

Conquering Stress



Sailing On Calmer Waters

© 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 C J Green

All rights reserved.

Nothing may be reproduced from this work or stored in any form without the express written permission of the publisher. The author and the publishers issue this book on the understanding that whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all the information contained within, they will not accept any responsibility for any loss direct or otherwise, as a consequence of using any of the information presented. The opinions given are those of the author who is acting in good faith according to the extensive research undertaken by him and who confirms that he himself uses the principles and techniques described. Users are urged to take medical advice before embarking upon, or changing, a course of medication or a fitness programme.

**Welcome to the essential guide to
conquering stress, depression and anxiety.**

Table Of Contents

<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Introduction</i></u>	3
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters <i>The Power Already Within You</i></u>	4
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Watch Those Plates!</i></u>	6
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Crossover Time</i></u>	8
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Exercise Your Powers Of Control</i></u>	10
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Throw Down A Challenge</i></u>	14
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Let Sleeping Dogs Lie</i></u>	19
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Busy Doing Happiness</i></u>	21
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Exercise Your Body, Calm Your Mind</i></u>	25
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Plug Into Happier Feeds</i></u>	27
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Tune In To Happiness</i></u>	31
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Natural Mood Elevators</i></u>	33
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Mapping The Route To Calmer Waters</i></u>	36
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Beyond Compare</i></u>	38
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Reign In Your Wild Horses</i></u>	41
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Chart Your Own Course</i></u>	44
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Manifesting Your Happiness</i></u>	47
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Ease Your Burden</i></u>	51
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Are You Talkin' To You?</i></u>	59
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Mood Food</i></u>	64
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Making Your Mind Up</i></u>	67
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Not- So-Great Expectations</i></u>	69
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Time To Chill</i></u>	71
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Meet The Sandman</i></u>	73
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Let The Chord Of Happiness Ring</i></u>	75
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Keep Yourself Connected</i></u>	78
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>The Plot Thickens</i></u>	81
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>10 Quick Fire Stress Busters</i></u>	85
<u>Sailing On Calmer Waters: <i>Inspirational Quotations</i></u>	96

Sailing On Calmer Waters:

Introduction

Hello again and a warm welcome to **"Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters"**.

In **"Emerging From The Tempest"**, you discovered how the plagues of modern society – Stress, Depression and Anxiety – arise and you now have a vital insight into how a 5 step loop traps sufferers into a harrowing mind storm. Understanding this loop is such an important step to take because when you understand how these plagues work, you can then move to conquer them – forever!

OK, you're now ready to fully emerge from the tempest and enjoy greater levels of calmness, happiness and peace of mind. The storm has been broken, now let's move to conquer stress, depression and anxiety and ensure you never experience such a traumatic time ever again.

In this part of the Conquering Stress program, you're going to become equipped with some very powerful skills that simply crush stress, depression and anxiety before they even arise. From a raging tempest that brought so much misery to your life – and my life and the lives of millions of other sufferers – you'll find peace and tranquillity by **"Sailing On Calmer Waters"**.

No more storms. No more unhappiness. No more torment. No more stress, no more anxiety and no more depression – ever!

Sounds good yes? YES!

So let's get started. And remember, take your time, go at your own pace, a pace you feel comfortable with and if you have any questions don't hesitate to email me. You're not alone, and together we'll beat stress, depression and anxiety once and for all.

Ready? Let's begin.

Sailing On Calmer Waters **The Power Already Within You**

"Our life is what our thoughts make it."

– Marcus Aurelius

The quote above is one of my very favorite quotes. In one small but empowering sentence, Marcus Aurelius has revealed the key to life. Quite simply, it shows that everything that happens to us comes as a result of thought. Indeed, in **"Emerging From The Tempest"** you learned exactly how important modes of thinking are when it comes to interpreting events.

It all boils down to one very simple equation:

First comes a thought. Then comes an action.

You know I emerged from the raging storm of my anxiety and depression without taking powerful anti-depressant drugs. OK, I was fortunate to be largely ignorant about what was happening to me and to the fact that the way I reacted to events caused me to become stressed, anxious and depressed. But all of the powerful skills you are about to develop were instrumental, each one of them, in helping me emerge from the storm and find calmer waters. I know for sure they will do exactly the same for you.

The quote above from Marcus Aurelius had a major impact upon me right at a time when I was at my lowest. At such a point, struggling to make sense out of my life, his words triggered a realization:

When I think in a negative way and react to events in a way which causes me great harm, what will happen to me if I start to change the way I think? What will happen to me if I change the way I respond to situations and events by thinking in a less negative, less harmful and less traumatic way?

Would I feel calmer, better, happier?

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

This realization was further re-enforced, quite unexpectedly, when I was relaxing one evening. Have you seen a film called "Stigmata"? OK, I'm not usually a film watcher (I'm one of these annoying channel scanners, forever switching channels to see if I'm missing anything!) but I was hooked by the opening scene and stuck with it. It's a film about a woman who is "possessed" by the spirit of a priest who discovered the lost gospel of St. Thomas and who had the stigmata – manifesting the wounds of the crucified Christ on the body. (I'm not a religious man so please don't think this book is about finding religion.)

At one point in the film, a line from the gospel is recited that further ties in with the quote by Marcus Aurelius:

"The kingdom of God lies within you and all around you."

So, I reasoned, if you change what lies within you, you will change the whole world around you. Believe me, I've done this, and I'm going to show you how to do it.

I just need to give you something to be mindful of. You, like me, will have spent many years in developing stressful modes of thinking. All of the brilliant skills and techniques in this release will not get rid of stress, anxiety or depression overnight.

But the more you use them, the more ingrained they become and you will develop less stressful modes of thinking. Please allow yourself as much time as you need for this to happen.

The point here is that it isn't a race to lose stress, or depression or anxiety, the point is to reach calmer waters. Cut yourself some slack and let your journey take as long as it takes.

There's more empowering quotes later.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:

Watch Those Plates!

The first skill you're going to acquire is one that you can apply to your life right away. I think a lot of people who endure harrowing episodes of stress, depression and anxiety do so as a result of taking on way too much. And, just as I was, many people may be totally unaware that stress, anxiety or depression have arisen, they'll think they feel so bad because of the situations and events they are facing.

When you are suffering from stress, anxiety or depression, you are already dealing with a full plate. It is vital that you **do not pile the plate higher**. Postpone any major decisions: change of job, house move, starting a serious relationship, marriage, divorce until you've got your stress, anxiety or depression under control.

Take my story as an example of what I mean. I was dealing with the loss of my father, my mother's terminal illness, Lisa's depression, and uncertainty about my job. My plate was full to the brim!

What did I do?

Decided to move to a new house in an area I didn't know.

What was the predictable, inevitable outcome?

Descent into anxiety-induced depression.

Do I believe things wouldn't have been as bad if I hadn't moved house? Absolutely. No question about it.

Have you seen circus performers who spin plates? They manage to keep adding more and more plates until it gets harder and harder to keep them all spinning. Eventually, several plates begin to wobble and fall to the ground, where they smash. That

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

is a good analogy to describe my descent into anxiety, and I also think it describes the way millions of people enter into harmful episodes of stress, depression and anxiety.

We can relate this to our discussion about how stress works. Back in "**Conquering Stress: Emerging From The Tempest**", I stated that one of the main factors in becoming stressed can be a lack of control over your life. If you take on too much at once, it is likely you'll fuel your stress as it becomes harder and harder to stay on top of everything.

But many people simply don't appreciate how much they've taken on. Maybe they know they have but – and this can be especially true for males – they don't want to lose face or feel inadequate. So, they carry on regardless, continuing to heap more onto an already over-flowing plate until the day dawns where they cannot cope with life and wham! They are deep into the storm of stress, anxiety or depression wondering how they got there.

And as you know all too well, when you're deep into the storm, you find it so very hard to see a way out. It's so harrowing, it really is.

So go to your computer or get a pen and a notepad. Write down everything that you are dealing with right now. Do this so you are aware of how full your plate is. When you've done this, prioritize the tasks, giving your attention to the most important ones. The less important ones you can either postpone, delegate by getting others to help, or just leave.

The goal is to reduce the amount on your plate so you can cope more effectively with what needs to be done. This will reduce your stress levels significantly.

Important: Get stress, depression or anxiety firmly under control before you undertake any major changes to your life.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:

Crossover Time

We know the way we make sense out of the various changes to our lives we all experience (changing jobs, job loss, divorce, marriage, moving house, losing loved ones etc.) can cause us to become highly stressed, anxious or depressed.

Adapting to new circumstances is hard and we can put ourselves under pressure by wanting to adapt straight away. But initially, it is very difficult to feel comfortable about our new situation. We feel unsettled, strange, awkward, ill-at-ease and these feelings can make it harder and harder to adapt.

Have you ever made a change to your life and then once the change has happened, you said:

"Things just aren't the same anymore."

I said this so many times when I moved house. I didn't know anyone in the area, I found it hard to get used to how quiet the neighborhood was, and I was totally ignorant as to what the area had to offer. In short, I was a stranger in a strange place!

I was placing myself under stress because I expected to just move on in and be as contented and happy as I'd been in my previous home. Obviously, feeling as comfortable as this right from the get-go is a lot to ask for. And as it didn't happen, I became highly stressed because I thought I'd moved to an area I didn't like. Feeling this way had the unwanted consequence of placing stress on my relationship with Lisa who'd say:

"I don't understand. You really wanted to move here and now you don't like it!"

She was right. So what was the problem?

I didn't give myself a chance to adapt. I placed myself under great stress because I hadn't settled into my new home straight away. I started to think in a stressful way by assigning a bad outcome to the move:

"I don't like this area! I'll never settle here!"

I hadn't given myself a chance to get to know it! I hadn't allowed myself any **crossover time**, the time it takes to adjust to new situations and circumstances. Crossover time is the allowance you give yourself to adjust from circumstances and situations you were familiar with to your new circumstances in life.

So, when changes occur in your life, particularly changes of a major kind, give yourself plenty of crossover time to adapt to your new circumstances. Expecting everything to be fine and dandy straight from the word go will put you under severe stress. Things may feel a little strange at first, sure, but just because they do it doesn't mean the change is bad.

Take time to settle. My mother used to say "You don't become established overnight" and she's right. As I got to know the area more thoroughly, I found some great places and was getting to know people and 12 months after moving there, I'd settled down and I really liked the place.

Sadly, because of the enormous stress I was feeling and because of the toll it had taken on my relationship with Lisa, too much damage had already been done and I lost both my home and my relationship.

Applying crossover time to changes can make a real difference in adapting to change, no matter what the change is and it's an excellent tool to have in your stress management toolkit.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Exercise Your Powers Of Control

Here's how you can retain control over your life by removing or restricting any negative influences.

This is one of the easiest, yet most powerful techniques you can use to help elevate mood.

Let me give you a bit of background. A business newsletter I subscribed to contained an article about a US entrepreneur called Randy Gage. Randy Gage is an enormously successful marketer, who, before he achieved tremendous success in business, had experienced several traumatic events – he spent time in prison, and had lost a fortune in various unsuccessful business ventures.

OK, in the article, he spoke about something he calls “the datasphere”. It is the amount of negativity that bombards us every day through the various media – newspapers, magazines, TV news, soap operas, advertising and films.

Most of this negativity is absorbed by our subconscious mind. One insidious example would be news coverage of disasters in very poor, third world countries. When we watch these programmes, or read about them in the press, it is only natural for any caring human being to feel enormously for the plight of these poor people.

However, if you are prone to thinking in stressful ways, feelings of guilt can result. You know you have a good standard of living, and wonder why you should have so much comfort but they suffer.

In seeing a daily news bulletin, where by and large the content focuses on the bad side of life – murders, rapes, wars, violence, natural disasters etc. – we can also begin to perceive the world as a very bad place.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

In other words, we are exposing ourselves to material that can alter our mood and make us feel sad, particularly if you think in stress-inducing modes.

Let's help ourselves by cutting out a daily "hit" of negativity.

I never read a newspaper now. I may pick up a local one to read about the sport, nothing else. As for news bulletins, I seriously cannot remember the last time I watched a TV news bulletin. I occasionally listen to a radio news bulletin, that's it.

Now, you may be thinking "yes Chris, but it's important to keep informed about what's going on in the world."

I thought this too. I'd always watched the evening news bulletins since childhood. My parents were religious about watching the news.

But is it important?

Not in the slightest. Let me demonstrate why. Think of the news bulletin you watched on February 3rd 1998. I'd like you to recall each and every story that was featured in the bulletin, and I'd like you to find examples of how it related to your life.

Can you remember? Imagine trying to do this for all of the news bulletins you've watched in your lifetime!

I can't remember what the news stories were in the last news bulletin I watched, and I'm talking about 6 months ago! None of these events have an effect on my life in the main.

And what about the times you were on vacation and didn't have a care in the world about what was going on back home. Why didn't you care? Because you were relaxing and thinking about **HAVING A GOOD TIME!**

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

What happened to these stories? Did the fact that you didn't buy a newspaper or catch CNN mean that these stories didn't continue to be reported?

Of course not!

Here's the rub: DID YOU ENJOY YOUR VACATION DESPITE NOT KEEPING INFORMED ABOUT WORLD NEWS?

Do you see what I mean? You were too busy enjoying your life to worry or care about what was happening all over the globe.

If you want to keep up to date with what's happening to the world, tune in to a radio news bulletin a couple of times a week. They're much shorter and you won't be exposing your mind to pictures and images that can cause distress.

We can take this a step further. If you're feeling depressed, avoid emotional films, soap operas, dramas and the like. OK, I know some people love to watch a good weepy – I do too! – but watching these types of programmes will only lower our mood further and make us feel more sad.

How many soap operas have you watched that solely deal with the happy side of life? Instead of dealing with murder, treachery, deceit, double-crossing, terminal illnesses, tragedy, relationship breakdown, abuse, etc., etc., etc.!

Hang on, I've turned into The King of Siam! Enough, onward, clap-clap! (I could get into this...!)

I bet there isn't a single soap opera that has. Sure, the happy events are there. But they're well over-shadowed by the unhappy events. Let's be honest. No one would watch them if they were mainly about the happier side of life.

What's good about this technique is that it keeps a sense of inward control. These programmes and films will always be

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

made, whether you like it or not. But YOU can decide whether or not you watch them and indeed when & where you'll watch them.

And, quite by surprise, I noticed something else that was happening to me. There I was one night watching TV, the usual glass of wine in front of me, and I suddenly realized I hadn't been watching or listening to the programme!

Can you guess what I was doing instead?

Hey, behave!

I bet it's happened to you.

I was sat there staring at the screen but I was churning over my problems in my mind. The programme was so dull and uninteresting that my mind had switched off and I started to think about my problems, in particular, the past.

I'm sure you've done the same. How many times have you sat watching TV but your mind has been anywhere else except the programme?

These days, I only watch programmes that I have an interest in. These are more often than not comedy programmes, documentaries and natural science programmes. Sport is also a favorite.

We'll be looking at alternatives to TV in later tips. Keep control. Be very selective about what you allow your mind to be exposed to. Allowing your mind to be exposed to everything and anything put out by the media relegates you to the level of a zombie, i.e. under the control of others. You are being fed information selected by someone else who deemed it fit for your consumption. Please don't let them do it to you. Take control and decide what you want to expose your mind to.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Throw Down A Challenge

To stop developing modes of thinking conducive with stress and depression, an important skill needs to be learned. It is the ability to challenge your thinking. Once the skill is mastered, it becomes a habit. You perform it without consciously making an effort to do so. When I first came across this skill, I thought it would be difficult.

Then I discovered something about the mind:

You can only hold one thought in your mind at any one time.

It's easily demonstrated. Try to think about a great big pink giraffe with yellow spots grazing on orange grass and a purple surfer on the biggest wave of milk you can imagine at the same time.

