

STAYWELL

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Need to Borrow a Jack?

Years ago, when I was upset, my mother told me a story that left a lasting impression on me. She told me of a man that was driving through a small farming community in the middle of the night and acquired a flat tire. The man got out of his car, thinking he was prepared to fix the flat tire, when he discovered there was no jack in the trunk. He was understandably upset. He had been on this old country road for hours and he had not seen any cars drive by so he didn't expect any to come soon. Several miles in the distance he could see a yard light of a local farmer's home. The man decided to proceed and seek the farmer's help.



As the man walked on the lonely dark road he tried to determine the best way to approach the farmer after knocking on the door. The man subsequently became concerned with how the farmer might respond when suddenly awakened from his slumber by someone dumb enough to not have a jack in his car. At first he thought the farmer may be upset, but then recognize the situation and offer his help. The man then realized that it was spring time and the farmer may have worked late planting and preparing the soil and would probably be rising very early to get his day started. That reminded the man of a friend who once told him that farmers think city folk are stupid. These scenarios continued to develop as he walked to the farm house. As a result, the man began planning defenses to the farmer's offensive remarks and the

man's anger began to boil inside. As he entered the property and walked down the lane, the dog began to bark and the chickens cackled and crowed. A light in the farmhouse came on. The man became more nervous and upset thinking the farmer may be upset about a stranger walking in the barn yard and could possibly have a firearm which compounded his nervousness. As the man approached the door he felt ready for whatever the farmer dished out. He tensed and braced for whatever could happen and then rang the bell. At first there was no answer. Frustrated he pounded on the door. A loud response came, "just a minute." The man was hostile when the farmer opened the door. He was so sure of the farmer's reaction that the man yelled, "I didn't want to borrow your dumb jack anyway." Then the man walked away!

The point of this story is obvious. Have you ever needed to borrow a jack? Sometimes we create a situation in our minds that doesn't exist and may never exist. *What-ifs* can create stress in people's lives, which is not healthy. Even if a situation arises it can't always be changed. Worrying will not stop it. Worrying only creates a sense of terror and lost control of logical thinking, creating tension, and other unhealthy side effects, such as lack of sleep. The fact is, speculation may lead to a person acting inappropriately resulting in the person missing an opportunity he/she may have walked miles to obtain. This should not be confused with preparedness. Being prepared, paying off debt, saving money, or even checking for a jack before a trip, can help when a crisis arises.

Without a doubt, stress affects and creates health problems. Below are some signs and symptoms of stress and some tips on how to prevent or control stress in our lives.

Stress Signs

- ♥ Cold hands, rapid breathing, rapid heartbeat, shakiness, headaches, muscle tension, knotted stomach.
- ♥ Difficulty sleeping.
- ♥ Changes in eating habits.
- ♥ Increased use of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes.
- ♥ Chronic irritability/increased anxiety.
- ♥ Frequent illness or physical complaints.

Managing Stress

- ♥ Avoid being idle and participating in idle conversation, stay active and keep busy.
- ♥ Relieve the tension with exercise or physical activity. Play golf, sports, walk, run, garden.
- ♥ Talk things out with a friend or relative (keep to the facts not speculation). If the situation is really serious, seek professional help. IPSC has an employee assistance program with KEPRO 800-999-1077.
- ♥ Accept change and learn to adapt.
- ♥ Get enough rest and eat good healthy foods (a lot of fruits and vegetables).
- ♥ Fit some fun relaxation time into your schedule, do more family activities. **Make the time!**
- ♥ Learn that everything can't be done at once. Make a to-do list, then do one thing at a time.
- ♥ Learn to manage the things that can be controlled and don't worry about what others control.
- ♥ Learn to be flexible. Look for the good in the situation.
- ♥ Recognize that hidden in each crisis situation is an opportunity to learn and grow.
- ♥ Develop a realistic, positive attitude.

Years ago I heard Hyrum Smith of Franklin Quest speak on changing our belief windows. He told the story of a friend that was a lawyer in a family of lawyers. It was an expected family tradition. Hyrum explained that his friend was always unhappy, depressed, and ill. His friend had been this way for as long as Hyrum knew him, (about 15 years). One day Hyrum's friend went home and discussed his unhappiness with his wife, he revealed to his wife his life dream. He wanted to be a music professor at a nearby university. The wife was distraught and deeply concerned. By quitting he would take an eight fold cut in pay (Say if he made \$200,000 a year he would now be making \$25,000 a year), a very sizable lifestyle

change. After many long discussions he changed professions and became a music teacher at a university. Hyrum revealed that he had never seen his friend or the family so happy and healthy. The decrease in pay did not tear the family or their lives apart, but brought them together.

So what changed? The belief window that he had, to be a lawyer and that money is what brought the family happiness changed. By changing the belief window, he and his family obtained happiness. In this case he also changed careers.



Does the happiness and satisfaction of a job, affect a person's health? Over the years I have found that if a person doesn't like his/her job or has a high degree of job-related or family stress, then he/she are less productive, the aches and pains seem to be worse and take longer to heal. Even old injuries that have not bothered a person for years, now do. It is truly better to alleviate the stress or learn to control it rather than suffer in a stressful situation. Try the above stress reduction suggestions or seek professional help. Sometimes, reducing stress requires a big step, but when a person takes the step, the effects are immediately evident.

Most stress is self-induced and avoidable. Stress usually occurs when an individual is idle—idle minds create idle thoughts and *what-ifs*. To avoid rumors and associated stress, decrease idleness. If there is time that needs to be filled, exercise. Exercise is the best natural way to alleviate stress in a person's life. If a person is too busy for personal time then he/she needs to make the time; or stress is sure to follow.