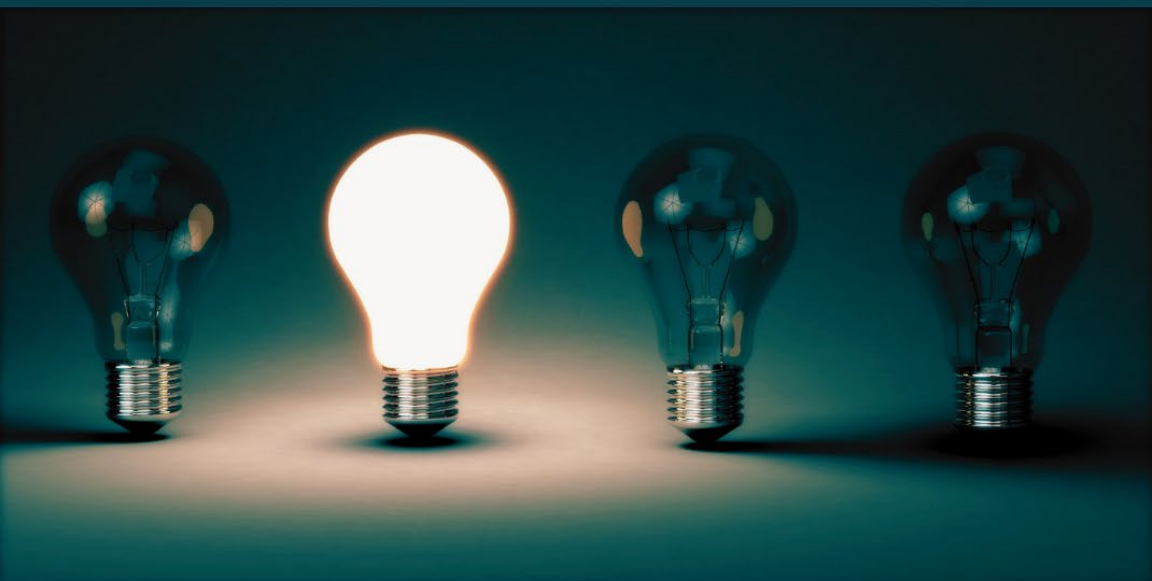


LIGHT UP OR BURN OUT



Practicing Self Care on the Field

Dr. Emily Hervey

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Light Up or Burn Out: Practicing Self-Care on the Field

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The Greatest Commandments

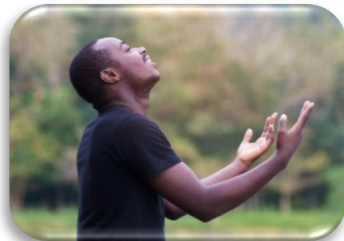
“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” And he answered, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.” (Luke 10:25-28, NASB)

In both the Old and New Testaments (Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27) we are told the greatest commandment is to love God with our whole self: heart, soul, mind, and strength. These are all parts of our identity, making them areas for growth and healing. The second commandment is to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Loving God with a Healthy Self

Think of how you select a gift for someone you love. Generally, we want it to be of high value, in good condition, useful, beautiful, and significant. How do you think your loved one would feel if you presented a rusty, bent, old tool that was no longer useful? Probably not very appreciated!

When we give our lives to God, He takes us in all our brokenness, welcoming us with loving arms. We are certainly not required to be perfect-looking or win the prize for “most effective tool for the kingdom.” However, if we want to love God with our whole selves, we need consider how we are taking care of ourselves. We are invited to “present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” (Romans 12:1, NASB). When choosing a sacrifice, the Jews were expected to bring an animal without blemish, well-cared for, and healthy. Likewise,



we must present ourselves having been redeemed and cleansed through Christ, and now doing our best to take care of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength.

In the Church today, there remains an emphasis on “works,” with value placed in doing, serving, teaching, and leading. Success in the secular world, measured by accomplishments and influence, bleeds into our views of being successful believers, especially on the field. We feel the duty to work hard until we see results, the obligation to give of ourselves until the needs are met, and the responsibility to invest in the lives of others until we see transformation. Working, giving, and investing are all good things! But *HOW* and *WHY* they are done is also important. When done out of guilt or duty, we are no longer living the gospel of grace, and get worn out and discouraged if we don’t see results. When done out of love, the action itself can be fulfilling, without worrying about the outcome, trusting God’s sovereignty for the long-term results.

In multiple parables, Jesus describes servants or stewards who have been entrusted with care of the Master’s resources for some time, and when He returns they are called to give an account for how they used those resources. Sometimes we interpret that as illustrating the need to produce a visible profit for the kingdom. But it is not just about the outcome. If you worked for a company and were given use of a company vehicle to do business, you would likely take good care of the car. Instead of driving the car as fast as you could to get as much as you could done, you would likely follow the appropriate speed for the best of the car, the driver, and everyone else on the roads. If the fuel light went on, you’d make sure to fill it up. If a warning light showed a problem with the engine, you’d get it checked out and fixed. To be a responsible steward of the car, you would take good care of it! Likewise, we have each been given one body to last our entire time on earth. For our bodies to function well for long-term use and efficiency, we need to make sure to take good care of them along the way. We can’t expect to serve God well if constantly trying to run on an empty fuel tank and

ignoring signs that we need to get some maintenance and rest. Failure to take care of ourselves is poor stewardship.

