

HOW TO PREVENT STRESS AS A NURSE:

90 MINUTES TO SUCCESS



FREE EXCERPT

Vernon L. Williams

Author of Top 7 Myths That Perpetuate Stress (And How to Dispel Them)

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PREFACE:

HOW I CAME TO WRITE THIS BOOK

“Your wife has a chronic illness. She will require treatment for the rest of her life.”

Those were the words from my wife’s doctor one year into our marriage. Indeed, over the next 34 years, she required treatment, much of which was done in the hospital. While I do not know the exact number of hospitalizations, a conservative estimate would be more than one hundred and fifty. The length of stays ranged from 7 days (the shortest) to forty-eight days (the longest).

Since I was my wife’s advocate, I was with her around the clock during each hospitalization.

I learned very early that my perspective on the situation influenced how I felt and how I acted. For example, if I thought I shouldn't have to go through this, I felt discouraged, and I carried out my duties lackadaisically. On the other hand, if I thought of this as a great opportunity to serve my wife when she was vulnerable and needed my support, I felt honored, and I cheerfully carried out my duties with enthusiasm and purpose.

Spending so much time in the hospital allowed me to observe and talk with hundreds of nurses. I learned their duties, methods, routines, etc. I also learned things that they said caused them stress.

I observed that some of them complained about being stressed, while others neither appeared to be stressed nor complained about being stressed.

Beginning with these hospitalizations, I read books rooted in decades of research on emotions such as stress. The books included *A Guide to Rational Living*, by Albert Ellis, Ph.D, and Robert Harper, Ph.D, and *Cognitive Therapy and Emotional Disorders* by Aaron T. Beck, M.D.

Later, I read: *Mind Over Mood: Change the Way You Feel By Changing the Way You Think*, by Dennis Greenberger, Ph.D., and Christine Padesky Ph.D., *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*, by David Burns, M.D., *Your Brain Is Always Listening: Tame the Hidden Dragons that Control Your Happiness, Habits, and Hang-ups*, by Dr. Daniel Amen, M.D., *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*, By Martin E.P. Seligman, Ph.D., and *Cleaning Up Your Mental Mess: 5 Simple, Scientifically Proven Steps to Reduce Anxiety, Stress and Toxic Thinking*, by Caroline Leaf, Ph.D., *The 14-Day Stress Cure: A New Approach for Dealing With Stress that Can Change Your Life*, by Mort Orman, M.D., *The Myth of Stress: Where Stress Really Comes From and How to Live a Happier and Healthier Life*, by Andrew Bernstein, *Switch On Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health*, by Caroline Leaf, Ph.D.

Additionally, I read the words of King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, who said: Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.- Proverbs 4:23

My reading confirmed what I had learned - thoughts lead to feelings (stress).

Based on my reading and on what I had learned while earning a Master's Degree in Applied Behavior Science, I began coaching nurses on how they could cope better with issues that they faced, without getting stressed. They appreciated my coaching and began seeking me out, even if they were not assigned to care for my wife. Many of them told me that, while they did not wish for my wife to be in the hospital, they benefited greatly from my coaching.

Eventually, I became a mindset coach, speaker, and author. I developed the Stress Prevention Method (SPM), which identifies an issue that one is experiencing as stressful and provides practical steps to take right now to prevent stress, rather than simply manage the symptoms.

I have written several books, including: *Top 7 Myths That Perpetuate Stress (And How to Dispel Them)*, *Prevent Work Stress: 10 Steps to Success*, *How to Prevent Stress As A Pastor: 90 Minutes to Success*, *12 Steps to Preventing Business Owner Stress*, *Stop Negative Thoughts Today*, and *Power to Rejoice: 21 Days to Victory Over Your Problems*.

I also developed the Stress Prevention Method (SPM) and have I have used it for several years to help pastors, business owners, and government employees prevent stress, rather than manage the symptoms. While the duties of pastors, business owners, and government employees differ from nurses, the cause of stress is the same: thoughts about circumstances, not the circumstances themselves.

My wife passed away in 2006. While I am no longer in hospitals multiple days in a row, I still make several hospital visits per year to see family members, neighbors, church members, and friends. I still find myself coaching nurses on how to prevent stress by changing their thinking.

During a recent hospital visit, while coaching a nurse on the importance of changing her thinking about her circumstances, the idea occurred to me to write a book dedicated to nurses based on the Stress Prevention Method (SPM).

With that in mind, I have written **How to Prevent Stress As A Nurse: 90 Minutes to Success**. It provides steps you can take right now to prevent stress instead of managing the symptoms.

Let's get started.

DEFINITION OF STRESS

A state of mental or emotional tension caused by one's thoughts about a circumstance, not the circumstance itself.

OBJECTIVE

To teach you how to prevent stress by applying 10 proven steps to a circumstance that you are experiencing as stressful.

MYTH OR TRUTH

1. STRESS IS A NORMAL PART OF BEING A NURSE. ALL NURSES ARE STRESSED.

This is a myth.

According to the Pulse On the Nation's Nurses Survey, 84% of nurses are stressed. That percentage would be 100 if stress were a normal part of being a nurse.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSE NURSES' STRESS.

This is a myth.

If it were true, all nurses who experienced the same circumstance would be stressed.

I will introduce you to two nurses who experienced the same circumstance: the nurse manager asked both nurses to leave their regular unit and work their shift in a different unit.

Nurse #1 was stressed. Nurse #2 was not stressed.

How is this possible, since both nurses experienced the same circumstance? This is possible because:

Nurse #1 thought: I should not be asked to do this. It is unfair and unrealistic to expect me to function in an unfamiliar unit.

Nurse #2 thought: This is an opportunity to interact with a different nursing team, make new friends, and even learn some new skills.

So, the circumstance did not cause Nurse #1's stress. Instead, what she thought about the circumstance caused her stress. This illustrates that there is only one cause of stress - one's thoughts about circumstances, not the circumstances themselves.

Proverbs 4:23 says: Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts. Notice that the verse does not say **circumstances** shape your life, but **thoughts** shape your life. The logical conclusion is that our thoughts, not our circumstances, create our stress.

Stress doesn't come from what's going on in your life. It comes from your thoughts about what's going on in your life. - Andrew Bernstein

3. THE BEST WAY FOR NURSES TO DEAL WITH STRESS IS TO MANAGE IT.

This is a myth.

Nurses may attempt to “manage” stress through various methods:

a. Band-Aid method. (BAM)

This method may include alcohol or illegal drugs. This method may provide temporary relief from emotional pain. However, it may cause long-term problems.

b. Stress Management Method. (SMM)

This method may include yoga, tai chi, aromatherapy, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, massages, or doing something that makes you laugh. While these activities may provide temporary relief, thoughts about how to fit these activities into an already jam-packed schedule may lead to additional stress.

In the end, both the BAM and the SMM methods fail because they address the **symptoms** of stress, rather than the underlying **cause** of stress.

On the other hand, my method, the Stress Prevention Method (SPM), succeeds because it addresses the underlying cause of stress, your thoughts.

Follow the worksheet steps to see how my Stress Prevention Method (SPM) works.

**DISCOVER 10 PROVEN STEPS
GUARANTEED TO EMPOWER YOU TO
PREVENT STRESS AS A NURSE**

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