

Living Well

TOTAL WELLNESS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Success with Stress

Learn to...

- Use four skills to reduce stress, improve communication and enhance peace of mind

Joe stretched out as far as he could, his hand just inches from where the call button dangled.

He waited, screaming inside. Trapped in his hospital bed.

Pictures of wheelchairs and bed pans surged through his mind. But each time his heart raced, he focused back on his breath ...and those thoughts of peace.

From: "Trapped" - a *Being Your Best* story

The *Satisfaction Skills* are four choices that can help you to reduce your stress.

Watch for these signs of stress: the *alarm response* (e.g., tight muscles, rapid breathing, fear, anger) and the *snooze response* (e.g., low energy, sighing, depression).

Try using the *Satisfaction Skills* in all your relationships, especially the stressful ones. Most likely you'll see that your signs of stress happen less often; aren't as strong; and go away faster.



Awareness is the choice to focus on what's most helpful. This may be:

- *The present moment*, instead of a troubled past or a fearful future
- *Someone else's perspective*, rather than just your point of view
- Focusing your attention on your breath or a peaceful thought
- The *spiritual*, physical or emotional aspect of a situation
- Knowing someone's highs and lows each day or each week



Affirmations or **Gratitude** are positive statements or compliments like: "Thank you" or "Good job"

- Affirmations can also be positive thoughts like: "I breathe in love, and breathe out fear"



Assertiveness is the skill of telling people what you think, how you feel and what you want.

- *Assertive statements* usually begin with "I am..", "I want...", "I feel..."
- *Aggressive statement* usually start with: "You are...", "You should..."

Acceptance doesn't mean giving up. Instead, it means letting go of your anger, fear or guilt, so you can find more peace in the present moment.

Acceptance may include thoughts such as:

- Forgiveness ends suffering
- Your will be done



Do you use each skill equally in relating to ...friends? ...family? ...or others?

Does stress makes you blind?

Think of the last time you were stressed. What did you notice about yourself ...and the world around you? ...The good stuff? ...or the bad stuff?

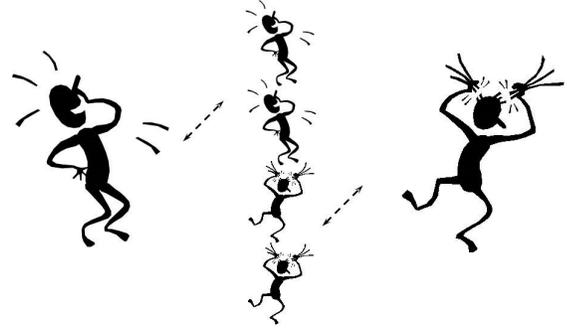
It's almost impossible to see or feel love—or anything good in your life— when you're stuck feeling guilty, fearful or stressed. The satisfaction skills can remove this "blindness" so you see more options, including the strengths you have.

Forgive Yourself ...and others

If you don't forgive, you'll stay "blind." The *Satisfaction Skills* are practical steps toward forgiving yourself ...and others. If you're like most people, you'll need to keep using them over and over. But try them, and see what happens.

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Feelings affect the facts we see.



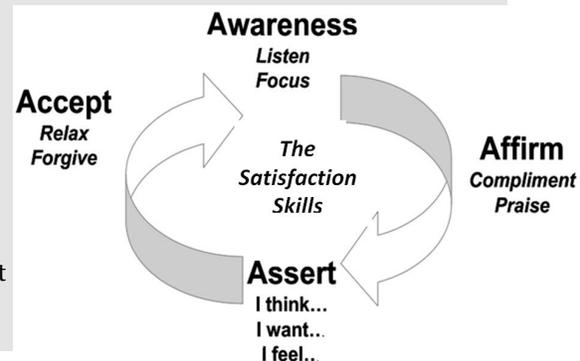
If Spirituality is Important....

If a prayer is "any thought that connects us to God or God's creations," then the *Satisfaction Skills* suggest four ways to pray.

- *Awareness* can open your mind to the blessings, love and goodness that surrounds you now.
- *Affirmations*, such as praising the wonders of creation or the miracles of life, are an uplifting and common form of prayer.
- *Assertiveness* can be used to prayerfully describe your needs and feelings.
- *Acceptance* helps us recognize that we do not have the wisdom to predict the future or to understand God's will (e.g., as expressed in prayers like: "Thy will be done"). It helps us to trust.

You will get the most benefit if you use *all* the satisfaction skills in your prayers - just as *all* of the skills can help bring more love into your personal relationships.

From: "[Spirituality and the Satisfaction Skills](#)" - a BYB booklet



So What? How has "stress blindness" affected you? If you've mostly seen the bad when you're stressed, have you made bad decisions? ...about yourself? ..about others? How could the Satisfaction Skills help you forgive yourself? ...or others?

Now What? What can you do stop your stress? ...for a minute? ...a day? ...Or longer? How can you help yourself and to have less stress? ...and less stress blindness? Get help from community resources by calling **United Way's 211 referral and information service**.

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