

# Job Search Stress Management

## *In the Digital Age*

Northwestern Alumni Association  
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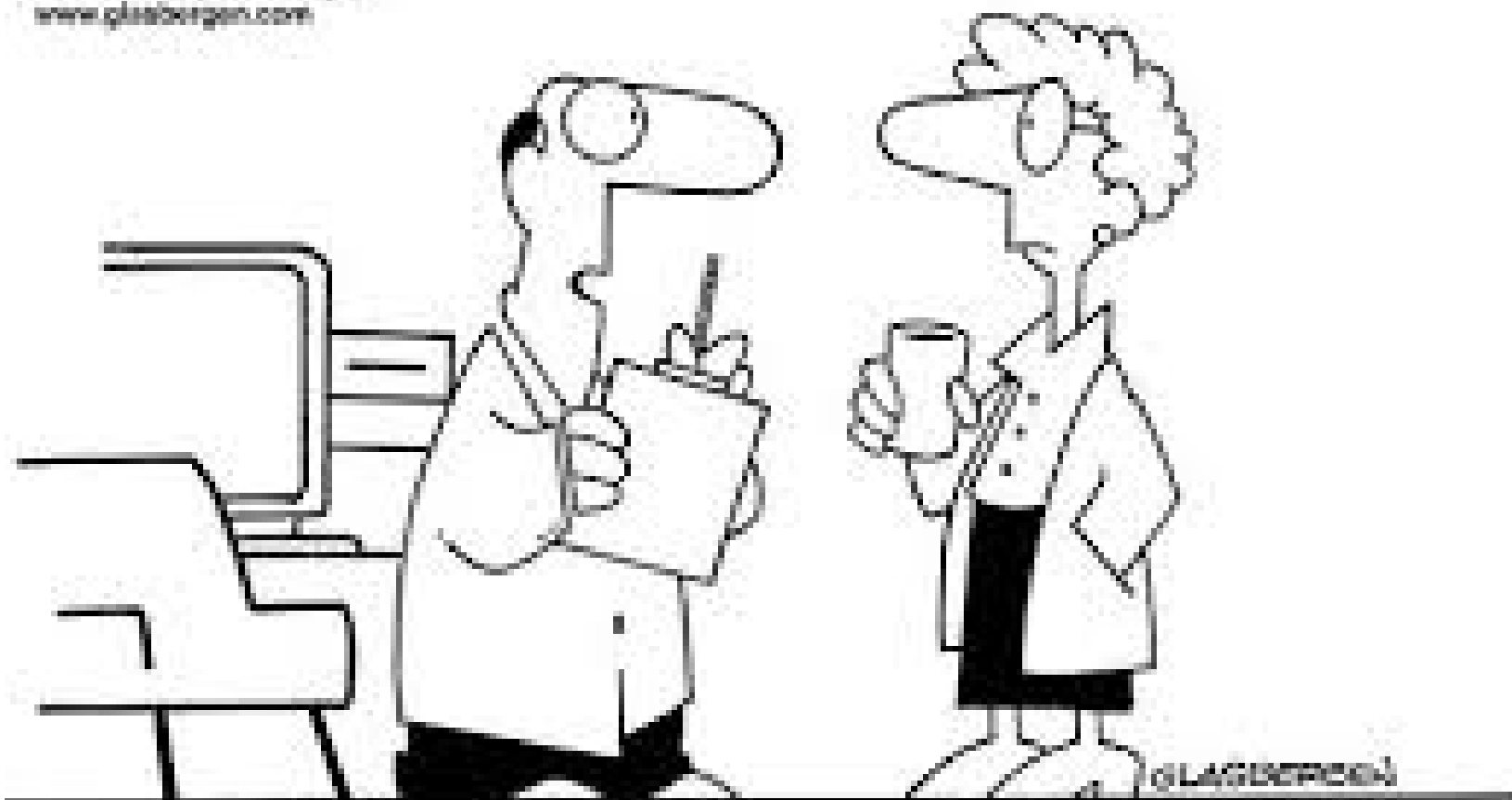
# Professional Background

- Kellogg MBA – Marketing and Management
- Vice President, Head of Coaching and Talent Management at Mandarin Consulting
- Certified Coach in Private Practice
- Formerly Vice President, Senior Director of Human Capital Practice, Leslie Kavanagh Associates