See? You either see one image or the other, you cannot see them both unless you imagine the big pink giraffe is on the surfboard! (I bet this image has just sprung into your mind!) So, in knowing this, we can either think of a negative response to an event or a positive one.

Let me make this quite clear. We have the power to CHOOSE whether we think a positive thought or a negative one.

When we think negatively – assigning bad outcomes to events, self-doubt, etc. – we have to challenge our thoughts. Instead of seeing things as either up or down, we need to find some middle ground.

Remember, nothing is ever wholly bad or absolutely good. Come to think of it, neither is anyone.

How can we do this?

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Bring in other possibilities. If you say to yourself:

"I'm completely useless at cooking. I always get it wrong, I'm hopeless."

Inside your head, say:

"Yes, I agree, I am a bad cook, but I'm good at gardening, great at fixing broken toys and I can speak mandarin Chinese fluently." Or whatever it is you're good at.

Instantly remind yourself about your good side. Get rid of the negative thought inside the mind and replace it with a positive.

Let me share this with you. Everyone in the world can have two stories told about them. EVERYONE.

Let's say I'm telling a story about you to a group of strangers.

I can tell them about all the times you shouted at someone for no reason. About the times you lost your cool and made a situation worse. I can tell them about situations where you should've stood up and spoken out and you didn't, and about situations where you should've shut the hell up and you mouthed off like a parrot on acid. How about the several occasions when you let down your family and friends? I might also mention the moments when you deliberately did something you knew was wrong, but carried on regardless of the consequences. I could bring to the group's attention all your broken promises, the times you lied and the times when you bad-mouthed others purely out of spite.

What impression would the group have of you?

Conversely, I could describe a person who brightened people's day with acts of kindness and thoughtfulness. About all the times you said something that made a difference and made people feel good. I could tell them about the many occasions where you

Conquering Stress: *Sailing On Calmer Waters*

gave freely of yourself – even missed out on something you really wanted to do – to help someone. I'd make sure the group knew of all the times you worked so hard to achieve a goal. I'd tell them about the times you made your family happy and about the times when you showed great courage in facing a frightening situation which you overcame and I could tell them about all the times your friends needed you and you were there for them. And hey, let's not forget all those times you helped other people only for them to take you for granted and not even notice your efforts and you never said a word against them nor did you let it stop you from doing similar acts again. I'd also point out the times when you kept your cool and made a situation better even though losing it would've been fully understandable.

Now what impression would the group have?

This is the same person, remember?

What happens when we are stressed or anxious or depressed is that we completely forget about our good side and brood about our bad side over and over again. We recall bad events from our past, we start to think the world is against us, we feel out of control and that the only fate that awaits us is catastrophic.

We need to remind ourselves of the good. Instead of thinking either up or down, we need to bring in middle ground.

Learn to question your thoughts. If you think:

"Oh no, I just know this is going to be disastrous."

Ask:

"What other possible outcomes are there?"

"What can I do to prevent this?"

Something I do if I feel myself thinking negatively is to shout:

"STOP!"

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Then:

"I'm focusing on one outcome. I know other outcomes are possible. What are they?"

I then come to the computer and write down all the alternatives I can think of, both good and bad.

Speaking of computers, there is a similarity between how the mind works and how a computer works. If you TELL the mind something, it will take it on board, just like a computer does when storing data. If you ask the mind a question, it will provide you with an answer. Ask it a negative question, it will give you a negative answer. Ask it for positive answers and it will deliver.

So, the way we ask a question will determine the answer our mind will give us. Here's an example:

I'll bet you've asked this question many times:

"What's the point in doing anything?"

Yes? I asked this question many, many times during my episode of depression. My answer was usually:

"There is no point. Everyone and everything I loved has gone forever."

But, using the skill of generating other possibilities and outcomes, I re-phrased it:

"What's the point in NOT doing anything?"

I got the answer:

"If I don't do anything things will remain the same."

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

I didn't want things to stay the same, that's for sure, and I realized that if I did something, yes, there was a possibility things MIGHT not change despite my efforts. But there was also a possibility that things MIGHT get better. If I didn't do anything, things were CERTAIN to remain the same.

Do you see the difference in how the question changed the response I got by bringing in a different possibility?

I used this technique to help me deal with the loss of my parents. I found it very hard to accept that they both became terminally ill at around the same time and couldn't help each other when they needed it most. And as I said in my story, when Mom died, I knew I was to face this world alone.

I felt very sad and angry about what had happened. Then I used this technique. I started to assign multiple explanations; here's just a small selection of them:

I buried my parents they didn't bury me. Some parents have had to cope with the loss of their children and I can't imagine how difficult that must be to come to terms with.

My parents died with me at their side. They didn't die alone and they didn't die without love.

Although I now have no family, this doesn't mean I have no life. I am free to go wherever I want, whenever I want. I can also undertake major changes to my life without impacting on a partner or on my children. I now accept that new people will come into my life and some people will move out of it.

Do you see how generating other possibilities and explanations helped me?

Seeing other possibilities stops me from focusing on negative outcomes and alleviates my anxiety. The less anxious I am, the better I feel.

It's another powerful weapon to have in your armory.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Let Sleeping Dogs Lie

A common behavior in people suffering from stress and stress related illnesses is the recalling of bad experiences from the past and imagining catastrophic events in the future.

The antidote to this is to live in the only place you can – the here and now.

I'm a real jerk for living in the past. I recall bad events from as long as 15 years ago and replay them in my mind, chiding myself for how I acted.

It's an absolutely futile waste of time, the only outcome of which is feeling bad about myself.

To stop myself from living in the past, or imagining disastrous events in the future, I remember these quotes:

"Don't think about the past, the past is gone forever. Don't think about tomorrow, for tomorrow may never come. Live for today, it is all you have."

"The past is like a foreign country. They do things differently there." – L.P.Hartley

"You cannot change the past, it's gone forever. You can shape your future by living in the now."

They're great quotes aren't they, particularly the second one. My apologies for being unable to find out the originators of two of the quotes, but I couldn't leave them out. Please do email me if you know the answers!

The problem with brooding over past events is that it just brings more of the event into our lives – we keep the event ongoing, if you like. What's the point of that?

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

None whatsoever. Apart from self-harm of course. So let's put the past to bed once and for all.

If someone were to burn your hand with hot iron, would you turn to them the next day and ask them to burn it again? Would you ask them to burn your other hand to see if you'd react differently? Would you ask them to come to your house at the same time every day and burn you so you didn't forget what it felt like to be burned?

I should think not!

So why ask the mind to keep burning you with your past?

A very good technique to apply if you're brooding over a particular situation from your past is to resolve to never think about it beyond a certain date. I use New Year, it works for me. Other dates could be birthdays, anniversaries, historical dates – whatever is good for you.

Before the date, write down the entire experience. Recall how you felt, write down your anger, your sadness, your frustration and write down any other emotions you feel. Let it all out of you. At the end, forgive anyone else involved, and forgive yourself. Write down what you've learned from the experience by applying the skill of challenging your thinking. What middle ground can you find? Please trust me, it will be there.

When you've done this, place the letter in an envelope marked:

"The Past. Gone forever."

When the hour of your choosing arrives, burn the envelope. You must now resolve to NEVER think about this event again.

Say to yourself: "A new chapter in my life is now about to unfold. Time to move on."

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Busy Doing Happiness

OK, you now know you can only think one thought at a time. The technique of replacing a negative thought with a positive one that you acquired earlier is a good way of eliminating negative thoughts from the mind. And when you combine it with the following stress management technique, you suffocate stress, anxiety and depression right at the very root. Before I tell you what it is – and I use this every single day as much as I can – let's take a little checkpoint here because there is a pattern I want to bring to your attention:

- First comes a thought, then comes an action.
- Thought is how humans interpret reality.
- You can only think one thought at a time.
- The mind works like a computer. What goes in comes out.
- Negative thoughts will produce actions that harm us.
- Positive thoughts will produce actions that please us.
- You have the power to choose what you think.

Can you see the relevance here? If you choose to allow your mind to dwell upon negative aspects, you will interpret life in a negative way and you'll arouse the fear response within you. You'll enter the stress loop. You'll be unhappy, your health will suffer and you may enter into a serious episode of depression.

And you know from reading about my experience that the above paragraph is a concise definition of my descent into anxiety and depression. Believe me when I say it happens to millions.

But it can be very hard to consciously program your mind with positive aspects, especially during times of inactivity.

If you were to ask Lisa how she knew I wasn't coping very well, she would say it's because I get frustrated and say:

"I'M BORED!"

I find it very hard to deal with silence and peace and quiet.

You know a bit about me. Why do you think I find it hard?

Exactly. It's because when I haven't got anything to OCCUPY MY MIND, I start to brood on the past, or get anxious about things going wrong in the future and I bring negativity into my mind.

We know that thoughts produce an action. Negative thinking produces actions. It makes us sad, angry, frustrated. It arouses the fear response within us, causing the brain to over-dream to fulfil the emotion. We don't get enough restful sleep. We feel more and more tired, which makes us think about negative aspects more and more and we're now in the stress loop.

So, if we can prevent negative brooding, we cut off the fuel needed to maintain stress.

How can we do that?

GET BUSY. I don't mean work yourself to the bone for 16 hours a day! I mean keep your mind occupied doing things you enjoy. Yes, I know, it feels like an almighty inconvenience at first – but please push on as it will help to eliminate stress and depression.

Not a bad reward for your efforts, is it?

There are lots and lots of things I'd really like to try before I breathe my last. I'm sure there's heaps of stuff you want to try as well. Here's a few things I want to do to stimulate a few of your own ideas – do what I'm doing and make a list:

- Speak Spanish.
- Do a cookery course. Especially Thai & French cuisines.
- Play the guitar to a very high standard.
- Write poetry.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

- Write a play.
- Write a novel.
- Write a song.
- Learn to fly an aeroplane.
- Astronomy. The night sky absolutely fascinates me.
- Study philosophy in depth. It's my very favourite subject.
- Theatre, cinema, concerts – I want to attend more of these.

There's a lot more but you can see the picture.

Now, if I want to do these activities, I have to become involved in them. Quite simply, I have to do. When I'm doing these activities, I'm thinking about what I'm doing and therefore, I cannot think about anything else.

But the good news doesn't end there. When we partake in enjoyable activities, we stimulate the brain to produce chemicals that make us feel good – neurotransmitters such as serotonin.

Also, we are fulfilling a basic human need: to be challenged. We are getting stimulation from activities that stretch us. When you occupy your mind performing activities you enjoy, you are in effect strangling stress. It simply can't flourish because you're not brooding and you're producing more feel good chemicals.

To paraphrase a famous proverb:

The devil will find work for idle minds to do.

His work is negative brooding. Get busy and frustrate the devil!

Here's a thought I came up with regarding this:

"A happy life lies not in the thinking, but in the doing."

I know when you're caught up in the 5 step loop, you're exhausted and you find it nigh on impossible to do anything. I know the exhaustion is crushing, I know you'll have little

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

motivation and even less energy to do something. Please please please muster as much will-power as you can. Gather up as much strength as you can and take the first step, even if it's just 15-20 minutes to read a book or to do a simple exercise routine, so you force yourself to BREAK OUT OF THE LOOP.

I promise you, combine this with challenging your thoughts and you will start to sail on calmer waters and stress, anxiety and depression will move out of your life.

I'll leave the last word on this to none other than the British wartime Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill:

"Worry? I'm too busy. I have no time for worry!"

He did suffer from depression though, and referred to it as his "black dog." Widely regarded as one of the greatest war time leaders in history, he never let his depression dominate him and always believed he would be a great man.

Being busy was obviously one of the techniques he used to combat depression. Amongst his hobbies were painting – landscapes mostly – bricklaying and of course, writing.

Not to mention some of the greatest speeches in human history!

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Exercise Your Body, Calm Your Mind

OK, you're now aware of how important it is to occupy your mind so you reduce negative brooding. One of the suggestions concerned exercise, and although exercise is good, there are one or two things you need to know so you exercise in a way that doesn't make stress, depression and anxiety deepen.

Taking regular exercise is a great way to occupy your mind and improve your health. Exercise can release tension, flood the body with endorphins that make us feel good, improve muscle tone and shed excess fat. And looking good helps to elevate mood. It's also a great way to get rid of pent-up feelings.

I've tried several forms of exercise, and I've found that some forms encourage negative thinking. These tend to be exercises that require no mental effort whatsoever. For me, these included rowing machines, treadmills, cross-trainers, steppers and, worst of all, weight lifting. I imagine distance running would have the same effect on me.

I found that during these types of exercise, my body operated on auto-pilot and my mind turned to brooding. So, although the exercise was doing me good physically, I was fuelling my anxiety. Remember, negative brooding is the root cause of stress, anxiety and depression. Reducing the negative brooding should be the main reason for taking exercise if you're suffering from these problems.

Far better for me is to partake in more intense forms of exercise. My favorite is circuit training. Here, you just haven't got time to brood. It's intense. Lots of different exercises performed in sequence with minimal time to rest with loud, high beat music to get you going. The instructor shouts out instructions on what exercise to do and at what tempo, so you're listening out for instructions.

Like I say, it works for me because it stops me brooding.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

When choosing your exercise, make sure you don't ignore what's happening to your mind. Performing the exercise isn't enough. If you're brooding as you're exercising, choose something that requires more concentration. The aim is to reduce brooding, as well as to improve physical fitness.

Here's a short list to help you:

Martial Arts: Excellent. You try brooding over your problems when someone is trying to hit you! Great for fitness, concentration and of course, the discipline required to master the skills. I did Ju-Jitsu for 18 months and I can't recommend it enough.

Racket sports: Squash, badminton, tennis, all great for physical fitness and all require high levels of concentration.

Volleyball: Again, concentration required so you can't brood and if you're lucky enough to have a beach near you, what an enjoyable way to get your exercise!

Circuit training: Already mentioned, here again because it is so good and most gyms will have circuit classes.

Avoid: Anything that has lots of breaks and rests, auto-pilot exercising such as swimming, anything really that doesn't need high concentration levels to perform it.

Before beginning an exercise routine, make sure you get advice from a qualified professional.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Plug Into Happier Feeds

Let's look at reducing some more negative aspects from our lives. One of the biggest causes for people to start thinking in a negative manner is by being around people who are negative.

This has several forms. For instance, some people enjoy belittling others, especially in a group. Other people believe they know what's good for others and always pour cold water on any new ideas others come up with. Some people enjoy talking about themselves all of the time and switch off when others talk. Some are jealous of any achievements their friends and family attain, and make disparaging remarks about them. There are people who always look on the down side (not talking about depressed people here) and some people are just plain old lazy and find life a bit of an effort. They see life as something to be endured, and have no enthusiasm or passion for life.

Being around such people can be very damaging if you are prone to negative, stressful thinking modes.

Unfortunately, we're all going to meet people like this. I'm sure you can think of several people who match each of the descriptions given above. What you have to do, as much as is possible, is to avoid being in the company of people who leave you feeling down after you've experienced their company. So:

If you have family members who never acknowledge your good deeds but are quick to jump on you when you make a mistake, avoid their company as much as possible.

If you associate with people who love talking about their life but switch off or continually interrupt when you talk about your life, avoid them.

If you socialize with people who put you down continually, or try to make you feel guilty about anything, get rid of them. They aren't friends.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

The problem with being around negative people is that they increase self-doubt, dent your confidence, make you angry or upset, and even give you a personality crisis. If, like me, you're prone to negative modes of thinking, being around negative people is seriously bad news.

I wish I could tell you that it's easy to find positive people. People who love life, have bundles of energy, are enthusiastic, genuine and a joy to be around. Just as you can take on board negativity when you associate with negative people, associating with positive people makes you more positive. They are an absolute pleasure to be with.

