

STRESS MANAGEMENT

how to step off the
'conveyor-belt' &
reclaim your life

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter de Ruyter was born in South Africa in 1951 of Dutch migrants. In 1964 he moved with his family to Sydney, Australia, where he did his secondary schooling before going on to study at Sydney University. In 1975 he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree, which was used to obtain entrance to a specialized Nursing Course offered by Prince Henry Hospital. He graduated as a Registered Nurse two years later.

He worked in several major Sydney teaching hospitals, and did a second Certificate in 'Nursing Unit Management' at St. Vincent's Hospital. He then worked in Pathology, which provided a comprehensive experience in a multitude of orthodox diagnostic procedures. This background produced an excellent base from which to enter the Naturopathic arena.

It was during the latter years of his Nursing career that Peter became increasingly interested in Alternative or Complementary approaches to true healing. This desire led him to undertake courses in Reiki, Homeopathy, Iridology, Bach Flower Therapy, Tissue Salt Therapy, Diet, Massage and finally to major in Medical Herbalism, having studied this in a Diploma Course at the Southern Cross Herbal College, under the renowned herbalist, Denis Stewart.

Peter started practicing as a Natural Therapist in 1982, specializing in Medicinal Herbs, at the 'Village Healing & Growth Center' in Paddington. He consulted from there for two years before being invited to practice at the former 'Euroa Center' in Balmain. He ran a highly successful practice from this Center for 12 years; between 1984 – 1996. He subsequently worked from several different clinics, and presently operates from Randwick.

From the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Peter was involved in helping people deal with this health challenge, using a wide range of natural therapeutic techniques. Although no cures have been achieved, these protocols provided immense benefits to many people, frequently stabilizing them for long periods of time, as well as greatly increasing quality of life. Over the years, about 25% of Peter's practice involved dealing with HIV/AIDS clients. The remaining 75% of his clients came for a range of ill-health conditions, including cancer.

Peter has presented his work at local and national conferences, and lectured to a host of lay groups. In the early days of the AIDS epidemic, he organized and facilitated many intensive workshops, and several self-help groups in which people learned a range of techniques through which to help regain their health. In a number of radio and TV appearances, similar topics were addressed. He is author of '*Coping With Candida*', which went to a second edition. His next book, titled '*Living with HIV/AIDS – a practical guide to staying well*' was published by Allen & Unwin in 1996.

After 28 years of consulting with thousands of clients, Peter has recently taken a Sabbatical, during which time he finished his third book, '*Lifenotes – a user's guide to making sense of life on planet earth*'. Peter now offers a range of training workshops in the area of natural health, as well as some part-time consulting. Drawing on both orthodox and complementary methods, he finds himself well placed to continue being of service in a truly Wholistic manner.

Stress Management – how to step off the “conveyor-belt” & reclaim your life’

The world and its affairs are moving so fast that there are days when the person who says it can't be done is interrupted by the person doing it.

Unknown

The single most common problem presenting itself in my professional practise, day in, day out is that of stress. People find themselves caught on a ‘treadmill’ which is not just going too fast, but has in fact gone out of control, causing exhaustion and burnout. Inevitably, such a demanding state of affairs is also the basis to much of their unhappiness, as well as their health related issues.

As Westerners, we seem to have lost the capacity to be truly present in the Moment. We live so much in the past and the future that we are virtually never in the NOW. It would seem that this is a major source of the rumbling discontent that pervades the very fabric of our existence. Why do we allow ourselves to live in this crazy way? Let’s explore this issue a bit further: what it is doing to us, and how we all can take steps to slow down or step off this ‘treadmill’.

Some of the topics we’ll delve into include:-

- ‘Techno-overwhelm’ – and what you can do to reclaim your power
- How Western consumerism has seduced us into running on an endless treadmill, driven by chronic dissatisfaction
- The corrosive effects our hectic lives have on our health and wellbeing
- How we Westerners have lost the ability to be truly present to what’s happening right now in our lives – and the sad consequences of that on mental, emotional, physical as well as spiritual levels
- So many people feel they have no purpose in life – simple yet empowering ideas are provided through which to re-gain a genuine and constructive sense of purpose
- Setting limits to our daily demands
- Using Life’s challenging moments as a means to enhance our sense of Awareness or Consciousness

Within this discussion, you’ll also notice an atypical usage of capital letters for certain words, indicating that the reader is being alerted to perceive a Higher Dimension to what is being discussed. In other words, such capitalized words are being utilized to signal the reader

that they need to approach the concept or point under discussion from a much Higher level of Awareness or Consciousness than we normally use in everyday life.

It also needs to be acknowledged that this booklet draws on the deep and insightful ideas of Eckhart Tolle, via his book 'The Power of Now',¹ and his various DVD's and CD's. Out of all the Metaphysical books presently available on the market, his are pivotal in any search for a meaning to life, and are highly recommended.