# Overview

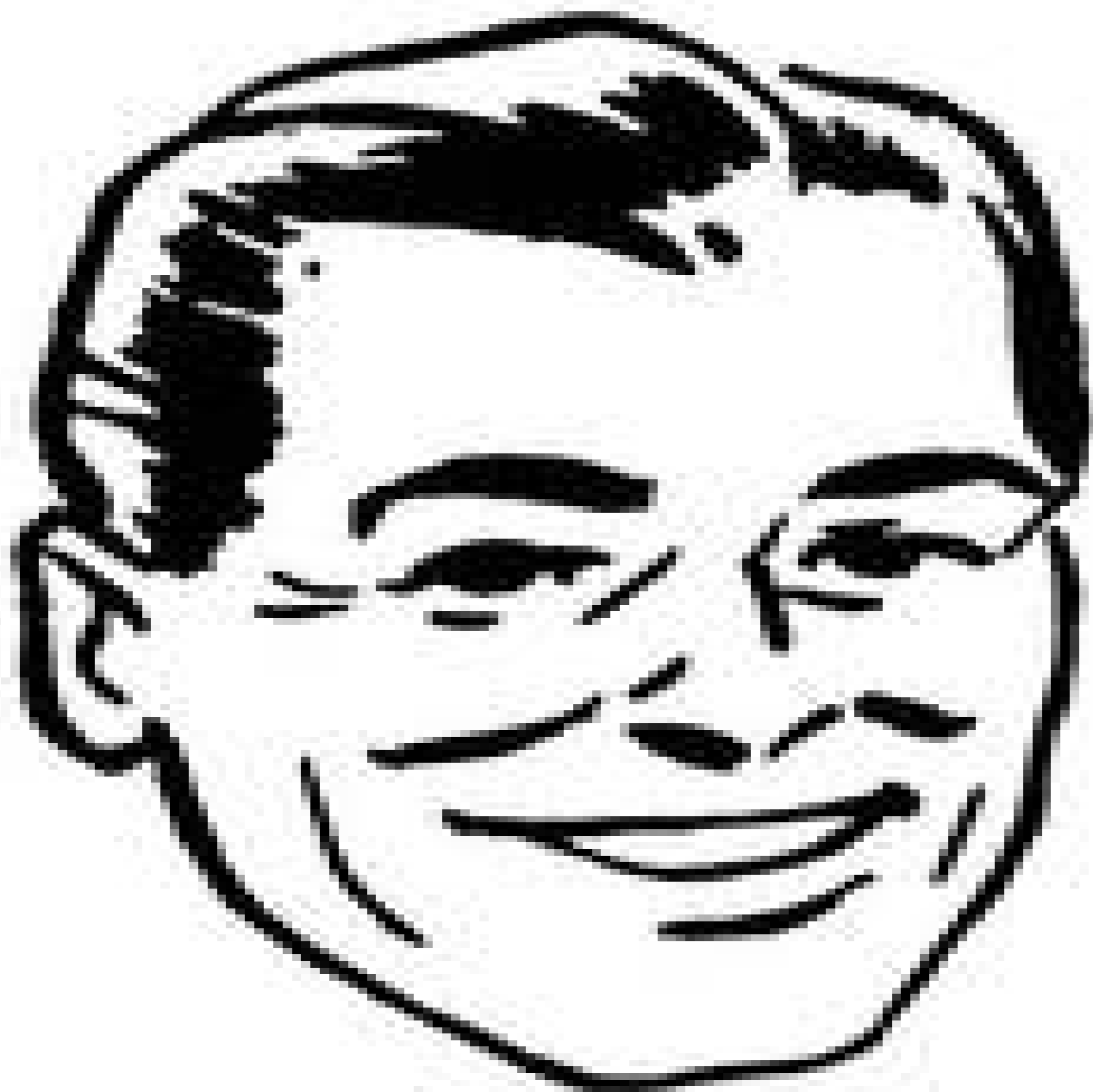
- What exactly *is* stress?
- Why do we get so stressed about the job search?
- Why is it worthwhile to *address* getting stressed about the job search?
- How can we channel job search stress into job search success?