But they're a rare breed. In my lifetime, I've met just 5 of these people. The times I spent with them are without doubt the happiest times of my life. 3 of them are males. 2 of them are females, one of whom I shared a relationship with, the best relationship I've ever experienced.

I know it's very hard to avoid people you've developed relationships with. But if these relationships are harming you, you owe it to yourself to reduce the effect these people are having on you.

Dynamic, ace US motivator Anthony Robbins puts it very succinctly into one sentence:

"Who you associate with is who you become."

I've distanced myself from several friendships that were causing me to brood in a negative way. One was all take and no give, and let me down every time I needed him. Another would snipe about my achievements – selfish was his favourite word and he'd always ask me if I'd thought about what would happen WHEN things went wrong! Thanks a bunch pal!

Others just had no zip about them and I found it very hard to be around them as they increased my fears, doubts and insecurities.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

The key issue here is that being around negative people will drain you of your energy and they will increase your negative brooding. Not good, not good at all.

I am very aware about the kind of company I keep these days. I loathe being around negative people and I try to avoid them like the plague.

Please be alert. If you notice that you're brooding in a negative way after being in someone's company, seek out a better class of company. People who like to make you sad aren't worth the time of day. Avoid them as much as you can.

I've restricted this discussion to friends and family. When it comes to romantic relationships, it's very hard. If you're with someone who is making you unhappy, my advice is to leave them as quickly as you can and find someone else. But I know people find it hard to leave their partners, so maybe arranging to see a relationship counsellor would be a good idea.

All I'm saying here is that it isn't right for other people to make you unhappy for whatever reason.

A word or two about family. Your family can be the best source of love and support in your life. They're always there when you need them, and if you're lucky to have a loving family, then cherish them.

But be careful about how much influence you allow your family to have over your life. Obviously, your family care for you and will always want to protect you.

A problem can arise when family members become over-protective.

Over-protection is very bad news when it comes to stress. What happens with over-protective families is that they can stop you living the life you truly want to lead. They can criticize your ideas, focus on the bad side of your choices, fill you with doubt,

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

and leave you feeling inadequate. Over-protection from family members can help to increase negative brooding and fuel stress.

The difference here is that your family believe they know what's best for you and don't want to see you hurt. They are acting out of love. But if your family are over-protective of you and interfere with how you'd really like to live your life leaving you feeling down, you must be strong and resist them.

Your family cannot live your life for you. You must live the life of your choosing, making your own mistakes, and experiencing the various episodes we must all face in life. If your family seek to protect you from life, they may in fact be doing you more harm than good, particularly if their interference is making you unhappy.

The best way to do this without a potentially upsetting confrontation all-round is to go ahead with whatever it is you want to do without seeking family approval beforehand. Just do it! When they see you living a happy life by being the person you want to be, they'll come round, don't you worry!

If they don't, and make their love for you conditional, I suggest you carry on regardless. Sacrificing your happiness to make others happy is not a good way to avoid stress. You cannot please everyone and if you try, you will send stress levels into orbit. Live your life, be who you want to be and find the happiness you truly desire.

OK, I think I've said enough on negative people. I know it's hard to examine your relationships with people you are close to. All I ask is that you don't allow others to seriously diminish the quality and happiness you deserve from life.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Tune In To Happiness

I think that's quite enough of looking at negatives! Let's get some positives in our life right now! Before you go to bed, and on waking, read something positive. At the end of the book, I've listed some resources that have helped me enormously. Among them are a number of inspirational quotations. Every single morning, without fail, I read a couple of them. And I'm always on the lookout for an inspirational quote to add to my list.

When I go to bed, I try to avoid watching heavy movies or dramas, and I don't read anything too heavy either.

When I wake-up, I like to have some music on in the background as I get myself ready for the day ahead. I keep the music light and up-beat. Believe it or not, music can have a big influence on your mood.

A television documentary I saw recently demonstrated this. Identical twins were separated. One was given slow, downbeat music to listen to on waking, the other listened to up-beat music. The twin who listened to the up-beat music had a really good day – she went shopping, bought lots of clothes, had a really nice lunch and was in a great mood. Her twin had a “nothing” kind of day. She too went shopping, but didn't feel like buying anything. She had little patience, and didn't feel very hungry so just had a coffee and a Danish for lunch. The music they listened to was the only difference between them.

Surprising isn't it?

So, I listen to radio stations who play mostly pop-music and dance music and I avoid stations with lots of news content, lots of phone-ins, lots of classical music, heavy or hard rock music and DJ's who talk about everything and anything and don't play enough music.

Oh, and as much as I love the blues, listening to blues first thing in the morning is not a good idea!

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Call me sad if you must but the kind of music that always gets me in a good mood is 70's disco! The music of Chic never fails to raise my moods, you remember them? "Good Times", "Le Freak", "I Want Your Love", "Everybody Dance" it's all in the bass lines dude! Nile Rodgers you are a genius!

Ah, the music of my teens...surely it wasn't THIRTY YEARS AGO!! I feel old! Onwards and quickly!

On waking, ensure the music you listen to has a positive influence on your mood levels and makes you happy. I hope I don't need to ask you to avoid the breakfast television programmes? If you do watch these programmes first thing in the morning, you'll be helping yourself to a nice big portion of war, violence, corruption, disasters, famine, crime and politics for breakfast.

Not to mention a side order of image manipulation the commercials will serve up for you.

How do you think these will affect your moods? Exactly, they'll have a negative effect upon you and I'm sure you and I can think of much better alternatives to kick-start the day.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Natural Mood Elevators

We know that anti-depressants only treat the symptoms of depression. They can help us to control depression, but they cannot cure it.

There's something very important to understand about anti-depressant drugs:

The pharmaceutical companies who produce them aren't sure how they affect the levels of neurotransmitters in the brain.

Please re-read the last sentence, it is a very shocking statement.

If you read the instructions provided with anti-depressants, you will find them littered with words such as *maybe*, *possibly*, *implicated* and *could be*. Check the instructions for your drugs and see for yourself. EVERY anti-depressant contains these weasel words in the instructions.

Recently, it was discovered that some anti-depressants don't alter levels of serotonin, as was claimed, but glutamate.

They are very powerful drugs. Also, long term effects of these drugs are not known as clinical trials examined the drugs on a six week basis. Coming off these medications can be hell. Companies are being sued because of the effects these anti-depressants had on people. In certain cases, taking these drugs proved fatal.

Let me remind you again: the pharmaceutical companies who produce anti-depressants do not know for sure how these drugs interfere with the delicate chemical balances of the brain.

If you are about to start a course of anti-depressant drugs, or if you've been taking anti-depressant drugs, I strongly urge you to check out this site:

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

WWW.PROZACTRUTH.COM

Despite the name, this site has detailed information about the most common anti-depressants - prozac, paxil-seroxat (currently being investigated by the FDA), effexor, lexapro, zoloft etc. The effects of these drugs are listed, and the claims of the pharmaceutical industry are substantially challenged. It is the best site on the Internet for anti-depressant drug information. And it's freely available.

On the site, you will also find out how to taper off medications, and other alternatives to these drugs are listed. There is also an interesting discourse on psychiatry, which is very hard-hitting and extremely thought provoking. To say my perceptions about psychiatry have changed would be an understatement.

One alternative to look at is St. John's Wort. This is a herbal remedy which has shown to be effective in clinical trials. St. John's Wort can however, react badly with other medications, so consult with your doctor and a qualified, reputable homeopath before you take it. A good idea is to visit the site and look at the other alternatives then discuss them with your doctor.

Other alternatives that some people have found beneficial include taking a multi-vitamin and eating a diet high in omega 3. Omega 3 is found in oily fish. If, like me, you don't like oily fish, try taking a cod liver oil capsule instead. Again, you'll only know if these are effective for you by trying them. At least with multi-vitamins and omega 3, you won't experience severe side effects or get addicted to them.

I've also been told that eating good quality chocolate releases the same chemicals in our brain that are released when we make love. I've lost my sweet tooth totally, so I guess I'll just have to make love more often! Seriously, try it, but chocolate also has side effects: it rots teeth and makes you fat! If it helps to boost your mood, all well and good.

Another site you should check out regularly is:

WWW.DRUGAWARENESS.ORG

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

This also looks at how these drugs effect people and at how the public is being misinformed about just how potentially dangerous the drugs are. You will also find real life experiences from people who've suffered terribly when taking these drugs. If you have had bad experiences on anti-depressants, here is a site that would like to hear your story. Another excellent site.

You'll find how to best taper off these drugs at prozactruth.com. I strongly urge you to visit this site, and the site's author, Jim Harper, is contactable by email.

Jim Harper has put together a fantastic resource for people suffering from depression. What he has found out about psychiatry will amaze you. You'll also be able to support senate bill 1390, The Child Medication Safety Act which aims to prevent the forced medication of children.

Do take the responsibility for your own recovery. Be an informed partner along with your health professionals. You don't need a degree in medicine and you don't need somebody in a white coat prescribing you powerful drugs to look after yourself.

If you find something you believe will help you, bring it the attention of your doctor or counsellor. Be informed & be proactive. Understand what is happening to you by conducting your own research – the Internet is an absolutely invaluable resource because you can now have access to information you never would have previously. Do please use it for your, and your family's, benefit.

And believe me, now that you have read this book, you are more informed about stress and related illnesses such as anxiety and depression than many of the doctors and counsellors who treat it. And the pharmaceutical companies who make billions of dollars from drugs they claim can cure it.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Mapping The Route To Calmer Waters

Here is an excellent strategy, not just for beating stress and depression, but for bringing things that you want in to your life.

If you've ever purchased a self-improvement book, you will undoubtedly have read about the importance of setting goals. Goal setting is the process of writing down what you want and the actions you need to take to get it. It is a very important process that brings clarity and focus to your life. You know what you want and you know what you have to do to achieve it.

All it involves is writing down your goals on a piece of paper and reading them every day. Goal setting can help you reduce stress, anxiety and depression, and we're going to look at this now.

Each week, set small goals. When we're under stress or feeling depressed, we can feel like we aren't making a contribution. We feel lethargic. We feel that life has lost its purpose. If we set small goals, we can set ourselves little tasks, which, when we complete them, will give us a sense of achievement and contribution.

Examples of small goals:

- Weed the garden.
- Clean the automobile.
- Tidy the bedroom.
- Cook a nice meal – for yourself or for your partner/family.
- Throw out any junk.
- Clean the bathroom.
- Re-organize your wardrobe.
- Decorate a room.
- A 20 minute workout.
- Read 5 pages of a new book.

OK, I know these seem like simple tasks. But when we're feeling low or stressed out, even tasks like these can seem much too much of an effort. But if we set ourselves a couple of these each week, we will be helping ourselves enormously. Make the time

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

once a week to commit the goals to paper and remind yourself of the goals every day.

Here's the important part: each time you complete the task, put a tick next to the goal, or strike a line through it, to indicate it as completed, and **reward yourself**. Have a candy bar, have an ice-cream, a glass or two of good wine, treat yourself to small gift, anything, **just reward yourself**.

You set a goal and you did it! Well done you!

I cannot explain just how important goal setting is in my life. Every Sunday evening, I go into my office and I spend about half-an-hour setting my goals for the week ahead. I feel like it brings focus into my life and it keeps my eye on the ball. My goals take me in the direction I want my life to go in.

I also feel like I have some control over my own destiny.

And we know how important it is to have a feeling of control over our lives. If we feel like we're out of control, you can rapidly enter the downward spiral of anxiety and depression that I entered in April 1997 and came out of five years later.

So give it a try. Set a couple of goals and don't forget to reward yourself when you complete them!

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Beyond Compare

A major problem with modern society lies in the way we compare ourselves with others. This doesn't just apply to the way we compare ourselves with rich and famous people such as actors, TV personalities, sports stars, models etc., but in the way we compare ourselves to people in our peer groups.

If people are more academically gifted than we are, have more success in their careers, or seem to have idyllic lifestyles, we can compare ourselves to them in an upward manner and feel like we aren't as good or that we've failed in our lives.

With people who are very successful, we see how talented they are and feel like we're inadequate by comparison.

In modern societies, more and more young girls are developing eating disorders because of the amount of image manipulation in the media. They see beautiful actresses and models, all of them slim, and become obsessed with their weight.

The pressure on children to achieve academic success is enormous, as is the pressure for them to graduate and perform well in careers. They see others in their peer groups achieving great success and a feeling of failure can result if performance doesn't match.

Add this to the daily stresses of modern life and you don't need to be Einstein to work out what will happen. In continually comparing ourselves solely in an upward manner, we are going to start feeling inadequate and we'll start feeling depressed.

When we engage in upward comparisons, we can start to put ourselves down. Have you ever done this? Maybe you've thought to yourself:

"Steve's really good at selling, he's a natural. I'm nowhere near as good, I have to work so hard to get results, unlike Steve."

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Or:

"She always looks so good. I wish I had her natural beauty. I have to make an effort all of the time and no matter how much effort I make, I can never look as good as Lynn."

When we enter this type of thinking, we can start to feel that we aren't as good as others, we can feel inadequate and even worse, we can believe we are failures because we haven't got what others have got.

I'm sure you'll have upwardly compared yourself to someone else many times in your life. I have, and many people who I've met have done. It seems a part of modern living.

When we're stressed, this kind of thinking can become exaggerated. We can use it to beat ourselves up even more, and can even go to the extreme where we think everyone we know is having a great life and we aren't because we're inadequate.

This kind of thinking is seriously flawed because it is an unbalanced way of thinking. Not only is it unbalanced, it fails to take into account the unseen.

Please let me explain.

When we compare ourselves SOLELY against people who have achieved success or look great, we are engaging in an unbalanced comparison because we are not comparing ourselves to people who are less fortunate than we are.

This would be akin to a judge listening only to the argument presented by the prosecution and not hearing the case for the defence i.e. getting one side of the story.

Take finances. If we compare ourselves only to people who have achieved great wealth, we can think we are poor and are

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

inadequate because we haven't achieved as much. We can feel jealous and resentment can creep in too.

But what about people who don't earn as much as we do? What about people for whom every day of life is a struggle to survive? I'm talking here about people who live in poor, third world countries. Are they happy because they don't have wealth? Yes, because they don't see wealth as a measure of worth nor do they have a media trying to manipulate them using the weapons of image and material possessions.

There are people who would gladly swap places with us in an instant, people who see what we have as being absolutely fantastic. Remembering this is important when we engage in unfair, upward comparisons.

Also, when we upwardly compare ourselves, we are comparing ourselves to the end result. We don't know how much hard work and effort that person has put in. We don't take into account any major setbacks or failures they have experienced to get where they are now and we don't know whether or not we'd have wanted to undertake the same journey.

Of course, a lot of this is down to the instant-gratification prevalent throughout society. People want to master sports, musical instruments, trades, computers, etc. but they want to do it NOW. They don't want to put in the effort and make the necessary sacrifices to achieve success and they really believe that others are "just plain lucky".

Whenever you engage in upward comparisons, please remember to downward-compare as well by taking into account others less fortunate than you and that you don't know what has gone on "behind the scenes" for that person to be where they are.

It's another adjustment to our thinking which will help to stop us from becoming stressed or depressed because we feel inadequate. Few people really are inadequate, and the next skill will show you exactly why you aren't one of them.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Reign In Your Wild Horses

Do you know that you are in possession of one of the most powerful things known in the universe: Your mind. YOUR mind.

Don't believe me, huh?

Look at this. Your mind is unique. It perceives the world in a way that nothing else on earth can. Its full power is BEYOND THE UNDERSTANDING of modern science.

You possess this power. Because sitting between your ears is a natural miracle. Your brain is more powerful than any computer in existence, including super-computers. A super-computer can process a mind-boggling number of instructions per second. Hundreds of millions in fact.