Technology – what a treadmill

We live in a culture addicted to numerous things, and it would appear that many of us are certainly addicted to being busy. There seems to be an unspoken, but powerful rule in our society that we are not allowed to have any down-time till... 'all our work is done'.

Indeed, we often boast about how 'busy we are' as if this is some sort of wonderful character trait. But the problem is that realistically, there is no end to the amount of things needing to be done – often urgently so, and especially in work situations with a boss breathing down our necks.

But there is another level to this 'treadmill' we find ourselves caught on. *It rather looks like our technology has out-stripped our ability to handle what it creates in our lives.*

Instead of having more time off for leisure and rest, the reality is that many people are working longer and harder, with ever *decreasing* free time available to us - despite all the supposedly time-saving devices cramming our lives. The problem is particularly acute in the arena of communications. We now have a plethora of devices – phones, txt, Twitter and emails being probably the worst slave-drivers in this category - which demand our constant and instant attention, 24/7.

Remember, there was a time - when corded phones were the only option! - where a phone call meant we had to take time out to sit near the darn thing if we wanted to continue the call. Now, with the magic of 'cordless', we're encouraged to multitask while also somehow trying to connect and communicate with our caller. Enter the mobile phone, and suddenly we don't even get a respite once out of the home, and away from the cordless.

The magic of 'mobile' ensures that we can be reached anywhere, anytime. And if you are required to have one of these ultimate 'slave devices' for your work situation - guess what? You are then truly open to invasion of your time, energies and privacy 24 hours a day. Problem is: a lot of bosses have absolutely no concept of boundaries.

Let's not forget the wonders of 'txt'. Yes, it may relieve us of a more lengthy call to respond to, but txt also invades our lives 24/7... and people expect *instant* responses, as they

do with the mobile. We haven't even got to the email system of never-ending communication invasion; let alone the continual demands placed upon us via 'Twitter' or 'Facebook', all of which soak up a lot of precious time from our personal or work lives.

Again, the unspoken expectation is that you need to respond ASAP. And if you don't, a lot of people will quickly send you another message, or follow-up the initial message with a phone call... just to make sure you did in fact get the first one. 'Yes thank you, but I happen to be brushing my teeth or using the bathroom'. This technological invasion is rather unrelenting and overwhelming. Not a sacred moment anywhere.

Techno-intrusion

People sending txt messages, 'Tweets' and emails, or connecting via the many other forms of electronic communication, frequently seem to have developed a psychological blind-spot. They invariably appear to think they're the *only* one demanding your attention, when the reality is that their communication is inevitably just one of dozens hitting you that hour or that day.

If you are feeling really needy, alone, unwanted, unloved... or just plain bored with your life, then by all means go ahead and answer every phone call, 'Tweet', txt, email, or fax. However, if your life is already on a really tight schedule, then only answer if it really suits *you*. Especially if you're trying to juggle a whole lot of things in a very limited period of time, and yet these sources of communication keep intruding into your daily routine.

There simply is no law which says 'Thou Shalt Answer All Incoming Messages – whether it suits you or not'! Yet many of us live as if such a law exists, and what invariably happens is that you rush off to answer those various instruments in a truly Pavlovian manner, and at a time that invariably doesn't really suit you either. Result? You're now caught up, yet again, in what is more often than not of little importance, but soaks up an enormous amount of time.

This in turn makes you run late for all the other things on your agenda, which then... stresses you out. Don't do it! Look at it from a lateral angle. Surely you wouldn't dream of barging up to someone's house, and crashing right into their life totally unannounced? More likely than not, this would occur at an inconvenient moment for them.

Would you really expect them to now drop everything, and attend to you alone? Surely you wouldn't do this *in person*. Nevertheless, we seem to have no qualms – or no insight – into the equal reality that every time we phone, txt, email or 'Tweet', we are crashing in unannounced into that other person's life – albeit *electronically*.

Out of the goodness of their heart they may try to accommodate your intrusion, but far too often at a huge and cumulative cost to themselves; again, in the form of stress. So, if you wouldn't do this consciously to another, why would you allow others to do so to you?

Most people are aghast when they hear these comments, thinking this to be a harsh and un-caring response to people's attempts to simply connect with you. But it's not about being uncaring. Rather, it's got everything to do with getting a firm grip on the present daily reality of our lives.

We need to realize that this day after day technological intrusion has been sneaking up on us for several years now, yet, in a sense most of us are almost blind to what's actually happening, or see no socially acceptable way of dealing with it.

Bit by bit, we've tried to accommodate it all, somewhat like the frog in a bowl of cold water, put over a slow flame. The rise in water temperature is so slow, and is occurring in such small increments that it has lulled that frog into almost a state of apathy and unresponsiveness. Until it is actually too late, and the poor ol' frog ends up getting cooked.

This was only possible because of the frog's lack of awareness of how it was being overcome by the heat, slowly but surely. So too for us humans, and our communication-invasion. Hence, it's about creating alternative strategies in a world of techno-overwhelm, where the reality is many of us simply can't handle it all anymore.

Remember your point of power therefore,



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