

Essentials of
**Managing
Stress** *Fifth Edition*

Brian Luke Seaward, PhD
Paramount Wellness Institute
Boulder, Colorado



JONES & BARTLETT
LEARNING



World Headquarters

Jones & Bartlett Learning
5 Wall Street
Burlington, MA 01803
978-443-5000
info@jblearning.com
www.jblearning.com

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For Christine (Chris), who copes admirably with the stress of life through a personal resiliency program of physical exercise, journaling, music, yoga, massage therapy, and when all else fails, a healthy dose of chocolate therapy.



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Introduction

► One Planet Under Stress

"Modern man is sick because he is not whole."

—Carl Gustav Jung

There is a huge health crisis in the world today that barely gets noticed in the news headlines, even though it underlies nearly every topic of conversation among friends, family, co-workers, acquaintances, consumers, and even young teenagers. The crisis is an epidemic of stress that affects everything in our lives, from our eating habits to the most basic lifestyle behaviors of everyone with whom we interact. Sociologists tell us that stress is one of the few factors that knows no demographic boundaries. As the expression goes, "Stress is the equal opportunity destroyer."

It is no secret that the world itself is currently under a great amount of stress, particularly with the economic instability, rampant gun violence, political unrest, and multiple environmental disasters. The global concerns crash upon the shores of our personal lives in ways that were unimaginable only a few decades ago. Despite the current issues—personal debt, chronic diseases, financial instability, social unrest, global warming, identity theft, domestic terrorism—solutions and adaptations to these problems are within our grasp if we make the effort to use our inner resources to reach for help.

Before each of us is a fork in the road. The first path may look appealing, even easy at first, but beware: it's an illusion, a lifestyle trap. Many people head down this direction and face years, if not decades, of frustration and possible ill health. The other path looks more challenging at first—very steep and perhaps with unsure footing. Soon, however, this path offers better panoramic views and ultimately a better quality of life. This path is uncrowded because few people choose this direction. Don't let this fact put you off. This book is both a roadmap and a compass to the second path, the path of holistic stress management, the one with the great views and exhilarating experiences.

Holistic stress management is based on the premise of ageless wisdom in which the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts. If you were to ask the shamans, sages, mystics, and healers of all times, of all ages, and of all languages regarding the topic of health—"What are the parts that make up the whole?"—you would hear a unanimous voice among these wisdom keepers saying these words: mind, body, spirit, and emotions. When asked to elaborate further, they would explain that holistic health is the divine alchemy derived from the integration, balance, and harmony of these four components.

Today, the voice of ageless wisdom often is drowned out by the dull roar of a scientific community that tends to look for and associate a specific cause with each effect. Rather than looking at the whole picture, Western culture has opted to dissect and study the pieces that make up the whole, yet, curiously, never getting around to putting the pieces back together. Moreover, Western culture often fails to recognize the significance of the unique unifying synergistic force that gives power to the whole being that is greater than the sum of the parts. Herein lies the danger regarding our current healthcare system. Symptomatic relief, the capstone of the western medical model, does not honor the code of holistic health, wherein both the causes and symptoms of disease and illness are resolved together. Perhaps most importantly, holistic stress management honors the aspect of spiritual well-being, a component that had been long ignored or neglected entirely.

Paradigms often are slow to change, but, with a newly recognized national interest in various forms of complementary and alternative medicine, new insights into health and healing based on ageless wisdom are taking root in U.S. culture. In his acclaimed book *The Best Alternative Medicine: What Works and What Doesn't*, author Kenneth Pelletier cites that there are more than 600 different modalities of holistic healing, from acupuncture to zero balancing. Despite the plethora of techniques, the purpose (implicit or explicit) of every modality of complementary and alternative medicine (now called CAM by the medical

establishment) is to restore a sense of homeostasis through the integration, balance, and harmony of mind, body, spirit, and emotions. It is no coincidence that virtually every modality of holistic stress management is considered a member of this family of 600 healing modalities because the purpose of effective coping skills and relaxation techniques is the same—to return each person to a sense of homeostasis.