But like any computer, it can only do what a human has programmed it to do. It took a human brain to invent, design and program it. When you perform the most simple of tasks, such as brushing your teeth, you perform more instructions at any one time than even the most powerful super-computer could handle.

No other creature on earth possesses a brain as powerful as a human's. It's why we humans are by far the most intelligent and dominant species on the planet. No other creature can shape its environment the way humans can.

This is the awesome, creative power behind skyscrapers, computers, world-wide telecommunications, and medical science. It is the driving force that enabled man to conquer the skies, to land on the moon and sail the oceans. Every challenge faced by mankind has been met and conquered. All because of the power of the human brain.

And this natural miracle is sitting between your ears.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

OK, I'm going on a bit here so I'll come to the point.

What does this mean for you?

It means that you can decide to use this power against your stress by altering your thinking. You now understand what causes stress – modes of thinking – and you now know you have a very powerful tool to help you beat it.

One of the reasons we become stressed, or anxious or depressed is because we react to events in our lives negatively. These reactions are formed over a period of years and they become second nature. That is, our brains perform them automatically.

This is the power of the human mind to learn. Think of the first time you sat behind the wheel of a car. How difficult was it? You had to learn co-ordination to accelerate and brake, to use the clutch, to change gear, to be aware of what was in front of you, behind you and around you. You had to be able to "think ahead", to corner, to park, to drive at speed and to drive around congested streets.

Years later, you do all of these on auto-pilot! The brain has learned over time to do them without needing conscious thought.

Another example. I'm a very keen guitarist. I'm no Jimi Hendrix (who is?!) but I can knock out a tune or two and I'm not a bad little classical guitarist either. Now, when I first started to play and started to read music, I thought I'd never be able to read and play at the same time.

Now, I can do it without even thinking. My brain has learned enough to be able to recognize notes instantly and transfer what is on the page to my hands in a split-second.

Here's the point: If you continually assign worst outcomes, continually put yourself down, continually blame yourself for everything and anything, your brain will learn to do this automatically and you will do it as a matter of nature.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Conversely, if you continually assign multiple explanations, praise yourself instead of putting yourself down, stop blaming yourself for everything and anything, your brain will learn better, less harmful skills and you won't enter into an episode of stress or a stress related illness.

I know it seems hard at first. This is because you are putting new skills into effect. You are replacing what the brain has learned to perform with ease with skills that it needs to think about. But the more you use the new skills, the more your brain will learn them and will perform them automatically.

And trust me, when you do, you will conquer stress and its related illnesses once and for all and you will experience more happiness from life.

The brain is one seriously powerful piece of kit. It can work for you or against you. In giving up activities you enjoy, in not trying to apply the skills and techniques you're discovering in this book, you are allowing this power to find its own way. So it's vitally important that you harness the power of your mind.

Think of it as "reigning in your wild horses".

In so doing, you will make the amazing power of your mind work for you and not against you.

When the mind is left to occupy itself, it will turn inward. All too often, this means it will turn inward AGAINST YOU. Negative brooding is one of the ways it will occupy itself. Brooding about negative, even catastrophic outcomes and assigning negative meanings to your life is how the wild horses of your mind run amok. Reign them in by using the knowledge you have and you'll calm the mind and greatly reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

And when the mind is working for you, it is one very powerful ally to have under your control.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Chart Your Own Course

In trying to find out about stress and depressive illnesses and making it my goal to help people beat them without powerful medications, I encountered a mode of thinking which fuels depression and is not recommended for our mental well-being.

Many people have written to me about their depression. Occasionally, I get a very angry, resentful and abusive letter, rubbishing my experience and asking what right I think I had to be depressed.

Sometimes, these are people who have experienced extremely traumatic events. One, in particular, stands out.

One day, I received an email from a poor young woman who had been dreadfully physically and sexually abused as a child by both of her parents. I won't go into the details here, but her letter is the hardest I've ever had to read. In it, she belittled me and my experience. She also threatened to take her own life as she just couldn't live with what had happened to her.

As her letter came via email, I wrote back immediately begging her to get help from counsellors who specialize in helping people who are victims of abuse. I really hope she did, and I hope I hear from her again in better circumstances.

OK, what happened to her was wrong, and has nothing to do with stress or depression. You cannot challenge your thinking when you've been abused because it will never take away the fact that you were abused and there are more complicated issues concerning victims of abuse than there are with depression. And I also hope her abusers receive the justice they fully deserve, either in this life or the next.

Unfortunately, I do receive letters from time to time that are just plain abusive and seek to justify the writer's depression by comparing it to mine.

THIS IS A VERY DANGEROUS GAME TO PLAY WHEN WE ARE DEPRESSED.

I've been there with this and I can recognize it instantly. When I went through all of my traumas, I felt very angry and bitter about other people who suffered depression, especially Lisa.

I'd ask:

"What the hell have you got to be depressed about? You've got all of your family, you've got a good job and you've got a good standard of living. Look at me, I've got no one and my whole world is falling apart."

Yadda, yadda, yadda. On and on I'd go. The only objective I was achieving was to keep wallowing in my depression. And I now know that many people who are suffering with depression do exactly the same.

What do you think is going on here?

Is it a kind of competition to see who has the most valid reason to be stressed out or depressed? Maybe. Perhaps we're looking for justification, a sort of "I had things so bad my depression is justified." I'm pretty certain this is how I felt, especially comparing myself with Lisa.

Another reason could be in wanting to have a crutch to lean on. Some people want their illness to be "really bad, worse than anyone else's". It becomes a focal point of their lives. This is rare, but I have seen it. Again, it isn't a good thing to do.

But you know, I'm not really sure why we do this and I've been trying to find the answers to this puzzle since I first created this program in 2004.

I'll tell you what I am sure of though. It doesn't help us to get better one little bit. So what if someone else is depressed or anxious? So what if their experience may seem trivial in comparison to ours? So what if their experience is more severe

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

than ours? Everyone's experience of stress and depression is unique anyway. No one can feel the way you feel, no one can be you and you can't be anyone else.

There's a Chinese proverb: "**Never condemn a man until you've walked a mile in his shoes.**" It's wise advice. It's wise advice because you can only travel on your own path, you cannot travel anyone else's. You can only be yourself and no matter how hard you try, you can never feel the way another does and you cannot see the world through anyone else's eyes.

Wallowing in our circumstances and feeling resentful about other people who are suffering from stress or a depressive illness will only make us even more stressed and the loop continues.

So, forget about other people and concentrate on ridding yourself of stress and depression. And remember, it doesn't matter what event a person suffers because events do not cause stress and depression, it's the way we react to them that counts.

Again, please let me make it clear that the poor woman who had such a terrible childhood is NOT suffering from depression but is suffering from the effects of severe abuse from her parents. The techniques presented here will not help her much, she needs highly-specialized counselling and if you're in a similar position or know someone who is, please get this kind of help.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Manifesting Your Happiness

Here's another highly effective skill to bring in to your life to help you get rid of stress and prevent it from ever returning. It's all about how you perceive happiness. Without a shadow of a doubt, the majority of people in the western world believe that happiness comes from without and not from within. This is easily demonstrated. How many times have you said or heard the following:

"I'm not happy because of my size. As soon as I lose a stone, I'll look better and I'll feel better. Then I'll be happy."

"I'm driven by ambition. As soon as I achieve my goals, then I'll step off the gas and be happy."

"I'm not happy living where I am right now. I like space, and I won't be happy until I've got a place of my own out in the sticks."

"I'll be happy when I get a new car/clothes/swimming pool/Jacuzzi etc."

"To be really happy, I need to earn \$100,000 a year."

And on it goes. I'm sure you're more than familiar with this.

I have to confess that I used to be a very driven and ambitious person. I had a fantastic career, and I was always driven by the next goal. As soon as I achieved one of my goals, I'd quickly set myself another one. I sacrificed an awful lot for my career, I always placed it before everything else, and I missed out on a lot of things because I did so.

And that's the problem. Now, don't get me wrong, there's absolutely nothing wrong with being ambitious and striving to be the best you can be. But you need to strike a balance. Every now and then, you need to live for the now and not for the next now.

Makes sense, agreed?

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

You see, the problem is that we're always thinking that we need to get somewhere or have something else BEFORE we can be happy. This then takes up our focus. We're living somewhere we cannot: The future.

I'd estimate that from the age of 25 to 32, I missed out on an awful lot of life. I missed Christmases because I'd be on call, I'd spend New Year's Eve "home alone" to be available if needed and I'd even go in on days off to educate myself further, unpaid!

I know, what a bozo! But I was determined to get what I wanted and I did.

Was it worth it? Yes, eventually.

So what's the problem?

I forgot to live in the now. I didn't need to do a lot of the things I did, they would've happened anyway. I didn't need to be so intense, I could've – should've – just taken a little bit of time to spend more time with my family and friends. To have enjoyed what I had there and then, to have been more aware of the little things that make life worth living.

When it comes to stress and depression, this kind of "I'll be happy when..." type of thinking can be a real problem. One day, you start to realize that all of the goals you've achieved haven't brought you that much happiness. This is because you didn't appreciate it at the time as you were too busy setting the next "I'll be happy when..." goal.

You then say to yourself:

"What's the point of doing anything anymore? None of this has been worth it as I'm not happy."

I mentioned earlier about the past being a cruel place to live and it is. But living in the future isn't that much better. Please try to avoid the pressure of continually setting goal after goal because

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

this just relegates life to a treadmill. So take a step off the treadmill once in a while and enjoy being in the here and now.

True happiness doesn't come from continually achieving goals, losing lots of weight, owning big houses or wearing flash clothes and jewelry. These all contribute, sure, but real happiness comes from being happy with who you are, where you are, and who you are with right now.

Speaking of who you are with leads me to an important point about happiness as well. In the last few paragraphs, I've stated that happiness doesn't come from without, it comes from within.

This statement is very important, especially when it comes to our romantic relationships. Just as we can believe that we'll be happy when we earn \$100,000, buy a new flashy car, wear expensive clothes and jewelry and live in a big house with a pool, we can also believe that we'll be happy when we meet the right one.

Many people in today's world move from relationship to relationship, desperately seeking the right person to make them happy. Rarely, if ever, do they find it. A look at the divorce rates is enough to tell you that. And the divorce rates throughout western societies increases year in, year out and that's excluding the number of couples who live together and experience relationship breakdown.

Like excited children unwrapping their lovely surprises and presents at Christmas, the initial discovery of a new partner brings intense joy. Our new partner makes us feel special, we feel connected and strongly attracted. For a period of around 6 months, new lovers are absolutely besotted with each other.

Then reality bites. The novelty starts to wear off. Some couples embark upon a roller-coaster ride of events to "lift" the relationship. For example, they get engaged, they move in together, they get married, they have children. They're still looking for external events to make them happy.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

(Yes, I know not all relationships are like this. But a lot of people make mistakes in relationships because of what I'm talking about.)

And just like children gradually feel indifferent towards their Christmas presents, a couple gradually become bored with each other. Their partner isn't making them happy anymore and they start to believe that they made the wrong choice. They know the right one is out there, so they quit the relationship and repeat the process again and again.

The problem lies in believing someone else outside yourself can make you happy. They cannot. Happiness comes from inside yourself. No amount of possessions, no amount of money and no single person has the power to bring you happiness.

That power lies with you, and only you.

If you take time to enjoy your present moment, to really connect with where you are and who you're with and to notice all of the little details that make life worth living; you will enjoy much more happiness than if you keep looking and waiting for it to come over a distant horizon.

Point made, I think.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Ease Your Burden

In this section, I'm going to help you to deal effectively with an emotion that can cause great unhappiness and fuel stress. It is a totally worthless emotion, bereft of any beneficial value or purpose, and is therefore a complete and utter waste of precious, non-renewable time.

Millions and millions of people suffer because of it. It is one of the main emotions experienced by sufferers of stress, anxiety and depression and it is a powerful, destructive force. Indulge it, and the only outcome is misery.

The emotion in question is guilt.

Guilt has many forms. You can feel guilty because of your religious beliefs, guilty about past incidents, guilty about the various things you think about, guilty about not doing something you feel you should've done, or guilty about things you've done that you shouldn't have done. You can feel guilty that you have a good standard of living while others suffer, guilty that you haven't done enough for others, guilty that you eat while others starve, guilty that you pollute the environment, guilty that you don't raise your kids the right way, guilty about an affair, on and on and on and on...

And you know, all of this guilt is **completely pointless**. But you'll cause yourself much pain if you allow guilt to dominate your thinking. Let's put a stop to this self-torture right now.

When it comes to stress and depression, wallowing in the past and going over and over events and chiding yourself will keep you locked into the 5 step loop. You know about living in the past and you know it is a cruel place to live. Indulging in guilt about events that have **GONE FOREVER** brings the past into your present. Not good at all.

But what about feeling guilty because you have a "better" life than others who are suffering?

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Remember back in "**Emerging From The Tempest**" we talked about the control paradox? This is where you feel you have a lack of control over events in your life that you can control and that you can control events that are totally beyond your control. It's flawed thinking, exactly the kind of thinking that fuels stress, depression and anxiety.

When it comes to people who are homeless or starving, you must understand that this is a part of the world. It always has been and it always will be. If you were to start feeling guilty about every single person who is homeless or starving, you wouldn't have enough time in a year to pronounce the list of names never mind do something to help them all.

But let me ask you a very important question:

Why on earth do you feel guilty about them? You didn't have anything at all to do with their plight and if you could, you'd change all of their circumstances for the better. I know you would if you could but you can't and neither can I. But feeling guilty about these things only harms us and doesn't benefit the people involved in any way whatsoever.

Of course it's natural to care. If issues like this interest you, try instead to make a contribution, no matter how small, to help. And when you do make a contribution, value it. Please don't start wishing you could give more for goodness sake. You gave and you're helping. This could be in cash donations, clothes, toys, food, bric-a-brac or voluntary work. But guilt as a contribution is pointless.

If these things don't interest you but you just feel guilty because you have a better life, then stop. These sad situations will always be around whether you feel guilty about them or not. They always have been and they always will be. Their plight has been brought about by events not of your making. Why waste valuable life time by beating yourself up about things you didn't cause and are powerless to change?

There is a very interesting point to make here about a clear conflict in certain modes of thinking that can cause us to become stressed, anxious and depressed.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

You're becoming equipped with some very powerful skills and techniques and earlier, you learned how to address the problem of making upward comparisons. This is when you SOLELY compare yourself to people who have greater wealth, better looks, or a seemingly idyllic lifestyle leaving you feeling inadequate or worthless.

Now, combine this with guilty feelings about others who are in a less fortunate situation than yourself and you can see that you have entered into a flawed mode of thinking that can only have one outcome: deep unhappiness.

Why?

Well on the one hand, you're comparing yourself to people who are in better circumstances than you are and you beat yourself up because you somehow feel inadequate.

On the other hand, you see people who are in less favorable circumstances, and instead of thinking that you are in a good position and that you have much to be thankful for, you beat yourself up! You start to believe that it's wrong to have a better life than others! You think you could do more and that you have a responsibility to help more than you actually can!

It's a lose-lose situation. It's also a clear indication of how flawed modes of thinking can make you stressed and unhappy. Please avoid this type of thinking by using the knowledge and skills you're acquiring in this book.

Religious guilt is a tough one for me to talk about in this release. I would need to write a complete book about this topic to cover all the issues involved. If you constantly feel guilty about your "sins", it will be hard for me to challenge your guilty thoughts in a couple of paragraphs.

What I will say to you is that I'm sure God, whoever or whatever God is, wants you to enjoy your life and not feel guilty or sad because of some "imagined slight" you've done to him. I think it would be a very strange God who loves his people so much he

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

wants them to feel guilty, sad, and frightened about enjoying the various pleasures life has to offer.