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**“According to the latest research, the average human body is 20% water and 80% stress.”**





# What is Stress?

- Stress is a Combination of a Stressor and the Body's Reaction to it
- The Body Cannot Distinguish Between Positive And Negative Stress; It's Perception that Counts
- The Way You Perceive Stress Affects its Impact on Your Health
- Three Kinds Of Stress: **Positive**, **Tolerable** and **Toxic**

## **Positive**

Brief increases in heart rate,  
mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

## **Tolerable**

Serious, temporary stress responses,  
buffered by supportive relationships.

## **Toxic**

Prolonged activation of stress response systems  
in the absence of protective relationships.



# Positive Stress

- Eustress
- Positive Response to Healthy Stress
- Can Be Beneficial, Giving An Extra Burst of Adrenaline
- Provides Mental Alertness, Motivation and Efficiency
- May Increase Self-esteem

# Negative Stress

- Distress
- When your Body Cannot Return to a Relaxed State Even in the Absence of the Stressor
- Can be Acute (Short-term) or Chronic
- People Who View Stressful Situations as Chances for Growth Usually Avoid Stress-related Symptoms



# Physical Signs of Distress

- Changes in Eating or Sleeping Patterns
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Frequent Headaches or Migraines
- Neck And Back Pain
- Mouth (Canker) Sores

# Physical Signs of Distress

- Weight Fluctuations
- Muscular/Skeletal Pain
- Chronic Fatigue
- Skin Disorders
- Intestinal Disorders
- High Blood Pressure
- Higher Cholesterol levels

# Physical Signs of Distress

- Inability to Stay Awake or Fall Asleep
- Difficulty Completing Tasks
- Body Aches
- Frequent Colds and Infections
- **69%** of Americans Experience Physical Symptoms of Stress\*

\*Source: American Psychological Association

# Emotional Signs of Distress

- Increased Frustration with Minor Annoyances
- Nervousness
- Irritability
- Lack of Concentration

