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WHEN SUFFERING FROM JOB STRESS, LOOK IN THE MIRROR FIRST**

Life can be difficult at times. Problems may arise in our personal lives in our marriages, with raising our children, having un-neighborly neighbors, financial problems, personal issues such as dealing with weight or anger. Those are all problems that are very stressful and occur within the personal and everyday routine that many of us encounter. And then, of course, there's what may be occurring outside of our personal lives within the workplace.

After all, most of us spend at least one third of our twenty-four hour day outside of the home in a place that can have many different faces associated with it ... namely the workplace. Like it or not, there are situations and people there that can be very stressful and have an extraordinary effect on us personally as well as on the relationships we have outside of the workplace as well. Without getting into the kinds of stressors that the workplace might hold that leave us exhausted at the end of the day, the focus of this article is on how much of that stress might be associated with what we might be bringing with us into our jobs.

In my book, *Guide to a Life Management Process* I coined the phrase "carryover effect". This is to indicate that we always tend to carry issues or problems from one area of our lives into others. When this happens, and usually we are not aware of its happening, problems that might appear to be associated with the area we may be in are really what we've carried over from another part of our lives. For instance, we may think that we're having a problem with our boss but what might really be the case is that we are having problems in our marriage or with our children that make it appear that our boss is the problem.

The basis for the carryover effect has to do with our feelings and our not being aware of them or not dealing with them in a forthright manner. In other words, the feelings that we might experience with the marital problems have not been resolved so as to "wipe the slate clean" as we move into the work environment. Of course, the same thing can happen in reverse. If we're experiencing a problem at work and bring home the residue of those effects, it might appear and feel that we have a marital or other family-type

problem. It isn't unusual for people who experience the carryover effect to experience problems in many if not all relationships. They might also end up feeling overwhelmed, argumentative, fearful or a myriad of other feelings that aren't very productive or comfortable to experience.

As I mentioned, the key to preventing this effect from occurring has to do with our feelings and how we handle them. There are three major steps in dealing with feelings successfully and they are as follows:

- Be aware that you are feeling something that needs attention
- Be sure to label that feeling or feelings accurately
- Express those feelings in an appropriate and meaningful manner

As we are able to accomplish these three steps successfully, what will happen is that instead of storing those feelings or carrying them around with us having them interfere with other parts of our lives, we can get on with our lives with a much more free emotional state. Doing so will increase our productivity in whatever we might be doing and our focus will be much more attuned to whatever task it is that we are engaging.

And so, let me pose the following questions for you to consider:

- Do you oftentimes feel confused, angry, guilty or overwhelmed without being able to identify the source or why?
- Are you aware of your feelings when you experience them and what do you tend to do with them?
- Can you practice the three points listed above, keep a journal as to how you end up feeling and what effect it has on your life?

### **A Brief Biographical Sketch**

*After an over 40 year career as a professional psychotherapist and Director of The Sports Stress Clinic in Amherst, NY, Charles Bonasera came to Florida and decided to use the benefits of his previous professional experiences in his new roles of Consultant in Life Management and Business Coaching as well as his expertise as a Motivational Speaker. He once again became involved with athletes in different sports training them with his techniques to help them develop and maintain focus as well as staying in their zone. Much of his training methods are derived from the CD collection he developed under the heading of WIN-WIN SECRETS as the President of Personal Identity Controls. This collection consists of thirty-six programs dealing with vital issues in the management of stress.*

*Another role that he adopted to add to his professional career was that of Author. Early in the 1980's he wrote Guide to a Life Management Process which he has re-written as a workbook to successfully help people manage their stress which includes his own Working Model. As a result in his interest in golf and realizing that it was essentially a "mind game", he wrote The Mental Side of Golf which can benefit the beginner as well as professionals playing the game of golf.*

*He then compiled over five-hundred sayings that he had developed in the course of his professional career as stimuli to help people change patterns in their lives entitled How to Stay Well and Live Life to the Fullest. This was followed by a book documenting case studies around disruptive life patterns including ways to change them under the name of How in the Hell Did This Happen to Me? Both his personal involvement in sports as a participant, coach, manager and in his role in officiating, inspired him to write a primer for parents and coaches entitled The Legend of Little League.*

*Charles invites you to view his website at [www.charlesmbonasera.com](http://www.charlesmbonasera.com) as well as to write with your comments and questions to his e-mail address ([charles@charlesmbonasera.com](mailto:charles@charlesmbonasera.com)). He would also be very happy to communicate with his readers by telephone should they desire. His professional motto is “seeking alternative methods to happiness” and wishes those touched by his words to practice the three secrets to a happy life: “enjoy life and enjoy it thoroughly ... develop and maintain a sense of humor ... bring as much love into your life as possible.*