Something else just popped into my head as I was writing this and I want to share it with you.

Remember, God is the only being who is infallible. We poor humans are not. We make mistakes, we louse things up, we do stupid things and we go wrong lots of times. It's part of being human.

Here's the rub though: If God can forgive us all of our faults, then why don't we emulate him (her?) and forgive ourselves?

The way we forgive ourselves is by not feeling guilty all of the time about things we did or did not do.

Without a shadow of a doubt, by far the most effective way of dealing with guilt – in whatever guise it comes in – is to assess what it is you feel guilty about and learn from it so you don't repeat it in the future.

I'm not talking solely about "being a better person". What I'm saying is you ACCEPT what happened. You then LEARN from it. Ask yourself: what would be a better way of responding? Then you RESOLVE to not repeat your actions – or inactions - in the future should the same thing happen again.

You then FORGIVE yourself and FORGET about it.

In this way, you bring more calmness into your life. And more calmness means less stress, means less anxiety, means less depression. And you'll reduce the chances of heart attack and strokes too. Win-win instead of lose-lose!

Living in the modern world is as hard as life has ever been. Sure, our standards of living have improved, medical science has made

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

huge progress and we are better educated than previous generations.

But life today has other problems. Stress – both at home and in the workplace – will become the biggest killer in the 21st Century. The financial pressures of raising a family and paying our way are immense as we are driven more and more by material wealth.

And we still have to deal with the one constant present throughout the history of the world: Change.

The cycle of the world is birth-death-birth-death ad infinitum. Nothing will ever stay the same forever. We change jobs more often, we move around much more, our kids get older, we get older, our loved ones die. One day, we will too.

When our loved ones die, we can sometimes feel guilty that we didn't do enough for them when they were alive. We can beat ourselves up about bad times when we rowed with them and we selectively remember all the times we let them down. We're entering into a mode of thinking the only outcome of which will be stress, sadness and depression.

Far better is to accept that nature has taken its course. We too will make the same journey one day. When my parents died, I found it very hard to accept that they'd gone. You feel like things will never be the same again.

Of course, they won't. But that doesn't mean to say they will NEVER be as good or even better. The key here is not to live in the past, feeling guilty about the bad times, but to generate other possible outcomes.

One way of doing this is to remember all the good things you learned from them and keep them in your life. This gives the deceased person a legacy. You are keeping their contribution to the world ongoing by bringing it into your life. Combine this with the skill of accepting, learning and resolving not to repeat

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

mistakes and you have a very effective method to help you deal with the death of loved ones.

Please remember that you are powerless to prevent people from dying. It is the natural way of the world and we must accept it when it happens. Feeling guilty about nature is pointless. Using the skills you have acquired in this book by applying them in the here and now will be very effective in helping you to deal with the harder changes life will throw at all of us.

When it comes to other people, guilt can be used as a very effective weapon against you if you are susceptible to it. It can be used by parents, bosses, spouses, children and friends to try and gain extra value from you.

What's happening here is that people have detected that you're open to feeling that you somehow don't deserve good things. If you do feel like this, let me reassure you that there is absolutely no reason whatsoever why you shouldn't enjoy good things.

Let me use an example. In a relationship, guilt can be used as a weapon against a partner who is susceptible to it. For instance, the woman is discovered having an affair. It could be the man, it matters not. She confesses and asks for forgiveness as she has made a big mistake.

The relationship resumes. But every time the woman wants to go out, the man reminds her about her mistake:

"Going out are you? You looking to have ANOTHER affair?"

Or he can try and get her to perform more chores:

"I bet you'd have done that for your fancy man."

Blame can be apportioned:

"You put me and the kids through hell with your little fling. You're going to have to do an awful lot of work to make up for the damage you caused."

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Another example would be comparing you to other spouses and pointing out your shortcomings:

"Look at Mike. He can't do enough for Sue. He's a great cook, fixes up the home, and works long hours. He can't do enough for the woman he loves. You obviously don't love me that much."

Laying guilt trips on you in this way is very unpleasant and totally unacceptable. You must resolve to never allow anyone to use guilt as a weapon against you. Guilt is used by weak, inadequate people who lack the intelligence to treat people with the respect they deserve. If someone you know is using this weapon against you, have a little think about the effect they're having on you and why they have such little regard for both themselves and you.

A good technique is to bring their guilt out. Try these:

"Are you trying to make me feel guilty?"

This is direct but effective as it shows the other person you know what they're up to. You're calling their bluff if you like.

"Oh, you're bringing up a mistake I made in the past. Obviously, I thought you'd forgiven me because you loved me. But you don't because you're trying to make me feel guilty. If it's a problem, then we need to see where we go from here because I'm trying to MOVE ON and make things better. You, for some reason, cannot."

In comparisons, say:

"You know I'm not like that and you've always known I'm not like that. Are you saying you want to be with someone who is like that?"

This puts the ball firmly back in their court.

Remember I said earlier that the power to make you happy lies with you and only you? In removing the power some people try to have over you by nullifying their guilt weapon, you stay in

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

control of your own happiness. Guilt will not manipulate you anymore.

I think it was Eleanor Roosevelt who said that the only power people have over you is the power you give to them. Guilt is a major, major contributor to stress and depressive illnesses. Please, never give anyone power over you by letting them use this worthless but painful weapon against you for their own gain. It's totally unacceptable, especially from someone who claims to love you.

And don't feel angry or aggressive to these people, instead, forgive them and move on. Sadly, sometimes people aren't aware that they're using the guilt weapon and will in many cases stop using it if you point it out to them.

The bottom line here is that guilt, in whatever form it comes in, has no place in your life from now on. You are moving on to a new, happier, guilt-free chapter in your life. Guilt was a real problem for me for a long, long time. Believe me, getting rid of it is like removing a millstone from your neck, it really is liberating!

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Are You Talkin' To You?

Here's another major problem we can have that fuels stress, depression and anxiety. It's self-deprecation. I indulged in this frequently, and I'm sure you will have done it too at some point in your life. When you're caught up in a harrowing episode of stress, depression and anxiety, you can talk to yourself in a very harsh manner, a manner that can be extremely hurtful.

Time to talk in a much kinder manner.

Are you the kind of person who beats yourself up over anything and everything? Do you blame yourself when things go wrong, analyzing all of your actions? Do you tell yourself some or even all of the following:

- That was all my fault. I'm such an idiot.
- Oh well done. I've done it again. I'm stupid, I never learn.
- Just look at it. It's GARBAGE! I'm totally useless.
- Look at the state of me. I'm fat/skinny/ugly/too tall/small etc.
- I really am boring. I haven't got much to say and I haven't done anything remotely interesting. No wonder people hate me. I do too.
- I can't blame people for laughing at me. I'm a joke.
- I'm not good enough.
- I'm a total loser. Always have been, always will be.
- I always make the wrong decision. I'm a fool.

I know, they're not pleasant are they? And I've played them down. I'm sure you can imagine stronger, expletive-filled versions of the above.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Such mean phrases aren't pleasant things to say to anyone never mind the self. If you do this, let's stop you from beating yourself up any further.

What happens when you talk to yourself in such a mean way is a gradual erosion of your self-worth and your self-image. OK, we will all be exposed to positive and negative feedback throughout our lives. It begins in childhood with our parents and continues with our peer-groups as we move into adulthood.

You know that during episodes of stress, depression and anxiety, we have a tendency to take on board all of the negative feedback and disregard the positive. In continually engaging in self deprecation, you'll develop a very negative view about your self image and your worth and you'll cause your levels of self-confidence to plummet. You'll arouse powerful emotions within you because you're having a seriously detrimental effect on all of these very important values.

Let's see how this works by asking an important question:

What state are you in when you beat yourself up?

An event triggers a stressful reaction. You louse up dinner or forget to post a letter, for example. A PATTERN is then followed, like this:

- Heavy sigh of disbelief. Instantly feeling down because of the event.
- You turn on yourself to apportion blame: **"Not again. I can't believe I've been so stupid YET AGAIN."**
- You then tell yourself this is typical of you: **"That's me all over. I'm useless. Absolutely useless."**
- You then take time to analyze the event, comparing it ONLY to other occasions in your life that went wrong. **"It's just like the time when I tried to bake a nice cake and I couldn't even get that right. I'm hopeless. I can't learn anything, I'm a loser."**
- Depression starts to kick-in. You feel down, sad and irritable with others. You're in a bad mood and you continue to wallow

Conquering Stress: *Sailing On Calmer Waters*

in it, wondering how you could be so stupid on so many occasions.

Goodness me, it's a horrible practice isn't it? The only outcome of this is misery. You will feel bad about yourself, no question about it. Especially when you combine it with minimizing any good you do in life – **"Hey, it's no big deal"** – you can understand why you'll lose a little bit of self-respect, a little bit of self-worth and a little bit of confidence each time you do it.

If you repeat this behaviour over a sustained period, you'll just feel worse and worse and you'll go around the stress loop. Eradicating self-deprecation is a crucial skill in combating stress, depression and anxiety and here's how you do it.

I'm not going to suggest using affirmations here. I know many other programs do suggest using affirmations, but I didn't use them and I'm not going to suggest you do something I did not. I used the following techniques instead to stop this very harmful practice:

- Best one of them all: **If you put yourself down, down is where you will stay.** I drummed this into my mind everyday by reading and reading it. Please do the same. Remind yourself of this as often as you can. Use it when things go wrong. One of my clients emailed me and told me she wrote this on post-it notes and stuck them on the fridge and around her desk to continually remind her not to put herself down and it helped her a lot. Try this, see if it works for you.
- **Perspective.** So what if you made a mistake? Are you the only one who makes mistakes? No! Will your mistake end civilization as we know it? No! Will you make more mistakes? Yes! EVERYONE IN THE WORLD DOES! Apart from me. Shyeah, right! If only...!
- If someone you loved made the same mistake, would you beat up on them? Would you start reminding them of all of their other mistakes in an attempt to make them feel small, inferior and hurt? No! Would you even think this is an acceptable way of behaving? Of course you wouldn't! **SO WHY IS IT ACCEPTABLE TO DO IT TO YOURSELF?** Please inscribe this into your brain: **It is unacceptable to**

talk to myself in a way that I deem to be totally unacceptable to talk to others.

- **Forgive yourself.** If you can't forgive yourself, who can you forgive? And remember this: You cannot love anyone more than you love yourself. If you don't love yourself for the unique, wonderful human being you are who makes mistakes just like every other human being, you will find it hard to love someone else.
- **You have the power of choice.** This is another effective way to beat this. As soon as you start the self-abuse, go do something else. You know you can only think one thought at a time. If you do something else, you will occupy your mind and you won't be able to put yourself down. This also keeps internal control. You are the one who decides to engage in self-abuse. Therefore, from now on, YOU will decide NOT to and CHOOSE to do something else instead.
- **Maximize the good deeds and work that you do.** So, when someone thanks you, don't dismiss it. Say to yourself: "Yeah, I knew I could do good there, that was great!" Follow it up with a small reward and accept the praise and thanks you've earned when others give it to you. Don't just shrug and say "Hey, no big deal" or "It's nothing, don't mention it." **Value your efforts.**
- Never look at yourself in the mirror and engage in self-abuse. **Don't call yourself because of how you look.** Instead, always look for your good points and make a point of noticing them. Remember, no one is absolutely, totally gorgeous (no, not even Pamela Anderson or Brad Pitt), and no one is absolutely, totally ugly (Not even me!). NO ONE. Just notice the good and say "My eyes/legs/ass/smile/figure/whatever looks really good today." Ignore the rest. IGNORE THE REST. I've got great eyes and a bright smile and I remind myself of these often. Please do the same, it boosts confidence and will stop you from becoming stressed. (I mean remind yourself of your good points not mine, silly!)

OK, I know you may feel embarrassed to look in the mirror and pay yourself a compliment. Perhaps you think it's silly? I find this astonishing! Why do we feel it's perfectly OK to put ourselves down, to beat up on ourselves, to be hard on ourselves and tell ourselves we're foolish?

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Hey, HELLO?! What do you think you should be more embarrassed about? This is how you help to keep the stress loop ongoing by continually putting yourself down.

You now know how to stop yourself from doing so. Use your knowledge and be as respectful to yourself as you are to others.

No more self-deprecation – IT IS UNACCEPTABLE.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:

Mood Food

I recently came across some very important information concerning the foods we eat and links to stress. Now, I'm not for one minute suggesting that the food we eat causes stress or depression. Eating certain foods will not cause nor cure either of them.

BUT. I've found that certain common foods have links to hypertension, high-blood pressure, anxiety, nervousness, fatigue, and many other illnesses such as obesity and cancer.

I've done a lot of experimenting with this and there is no doubt that certain foods have an unhealthy effect. What I'm going to do is provide you with a list of foods for you to experiment with to see if they are having an effect on you. Like I said, these won't cure you but they may provide relief and combined with the other techniques will contribute to eliminating stress.

- Salt. Excessive salt intake is linked with high-blood pressure and hyper-tension. Instead of using ordinary, highly-refined table salt, switch to sea salt and try and reduce intake. Highly-refined salt is full of sodium which is linked with high-blood pressure and hyper-tension. I've switched to sea salt and I use less of it as I think it tastes better.
- White bread. White bread is another highly-refined product and is made from bleached flour. I love white bread but I've dramatically reduced my intake of it. I've switched to wholemeal bread instead and just have white bread once a week. Bleached flour is linked with headaches, stomach disorders and heart disease. Besides, I wouldn't take a sip out of the bleach bottle everyday because I don't want to slowly poison myself.
- Here's the big one for me: Sugar. Since childhood, I've drunk full sugar soda. About 5 years ago, I started to notice that these drinks were having a big effect on me. And I don't just mean on my teeth! Dizziness was the first thing. I started to get these dizzy spells which would only happen to me if I'd drunk soda. Also, I'd find it impossible to sleep if I'd had one during the day and I also noticed that I was fidgety. I just couldn't sit still after drinking

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

these things. I'd play with pens, chew pens, shake my legs, constantly adjust position and have an uncontrollable urge to move around. I now avoid full sugar soda like the plague! As for white refined sugar, I don't have this in any way, shape or form. Sugar has no nutritional value whatsoever, and appeals only to our tastebuds. I think it is an evil substance and causes us much harm. I'm sure you've seen the effect sugar-coated candy can have on children, hyper-activity in particular. Occasionally, I will have a bar of good quality chocolate as a treat or to cheer myself up if I'm a bit down. But other than that, I have eliminated sugar and sugary products from my diet and I feel much better for it. Please be aware of how you feel after you've eaten sugar.

- Another food to be wary of is cow's milk. Cow's milk is full of hormones used to make cows produce more milk. These hormones are linked with breast cancer, fatigue, allergies, gas, constipation, obesity, heartburn and osteoporosis. I have to say I was alarmed when I discovered that cow's milk contains hormones. A more healthier option to try is soy milk, which contains far more beneficial nutrients than cow's milk. Give it a go and see if you notice a difference.
- Watch your fat intake. Not only is fat linked with obesity and heart disease, it's also linked with tiredness and fatigue. A good idea is to adopt the 5-2 rule. This is where you avoid saturated fat for 5 days, eating healthy options such as lean chicken, fish, fresh fruit and vegetables and then eat what you want for 2 days – without being too excessive. I eat this way, I've reduced 2 inches from my waist (from 36 to 34) and I find eating this way maintains my weight. I'm less tired as well.
- Are you drinking enough water? Water is an essential requirement for our bodies to function properly. Yet, over 75% of US citizens are dehydrated with around 40% being unable to differentiate between hunger and thirst. Dehydration is linked with fatigue and mental dysfunction so you can see why drinking enough water is very important, especially if we are stressed or depressed. You should aim to drink at least 4 glasses of fresh water everyday and you shouldn't drink water with your meals as this impairs the digestion by causing vital nutrients to be flushed away. Drinking this amount of water will also reduce the risk of colon cancer by 45%, breast cancer by 79% and bladder cancer by 50%. I've eliminated coffee

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

and tea from my diet now and prefer to drink cold, fresh water instead.