\*Source: American Psychological Association

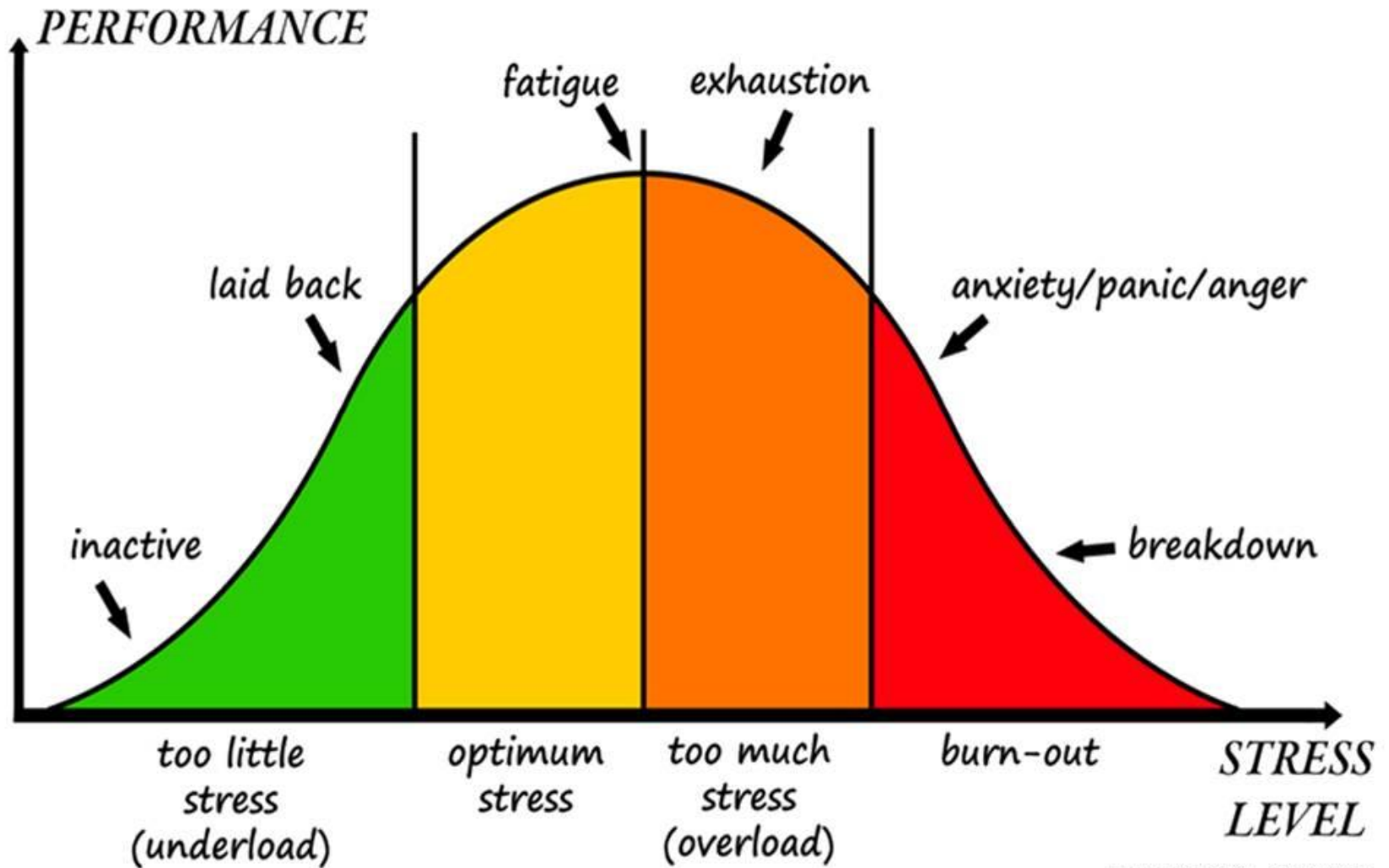
# Emotional Signs of Distress

- Persistent Hostile or Angry Feelings
- Anxiety
- Depression
- **67%** of Americans Experience\*

\*Source: American Psychological Association



## STRESS CURVE



# Stress and the Job Search

“Stress is a normal, inevitable part of the job-hunting process. The job seeker is going through a time of change, moving from something familiar (...an educational environment, or previous employment) to something unknown.”

\*Source: [Careersource.com](http://Careersource.com)

# Why is the Job Search So Stressful?

*There is an inherent lack of control any individual has during the application process.*

- While searching for a job, you receive little or no feedback on why you're not invited to interview for a position or why you didn't receive a second or third interview.
- You don't know who your competition is.

\*Source: Money.USNews.com

# Why is the Job Search So Stressful?

- Large Companies Have Now Added Webex or HireVue Interviews as a First Step in the Hiring Process
- These Require the Interviewee to Stare into a Tiny Camera, Without Even Getting Any Visual or Auditory “Feedback,” While Knowing Every Move is Being Evaluated!

# Why is the Job Search So Stressful?

- You are kept in the dark during the interview phases. Human Resources and hiring managers may keep their cards close to their vests.
- Uncontrollable events occur when dealing with a job search, including economic shifts, internal hiring freezes, unexpected mergers and buyouts.

\*Source: Money.USNews.com

# Facing Rejection

- “We don’t deal with rejection very well as human beings, especially when it has to do with our finances...”
- “We tend to think ‘oh, I’ve been rejected 99 times’, instead of ‘that’s one more interview I’ve gone on, toward getting a **1% success rate**.’”

\*Source: The Ladders

# Stress and Confidence

Stress often comes from lack of confidence, which can come from lack of practice. Practice makes perfect!

# Stresses Related to Job Search

- Additional Demands on Time
- Financial Uncertainty (73%\* of Millennials are Concerned about Money)
- Change in Routine
- Increased Interaction with New People
- Dealing with Family Reactions

\* Source: USA Today



# Stresses Related to Job Search

- Uncertain Direction
- Anxiety about the Future
- Feelings of Isolation
- Sense of Lack of Control
- Fear of Rejection
- **92%** of Americans Have Anxiety about Job Interviews\*

\*Source: Anxiety.Org

# Dangers of Job-Search Stress

Stress hinders interview performance and negotiation ability, and, when it gets to a certain point, it can result in people wanting to postpone and ignore the process altogether.



# Tips for Dealing with Job Search Stress

## “The 4 P’s”

- ❖ Planning

  - ❖ Persistence

  - ❖ Perspective

  - ❖ Positivity

# Tips for Dealing with Job Search Stress

## ❖ Planning

- Create a Long-term Plan for Your Search
- Identify Short-term Goals for Your Search
- Take Steps Every Day toward Your Goals
- “If You Fail to Plan, You Plan to Fail”

“If you can’t fly, then run. If you can’t run, then walk. If you can’t walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

# Tips for Dealing with Stress

## ❖ Persistence

- Set Reasonable Goals that You Can Carry Out for a Period of Time
- Modify Goals if Necessary
- Expect and Plan for Setbacks
- Reward Yourself Periodically

“Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.”