Loving Ourselves as We Love Our Neighbor

When Jesus was asked about the greatest commands, the follow-up question was “Who is my neighbor?” He told the story of the good Samaritan, who saw a man in need, stopped, put aside all cultural and societal reasons for rejecting the man, cared for him physically, and took him to a place for rest and recovery, and paid for someone else to care for him. That was a display of genuine love, which we are called to demonstrate. But consider the second half of the commandment: “as you love yourself.” Is this also how we love ourselves? Do we show ourselves attention and care as needed? Do we put aside self-criticism and offer ourselves grace? Do we tend to the wounds we’ve endured and get help from others to care for ourselves if necessary? Some of us may find it easier to love others than to love ourselves, but both are necessary for a healthy equilibrium.

If we are not receiving the love of God and of others, then it will be difficult to be vessels of love to the world. Think of the illustration of the church as the body of Christ. In the human body, if one organ is shutting down, the rest of the body is also affected. For the body to function well on a long-term basis, every part needs consistent care. Failure to take care of oneself takes a toll on the family, the team, the church, and the ministry.

To love God completely and to love others effectively, you must take care of your whole self.

Understanding Trauma and Stress

Stress: Definition and Reactions

Stress can be defined as “a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stresses can be external (from the environment, psychological, or social situations) or internal (illness, or from a medical procedure). Stress can initiate the ‘fight or flight’ response, a complex reaction of neurologic and endocrinologic systems.”¹ In small amounts, stress can actually be helpful. For example, an upcoming deadline can cause us to stay more focused and use our time more efficiently. When seen as a source of motivation, it is not always harmful.

However, **chronic stress** can cause negative and sometimes harmful results physically and psychologically. When hormones, such as cortisol, are being released in excess over a long period of time, it takes its toll on the immune systems, as well as increasing risks for problems in the musculoskeletal, respiratory, cardiovascular, endocrine, gastrointestinal, nervous, reproductive systems. Physical symptoms include tense muscles, headaches, IBS, weight gain or loss, and others. Unhealthy ways of coping with stress, such as overeating or consuming alcohol, can cause additional health problems. Psychological concerns, such as depression and anxiety, can also develop.

Trauma: Definition and Reaction

Acute stress or trauma refers to experiencing or witnessing specific, severe events, such as the threat of death, actual or threat of injury, and actual or threat of sexual violence.² Exposure can also be through learning of a relative or close friend being exposed to the trauma or having indirect exposure to the details (such as first responders, therapists, and medical professionals who are seeing the results and hearing the stories).

It is normal to have strong reactions to these kinds of fear-inducing events; in fact, our bodies are made to react for own protection. The

signals sent by the brain and the gut trigger a state of defense, enabling the human body to fight back or run away with more energy than usually capable of using. That’s why your heart and lungs are pumping more blood, your adrenaline and other hormones are released, and other systems stop using energy (e.g. digestive system). In addition to the “fight or flight” modes of defense, sometimes the survival reaction is to freeze, just as that might protect someone from being seen by a predator. How our bodies react is not based on decision-making or reasoning; it is based on how we are wired.

Some reactions continue after the traumatic event:³

<i>Domain</i>	Negative Responses
Cognitive	Confusion, disorientation, worry, intrusive thoughts and images, self-blame
Emotional	Shock, sorrow, grief, sadness, fear, anger, numbness, irritability, guilt, and shame
Social	Extreme withdrawal, interpersonal conflict
Physiological	Fatigue, headache, muscle tension, stomachache, increased heart rate, exaggerated startle response, difficulties sleeping
<i>Domain</i>	Positive Responses
Cognitive	Determination and resolve, sharper perceptions, courage, optimism, faith
Emotional	Feeling involved, challenged, mobilized
Social	Social connectedness, altruistic helping behaviors
Physiological	Alertness, readiness to respond, increasing energy

Some people recover fairly quickly, especially with the needed support, feeling of safety restored, and appropriate closure. However, some have more severe reactions, classified as “Acute Stress Disorder” for the first four weeks, and “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” (PTSD) if lasting longer than that.

The symptoms include:⁴

- **Re-experiencing the trauma** (at least one way):
 - Intrusive thoughts
 - Nightmares
 - Flashbacks (feeling like it is happening all over again)
 - Emotional or physical distress after being exposed to something related to memory of the trauma
- **Avoiding trauma-related stimuli** (at least one way):
 - Thoughts or feelings related to trauma
 - Physical reminders of trauma
- **Worsened negative thoughts or feelings** (at least two):
 - Inability to recall key features of the trauma
 - Overly negative thoughts and assumptions about oneself or the world
 - Exaggerated blame of self or others for causing the trauma
 - Negative mood/feelings
 - Decreased interest in activities
 - Feeling isolated
 - Difficulty experiencing positive mood/feelings
- **Worsened arousal and reactivity** (at least two ways):
 - Irritability or aggression
 - Risky or destructive behavior
 - Hypervigilance
 - Heightened startle reaction
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Difficulty sleeping

Not everyone who experience trauma develops PTSD. In fact, the majority don't have it to the point of being a disorder, but still have some of the individual symptoms. When working with people who have experienced trauma, it is important to be aware of the wide range of reactions and show support and acceptance along the way.

Compassion Fatigue and Burnout

When in a role of caregiver to those who experience chronic stress and/or trauma, whether as a professional or a loved one, one can experience secondary trauma exposure. Witnessing the negative impact of what occurred or continues to occur can be emotionally and physically draining. This is known as "compassion fatigue" and lead to decreased empathy, increased desensitization, and declining quality of work.⁵

Ongoing stress and compassion fatigue can contribute to eventual burnout, a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion, often manifest in irritability, anxiety, depression, and physical problems.⁶ It can have a negative impact on relationships at work and at home. Compassion fatigue can contribute to burnout, but there are other factors involved such as the work environment and what kind of stress is being experienced on a regular basis.