- Other foodstuffs I've cut from my diet: Potato chips, corn snacks e.g. doritos, deserts – since I've cut sugar from my diet I find most deserts far too sweet to enjoy. This from someone who used to love deserts such as ice-cream, chocolate cake, apple pie, cheesecake etc.! I only eat foods such as pizza and burgers once a week, if that. I feel better for it. I eat lots of salads, especially with chicken or tuna, and I eat at least 2 portions of fresh fruit everyday. All I can say is be aware of what you're eating and see if certain foods are having a bad effect on your well-being.

My research into links between foods and stress, depression and anxiety has yet to find any evidence to support claims that a poor diet and these illnesses are connected. I did originally have a suspicion that a poor diet (a diet high in fat and low in essential vitamins and minerals) would be a major factor in causing stress, depression and anxiety to arise.

I also believed that by radically improving the diet, sufferers would find relief from stress, depression and anxiety. I have to say that I haven't found a single scrap of evidence to support this either.

So diet cannot cause nor cure stress, depression or anxiety. The following questions illustrate why:

If a person eats a poor diet, will they become stressed, anxious or depressed? Clearly not, as many people eat nothing but junk food and they're fine. They may not be in great physical health, but I'm sure you like me know many people who are overweight but who love life.

Conversely, if a person eats a very healthy diet, does this mean they'll never enter into an episode of stress, depression or anxiety? Again, clearly not as many people, me included, eat healthily but still suffer from these problems.

But please do be aware of what you're eating and try to cut down on the foods I listed above and see how you feel.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Making Your Mind Up

Another problem that I experienced just after Lisa and I bought our dream home: indecision. Indecision is, without doubt, a contributor to stress and depression. The reason is because avoiding a decision prolongs uncertainty. You now know that dealing with uncertainty is very difficult if you are highly stressed or in a depressive episode.

During the period of our move, I made lots of decisions. Once our move was complete, I started to doubt my decisions and instead of proceeding with my plans, I came to a halt. This caused me to become more and more anxious about how things would turn out. And you know I started to believe everything was going to collapse around me. Not good.

So not only is it important to make a decision, it's also crucial that once you have made a decision, you go through with it.

But what is the best way to take a decision? Especially if the situation is very important. Below, I've made a model that you can refer to when you are making a decision.

- A.** Write down all of the eventual outcomes, using one sheet of paper for each outcome. By outcome, I mean the end result.
- B.** For each outcome, write down all of the good points you can think of. When you have done that, write down all of the bad points you can think of. Remember to use the skill of generating multiple outcomes and don't just focus on bad outcomes.
- C.** Share responsibility. I kept everything to myself and didn't get any external perspectives. I've learned that getting a viewpoint from someone not directly involved can often generate ideas and perspectives I hadn't considered. This could be your spouse, a trusted family member, or a very good friend or confidant.
- D.** If the decision is about a house move, a move to a new area, a change of job and the like, conduct research. Use the Internet and libraries. Visit the area regularly, study

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

market trends, consult professionals. Be thorough and **be informed**. Ensure you include all of the information under the relevant headings on your sheets.

- E.** For each of the outcomes, generate a fallback plan. You do this by thinking of the worse case scenario and being prepared for it should it happen. This is a special forces technique. I watched a programme about special forces and the first thing they do before beginning a mission is to choose an Emergency Rendezvous Point (ERP). This is the position everyone will go to in the event of mission failure. It is a point from where they can regroup. Make sure you have a fallback plan should things go awry. And remember, things can go wrong through no fault of your own because of circumstances beyond your control. Be prepared and you will not fear it.
- F.** Don't rush. Take your time. This is useful to remember if you're being hassled by hard-sell salespersons. Sleep on it. I've never yet come across any deal that wouldn't still be available the next day. For other situations, especially those of a life changing nature, take the time to ensure you have all of the relevant facts and information you need to make a correct decision.
- G.** Finally, make the decision. And once you've made it, resolve to see it through no matter what. No looking back, you've made the decision GET ON WITH MAKING IT WORK. Look forwards, not backwards. You wouldn't walk along the street looking backwards would you? You'd keep colliding with people and obstacles in front of you because you're not focused on what's happening, you're focusing on what's happened. Looking back and wondering if I'd made the right decisions is exactly what I did and you know what happened to me. Keep referring to your sheets. **Be aware. Be in control.**

Use this model along with all of the other skills and knowledge you have now acquired and indecision and uncertainty will not result in stress or a depressive episode for you.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Not- So-Great Expectations

Have you ever imagined the way other people will react to something you did for them? Perhaps you cooked them a meal, or asked them for input on a piece of work, or you gave them a present and instead of getting a happy reaction, they reacted with indifference or even annoyance.

I've done this so many times, and on each occasion, I felt very unhappy – even quite angry on occasion - about the reaction I got. From the day I played a good friend a classical piece of music on my guitar (a piece called "Romanza"), that had taken me 3 months of hard practice to master and he virtually ignored me, to times when I cooked a special meal only to get no thanks or praise.

My favorite example? When Lisa came to visit me when I was working away. I met her at the train station, expecting her to be delighted to see me but getting an emotionless response when I hugged her.

I'm sure you've got your own examples of this. I call it "**outcome prediction**". The problem is that you're placing your happiness on a perceived outcome. If you don't get the response you expected, you can feel sad or angry and your stress levels will rise. You can think the other person doesn't value your efforts or even care about you. Sometimes, this can cause arguments to arise, further increasing stress levels.

What's important to grasp is that the other person may have things on their mind, may have intended no slight or harm to us, and may in fact appreciate our efforts more than we realize.

I got wise to this, thankfully, and nowadays, I try not to predict outcomes. I do things because I want to do them and because I'll feel good about doing them and not because I want to gain approval or praise from someone else. Of course, if I get a positive reaction then great. But if I get no praise or thanks, I don't let it bother me. This is because I haven't predicted a response in others.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Here's the key: It's good to enjoy praise and approval from others. **The danger comes when you NEED praise and approval from others.** This is because other people will detect a weakness in you and will give or withhold their approval from you to manipulate you with it.

But most of the time, people will be caught up with events in their own lives (human beings are naturally self-obsessed, which is a wonderful part of our nature) and won't mean to offend you or even be aware that they have.

Just be yourself and do things because you want to do them and if you get a good reaction, great. Try not to predict how people will react when you make an effort for them. I never do these days and it's another good way of keeping my stress levels down.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:

Time To Chill

You know from “**Emerging From The Tempest**” that one of things you need to do to reduce the effect of stress is to increase calm. The calmer you are, the less stressed you are. The less stressed you are, the less you assign bad outcomes to events and you don’t enter into the stress loop.

You also reduce the chances of heart-attack and strokes.

So with all those fabulous benefits for our mental and physical health, here’s some excellent ideas for you to help bring more calmness into your life.

- Learn to relax. Yoga, Thai Chi, or meditation for example.
- Take a weekly massage. Either visit a professional masseuse (no, not one of those “professionals!”), or make time to share massage with your partner. Giving as well as receiving a massage is very relaxing and it also increases the bond between a couple. Do make sure the room is warm, with towels and oils close to hand, use soft lighting – candles would be excellent – and soft background music.
- Have a weekly music bath. What a luxurious treat! Try lighting some candles to add ambience, and scent the water with oil or bath salts, whatever you like! Shut out the world, listen to your favorite chill-out music and just enjoy being in this indulgent moment. Pamper yourself even more by enjoying a glass or two of wine or whatever your favorite beverage is and enjoy a long, hot soak! Great for switching off. Great for relaxing. Great for calmness!
- Reading. I love reading. It is a great way to keep your mind active and occupied (and you know how important that is) and it’s much better than watching TV. Put some music on in the background if you like and curl up with a good read (nothing too heavy, like horror or war or weepies or tragedies and the like) and immerse yourself into the story. Call me a bit mad if you must but I love reading cookery books!

Other ideas such as aromatherapy and reiki may be worth investigating, along with a weekly sauna or Turkish baths if you have access to such facilities. I used to enjoy going for a

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

swim on a Saturday afternoon, I'd splash about in the cool pool for 15 minutes, jump into a roasting hot sauna for 20 minutes, then jump straight into the pool again. This of course then felt like jumping into the arctic ocean! Another 15 minute swim, followed by another 20 minute sauna, followed by a good shower and a shave and I felt like a million dollars!

Then the local pool closed so that was the end of that little jolly, sadly. But if you have access to these, give them a go.

If you're a spiritual or religious person, prayer would also be good. I have one friend who only ever goes to a church when he's under stress and he says he always finds an answer when he does. If it works for you, try it. Remember, the calmer you are, the better.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:

Meet The Sandman

"A ruffled mind makes a restless pillow."

- Charlotte Brontë

You know that if you're feeling stressed out or caught up in a depressive episode, getting a good night's sleep can be nigh-on impossible! You can mull over your problems and brood about negative outcomes and this arises powerful emotions within you and rejuvenating rest eludes you.

Getting a good night's sleep is important. It enables your body to repair and to replace lost cells, and dealing with the trials and tribulations of everyday living becomes very hard if you're dog-tired. Waking up feeling refreshed puts you in a better mood and gives you the energy to cope with whatever the new day brings.

Here's some tips to help you get a good night's rest:

- **Establish a good bedtime routine:** Try and go to bed at the same time each night. Half an hour each way won't make THAT much difference, just try and keep it around the same time. No need to be anal about this.
- **Avoid stimulants after 6pm:** Alcohol, coffee, tea, sugary sodas can all act as stimulants so try a milky drink instead. Hot milk, hot cocoa, hot chocolate or hot malt may be better alternatives for you. And again, there's nothing wrong with enjoying a glass or two of wine or beer, the problem comes with drinking too much or even NEEDING a drink to get you off to sleep. As with many things in life, the key is moderation.
- **Don't eat a big meal before retiring:** Try to eat your evening meal before 8pm and if you're peckish later, eat something light like a piece of toast or biscuits. This isn't a problem for me, I'm a late eater and it doesn't affect my sleep and if it doesn't affect your sleep there's nothing to worry about. But if you're finding it hard to get a good night's sleep, this is something else to look at.
- **Be relaxed before you hit the sack:** Have a nice soak in a hot bath, share a massage with your partner or read a book. Avoid books that stimulate or excite you – e.g. thrillers or horror stories.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

- **Lavender Oil:** Well known as a relaxing fragrance and can help us switch off. So, sprinkle your pillow with a couple of drops of lavender oil and add a drop or two to an oil burner to scent the room an hour before you go to bed.
- **Share The Load:** If you're a parent of a young child, ensure you and your partner share night-time feeds and attendance. Having one partner do all of the work can seriously stress them out not to mention totally exhaust them.
- **Power Naps:** Limit daytime "power naps" to no more than 20 minutes. This is an ideal way of refreshing yourself during the day, but more than 20 minutes can mean you'll find it hard to sleep at night time.
- **Oversleeping:** try to avoid sleeping too much. I know enjoying a lie-in once or twice or week is great but I have real problems if I sleep too much. For me, if I sleep more than 6 hours, I wake up feeling groggy and woozy. I'm much more on the ball if I sleep for 6 hours and if I combine this with a 20 minute daytime power nap, I don't have any trouble sleeping. If I sleep for more than 8 hours, I feel lousy, I just can't get into the day at all and I struggle to sleep the following night. This will vary from person to person but I thought I'd include my experience here as it's something else you might want to look at.

Hopefully, these techniques will help you get a good night's sleep. And if you're using them along with all of the other skills and techniques, you'll soon enjoy restful and rejuvenating sleep each and every night.

If not, and the lack of sleep is becoming a serious problem, I strongly urge you to consult your health practitioner.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Let The Chord Of Happiness Ring

Recently, I met a young lady who's a "friend of a friend" and we shared a very illuminating conversation. Her company was a real pleasure and she spoke about something I think is very important and I want to share it with you. It's something that has further helped me and I think it will help you too.

Catherine is a young woman of 28 years of age who has had, let's say, her share of misfortune. Life was all going according to plan for her, she was studying mathematics at university and was right on track to complete her degree.

Then, one Christmas party 8 years ago changed her life quite dramatically. Having enjoyed her party a little bit too much, she had a one night stand and became pregnant. One mistake. One huge impact on her life.

She told me her family put enormous pressure on her to terminate her pregnancy, but, after agonizing long and hard, she chose to have the baby. She had to leave home and find an apartment, and despite being under severe financial hardship, she moved into her own "small but comfortable" one bedroom apartment. Obviously, she had to give up full time education but resolved to complete her degree part-time.

She raised her child, completed her studies, worked full time and she told me it was really, really difficult for her. The father of the child didn't want anything to do with his daughter and at times she really struggled. And now, having attained her degree, she's attained an excellent job with a major bank and has just moved in to a lovely 3-bedroom home. She's found a new man and they plan to marry next year.

OK, that's the background, here comes the bit that really struck a chord with me.

Catherine is attractive, dresses immaculately, and enjoys going to the theater, to art galleries and museums and just enjoys the nicer things in life. She said "I like to do nice things not because

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

I want to show off or because I want to gain approval from anyone. I do nice things because **I LIKE DOING NICE THINGS AND I'M WORTH NICE THINGS".**

Wow! Do you get that? It seems such a simple statement doesn't it? But my word it has enormous power and here's why: many people, especially people who suffer from depression or anxiety, believe that somehow, they aren't worth nice things. They hold a deep-seated belief that "people like me don't deserve success/happiness/nice things" because they've endured a lifetime of negative programming from a variety of sources.

Consequently, each and every time they have a chance to do something nice, to get success, to have true happiness, they will do something – subconsciously perhaps - to sabotage it.

Despite – or maybe even because of – the challenges she's faced, Catherine doesn't let anything alter her self-value and enjoys her life without guilt or seeking approval.

How about you? Do you find yourself making excuses when an opportunity comes along? Do you avoid the nicer things life has to offer because you don't think you deserve them?

If you do, then why not take a page from Catherine's book? You are no better or any worse than anyone else. You deserve happiness as much as the next person. Honestly, there is no reason at all why you should shy away from the good things life has to offer.

Something I believe to be very important: Every single person has 3 inalienable rights that no authority, no government, no individual can rob from them: The right to life, liberty, and happiness. You have a RIGHT to be happy, you deserve happiness as much as anyone and there is certainly nothing wrong whatsoever with enjoying a full, happy life.

You aren't here to suffer or to deny yourself any of the nicer things in life.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

If you deny yourself the nicer things life has to offer because you somehow feel you aren't worthy of them, try using Catherine's phrase every day: **I LIKE DOING NICE THINGS AND I'M WORTH NICE THINGS.** I say it and I think it's a really great attitude to have. And please don't just say it! Do nice things. Don't let nice things pass you by anymore.

And it doesn't cost a lot of money to do nice things either. Most museums and parks are free. How much does it cost to spend a sunny afternoon in a leafy park with some good fresh bread, a block of decent cheese, some ripe fruit and something to wash it all down with? How much does it cost to have a candle-lit romantic evening with crackers and salsa, or pasta, tomato sauce and a green salad? Not a lot. Yet they are simple, nice things to do and they have a great effect on your well-being.

So let's do something to bring nice things into your life right away! Get yourself a pen and paper, or open a new document on your computer, and write down 5 nice things that you want to do over the next month. Keep it simple, nice things don't have to be expensive, but it's your show so write down things you'd really like to do. E.g. A picnic, a weekend away, going out for dinner, go watch live music, go to the theater – whatever you want.

