you experience clearer solution-oriented thinking, even in the midst of utter confusion. The next steps—a decision about what action to take and taking that action—follow. You don’t need Navy SEAL training to learn these skills. Your practice opportunities come with common events—a flat tire, an overdue bill, a burst pipe, a failed test, a cut finger, or a wedding band down the bathroom drain. Your success with these smaller events will prepare your reflexes for bigger ones yet to come.

Reducing Stress During the Holidays

Holidays can be exciting, but reducing stress continues to remain a common concern for many people. Holiday decorations, nostalgia, memories, and commercialization can easily paint an unrealistic picture of what your family get-together and experience should look like. Caution! Holiday excitement and anticipation are healthy and renewing things, but if anxiety and pressure to perform and get everything “perfect” are taking the cheer out of your season, then here’s a tip: Use perfection and vision as guides for what you do, not as performance measures for how well you succeed in taking it all on.
Walk at 3 MPH!

Walking for exercise is getting plenty of research attention—right down to the recommended miles per hour! A recent study of people averaging 73 years of age showed a 50% decrease in cardiovascular disease for those who walked 3 mph versus those who walked only 2 mph. The group of 4,207 walkers were followed for ten years. Walking longer also produced similar results for those walking 7 blocks versus 5 blocks. “Even late in life, moderate physical activity such as walking is linked to lower incidence of cardiovascular disease,” commented the author, Luisa Soares-Miranda, Ph.D. “It appears that if one increases the total distance or the pace of walking, CVD risk is lowered.”

Source: http://now.tufts.edu (search: “walking faster”).

Count Bites, Lose Weight

Is it too simple? New research found people who counted bites over a month’s time lose roughly four pounds—just about what the CDC recommends for “healthy” weight loss. Those in the pilot test counted the number of bites they took each day and then committed to taking 20 to 30 percent fewer bites over the next four weeks. Participants who stuck with the task saw results despite changing nothing else about their eating and exercising routine. “This study confirms what we already knew: consuming less food makes a difference,” said lead study author Josh West. “We’re not advocating people starve themselves; what we’re talking about is people eating less than they’re currently eating.”

Source: http://home.byu.edu (search “count bites”).

Light Boxes Versus Counseling for Seasonal Affective Disorder

Millions of people suffer with seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a mood disorder associated with depression and related to seasonal variations of light. Discovered 35 years ago, the condition affects over 4% of the population in the United States and upwards to 20% of Canadians at some point in their lives. Only about 1.5% of Floridians experience the condition. Use of a light box (easily purchased online) to increase the amount of daily exposure to light has been a recommendation of the American Psychiatric Association for some time now, but don’t rule out talking to a counselor. It works well too, and possibly better, according to the first ever comparative study of the two approaches. Researchers at the University of New Hampshire found that cognitive-behavioral therapy (a practical counseling approach to personal change) helped defuse and overcome negative thoughts that fuel depression. Counseling teaches problem-solving skills and different ways to think, and it can prepare you to act and respond to similar problems in the future. A light box does help about 70% of people overcome SAD, but if you don’t get the relief you want, don’t rule out some old-fashioned talk therapy.

Source: www.uvm.edu (search “talk outshines” and Mood Disorders Association of Ontario).
Did you know… the Federal Trade Commission reports that the highest percentage of identity theft victims are between the ages of 20 and 29?

Identity theft harms its victims on many levels: the emotional duress of having one’s financial security compromised, damaged credit and reputation and the time required to prove the crime and one’s innocence. On average, identity theft costs its victims 60 hours and $1,000 to recover their identity and credit record. Taking common-sense, preventive measures can help you avoid identity theft. However, even the best laid security measures can be foiled by a clever thief. That’s when IMPACT’s Identity Theft Prevention & Recovery services become an essential benefit.
The New Year means a new opportunity to make changes in your life. Instead of just making resolutions, why not try a personal development plan? A personal development plan helps you focus on where you are in your personal life and career, where you want to be, and the goals you need to accomplish to get there. Your Employee Assistance Program can help you develop your own plan with examples, resources, and information on goal setting.

Available anytime, any day, your Employee Assistance Program is a free, confidential program to help you balance your work, family, and personal life.

WEBINAR
Creating a Personal Development Plan
Dec 15th — 12 pm, 2 pm ET
Learn to recognize types of goals and understand effective goal setting. Explore potential obstacles that can create barriers to reaching your goals.

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