Table 1, from the Green Cross Academy of Traumatology, includes symptoms of compassion fatigue and burnout; you may notice that many overlap with reactions to trauma.

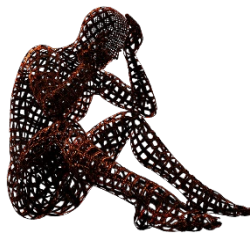


Table 1: Caregiver Reactions			
Cognitive		Emotional	Behavioral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Diminished concentration o Confusion o Spaciness o Loss of meaning o Decreased self-esteem o Preoccupation with trauma o Trauma imagery o Apathy o Rigidity o Disorientation o Whirling thoughts o Thoughts of self-harm or harm toward others o Self-doubt o Perfectionism o Minimization 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Powerlessness o Anxiety o Guilt o Anger/rage o Survivor guilt o Shutdown o Numbness o Fear o Helplessness o Sadness o Depression o Hypersensitivity o Emotional roller coaster o Overwhelmed o Depleted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Clingy o Impatient o Irritable o Withdrawn o Moody o Regression o Sleep disturbances o Appetite changes o Nightmares o Hypervigilance o Elevated startle response o Use of negative coping (smoking, alcohol or other substance abuse) o Accident proneness o Losing things o Self harm behaviors
Spiritual		Interpersonal	Physical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Questioning the meaning of life o Loss of purpose o Lack of self-satisfaction o Pervasive hopelessness o Ennui o Anger at God o Questioning of prior religious beliefs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Withdrawn o Decreased interest in intimacy or sex o Mistrust o Isolation from friends o Impact on parenting (protectiveness, concern about aggression) o Projection of anger or blame o Intolerance o Loneliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Shock o Sweating o Rapid heartbeat o Breathing difficulties o Aches and pains o Dizziness o Impaired immune system
Impact on Professional Functioning			
Performance of Job Tasks	Morale	Interpersonal	Behavioral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Decrease in quality o Decrease in quantity o Low motivation o Avoidance of job tasks o Increase in mistakes o Setting perfectionist standards o Obsession about details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Decrease in confidence o Loss of interest o Dissatisfaction o Negative attitude o Apathy o Demoralization o Lack of appreciation o Detachment o Feelings of incompleteness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Withdrawal from colleagues o Impatience o Decrease in quality of relationship o Poor communication o Subsume own needs o Staff conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Absenteeism o Exhaustion o Faulty judgment o Irritability o Tardiness o Irresponsibility o Overwork o Frequent job changes

Self-Assessment

One of the keys to maintaining well-being is to get an accurate picture what your strengths are and what your needs are. What has been working well that you need to maintain? What has been detrimental that needs to be changed?

There are a variety of tools for self-assessment, including:

- CHOPS Stress Inventory
- Measuring Life Stress
- How Vulnerable Are You to Stress?
- Ego Resiliency Scale
- Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Subscales

These are available in the Appendix A as resources.

The CHOPS Stress Inventory: This was originally designed by Kelly and Michele O'Donnell for overseas workers, and recently adapted by Laurie Tone as a more quantitative measure. It provides a valuable opportunity to identify key sources of stress in a cross-cultural context. Allow some reflection time to consider the sources of stress that have the greatest impact on you.

Measuring Life Stress: This test was designed based on the research that shows the impact of stress on a composite level. The combination of adjustments in multiple areas of life, and the resulting stress, can lead to an increased risk in physical problems. Some of the items, such as Christmas, are not negative in and of themselves, yet can contribute to the big picture. Be sure to review the entire year when summing up changes you've experienced. High scores do not guarantee the onset of disease; however, the higher risk revealed can show the need for healthy ways to counter the effects of those stressors.

How Vulnerable Are You to Stress? The outcome of this assessment shows two sides of the coin, not just vulnerability, but on the positive side some existing forms of resistance to stress. The items you mark as

high numbers (i.e. Never), are potential areas of development, while the ones you mark as a low number (i.e. Always) and positive areas that you can celebrate and appreciate.

The Ego Resiliency Scale Revised: This measure helps us see some of the general traits that contribute to how we respond to stress and trauma. It has been tested in multiple countries (though mostly Western cultures),⁷ and shown consistent correlation with effective adjustment, with an opposite relationship to maladjustment. The results also have a strong relationship with personality traits (particularly “the Big Five”: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability), suggesting that some of our tendencies are more ingrained. That does not mean there is no room for improvement in resiliency! But it suggests more room for grace, as some people will naturally have a harder time managing distress than others.

Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Subscales—Revision III: This tool is particularly helpful for those working directly in settings of disaster response and trauma. Helping the hurting can be fulfilling, but also draining. It can help to get a better picture of how we are affected by being the givers of compassion, also identifying if we’re in danger of burnout.

Finding Rest: Here are some simple questions to consider ways of seeking rest and refreshment, as well as considering if you have been intentionally facilitating the rest that is needed.

Healthy Habits: Taking Care of the Whole PERSON

It is important to address self-care from a holistic approach. One way to remember the different components are from the acronym PERSON: Physical, Emotional, Relational, Spiritual, Occupation, and Needs. Listed here are some key considerations, but these are not comprehensive. Add other components to the list that you notice in your life.

Physical: Do everything in moderation.