Do nice things. You're worth it. And raise a toast to Catherine for sharing her little gem with us.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Keep Yourself Connected

A major part of stress, depression and anxiety is the feeling that you just can't connect with anything or anyone. Motivation is non-existent, your self-esteem is on the floor and at times you feel absolutely shattered. The exhaustion that accompanies these symptoms makes even the simplest daily tasks seem overwhelming.

When you feel as lousy as this, you begin to retreat into your own dark world. You avoid the company of others whenever you can, and when you're around others you just don't want to join in with the conversation so you remain quiet and detached.

The more you feel this way the more you retreat. You just want to shut out the whole world and so, you isolate yourself from your family, your friends and from society. And the more isolated you become, the more you go down the spiral of the 5-step loop and the harder and harder it becomes to find any joy from life.

In my case, I ended one relationship I shouldn't have done – no not with Lisa – and I ended or let slip several friendships. I reached a point – December 2002 as you know – where I had no family, no friends and no partner. I was completely lost and I used to refer to this as "being trapped in a virtual world."

I wouldn't go out, I didn't want to be around anyone and I didn't much care. I'd "lost the plot" totally, and inevitably, having no self-worth left whatsoever, I reached that dreadful point where I just couldn't go on anymore.

I've since discovered this is a common symptom with stressful illnesses. It is a highly damaging, self-destructive process and it greatly exacerbates the pain these illnesses cause.

If you indulge isolation or if you're at the point where you're just starting to isolate yourself, please resist it with all of your might. OK, you don't have to go out everywhere, and you don't have to surround yourself with a crowd of people.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Try to keep one or two people close to you. People whom you can trust and who understand you and are supportive. Share this book with them so they can understand what you're going through. It is so important that you don't make the mistakes I made and end up with no one at all.

Even if you don't feel like talking, just having someone there listening to music with you, watching TV with you or even simply reading together is so helpful. Just to have someone you can call sometimes and have them listen to you. And remember, if you've got things you want to get off your chest that maybe you don't want to share with family or friends, shoot it off to me in an email.

The above paragraph is perhaps one of the most important in the entire Conquering Stress program. I cannot emphasize enough just how important it is to have someone – even just one person – who can be there for you. Thing is, many of your family and friends maybe good talkers but not good listeners. Hopefully you'll have a really good friend who can listen and understand and who can be there for you.

It's so important to keep one or two people close to you. You're developing the knowledge and skills that will get you to calmer waters and then all of your relationships can all resume as normal once again.

Here's a couple of things to think about regarding isolation:

- What would you think if someone tried to force you into a room? If they decided that "it's better if you don't come out of there". And they decided that when you do come out, it's only for short periods, periods where you don't say anything, do anything and only speak when you're spoken to? **You'd find it completely unacceptable, agreed?** So why accept this shoddy treatment from yourself to yourself? This is one way your mind keeps you caught up in the tempest of stress, depression and anxiety. Don't let it do it to you.
- How would you react if you saw someone do this to your parents, your children, your siblings, your lover or your best friend? **YOU'D BE OUTRAGED!** There's no way you'd allow anyone to shut your loved ones away from everyone, no way

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

whatsoever. Think of it this way: when you feel the urge to isolate yourself, think of how you'd react if someone approached your mother/father/son/daughter/brother/sister/child and said: "Right, get in that room and don't dare come out. It really is best that you don't associate with anyone at all. Stay quiet and leave us alone." **Totally, unequivocally UNACCEPTABLE.**

OK, let me just make something clear. There's absolutely nothing wrong with wanting your own space from time to time. Of course there's going to be occasions where you just want time by yourself to make sense of your life or even just to chill out and enjoy your own company.

I love to have a quiet night in where I cook myself something nice or get a dial out and watch a movie. I might even crack open a bottle of good wine. Might? Make that "will"!

Nothing wrong with that whatsoever. In fact, I recommend you have such a night 2-3 times a month. It's great to just have your own space and the time to relax and unwind in whatever way you wish without interruption or being watched. What's wrong is when you're doing this all of the time and you're repeatedly isolating yourself from your family and friends. Yes, take a solitary time-out from the world occasionally. But don't make it an everyday habit.

Please please please **DO NOT ALLOW YOUR MIND TO IMPRISON YOU.** Keep one or two trusted people close to you and let them help you to get through this unhappy chapter.

And that leads me nicely onto your next skill...

Sailing On Calmer Waters:

The Plot Thickens

You're aware that during a stressful or depressive episode, brooding about negative aspects is the main reason for entering into the 5-step loop. Once you are caught-up in the loop, it gets harder and harder to find anything positive in your life.

Here's a great technique I discovered recently during a conversation with a good friend of mine who, after 20 years of marriage, returned home to find her husband in bed with another woman.

Needless to say, the marriage has ended and Angela has moved out to live with a friend. I was asking her how she was getting on and how she was coping. Incidentally, relationship breakdown is one of the most stressful events you can be confronted with. I was hoping the shock of discovering her husband "in flagrante" and the subsequent split wasn't pushing her into mental trauma.

We were chatting away and ended up discussing something I think is a very useful mindset to have about your entire life. This came out of the blue with both Angela and myself forming this mindset as we chatted.

Imagine your life is like a rich novel. Crammed full of chapter after chapter, each one revealing a different tale as the whole story takes shape.

Now, there's going to be a lot of chapters in your book, just as there is in mine. From the innocent discoveries of childhood, to less innocent discoveries during the teenage years. There'll be family celebrations and crises, there'll be beautiful friendships and fall-outs and there'll be love, unrequited or passionate.

There'll be great relationships and cold relationships, triumphs at work and triumphs at home. There'll be accidents and injury, fights and arguments and moments of pure beauty. There'll be the joy of new arrivals and the mourning of lost loved ones.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

There'll be chapters where life just couldn't have been any better and there'll be chapters where you were tested to the limit and nothing seemed to go right for you.

And then there are the chapters still to come...

So what does this mean? Well, during our chat, we worked out a couple of things to help make sense of life. Such as:

- Once a chapter is finished it is finished for good. You wouldn't read a book and stop at one chapter without moving on to the next because the story is incomplete.
- In any great story, there will be dramatic chapters, there'll be happy chapters, sad chapters, tragic chapters and exciting chapters. Each chapter is a single part of the whole novel. You wouldn't read the novel by just selecting the good chapters because you didn't want anything sad or traumatic to happen. This would be an unbalanced and unrealistic story.
- Similarly, you wouldn't just keep on reading over and over again the bad or traumatic chapters to see if it could be different or re-written. Again, this unbalances the story. Good stories are usually filled with difficulties, tragedies and challenges. Part of a good story is how these trying times are dealt with and overcome.
- One chapter CANNOT last forever. No good novel is just about one happy chapter or one sad chapter. Both are an essential part of a gripping, exciting plot.
- As each new chapter begins, you open up new opportunities and possibilities for the way the story unfolds. There will be unexpected twists and dramas, new characters will be introduced who could play a bit part in the story or become a major player. Each twist and turn is all part of a great story, keeping the reader moving forwards towards the final climax.

It's interesting isn't it, that you can draw a parallel between all the great twists and turns that constitute a good novel and life itself. Because that's how real life is too.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

OK, when you're trapped in the tempest, you will start a selective process of brooding solely about negative aspects to your life. This could be in the form of raking over traumatic past events over and over again and beating yourself up with them.

Or, it could be in the form of an event you are confronted with right now and you can't see an end to it. And all you can imagine is a negative outcome.

It could be something yet to arise; something about the future that you are frightened of and that you believe will cause you great pain. Again, you cannot imagine any other outcome just a negative one.

It could be the way you look, your shape and size, a family crisis, problems with your job, with your relationship, with your finances or with your current life circumstances. Whatever it is, the only meaning you will assign is a negative one.

In doing so, you completely forget about all of the good in your life – the happy chapters. You forget that this current chapter will end and a new one will begin. You forget that nothing ever lasts forever just as no chapter does. And you forget that with each new chapter, you open up new possibilities. Just because the previous chapter or even chapters – were bad, it doesn't mean the next new chapter will unfold the same way.

When you perform negative brooding and assign only negative meanings you only focus on one part of your story. You're totally forgetting all of the other good parts that make up the complete story of your life. And you're also writing bad chapters that have yet to be reached.

Angela applied this to her situation really well. As our conversation progressed, she said:

"The chapter with my husband is over. I had some great times with him and I'll always treasure those times. But we'd come to the end of the marriage and now it's **time for me to begin a brand new chapter in my life.** I don't know what the future

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

holds now but I'm positive and excited about it and I'm going to have a great time!"

Go for it girl! And why not?

Here's the key point: You can shape each new chapter by using the skills contained in this book. Use everything – just as I'm doing – and make each new chapter better than the last. I promise you, you can do this and here's 2 more great quotes that illustrate this fact perfectly:

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

– Alan Kay

"It is choice, not chance, that determines your destiny."

– Jean Nidetch

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
10 Quick Fire Stress Busters

- 1.** Take a daily "timeout". Make time for yourself to switch off and just relax. 20 minutes a day is ideal. **Switch off the phones, the television, pagers, mobiles and any other distractions and sit down and enjoy the peace and quiet.** Maybe you want to listen to some relaxing music? Whatever. Just enjoy being in the moment. This timeout is very important as it will give you respite from the stresses of the daily grind so please value it. Taking a daily 20 minute timeout will improve your mental health by bringing you some much needed calm and it will improve your physical health too as you won't be placing yourself under so much stress. Don't let anything or anyone rob you of it!
- 2.** Before reacting to an event you are confronted with, try to perform an evaluation as to how important the event really is. A good technique to develop is to have a mental "**stress meter**". The meter is numbered from one to ten where 1 is least important and 10 is most important. A 1 would be something like a spilt drink or a letter you forgot to post. A ten would be the more serious events that demand immediate attention such as an important work deadline, serious illness to yourself or a family member, that kind of thing. Many times we give far more credence and attention to an event than it really deserves. So take a step back and ask: "**Just how important is this?**" Once you've assessed how much weight and credence to give the event, then ask: "**How much of my precious lifetime does this event actually deserve?**" By lifetime, I mean time spent dealing with it, and time spent thinking and brooding over it. In many instances, the event will be at the minor end of your stress meter and you can spend time on more important events without letting the minor events distract or disturb you.
- 3.** Following on from the above technique, another highly-effective stress-busting weapon to add to your arsenal is one of time-management. Poor time management can lead to things piling up and you can feel that things are getting on top of you and are beyond your control. You will then become stressed out and you'll worry about how to cope. You know how important it is to have a feeling of control over your life and time management will help you gain more control. At the start

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

of each week, take an hour to plan the week ahead. I do this on a Sunday evening or first thing Monday morning if I've been out on a Sunday. A desk diary is an excellent aid for this, I use one with a week to two pages. In it, **write down all of the things you need to attend to over the course of the week.** As the week progresses and other things come up that will need your attention, you can add them as they arise. At the start of each day, consult your diary. This helps to keep your finger on the pulse by avoiding the feeling that you're "snowed under", because events are out of control and that you're finding it difficult to cope.

4. My thanks to my very good friend Paul Durbin for this technique, a technique which has helped me enormously in transforming my life. Quite simply, this technique involves valuing yourself and setting high standards for yourself. **The cornerstone of these standards is respect. Total self-respect is so important.** This means you will refuse to accept shoddy treatment from others. It means you will be true to yourself and not put yourself down and accept yourself for who you are. If others disrespect you or abuse your friendship, you will refuse to tolerate it. As Paul says, if someone abuses your friendship, THEY LOSE. They lose because they lose you. If you ask someone to stop disrespecting you and they resent it, understand that it is their problem. They have low standards and want you to accept them – refuse to do so. Don't engage in disrespectful or mean behaviors, it demeans you, it devalues you and it does nothing for your self-esteem or self-worth. Who on earth feels good about putting others down, being mean to friends and family or betraying friendships or confidences? Refuse to do it by setting high standards for yourself and refuse to sell-out on these standards by accepting lower ones from others. You are worth so much better – please, value yourself. I cannot urge you strongly enough to seek out positive people with high standards to form friendships and relationships with.

5. Part of stressful illnesses such as stress, depression and anxiety is feeling worthless, that you can't do anything and that you haven't done anything. **These feelings can mask just how powerful and effective you can really be.** Just how powerful was brought home to me by a technique I refer to as a "BLITZ DAY". The title should give you a clue! Once you've got into the swing of setting and achieving small goals, plan a full day where you will do a number of things you

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

choose to do. Start the blitz day early – I do 7 a.m., and don't stop for lunch, have a sandwich on the go, and retire at 11 at night. I promise you, you will sleep like a baby after this day! Anyway, here's a number of suggestions for you to consider for your blitz day:

- Throw out all of your junk or sell it on ebay.
- Home maintenance: Painting, cleaning, fix leaking taps, lag the attic, clean windows, oil squeaky doors, mend fences – you get the idea.
- Car maintenance: Oil, tire pressure, brake fluid, clean the car inside and out, prepare the car for winter (anti-freeze, first aid kit, blankets etc.)
- Something life affirming: Write a poem, start on your book, learn a musical instrument, write a song, learn a new language.
- Cook your family a special 3 course dinner.
- Think about what you really want to do with your life and use the Internet to start researching about how you can achieve it.
- Any outstanding tasks that have been on the back-burner for a while.

The purpose of this day isn't just to achieve as much as you can. The most important outcome of a blitz day is to demonstrate how effective you can be in one day. It is to show that when you apply yourself with determination and vigour, you can accomplish much more than you ever thought. Yes blitz days are tiring and you certainly don't want to have one every day or even every week! Once a month is good but once every three months is probably more achievable. But do one. You will gain an enormous sense of achievement and satisfaction when you do and you know how important these feelings are for us.

- 6.** I touched on clearing out junk above, but there is another kind of clear out you may need to perform: clearing a house after the loss of a loved one. I want to share what happened with me, because I caused myself enormous distress with this.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

When my father passed away in March 1998, I – and I alone because I have no siblings and my mother was terminally ill with MND as you know – had to clear out a number of his belongings. I sold his car, had to sort out his finances (closing bank accounts and credit cards), dealing with insurance policies, grooming kits, and other personal effects I'm sure I don't need to list.

When my mother died, I went through the same procedures again, and in clearing the house they shared, I felt like I was "wiping away" all of their lives. I found this very, very difficult to handle. I'd get very emotional, very weepy, as it kind of brought home to me just how final death really is. So, I kept a lot of things including trinkets for my home and of course, video tapes and photographs of them.

But rather than make me feel better about things, all I did was to remind myself that they were no longer with me on a daily basis. Not good. It was like having windows where I could gaze into the past, getting a daily, visual reminder of my family and a fix of emotional torment. As hard as it was, I knew I had to get rid of these things because they were hurting me. I had to accept that my parents were gone, that they'd lived their lives, and I couldn't spend my life reminding myself of this.

I threw out most of the photographs and effects and trinkets, keeping only small but treasured things I could keep in a box and look at when I needed to connect to them. If you're in a similar position to me, this may help you enormously.

Something else that helped me to cope: I realized that things can never be as treasured as the memories I have of the happy times I shared with them and that those memories are always with me.

Another problem I had concerned visiting the family grave. This again caused me much distress and hurt, and besides, I don't want to remember them as a grave. I rarely visit their grave now, again, the memories I have of them are much more special to me. The times when I allow my memories to surface is on their birthdays and anniversaries, and of course, over the festive season. I now cope much better and don't get a daily reminder of their passing on. If effects, trinkets and artefacts are triggering emotional memories in you, keeping a few treasured ones in a box, where you can look at them when you choose, and clearing out others may help you as it has helped me.

