



FINDING PEACE OF MIND IN SAFETY

Stress abounds in our society and there is a wide spectrum of life stress causes. On one end of the stress spectrum are many sources of stress that we have little control over and we just have to learn to deal with it. To name a few, they include things like being stuck in traffic, the rising cost of health care, the sudden death of a loved one, having your property vandalized or stolen, caring for a person with dementia, being rear-ended by another car, and being caught up in a natural disaster. While these are difficult, we can take some comfort in knowing that these types of causes of stress are mostly out of our direct control, and in many cases just a natural part of life. There is peace of mind acceptance of things that are beyond our control.

On the opposite end of the stress spectrum are those stresses that are purely self-imposed, or those stresses that are imposed on us by others. Most of these stresses can be directly traced back to the unsafe acts of a person, be it you or someone else. Remember that safety is not only the condition of being free from harm, but also avoiding unintended consequences. Harm or unintended consequences could simply be the stress of how we deal with a situation. Essentially, when we make unsafe choices, we are compromising our peace of mind! An example of self-imposed stress is making the decision to text and drive or drink and drive. We know that these choices are somehow wrong and in choosing to text or drink and drive we are committing an unsafe act and simultaneously creating an unsafe condition for ourselves and for someone else. Even if no one gets hurt as a result of the irresponsible choice, we still feel the stress of having committed these acts and often we do not even realize it. Other examples include things like cheating on a spouse, making uneducated investment decisions, riding a bike without a helmet, eating unhealthily, taking drugs, committing a crime, and so on.

LIVING A SAFE LIFE IS LIVING WITH PEACE OF MIND!

By creating unsafe conditions or committing unsafe acts through our decisions we self-impose a tremendous amount of stress on ourselves. The reason for this is that we usually know that we are doing something that we should not be doing. As the great Stephen Covey conceived, every choice that we make lies between some stimulus and our response to that stimulus. Choices feel good when we make a positive choice that is somehow right, ethical, legal, and simply the right thing to do. Good feelings and low stress essentially comes from thinking rightly and acting rightly. Choosing to eat healthy always feels better than choosing to not eat healthy. Choosing to be honest always feels better than choosing to be dishonest. Choosing to not text and drive always feels better than texting while driving.

Why is this always the case? What triggers stress when we make unsafe choices? The reason is that our choices are always held hostage to our conscience. With every choice there is an accompanying little voice that tells you that the choice is going to be good or bad and dictates how you will feel about it. Conscience is the built-in safeguard that any person that is mentally wired correctly will always have at their disposal to avert a stressful feeling. When we make a bad choice, we instantly know that it is a bad choice, yet far too often we still chose to make the bad choice. The result is stress, more stress, and even more stress with each bad choice that we make! All that is required is to simply make the right choice!

When I look at the world I see a lot of sources of stress thrown at us every day. Why compound this with stresses that we impose on ourselves. Consider the following ten safe



choices that will eliminate stress, save you money, save you from ending up in prison, and make you live a lot longer:

1. Choose to not drive distracted by texting or impaired by drinking and drugs.
2. Choose to be faithful to your spouse, your family, and your God.
3. Choose to eat healthy, exercise, and exercise your mind.
4. Choose to see your doctor for an annual physical.
5. Choose to not outspend your resources and save for retirement.
6. Choose to be a role model for your family and your community.
7. Choose to wear required protective gear when doing sports or work activities.
8. Choose to be a professional in whatever your work is – strive for excellence.
9. Choose to continuously learn, improve your life, and strive to leave the world better than the way you entered it.
10. This one takes the most courage: Choose to point out when someone else is about to make a bad choice.

The last one is not only helping others to make good choices, but also helps to prevent others from committing unsafe acts or creating unsafe conditions that could come back to ruin your day or the day of a loved one (thus avoiding stress!). This is helping others live stress free.

Peace of mind is easy to achieve. There is nothing elusive or magical about its attainment. Peace of mind is often the end result of simply following any self-help you will ever read. It is the reason we strive for good health, money, and good relationships. Think about it, you strive for good health to have peace of mind that you will live long, you strive for money (in a healthy way) for financial security, and you strive for good relationships to avoid getting divorced or becoming estranged from the people in your life. Want to know the kicker? Peace of mind is basically free. It costs nothing to make the right choice, but it can cost us a fortune in stress, money, and time, when we make the wrong choice. We just have to have the courage to listen to the little voice in our heads and make the right choices when a stimulus prompts us to generate a decisional response.

Remember: keep TABs on your safety: Think safe, Act Safe, Be safe! Following TAB will get you peace of mind every time.

Check out my safety books and other safety resources and information at <http://www.markkowaleski.com> for more insights to guide you on your journey to living a healthier, wealthier, longer, and happier life.

- Mark M. Kowaleski