- Sleep, food, water, exercise
- Observe your physical reactions
- Take breaks
- Practice breathing slowly
- Identify what helps you relax and use it on a regular basis (e.g. warm bath, walking, massage, etc.)
- Avoid excess caffeine, alcohol, sugar, smoking, and other unhealthy habits
- _____

Emotional: Identify, accept, and express your feelings.

- Notice emotional reactions that might be different or stronger than before (easily getting angry, often hypervigilant, feeling down, etc.)
- Be aware that these feelings are normal; don't condemn yourself for your reactions
- Make room for grieving losses
- Find healthy ways of expressing those emotions, such as talking with someone you trust, praying, journaling, creative expression, etc.
- When feeling overwhelmed, re-focus on reasons to be grateful and intentionally spend time thanking God.
- Use healthy humor
- _____

Relational: Invest in those who influence you

- Make sure you have people around you who can support you and listen to you
- Give yourself permission to ask for help. Clearly express your needs.
- Recognize that stress can cause strain on relationships. Notice how it might influence yours and be careful not to “take it out” on your loved ones.
- When you do react negatively, be ready to apologize. When others around you react, be ready to forgive.
- Help each other understand emotions and responses.
- Show love and receive it. Hugs are wonderful if appropriate.
- Set appropriate boundaries
- Spend time together doing something enjoyable
- _____

Spiritual: Make time with God a priority

- Practice “Passing the Peace”
- Set aside time for reading the Bible, praying, worshipping
- Find fellowship with other believers
- Seeks mentorship and accountability/prayer partners
- Allow time to process questions and challenged belief systems
- Read devotions and books from others who have had similar experiences and grown from them
- Observe the Sabbath as a time sanctified
- _____

Occupational: Find (and create) stability

- Set routines

- Make small, daily decisions, but be careful not to make big decisions when feeling overwhelmed
- Remember there are other options; think creatively and look to others for ideas
- Limit demands on time and energy
- Make your work environment a safe, open, encouraging one
- Reflect on what you have done well in the past
- Look for lessons learned (or learning) in the midst of challenges
- _____

Needs: Balance your own needs with the needs of others

- Evaluate your current situation and what needs are not being met
- Determine what roles you are trying to fill in different circles, and which are taking the most time and energy
- Identify which roles are critical for you (e.g. being a parent), which are important for your position (dependent on your skills/training/knowledge), and which can be delegated to others
- Prioritize your roles and responsibilities, and be ready to ask for help
- Determine how much “information” you need, recognizing the influence of the news, social media, and other forms of input
- Be careful not to get too caught up in all the negative, conflicting messages, but make sure you are adequately informed from trustworthy sources
- Take everything with a grain of salt and decide what you are going to give back to society. We can contribute hope or fear, peace or conflict, truth or confusion, affecting stress for ourselves and others.

Using all these tools, choose two specific ways to meet those needs, by setting SMART goals:



Specific



Measurable



Attainable



Realistic



Time-Based

Rather than a broad intention (e.g. “I’m going to get more family time.”), be specific, stating it in a way that can be measured, that is within your capacity, that is not unreasonable high, starting in small increments of improvement, and that has an end point. For example, “I’m going to have at least four dinners a week with my family, within the next month.”

Write these goals down, put them on your schedule, and share them with someone else (e.g. spouse, accountability partner).

Self-Care for the Caregiver in Crises

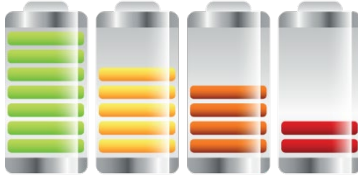
In times of crises, multiple sources of stress are usually compiled, including practical demands, complex logistics, high levels of need, and frequent lack of resources. Caring for others overwhelmed by the crisis can also be physically and emotionally draining. Seeing tragedy around us can be painful, particularly in the midst of our limitations and frequent inability to meet all the needs being presented. It is important to make room for REST, RENEWAL, and REFLECTION.

Rest and Renewal

Every person is unique in their needs and their reactions to crises. Some may find themselves energized by the opportunity to help those in need, while others quickly find themselves drained when witnessing suffering and empathizing with the pain around them. Often we’ll see both reactions, one hour feeling encouraged by the opportunity to provide food to someone who expresses deep gratitude, and the next hour overwhelmed with compassion for the devastated parent who lost

a child or the vulnerable woman who had no home, no food, and no means of income.

It is important to make time for rest if we want to function well, to love well. We often function as a battery: if we don't get re-charged, we



eventually won't function. It's better to get re-charged on a regular basis than to get to the point of being completely drained.

Taking a break on a regular basis to rest physically, perhaps drinking a glass of water, stretching, and having a healthy snack, as well as getting good sleep every night will help the body function well. We also need to identify sources of emotional and spiritual renewal: what makes us feel refreshed. Some tools only take a few minutes, while others deserve a longer length of time.

Here are some tools for renewal:

Short: 2-10 minutes

- Diaphragmatic breathing: Slow down your breathing, inhaling through the nose and expanding your belly instead of raising your shoulders, holding your breath for a few seconds, then slowly releasing the air. This process tells your body it is safe to relax, slowing down the shallow, fast breathing that is a typical reaction to stress.
- Breath prayer: Choose a simple phrase, such as a prayer or part of a Bible verse (e.g. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.") As you inhale, think the first part of the phrase ("The Lord is my shepherd"), receiving His presence, His peace, His comfort. After holding it for a moment, slowly exhale as you think the second part of the sentence ("I shall not want") releasing all your worries back to Him.
- Peaceful imagery: Close your eyes and picture yourself in a place where you feel safe, relaxed. Think of the different senses:

What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you feel on your skin? Enjoy being in that place.