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

7. We've already discussed how important it is to occupy your mind so you don't brood on problems and emotionally arousing modes of thinking. One of the best ways to occupy your mind is to engage in creative activities which stimulate the mind and provide a challenge. Play is also vital, as it is fun and helps us to relax and enjoy life. So why not engage in creative play? Here's some great ideas for you to feed your mind and have fun at the same time:

- Play games that require concentration and thought: Computer games – non violent, obviously, board games such as scrabble, monopoly, backgammon, trivial pursuit, pictionary, chess.
- Do puzzles: jigsaw puzzles, logic puzzles, crossword puzzles, lateral thinking puzzles – all news-stands and newsagents will have lots of these.
- Quizzes. Playing quizzes with family and friends is fun. There are even quiz teams playing in quiz leagues if you want to take it a bit more seriously! Setting quizzes is also a lot of fun, and you could organize a quiz night for your family and friends and be the quizmaster! I play quizzes regularly and am part of a quiz team. I love it, and I've met new people and made a couple of new friends too. Much better than sitting indoors watching TV!

The idea here is to learn, keep your mind occupied and have fun!

8. Another great stress-buster and one which helps to boost our moods is to have a comedy night. Stock up on your favourite nibbles: chips, tortillas, salsa, crackers, cheese, pizza, chocolate, cookies, ice cream etc. Crack open a bottle of wine or pour yourself a beer or two and spend a full evening watching your favourite funny films or comedians. Laughter raises our spirits and is a great antidote to the stresses and trials of modern living. Personal taste will dictate the films you watch, but here's a couple anyway that never fail to give me a good laugh:

- Blazing Saddles
- Monty Python's Life of Brian
- Monty Python and the Holy Grail

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

- Airplane and Airplane 2
- Any of the Pink Panther films
- Police Squad and The Naked Gun
- This is Spinal Tap
- Eddie Murphy or Richard Prior live on stage
- Planes, Trains and Automobiles
- Uncle Buck

Enough, I'll be here all day! A comedy night is something I do at least once a month, always gives me a good night, always boosts my spirits. And an extension of this would be to go for a night out to a live comedy show to a place like the comedy store. A variation would be to have a music night where you play your favorite music. Give them both a try, they'll do you no end of good.

- 9.** Get out of the firing line: Take off for some peace and quiet for a day or better still a weekend or a week. Take a journal, relax and gather your thoughts. When we're under pressure or struggling to cope with a major situation or event in life, seeing solutions to our problems can be really difficult. Distance from problems can bring clarity and relieve tension. I love going to the coast when I feel like this and it always, without fail, helps me to calm down and find solutions. I don't know why but there's something really soothing about being near the ocean. Being near water, come to think of it.
- 10.** This isn't so much of a skill, it's yet more grist to add to your mill to help you think more about positive aspects. What follows are a couple of stories told by The Buddha (no, I'm not a Buddhist, I'm not a religious man at all so please don't think I'm preaching a religious philosophy) and again, they've helped me very much. The second one in particular. Read them and see if you can apply them to your life to help you reach calmer waters.

There's a relevant story told from the life of the Buddha. It is said that a man began abusing him. The Buddha didn't respond. This made the man even angrier. Eventually he raged, "How

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

can you remain so tranquil when I abuse you so?" The Buddha looked at him calmly and said:

"If you offered me a plate of food, and I refused to accept the plate, the food remains yours."

OK, you can apply this to people who try and put you down or criticize you or are negative about you in any way. Just refuse to accept it by staying calm and not responding to whatever it is they're saying. **I love this technique as instead of a negative person making you feel bad, they make themselves feel bad.**

And that's exactly what they deserve. You know what I think about being around negative people and I use this technique on the thankfully rare occasions I find myself in the company of one.

The second story I want to share with you has further helped me to come to terms with the death of my parents. You know how much their loss affected me and how difficult it was for me to cope. I found this story recently, and even though I'm not a religious person, it has enabled me to generate another perspective and the truth of the story resonates strongly.

It's called "**The Mustard Seed**" and if you are dealing with the loss of a loved one – or loved ones – then this will help you.

One day, when the rainy season had ended, Krsa Gautami, the wife of a rich man, was consumed by grief over the loss of her only son, a baby boy who had died just when he was old enough to run about.

In her grief, Krsa carried the dead child to all her neighbors in Kapilavastu, asking them for medicine. Seeing her, the people shook their heads sadly out of pity.

"Poor woman! She has lost her senses from grief. The boy is beyond the help of medicine."

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Unable to accept the fact of her son's death, Krsa then wandered through the streets of the city beseeching for help everyone she met.

"Please, sir," she said to a certain man, "give me medicine that will cure my boy!"

The stranger looked at the child's eyes and saw that the boy was dead. "Alas, I have no medicine for your child," he said, "but I know of a physician who can give what you require."

"Pray tell me, sir, where I can find this physician?"

"Go, dear woman, to Sakyamuni, the Buddha, just now residing in Banyan Park."

Krsa rushed as quickly as she could and she was brought by the monks to Buddha.

"Reverend Lord," she cried, "give me the medicine that will cure my boy!"

Lord Buddha, Ocean of Infinite Compassion, looked upon the grief-stricken mother with pity.

"You have done well to come here for medicine, Krsa Gautami. Go into the city and get a handful of mustard seed. The mustard seed must be taken from a house where no one has lost a child, husband, parent, or friend."

"Yes, Lord!" exclaimed Krsa, greatly cheered. "I shall procure the mustard seed at once!"

Poor Krsa then went from house to house with her request; and the people pitied her, saying: "Here is the mustard seed: please take all you want of it."

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Then Krsa would ask: "Did a son or daughter, father or mother, die in your family?"

"Alas! The living are few, but the dead are many. Do not remind us of our deepest grief!"

As hard as she tried, Krsa could find no house where some relative, some dear one, some loved one hadn't died in it. Weary and with hope gone, Krsa sat down by the wayside, sorrowfully watching the lights of the city as they flickered up and were extinguished again, And at last the deep shadows of night plunged the world into darkness.

Considering the fate of human beings, that their lives flicker up and are extinguished again, the bereft mother suddenly realized that Buddha, in his compassion, had sent her forth to learn the truth.

"How selfish am I in my grief!" she thought. "Death is universal: yet even in this valley of death there is a path that leads to Deathlessness for those who have surrendered all thought of self!"

Putting away the selfishness of her affection for her child, Krsa Gautami went to the edge of a forest and tenderly laid his body in a drift of wildflowers.

"Little son," she said, taking the child by the hand, "I thought that death had happened to you alone; but it is not to you alone, it is common to all people."

There she left him; and when dawn brightened the eastern sky, she returned to The Buddha who said:

"Krsa Gautami, did you get a handful of mustard seed from a house in which no one has ever lost kith or kin?"

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

"That, Lord, is now past and gone," she said. "Grant me support."

"Dear girl, the life of mortals in this world is troubled and brief and inseparable from suffering," declared Buddha, "for there is not any means, nor will there ever be, by which those that have been born can avoid dying. All living beings are of such a nature that they must die whether they reach old age or not. As early-ripening fruits are in danger of falling, so mortals when born are always in danger of dying. Just as the earthen vessels made by the potter end in shards, so is the life of mortals. Both young and old, both those who are foolish and those who are wise - all fall into the power of death, all are subject to death.

Of those who depart from this life, overcome by death, a father cannot save his son, nor relatives their kinsfolk. While relatives are looking on and lamenting, one by one the mortals are carried off like oxen to the slaughter. People die, and their fate after death will be according to their deeds. Such are the terms of the world.

"Not from weeping nor from grieving will anyone obtain peace of mind. On the contrary, their pain will be all the greater, and they will ruin their health. They will make themselves sick and pale; but dead bodies cannot be restored by their lamentation.

"Now that you have heard the Tathagata, Krsa, reject grief, do not allow it to enter your mind. Seeing one dead, know for sure: 'I shall never see them again in this existence.' And just as the fire of a burning house is quenched, so does the contemplative wise person scatter grief's power, expertly, swiftly, even as the wind scatters cottonseed.

"Those who seek peace should pull out the arrow of lamentations, useless longings, and the self-made pangs of grief. He who has removed this unwholesome arrow and has calmed himself will obtain peace of mind. Verily, he who has conquered grief will always be free from grief - sane and immune - confident, happy, and close to Nirvana, I say."

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

Then Krsa Gautami won the stage of Entering-the-Stream, and shortly afterwards she became an Arhat [found Nirvana for herself]. She was the first woman to have attained Nirvana under the dispensation of Sakyamuni Buddha.

It's a very poignant story isn't it? I'm pleased to say that I have pulled out the arrow of my grief and am now fully at peace over the loss of my family. Yes, there are times when the memories come flooding back, particularly special occasions, but now the memories are comforting and don't cause me pain anymore.

Using the skills in this book, and the stories above, is precisely what's enabled me to come out of the tempest and rebuild a better life. They will do the same for you too, of that I have no doubt. Put them to use and you'll never undergo such an unhappy episode in your life ever again.

The story of the Mustard Seed brings us to the end of the book. Please use the information to help you eliminate stress and its related illnesses from your life. I know some people say that knowledge is power, but it isn't really. It is the APPLICATION of knowledge that empowers us. You now have a great deal of knowledge about stress and depressive illnesses and I sincerely hope you use it to bring more happiness into your life.

If you want to share what's in the book with other people, you may be interested in joining our affiliate program. Further details of our program are given in Appendix A at the back of this book.

If you'd like to share how the book has helped you, or have any questions you'd like to ask me, I'd love to hear from you. Contact details are given in Appendix B at the back of the book.

Inspirational quotations follow overleaf.

Sailing On Calmer Waters:
Inspirational Quotations

A list of some of my favourite quotations. I read a quote every morning to get a positive fix. Some of them really hit the spot!

"Within the mind lies the kingdom of heaven or the province of hell." – Unknown.

"Life is what our thoughts make it " – Marcus Aurelius

"Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so."
– William Shakespeare

"No problem can withstand an attack of concentrated thinking."
– Francois Voltaire

"My life has been full of terrible misfortunes most of which never happened." – Michel de Montaigne

"It is never too late to be what you might have been."
– George Eliot

"Inside of a ring or out, ain't nothing wrong with going down. It's staying down that's wrong." – Muhammad Ali

"Wise men ne'er sit and wail their losses, but cheerfully seek to redress their harms." – William Shakespeare

"Don't let yesterday use up too much of today." – Will Rogers

"When you start worrying about things that are over and done with, you're merely trying to saw sawdust." – Fred Fuller Shedd

"If you worried about falling off the bike, you'd never get on."
– Lance Armstrong

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

"A rough road leads to the stars." – NASA

"One can never creep when one feels an impulse to soar."
– Helen Keller

"If a man does not keep up with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears the beat of a different drummer."
– Henry David Thoreau

"Fear is a little darkroom where negatives are developed."
– Michael Pritchard

"I fear nothing except fear itself." – William Shakespeare

The next quote helped me not to see loneliness as a problem I couldn't overcome. I read this every day, without fail:

"Solitary trees, if they grow, grow strong." – Sir Winston Churchill

"Learn to enjoy your own company. You are the one person you can count on living with for the rest of your life." – Ann Richards

"There are some people who spread happiness wherever they go. Others, whenever they go." – Oscar Wilde

"Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance."
– Dave Barry

"Keep away from those who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you believe that you too can become great." – Mark Twain

"The higher we soar, the smaller we appear to those who cannot fly." – Friedrich Nietzsche

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

"The trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent full of doubt." – Bertrand Russell

"You can always tell a real friend: when you've made a fool of yourself, they're the ones who don't think you've done a permanent job." – Laurence Peter

"An optimist sees opportunity in every calamity. A pessimist sees calamity in every opportunity." – Sir Winston Churchill

"I have great faith in fools. My friends call it self-confidence."
– Edgar Allen Poe

"There are costs and risks associated with a programme of action. But the costs and risks associated with a programme of comfortable inaction are far higher." – John F. Kennedy

"... and then the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." – Anais Nin

Conquering Stress: *Sailing On Calmer Waters*

Resources:

This is a small list of books and audio cassettes that have helped me enormously. The people behind them have my eternally grateful thanks. Of them all, the first book in the list I would say is essential reading if you are prone to depressive illness. The rest are highly recommended.

Books:

How To Stop Worrying And Start Living, by Dale Carnegie.

The Consolations Of Philosophy, by Alain De Botton

As A Man Thinketh, by James Allen

I Could Do Anything If Only I Knew What It Was &

Wishcraft, both by Barbara Sher

What Color Is Your Parachute, by Richard Nelson Bolles

Audio

The Power To Shape Your Destiny, by Anthony Robbins

The Science Of Self Confidence, by Brian Tracy

Thank you and I wish you a calmer, happier future.

Warmly,

Chris Green.

The End

Appendix A

Respect

Many of the ebooks I have read always begin with a warning from the author. It always stresses that "Ten Plagues" will be visited upon anyone who so much as dares to allow any person other than the buyer to read the book. Hmm.

There are many systems available that can disable access to an ebook if a customer cancels payment. The problem here is that the author trusts you to buy the book but doesn't trust you in return. Not a nice, respectable relationship in my humble opinion.

So here's my take. You've been honest with me so I will return the honesty. If you want to share the book with your family or one or two close friends, please do so. But please, only share with a few. I think that's fair, yes?

If you're thinking of taking a pirate copy of the book and selling it yourself over the Internet, why not do it in a way in which we BOTH benefit?

How To Become A Licensed Reseller For This Book

This book is not available through the typical affiliate program so prevalent on the Internet where the world and his wife sign up to sell it. Instead, we make it available through special joint venture programs that allow other websites and eZine and newsletter producers to offer the books to their own subscriber and list groups. Inclusion to the program is by invitation only, subject to certain restrictions.

However, if you are:

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

- An eZine owner with a list of subscribers
- A website owner with a list of subscribers
- A newsletter producer with a list of subscribers
- A networker with your own downline
- Any business with an Internet presence and a current list of interested prospects

-then for further details about our special JV program,
please contact us using the email address given overleaf.

Appendix B

How To Contact Us

A major problem we have experienced when doing business over the Internet concerns the ridiculous amount of spam (unsolicited email) we receive when we provide our email addresses. This is either on our website or in our excellent ebooks.

Enough is enough! To eradicate spam from our mailboxes, we now use the Zoemail system. This means you need to register with us just once, and you will receive your own, personal contact email address.

When you get your contact address, please save it into your mail program's address book and use it every time you need to contact us.

To send us an email, please go to:

<http://www.zoemail.com/?diamonds>

You will be presented with the **"Request A Key"** screen.

- 1.** In the person to contact field, enter "diamonds". (no speech marks.)
- 2.** In the next field, enter your email address. This is the address the Zoemail system will send your special contact address to.
- 3.** Next, enter the special characters shown on the screen. This is case sensitive, so if capitals are displayed, be sure to use capitals.
- 4.** Now click on the "Request Key" button.

You will then be sent an email containing your personal contact email address for us. It will be in the form

Conquering Stress: Sailing On Calmer Waters

diamonds.XXXX@zoemail.net, where XXXX is your personal key for us.

You will only need to do this just once. I apologize for the inconvenience but spam is becoming a real problem for us and I thank you for your understanding with this.

If you experience difficulties in using the Zoemail system, we do have an emergency email address:

diamondstrats@hotmail.com

PLEASE ONLY USE THIS ADDRESS IF YOU CANNOT CONTACT US USING THE ZOEMAIL SYSTEM. THE EMERGENCY ADDRESS IS ONLY CHECKED ONCE A WEEK.

Thank you for helping us to beat the spammers.

**Thank you for your
valued custom.**

© Copyright C J Green 2004,2005,2006,2007