To understand, appreciate, and utilize the wealth of knowledge in the realm of holistic health, it is important to realize that the wisdom of mind-body-spirit stress management draws upon the disciplines of psychology, sociology, physiology, theology, anthropology, mythology, quantum physics, cosmology, and several more areas—all of which come together as a means to create the parameters of “the bigger picture.” By and large, we live in a society where experts focus their specialty on one discipline rather than on a synthesis of all aspects of the human journey, thus creating a dangerous blind spot. In essence, this fragmented approach creates a very myopic view of life, particularly when trying to deal with the complexities that make up the human condition; none of these are held tightly in the domain of one discipline.

Holistic stress management is more than just a theory, although many people end their journeys there. In support of the premise that the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts, holistic stress management goes beyond theory to include the daily application of this knowledge so that effective coping skills and relaxation techniques become part of one’s daily lifestyle, rather than a first-aid kit for crises.

I have been a follower of the holistic model of health all my life. Although the premise of the wellness paradigm is clearly intuitive, it is disappointing to me not to see it being more widely embraced. We do not have a healthcare system in this country; we have a sick care system where the focus is on symptomatic relief. In the late 1970s, I made a decision to focus my efforts as a health educator on being an advocate for holistic health. Soon after I completed my master’s degree in exercise physiology, a culmination of events opened the door to make this happen with relative ease, not the least of which was the distinct honor of meeting Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, MD. She was the keynote speaker at the American Holistic Medical Association meeting held in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1981. Although she was renowned all over the world for her work on the topic of death and dying, she gave a stunning presentation on the nature of holistic healing. Her presentation—as well as my subsequent meetings with her—galvanized the direction of my professional career. The perspective

I bring to *Essentials of Managing Stress, Fifth Edition* is a culmination of the knowledge, wisdom, and experience I have gathered over three decades.

An ancient proverb often quoted in the halls of Wall Street states, “To know and not do is not to know.” In simple terms, this means that you can know all of the information that supports a powerful strategy for holistic stress management, yet, by not practicing these techniques and making them part of your daily routine, the knowledge is quite useless. Perhaps in simplest terms, holistic stress management is an adaptation process involving all aspects of mind, body, spirit, and emotions to reach one’s highest potential.

Specifically, what is holistic stress management? Here are some insights that collectively shine light on this timeless wisdom:

- Holistic stress management conveys the essence of uniting the powers of the conscious and unconscious minds to work in unison for one’s highest potential.
- Holistic stress management suggests a dynamic approach to one’s personal energy where one lives in the present moment rather than feeling guilty about things done in the past or worrying about things that may occur in the future.
- Holistic stress management implies using a combination of coping skills to resolve issues that can cause perceptions of stress to linger and relaxation techniques to reduce or eliminate the symptoms of stress and return the body to homeostasis.
- Holistic stress management also can be described as moving from a motivation of fear to a place of unconditional love.

If there is one theme to this text (and, actually, there are many), it is the theme of balance, for without balance in one’s life, nothing else is really possible. Every skill and technique described here carries with it the premise of restoring a sense of balance, homeostasis, or inner peace to mind, body, spirit, and emotions.

The contents of *Essentials of Managing Stress, Fifth Edition* are based on the collective wisdom of a great many 20th- and 21st-century luminaries in the fields of psychology, physiology, sociology, theology, and mythology, including Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow, Ken Cooper, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, Albert Einstein, Victor Frankl, Joseph Campbell, Brene Brown, Kenneth Pelletier, Carolyn Myss, Richard Gerber, Hans Selye, Wayne Dyer, Dean Ornish, Don Campbell, Norman Cousins, Andrew Weil, Deepak Chopra, Candace Pert, Donna Eden, Jean Houston, and many, many others.

The purpose of this text is to increase your awareness regarding the various aspects of wellness through the mind-body-spirit nexus as well as to utilize any and all ideas so that you may fully integrate them into your life. By doing so, you begin to take an active role in the process of cultivating inner peace, rather than feeling like a passive victim in a hostile world.