- Progressive muscle relaxation: Work through different sets of muscles, first tensing them tightly, then releasing all the tension as you exhale, noticing the sensation of relaxation (see Appendix B for more specific directions).

Medium: 30 minutes to 2 hours

- Passing the Peace: Connecting with Jesus in a peaceful memory, expressing gratitude, and inviting Him to show you whatever He wants you to know.
- Lectio Divina: Read a passage (*lectio*), asking God to show you a specific word or phrase to think about. Read it again, meditating on that word or phrase, asking God what is significant about it (*meditatio*). Read it again, and consider how you want to respond (*oratio*). Finally, rest in God's presence, asking Him if there's anything He wants to tell you today (*contemplatio*).
- Journaling
- Artistic expression
- Music
- Dancing
- Whatever has helped you feel relaxed in the past!

Extended: 1 to 7 days

After working in a high-stress environment for an extended period of time, it can be very helpful to take a retreat, whether by yourself or with a small group of people. There are many varieties, some more structured than others. Consider what your needs are at this time, whether silence and solitude or instruction and affirmation.

Also include vacation in your long-term planning. Regardless of how far you go geographically, set aside time where you are not available for your work, making it clear you will not be responding to phone calls and

emails. Planning for it ahead of time will also give you be something to look forward to, a goal to reach when starting to feel overwhelmed.

Reflection

After facing a crisis as a responder or caregiver, it helps to verbally process the experience; this is particularly effective when with someone who is a good listener. It is valuable to allow the expression of emotions, including the painful ones, with some who can empathize, which we are called to do when sharing each other's burdens. But it is healthy to not end on the negative note, instead also identifying the positive part of the experience, such as the change to make a difference in someone's life, the fulfillment found in showing Christ's love, and the relationships formed or deepened. Often we don't see all the positive results we might have liked, but that doesn't take away from the value of serving others just as we would serve Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46).

Difficult situations can also be optimal times for growth, particularly when approached with an attitude of humility. Take this opportunity to consider what went well and what could have been done better. We often see our own limitations and flaws emerge when under pressure, making it a time to embrace both grace and growth. Just as precious metals are refined by fire, so our faith and character are refined by the trials we face (1 Peter 1: 6-7, Isaiah 48:10, Proverbs 17:3).



Overall, reflecting on our experience helps us put it into perspective and take something positive out of it. It is valuable to set aside part of this time for prayer, engaging in interaction with Jesus, inviting His peace, expressing gratitude, and asking Him what it is that He would like you to know or learn (this is integration of the Immanuel Approach and Passing the Peace).

Running the Race

Work on the field is a marathon, not a sprint. Pouring out all our resources—our energy, our health, our relationships, our time—early on sets us up for breaking down part way through. Marathon runners learn to pace themselves, they know their limits, they make sure they are staying hydrated, and watch out for signs of heat stroke. Most also have coaches and supporters checking up on them along the way. Running alone can be lonely and discouraging. Instead, we need to be running together, encouraging one another, at times in the role of the runner, at times being the encourager and supporter.

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2, NASB)



Appendix A: Self Evaluation

- CHOPS Stress Inventory
- Measuring Life Stress
- How Vulnerable Are You to Stress?
- Ego Resiliency Scale
- Professional Quality of Life
- Finding Rest

CHOPS Stress Inventory©

The following 10 categories list areas of stress that are often experienced by humanitarian, mission, and development workers. Using the scales below please rate how stressful each of the following areas were/are **during the past month**. Consider the examples of possible experiences to guide your responses. Note that many of these stressors can be both a source of stress and/or a symptom of stress.

Area	Possible Experiences	Level of Stress During Past Month				
1. Cultural	Getting needs met in unfamiliar ways: Housing, food, transportation, etc. language learning, culture shock, reentry, feeling rejected, overlooked, or undervalued by the dominant international culture, gender bias, prejudice, lack of opportunity/freedom...	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
2. Crises	Potentially traumatic events: Natural disasters, wars, accidents, evacuations, disease outbreaks, death of someone close to you, political instability, protracted armed conflicts and physical threats, one’s own community and/or country affected...	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme

3. Historic al	Unresolved past areas of personal and social struggle: Family of origin issues, personal weaknesses, lack of educational, health, economic opportunities...	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
4. Human Relation ships:	With family members, colleagues, nationals, raising children, couple conflict, struggles with team members, social opposition, caring for aging parents, few school options, human rights violations, harassment, persecution, discrimination, stigma...	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
5. Occupat ional	Job-specific challenges and pressures: Workload, travel schedule, exposure to people with problems, job satisfaction, more training, government "red tape", job insecurity, short-term contracts, work not understood or respected, seeing problems that are complex/that I can't help...	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme

6. Organizational	Governance and management: Incongruence between one's background and the organizational ethos, policies, work style, management practices, expectations, incompetence, corruption, abusive leadership, dysfunction, disability practices, legal protection, training...	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
7. Physical	Overall health and factors that affect it: Nutrition, climate, illness, aging, environment, no medical resources/insurance and inadequate nutritional options, injuries/road traffic accidents...	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
8. Psychological	Overall emotional stability and self-esteem: Loneliness, frustration, depression, unwanted habits, developmental issues/stage of life issues, transition, grief, loss, cumulative impact of "adverse life events"...	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme

9. Support	Resources to sustain one's work: Finances, housing, clerical/technical help, donor contact, minimum pay and/or financial support, finances used for survival and not just for one's work...	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
10. Spiritual	Relationship with the Lord: Devotional life, temptations, time with other believers, spiritual warfare, finding meaning, evil, inner growth, practices/disciplines, lack of trust/respect for spiritual leaders..	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Summary	How would you rate your overall level of stress over the past month?	Minimal	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
	Please mark the 3 categories that were/are the most stress producing over the last month.	<div> <div>Cultural</div> <div>Crises</div> <div>Historical</div> <div>Human</div> <div>Occupational</div> </div> <div> <div>Organizational</div> <div>Physical</div> <div>Psychological</div> <div>Support</div> <div>Spiritual</div> </div>				

<p>Please identify 3-5 specific stressors that caused distress over the past month. They may or may not be listed in the possible experiences or 10 categories.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
---	--

Reference: CHOPS Stress Inventory ©Adapted from O'Donnell, K. & Lewis O'Donnell, M. (2012) CHOPS. Retrieved from <http://membercareassociates.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CHOPS-Stress-Inventory-Updated%C2%A9-2015.pdf>

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Adapted in consultation with the O'Donnells by Dr. Laurie A. Tone, 2015.

Note: You can also use the results of this inventory to discuss how you are successfully managing stress now and your strategies for dealing with stress in the future. It can thus be a tool to explore struggles, successes, and strategies related to your adjustment/growth.

Measuring Life Stress⁸

Instructions: Circle the number of any event which has occurred in your life over the past 12 months. Add up the numbers for your total score.

Event	Scale of Impact	Event	Scale of Impact
Death of spouse	100	Son or daughter leaving home	29
Divorce	73	Change in responsibility at work	29
Marital separation	65	Outstanding personal achievement	28
Jail term	63	Spouse begins/stops work	26
Death of close family member	63	Begin or end school	26
Personal injury or illness	53	Change in living conditions	25
Marriage	50	Revision of personal habits	24
Fired at work	47	Trouble with boss	23
Marital reconciliation	45	Change in work hours or conditions	20
Retirement	45	Change in residence	20
Change in health of family member	44	Change in schools	20
Pregnancy	39	Change in recreation	19
Sex difficulties	39	Change in church activity	19
Gain of new family member	39	Change in social activity	18
Business readjustment	39	Small mortgage or loan	17
Change in financial state	38	Change in sleep habits	16
Death of a close friend	37	Change in number of family get-togethers	15
Change to a different line of work	36	Change in eating habits	15
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35	Vacation	13
High mortgage	31	Christmas	12
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	31	Minor violations of the law	11
Trouble with in-laws	29	TOTAL SCORE	

Interpretation

Score 150-199: If your current level of stress continues and/or you do not adopt effective stress management strategies, you have a 37% chance of a minor illness in the next two years.

Score 200-299: If your stress level continues and you do nothing to change your adaptive strategies, you have a 51% chance of developing a major illness in the next two years.

Score over 300: You have a 79% chance of a major health breakdown in the next two years. It is recommended that you begin adding effective coping strategies to your life-style.

¹ The Social Readjustment Rating Scale was designed to reflect the cumulative stress to which an individual has been exposed over a period of time (Holmes & Holmes, 1970; Holmes and Rahe, 1967, Rahe and Arthur, 1978). "Life change units" are used to measure life stress in the areas noted above.

How Vulnerable Are You To Stress?²

In modern society, most of us can't avoid stress. But we can learn to behave in ways that lessen its effects. Researchers have identified a number of factors that affect one's vulnerability to stress - among them are eating and sleeping habits, caffeine and alcohol intake, and how we express our emotions. The following questionnaire is designed to help you discover your vulnerability quotient and to pinpoint trouble spots. Rate each item from 1 (always) to 5 (never), according to how much of the time the statement is true of you. Be sure to mark each item, even if it does not apply to you - for example, if you don't smoke, circle 1 next to item six.

	Always		Sometimes		Never
1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I get 7-8 hours of sleep at least four nights a week.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I give and receive affection regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles, on whom I can rely.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I limit myself to less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I take fewer than five alcohol drinks a week.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.	1	2	3	4	5

10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I regularly attend club or social activities.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am in good health (including eye-sight, hearing, and teeth).	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems - for example, chores and money.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I do something for fun at least once a week.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am able to organize my time effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or other caffeine-rich drinks) a day.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I take some quiet time for myself during the day.	1	2	3	4	5

² University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter, August 1985. Scale Developers: Lyle Miller and Alma Dell Smith of Boston University Medical Center.

Scoring Instructions: To calculate your score, add up the figures and subtract 20.

Self Score:

Total _____ - 20 = _____

Score Interpretation:

A score **below 10** indicates **excellent resistance** to stress.

A score **over 30** indicates **some vulnerability** to stress;

A score **over 50** indicates **serious vulnerability** to stress.

Self Care Plan:

- ◆ Notice that nearly all the items describe situations and behaviors over which you have a great deal of control.
- ◆ Review the items on which you scored three or higher.
- ◆ List those items in your self-care plan.

Ego Resiliency Scale

This scale consists of 14 items, each responded to on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*does not apply at all*) to 4 (*applies very strongly*).

Record all 14 questions and add up your score.