Dale Carnegie





# Tips for Dealing with Stress

## ❖ Perspective

- Recognize the Nature of the Process
- Be Realistic about Time Frame
- Most Likely, You Will Find a Job
- Take Stock of What You Have
- Prioritize for Success

# Prioritizing

- Remember that not everything can be done at once.
- Some things you are used to doing may not get done for a while.
- Set priorities to allocate your time realistically so that time demands do not become overwhelming.
- Allocate your time according to which tasks are most important and not simply urgent.

# Tips for Dealing with Stress

## ❖ Positivity

- Keep a Positive Attitude
- Realize You Are in Control of Your Thoughts
- The Law of Attraction
- Recognize the Good Things in Your Life

# An Ambient Attitude

- Begin to adopt a mental attitude from which you talk to yourself with courage, frankness and good cheer.
- Focus less on the problems that occur and put your energy into possible solutions.
- Don't make every rejection a catastrophe; understand that you're not going to get every job you go for.
- Turn letdowns into ambition instead of inaction.

“The greatest weapon [we have]  
against stress is our ability to choose  
one thought over another.”

William James

**STRESS**

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graph TD; STRESS((STRESS)) --> PBR[Positive Behavioral Response]; PBR --> DSS[Decreased Stress Symptoms]; DSS --> IM[Improved Mood]; IM --> BT[Beneficial Thoughts]; BT --> RS[Relaxation Self-talk]; RS --> STRESS
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Positive  
Behavioral  
Response

Relaxation  
Self-talk

**THE POSITIVE  
STRESS CYCLE**

Beneficial  
Thoughts

Decreased  
Stress  
Symptoms

Improved Mood

# Additional Strategies

## ❖ Visualization

- Imagination is an Effective Stress Management Tool
- Programmed Visualization
- Visualization Exercise
- Finish with Positive Affirmations



# Additional Strategies

## ❖ Humor

- Keep a Sense of Humor about the Process
- Read, Listen to, or Watch Humorous Content
- Consider a “Laugh a Day” Plan

# Benefits of Laughter\*

- Stimulates the Immune System, Counteracting the Negative (Immunosuppressive) Effects of Stress
- Can Help to Relax Muscles, Lower Blood Pressure and Increase the Oxygen Level in Your Blood.
- Increases the Activity of Natural Killer Cells

\*Source: Loma Linda University School of Medicine

# Body Basics

## ❖ Food!

- Eat as Healthily as Possible
- Monitor Desire for Comfort Foods (Sweets/Carbs)
- Try to Eat as Early in the Day as Possible
- Eat Breakfast
- Don't Try to Radically Change Your Eating Habits



**"STRESSED"**  
is  
**"DESSERTS"**  
spelled  
backwards

# Body Basics

## ❖ Sleep

- Get as Much Sleep as You Can
- Take Naps During the Day if Possible
- Be Fresh for Your Interviews
- Schedule Interviews with Personal Biorhythms in Mind

# Why is Sleep So Important?\*

- National Sleep Foundation Study found that over **66%** of people associate their sleep problems with stress, yet, when pressed for time, **50%** said sleep is the first thing they give up.
- Stress can lead to loss of sleep, and loss of sleep can lead to stress, creating a vicious cycle.

\*Source: National Sleep Foundation

# More Body Basics

- Keep up Your Exercise Routine
- If Nothing Else, Take a Walk!
- Drink Lots of Water
- Avoid Getting so Busy that You Neglect Your Body
- Don't try anything crazy!

# Exercise Endeavors

- Exercise is one of the most important “steps” in managing stress.
- Experts recommend starting with 30 minutes of physical activity 3 times per week, working up to the equivalent of 30 minutes per day of moderately intense activity for stress management and significant health benefits.
- Choose a form of exercise you enjoy and make it a part of your daily routine.