► What's New

This new edition includes information on the following: digital toxicity, neural pathways of stress, stress and inflammation, the microbiome, subtle anger: micro-aggressions, inappropriate humor, art therapy: coloring books for adults, creativity (bend, break, blend), boredom and creativity, time management updates, poetry therapy, and five new corresponding workbook exercises as well as additional references in various chapters. At the end of each chapter there is a series of exercises based on specific chapter

contents, many of which are new or revised for this *Fifth Edition*. These exercises are designed to be stepping stones to your soul-searching efforts. They have been created specifically to help you process the informational content for the most comprehensive understanding. Although you are encouraged to complete the exercises, you may find it best to read each exercise first and then return to it when you are truly ready. Whereas some exercises were designed specifically for this text, the majority of them were created for workshop participants and college students over a period of three decades. They have proven to be very valuable and, in some cases, life changing. It is my wish that you find them to be equally valuable in seeking that place of inner peace in both your heart and soul.

Best wishes and inner peace,
Brian Luke Seaward, PhD
Paramount Wellness Institute
Boulder, Colorado
www.brianlukeseaward.com

To the Instructor and Students

► For Instructors

As a benefit/incentive of using *Essentials of Managing Stress, Fifth Edition* and to save your valuable time in the preparation and instruction of your course, the publisher has provided the following:

- Enhanced Testbank
- An Instructor's Manual
- Updated and revised lecture outlines in PowerPoint(TM) format

an enhanced Test Bank, an Instructor's Manual, and completely updated and revised Lecture Outlines in PowerPoint format all created by the author and available as a free download.

Video Conferencing

Additionally, if you are interested in having the author visit your class virtually, Brian Luke Seaward will make himself available to speak to your class through video conferencing. Previous appearances in college classrooms and lecture halls have been met with great enthusiasm, as it allows the author to enhance upon the subject matter. He can provide a range of learning enhancements, from classroom lectures to question-and-answer sessions with students.

► For Students

For students, each chapter is designed to aid in the mastery of the material. Features include bolded key terms throughout the text and extensive end-of-chapter exercises to reinforce fundamental concepts. Each chapter concludes with a comprehensive summary of the main points discussed in the chapter along with references for further study. Key terms

are clearly defined in a handy glossary at the end of the text, which can be useful when studying for examinations.

► Relaxation Audio Files

Also available is a complimentary 60-minute audio MP3 file that provides many relaxation techniques for stress reduction. Mental imagery, meditation, progressive relaxation, and autogenic training are taught with a professional mix of voice and restful music. Through listening to these audio tracks, students are taught how to apply stress-reduction methods to their own lives. These audio files are available for download on the companion website for this book and on iTunes.

► Companion Website

Students using *Essentials of Managing Stress, Fifth Edition* can access the companion website at <http://health.jbpub.com/seaward/essentialsmaturingstress/5e> for online learning tools and resources such as audio introductions by the author, workbook exercises as writable PDFs, audio relaxation files, practice quizzes, interactive glossary, and web exercises.

► Other Products Available

Managing Stress: A Creative Journal also is available as an optional supplement to the course. The journal contains more than 80 thought-provoking and soul-searching themes designed to engage the student in writing about personal stress, unresolved conflict, and tension-producing emotions. Journal writing has proven to be a formidable coping technique used by psychologists and health educators as an awareness tool for self-exploration and discovery.

Acknowledgments

Essentials of Managing Stress, Fifth Edition contains the wealth of wisdom that I have accrued over several decades of personal growth, discovery, and instruction to thousands of students and workshop participants over my career in the field of stress management. I am deeply indebted to all who have allowed me to share these exercises and meditations as a means for personal growth, soul searching, and mind-body-spirit integration. Your feedback was (and is) greatly appreciated.

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About the Author

Brian Luke Seaward, PhD, is considered a pioneer in the field of health psychology and is internationally recognized for his contributions in the areas of holistic stress management, corporate wellness and health promotion, human spirituality, and mind-body-spirit healing. The wisdom of Dr. Seaward can be found quoted in PBS specials, college graduation speeches, medical seminars, boardroom meetings, church sermons, and keynote addresses all over the world. Dr. Seaward is highly respected throughout

the international community as an accomplished teacher, consultant, motivational speaker, author, and mentor. He is the executive director of the Paramount Wellness Institute and serves on the faculty of The Graduate Institute, Bethany, Connecticut. He is the author of several books, including *Stressed Is Desserts Spelled Backward*; *The Art of Calm*; *Health of the Human Spirit*; *Quiet Mind, Fearless Heart*; and the popular *Stand Like Mountain, Flow Like Water*. He can be reached at www.brianlukeseaward.com.