Rate how true the following characteristics are as they apply to you generally:

1. I am generous with my friends.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
2. I quickly get over and recover from being startled.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
3. I enjoy dealing with new and unusual situations.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
4. I usually succeed in making a favorable impression on people.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
5. I enjoy trying new foods I have never tasted before.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
6. I am regarded as a very energetic person.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
7. I like to take different paths to familiar places.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
8. I am more curious than most people.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
9. Most of the people I meet are likable.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly

10. I usually think carefully about something before acting.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
11. I like to do new and different things.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
12. My daily life is full of things that keep me interested.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
13. I would be willing to describe myself as a pretty “strong” personality.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly
14. I get over my anger at someone reasonably quickly.	1 Does not apply at all	2 Applies slightly	3 Applies somewhat	4 Applies very strongly

Scoring Interpretation

Score	47-56	35-46	23-34	11-22	0-10
	Very High Resiliency Trait	High Resiliency Trait	Undetermined Trait	Low Resiliency Trait	Very Low Resiliency Trait

EGO RESILIENCY SCALE (Block & Kremen, 1996)

Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Subscales

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE

Helping others puts you in direct contact with other people's lives. As you probably have experienced, your compassion for those you help has both positive and negative aspects. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current situation. Write in the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these characteristics in the last 30 days.

0=Never 1=Rarely 2=A Few Times 3=Somewhat Often 4=Often
5=Very Often

/ _____ 1. I am happy.

0 _____ 2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I help.

x _____ 3. I get satisfaction from being able to help people.

/ _____ 4. I feel connected to others.

0 _____ 5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.

x _____ 6. I feel invigorated after working with those I help.

0 _____ 7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a helper.

/ _____ 8. I am losing sleep over a person I help's traumatic experiences.

0 _____ 9. I think that I might have been "infected" by the traumatic stress of those I help.

/ _____ 10. I feel trapped by my work as a helper.

0 _____ 11. Because of my helping, I have felt "on edge" about various things.

x _____ 12. I like my work as a helper.

0 _____ 13. I feel depressed as a result of my work as a helper.

0 _____ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have helped.

/ _____ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.

x _____ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping techniques and protocols.

/ _____ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.

x _____ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.

/ _____ 19. Because of my work as a helper, I feel exhausted.

x _____ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I help and how I could help them.

/ _____ 21. I feel overwhelmed by the amount of work or the size of my caseload I have to deal with.

x _____ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.

0 _____ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I help.

x _____ 24. I plan to be a helper for a long time.

0 _____ 25. As a result of my helping, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.

/ _____ 26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.

x _____ 27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a helper.

0 _____ 28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.

/ _____ 29. I am an unduly sensitive person.

x _____ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

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Self-scoring directions (revised 7/12/03)

1. Be certain you respond to all items.
2. On some items the scores need to be reversed. Next to your response write the reverse of that score. (i.e. 0=0, 1=5, 2=4, 3=3) Reverse the scores on these 5 items: 1, 4, 15, 17 and 29
0 is not reversed as its value is always null.
3. Mark the items for scoring:
 - a. Put an x by the following 10 items: 3, 6, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30
 - b. Put a check by the following 10 items: 1, 4, 8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26, 29
 - c. Circle the following 10 items: 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 23, 25, 28
4. Add the numbers you wrote next to the items for each set of items. Note scores in table below.

	High	Average	Low
Compassion Satisfaction (items marked by "x")	41+	40-33 (40)	32-
Burnout (items marked by check)	28+	27-20	19- (19)
Compassion Fatigue (circled items)	17+	16-9	8-(8)

Finding Rest

Thinking of past times when you have felt tired or stressed, identify what has been most refreshing and relaxing:

Physically:

Emotionally:

Spiritually:

Who are two or three people who you know will listen if you need to talk?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

How frequently do you take a Sabbath?

When was the last time you had at least one week off from work?

When is your next planned vacation?

Appendix B: Relaxation Exercises⁹

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This exercise involves systematically tensing and relaxing different muscle groups. This is a good relaxation exercise for those who have trouble concentrating, or experience racing thoughts or other mental distractions. You may leave your eyes open or close them, as you prefer. Experiment with how much you tense your target muscles: some find tensing tightly is most helpful, while others use “threshold tensing,” just tightening enough to barely sense the tension.

Start out by taking a few deep breaths into the abdomen. Just notice the breath. Do a simple check-in of your emotional state, your thoughts, and what you are feeling in your body. Just notice what is happening, without judgment or expectation.

Make a fist with your right hand, and tense the muscles in your right forearm, allowing the rest of the arm to remain relaxed. Study the sensations of tension. Compare the tensed muscles to the relaxed ones in the opposite arm, and in the rest of the body. When you’re ready, take a deep breath in, and, as you exhale, slowly, gradually release all of the tension, until every last bit has left the tensed muscles. You may imagine it’s like a fire hose that was rigid and becomes more flexible as the water drains out, or any image that works for you. Spend a few moments studying and appreciating the sensations in the muscles once they are relaxed.

Repeat this with your left fist and forearm.

Raise your right shoulder, pin your right upper arm to the side of your body, and tense the muscles in the right upper arm and shoulder. Study the sensations of tension. Compare the tensed muscles to the relaxed ones in the opposite arm, and in the rest of the body. When you’re ready, take a deep breath in, and, as you exhale, slowly, gradually release all of the tension, until every last bit has left the tensed muscles. Find an image that captures this

gradual release of tension for you: the sun melting ice, butter melting, releasing pressure with a valve, et cetera. Spend a few moments studying and appreciating the sensations in the muscles once they are relaxed.

Repeat this with your left upper arm and shoulder.

With your leg extended, bend your right foot up at an angle, so the muscles of your right calf, shin, ankle and foot are tensed. Allow the rest of the leg to remain relaxed. Study the sensations of tension. Compare the tensed muscles to the relaxed ones in the rest of the leg, and in the rest of the body. When you're ready, take a deep breath in, and, as you exhale, slowly, gradually release all of the tension, until every last bit has left the tensed muscles. You may imagine it's like a fire hose that was rigid and becomes more flexible as the water drains out. Spend a few moments studying and appreciating the sensations in the muscles once they are relaxed. Repeat this with your left foot and lower leg.