\* Source: [Careersource.com](http://Careersource.com)



# Link Between Water and Stress

- Your body is 75% water
- Stress can cause dehydration, and dehydration can cause stress-it's a vicious cycle
- You're likely to get more dehydrated when you're under stress, because your heart rate is up and you're breathing more heavily, so you're losing fluid
- Being just half a liter dehydrated can increase cortisol levels

\*Source: WebMD

# Water and Our Bodies

- Healing properties of water were recognized by ancient Egyptians in 2000 BCE.
- Romans were also strong believers in hydrotherapy.
- As early as 1138 AD people traveled from all over England to bathe to wash away infirmities.

\* Source: Aqua4balance

# Benefits of Hot Water

- In a Mayo Clinic study, it was found that soaking in hot water may provide many of the same health benefits of exercise with less strain on the heart.
- Soaking in hot water eventually lowers blood pressure.

# Calming Conduits

- ❖ Listening to Calming Music
- ❖ Yoga, Tai Chi
- ❖ Meditation
- ❖ Breathing
  - Breathing Exercise

# Music and Mood

- Research by the Department of Psychology at the University of South Alabama shows that listening to self-selected music after a stressful event or day significantly reduces negative emotional states compared to sitting in silence.
- Slower tempos can promote a calm, meditative state

# More on Music

- Music can help “keep depression and anxiety at bay as it helps increase creativity and optimism levels.”
- Lowering blood pressure, music reduces the risk of stroke and heart problems, boosts immunity and “eases muscle tension.”

\*Source: [Complethewell being.com](http://Complethewellbeing.com)

# Mechanics of Music

- Listening to music, especially slow, quiet classical music, can have a tremendously relaxing effect on our minds and bodies.
- Listening to music on headphones reduces stress and anxiety in hospital patients before and after surgery.

\*Source: PsychCentral.com

# The “Nature” of De-Stressing

- Those living in areas with the most green space had lower levels of cortisol, and self-reported feelings of stress were lower than those who spent more time in urban settings.
- Researchers found that people experienced the largest mood-boosting and self-esteem effects after spending just 5 minutes outside doing some light exercise, like walking.

\*Source: Study in Landscape and Urban Planning



# Nature and Our Mood

- Levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that helps regulate our mood, rise when we are outside.
- Regular outdoor runners were less anxious and depressed than people who ran indoors on a treadmill, and had higher levels of post-exercise endorphins, the feel-good brain chemicals associated with “Runners’ High.”

\* Source: Athleta.net

# Nature and Our Bodies

- Exposure to nature reduces pain and illness and speeds recovery time.
- Research by the man who coined the term “road rage” found that the scent of grass has a significant calming effect on out-of-control drivers.
- Fresh air is rich in negative ions (oxygen molecules with an extra electron), which have been linked to improved sense of well-being, decreased anxiety and a lower resting heart rate.

\*Source: [Athleta.net](http://Athleta.net)

# Get Outside!

- According to the Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air in the United States is **2 to 5 times more polluted** than outdoor air (meaning the outdoor air may be *far* less polluted than indoor air!)
- People living close to green space have lower rates of anxiety disorders, depression and poor physical health than those living in more urban environments.

\*Source: Anxiety and Depression Association of America

# Additional Soothers

- Aromatherapy (Especially Lavender)
- Drink Tea (Especially Chamomile or Green)
- Chew Gum (A mild flavor)
- Get a Massage (Body, Back, Hand or Foot)
- Try Progressive Relaxation
- Kissing! Hugging! *Really!*

# Hugging and Stress

- Oxytocin is released into the blood stream when you hold a friend close. This lowers blood pressure, reduces stress and anxiety and can even improve your memory.
- (The positive effect only occurs if people trust each other, if the associated feelings are mutually present and the corresponding signals are sent out.)

\*Source: Dailymail.UK

# The Well-Managed Life

“A routine which includes job-hunting steps, stress-management techniques and family time will give you a sense of balance and accomplishment. Establishing and maintaining a routine will give you a sense of control over your time.”

\* Source: JobShop, Inc.

WEEKLY PLAN		M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
9am-12pm								
12-3pm				A		A		
3-7pm					B			
7-9pm			F					
Active Job Search	A							
Networking	B							
Exercise	C							
Social Connection	D							
Continuing Education	E							
Buddy Time	F							

# Friends and Family

- Stay in Touch for Support
- Keep Communicating
- Don't Compare Yourself to Others
- Spend Time with People who Make You Feel Good – Identify your “Cheerleaders”
- Avoid Negative People



“You cannot expect to live a positive life if you hang with negative people.”

