

Stress Management and Meditation in Corporate Culture: Key Components of Success and Work-Life Balance

By *Eileen Lichtenstein, MS Ed (October, 2007)*

Meditation is the ancient-latest trendy buzzword making the rounds, and even those who wouldn't give the concept a second thought a few years ago are now practicing on a regular basis. Some folks have been practicing for years and would appreciate reinforcement at work, where most of their waking time is spent! Clearing the mind with intention and utilizing a focused relaxation breathing technique to break/prevent an anxiety cycle is what it's all about.

Go figure: When we perceive ourselves as having the least amount of time to "spare" is when "time-outs" are most indicated. Our mind/bodies need the opportunity to detach from external environments, to "clear out" and recharge; many are finding it an increasingly effective technique to take a "short break."

Increasing responsibilities and across-the-board economic concerns are creating a climate in which stress has become a routine part of doing business. And we're paying for it in absenteeism, unprecedented incidence of depression, addictive behaviors and stress related illnesses, everyday irritability and "burn-out". Maintaining a competitive edge can result in energy drainage from individuals and systems. Stress has been identified as the #1 health risk in America. Programs incorporated into the workplace for stress reduction, while meeting the unique needs of the organization, create practical hand-on tools to enhance performance, productivity and memory; boost energy, and morale while promoting overall wellness of the participants. Statistically speaking, if there are 100 people in your company or department, then probably*...

- 10 are heavy drinkers
- 50 feel they are under moderate stress
- 30 smoke
- 60 sit at their desk all day
- 27 have cardiovascular disease
- 5 have diagnosed diabetes, 5 have undiagnosed diabetes
- 25 (or more) have high blood cholesterol
- 35 are overweight by 20% or more

**According to Wellness Council of America, whose sources include the American Heart Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, StayWell Health Management Systems.*

Some of America's top companies who provide wellness programs, as well as stress management, include: AT&T Communications, Union Pacific Railroad, Johnson and Johnson, Du Pont Company, Sunbeam/Oster Company, and many others.

Take heart! Lifestyles and stress levels *can be changed* with impressive results! **Be proactive** and create **focus, creativity, decision making abilities, energy renewal and well being** for yourself, management and the entire support staff. Isn't it time *your*

company implemented a stress management program? If you're a reader who is not in the position to implement a new program, be proactive and ask for one!

The goals of a **Stress Management Program** are to provide an understanding of the role stress plays in our lives, including recent studies of the impact of chronic stress on physical, emotional and mental states, and to provide experiences of different relaxation techniques that can be used in the daily lives of the participants. Emphasis is on simple techniques, easy to learn, and that can be used in any setting to quickly produce a reduction in the level of stress being experienced in today's turbulent world, both in and out of work. Integrating stress reduction/prevention/intervention techniques and a strong awareness of personal triggers to help bypass personal panic buttons from being pushed are goals of the program.

Participants are encouraged to create personal goals to reduce stress and for work/life balance issues, especially in the realm of time management. **Follow-up** individual and team **coaching** is encouraged for optimal, consistent results.

Workplace Stress Relief Tips (*throughout the day*):

- **Take Cleansing Breaths:** Three sets of deep inhalations through the nose (belly rising) and exhaling through the nose, (abdomen deflating) can (temporarily) change your physiology.
- **Stretch:** Practice Office Yoga and the [Moving Meditation® Fitness Program](#) throughout the day to release/reduce tension and increase energy.
- **Walk:** A five minute walk outside can change your mood and mindset.
- **Listen to Music:** A mood changer.
- **Eat Peacefully:** This aids the digestion and gives you "time away". Leave your office!
- **Take a "mini-vacation":** Sit or lie down comfortably, close your eyes and visualize a favorite vacation spot. Be as relaxed as you were there. Stay there for a while
- **Allow Time:** Give yourself extra time for the unexpected.
- **Smile and Laugh:** Humor has been proven effective in reducing stress.

Sing ~ Dance ~ Love ~ Be Grateful ~ Think Positive ~ Have Fun!

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