Tense the muscles in the right buttock and thigh, allowing the remaining muscles in the right leg to remain as relaxed as possible. Study the sensations of tension. Compare the tensed muscles to the relaxed ones in the opposite buttock and thigh, and in the rest of the body. When you're ready, take a deep breath in, and, as you exhale, slowly, gradually release all of the tension, until every last bit has left the tensed muscles.

Spend a few moments studying and appreciating the sensations in the muscles once they are relaxed. Repeat this on the left side.

Suck in your abdominal muscles, and simultaneously push the small of your back against the chair or floor. Study the sensations of tension. Compare the tensed muscles to the relaxed ones in the rest of your body. When you're ready, take a deep breath in, and, as you exhale, slowly, gradually release all of the tension, until every last bit has left the tensed muscles. Spend a few moments studying and appreciating the sensations in the muscles once they are relaxed.

Let your head fall forward, or, alternatively, press your head backward against a wall, to tense the muscles in the back of your neck. Study the sensations of tension.

Compare the tensed muscles to the relaxed ones in the rest of your body. When you're ready, take a deep breath in, and, as you exhale, slowly, gradually release all of the tension, until every last bit has left the tensed muscles. Spend a few moments studying and appreciating the sensations in the muscles once they are relaxed.

Push your tongue against your upper palette, purse your lips, squint your eyes, tighten your jaw and scrunch up your face. Study the sensations of tension. Compare the tensed muscles to the relaxed ones in the rest of your body. When you're ready, take a deep breath in, and, as you exhale, slowly, gradually release all of the tension, until every last bit has left the tensed muscles. Spend a few moments studying and appreciating the sensations in the muscles once they are relaxed.

Take a few slow, deep breaths, and allow yourself to be aware of the sensations throughout your body. If there is any part that remains tense, repeat the exercise there until the tension is gone. Just allow the relaxation to move through your body in waves, allowing yourself to relax more, and more, and more deeply as you continue to take slow, deep breaths. If you like the seashore, you may want to think of gentle waves lapping at the sand, gradually washing away physical, and emotional, and mental tension, smoothing ... soothing ...relaxing.

When you are done with the relaxation exercise, allow yourself a few minutes to reorient before getting up. Just enjoy the sensations of relaxation throughout your body. You may notice sensations you have never been aware of before.

Rapid Relaxation Exercises

These are things you can do in a minute or two to feel more relaxed. As you start, take a moment to do a simple check-in of your emotional state, your thoughts, and what you are feeling in your body. Just notice what is happening, without judgment or expectation.

Abdominal Breathing

Abdominal breathing is the one of the most effective ways to relax quickly. By breathing with your diaphragm you will immediately signal your autonomic nervous system to relax. Place one hand on your belly and one on your chest. Take some slow, deep breaths into the belly. It's helpful, but not essential, to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. If you are doing abdominal breathing correctly, the lower hand should move as much or more than the hand on your chest. Continue this slow, deep breathing for a couple of minutes, imagining the breath calming your body and clearing your mind. Notice how you feel.

Cook's Hookup

With legs extended, cross your left ankle over your right one. With your arms outstretched, cross your right wrist over your left one, then turn your hands so the palms are touching, clasp your fingers, and twist your hands down and toward your ribs, and rest them on your chest. Hold this.

Once you have learned the technique, you don't need to use the hands if you prefer not to.

Position for two minutes as you breathe through your nose. On the in-breath, push your tongue against your upper palette, and on the out-breath push it against your lower palette. When the two minute period has elapsed, take a minute to notice what you experience in your body.

Quick Tensing and Relaxing

Tense your feet and lower legs and thighs and buttocks, pelvic muscles, abdomen, and lower back muscles. Hold them tightly for a few moments and notice the tension. Then release the tension completely and let all those muscles soften and become supple and relaxed. Tense your hands, forearms, upper arms and shoulders, belly, midriff, middle and upper back, and facial muscles, and take a breath in so your rib cage is full extended. Notice how that feels, then release the breath and soften all those muscles, letting them become supple and relaxed. As you continue to breathe, focus on releasing, softening, letting go. Let the tension continue to flow out with every out-breath.

Notes

¹ Shiel, W. C. (N.D.) Medical Definition of Stress.

<https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=20104>

² Definition of trauma from the DSM-5.

³ Psychological First Aid Field Operations Guide, 2nd edition

⁴ American Psychiatric Association. (2013) Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, (5th ed.)

⁵ Figley Institute (2012). Basics of Compassion Fatigue.

⁶ Figley Institute (2012). Basics of Compassion Fatigue.

⁷ Alessandri, G., Vecchione, M., Caprara, G., & Letzring, T. D. (2011). The Ego Resiliency Scale Revised: A Cross-cultural study in Italy, Spain, and the United States, *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 28(2), 139-146.

⁸ The Social Readjustment Rating Scale was designed to reflect the cumulative stress to which an individual has been exposed over a period of time (Holmes & Holmes, 1970; Holmes and Rahe, 1967, Rahe and Arthur, 1978). "Life change units" are used to measure life stress in the areas noted above.

⁹ This resource guide was produced at the Trauma Center, with the funding of the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA), under a federal Anti-Terrorism Supplemental Grant (ATSG), to aid Victims of and Responders to the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks. Available at

https://centerforsurvivors.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Relaxation_Exercises.pdf