Joel Osteen

# Do's

- Allay anxiety by initiating follow-up
- Ask if you can follow-up if you haven't heard back from the company by...?
- Try to avoid constantly checking your phone
- Commend yourself on steps taken
- Be your own "Best Friend"
- Interviews are like tests-**85%-90% may be good enough**

# Do's

- Communicate with your family
- Create a financial plan
- Consider keeping a journal
- Find a buddy or mentor
- View the search as a time for new opportunities
- Avoid anything sad or too challenging in between tasks

\*Source: Career Solvers

# Do's

- Limit your Exposure to TV and Online Media
- Watch Fun and Inspiring TV Shows
- Understand Delays in Response from Firms
- Keep Sending Out (Curated) Resumes!
- Practice Interviewing and Get Feedback
- Learn From Your Experiences
- Volunteer if You Can

# Don'ts

- *Don't* talk about your job search all the time
- *Don't* Obsess Over One Particular Job
- *Don't* Agonize Over Why You Didn't Get a Specific Company Interview
- *Don't* Stress Over Things That Don't Matter
- *Don't* Overanalyze the Interview
- *Don't* Feel You Have to Have Perfect Interviews

# Job Search “Support” Groups

## Pro's

- Great way to “share stress” with others who get it
- Talking is therapeutic
- Discussing the challenges of the job search and helping each other can reduce your stress
- May help you limit such discussions from consuming rest of your life

## Cons

- Can be depressing, if others are feeling down
- May give you a sense of hopelessness if negative statistics are shared
- May lead you to question your approach unnecessarily
- May lead to inaction due to negative perspectives

# SUMMARY

- How We Process Stress is up to Us
- Job Search Stresses Are Both Physical And Emotional, While Manageable
- Address Them through the 4 P's:
  - Planning, Persistence, Perspective, Positivity
- Roles of Visualization, Humor, Breathing etc.
- Importance of Body Basics
- Friends And Family







# Links of Interest

- On positivity: [www.Voices.Yahoo.com/Job-Search-Stress-Stay-Positive-1224564.html](http://www.Voices.Yahoo.com/Job-Search-Stress-Stay-Positive-1224564.html)
- On visualization: [www.Execsearches.com/Articles/Interview Stress Management.htm](http://www.Execsearches.com/Articles/Interview%20Stress%20Management.htm)
- On the role of planning: [www.Alumni.Umich/edu/Learning/Tips-For-Managing-Stress](http://www.Alumni.Umich/edu/Learning/Tips-For-Managing-Stress)
- On anxiety: <http://www.jobunlocker.com/blog/6-steps-to-overcome-job-search-anxiety-and-make-it-happen/>
- On anxiety: <http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2014/01/14/how-to-stay-calm-during-job-search/>

# Links of Interest

## General:

- [www.Careerdirectors.com/Members/Articles/J07.pdf](http://www.Careerdirectors.com/Members/Articles/J07.pdf)
- [www.Lannickgroup.com/Resource\\_Center/Job\\_Hunting\\_Stress.html](http://www.Lannickgroup.com/Resource_Center/Job_Hunting_Stress.html)
- [www.Vault.com/Blog/Job-Search/How-to-Deal-With-Job-Search-Anxiety](http://www.Vault.com/Blog/Job-Search/How-to-Deal-With-Job-Search-Anxiety)
- [www.Smhs.Uconn.edu/Docs/Newsletter/The\\_Connection\\_8.pdf](http://www.Smhs.Uconn.edu/Docs/Newsletter/The_Connection_8.pdf)
- [lseek.org/Jobs/StressManagement.html](http://lseek.org/Jobs/StressManagement.html)
- <http://www.careerealism.com/4-de-stressing-tips-for-your-job-search/>
- <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/science-and-sensibility/201006/top-tips-job-hunters-pressure-proof-yourself-against-job-search>
- [http://www.twincities.com/ci\\_23363720/working-strategies-beating-work-and-job-search-stress](http://www.twincities.com/ci_23363720/working-strategies-beating-work-and-job-search-stress)

We hope you feel less stressed now...  
Thank you for joining us!

For Further Information:

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