

THE
**EXECUTIVE
ESSENTIALS™**
SERIES



The Stress Solution!

The Complete Guide to Winning in
Business Without Sacrificing in Life.

David A. Weiman, Psy.D.

THE
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SERIES

The Stress Solution

By David A. Weiman, Psy.D.

EXECUTIVE ESSENTIALS™ PRESS

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Cover design by Karen Dougherty
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Introduction to *The Executive Essentials™ Series*

It is one of the realities of executive life: It can be lonely at the top. I know that as a consultant to leaders of corporations, and I experienced it firsthand during the years when I was an executive.

Regardless of the size of the company, as you rise to the executive level, there are fewer and fewer people who can relate to the challenges that you face everyday. By its very nature, life as a leader is isolating. Why? There are fewer people at the top of any organization, leadership positions can be very competitive, and, not surprisingly, not everyone who gets to the top is interested in sharing the secrets of their success with others. Especially with those who might replace them.

Many executives regularly read leadership books and periodicals for advice on how to succeed. However, there are so many books and articles about leadership and management available today, that executives often say they don't have time to sort through all of what's available to find what is relevant to them. If they do find something on a subject of interest, it's often either too long or too short to be optimally useful. Perhaps you feel that way, too.

The Executive Essentials™ Series responds with concise, information-rich guides that address the most important issues you face. And each volume is a ready reference of effective, proven ideas that you can use today to improve your executive life.

The information is presented in a clear, easy-to-follow format that highlights the essential aspects of the core topic. Vignettes are used to illustrate common experiences, the issues are discussed in plain language, and the recommendations are common-sense solutions that are easy to execute. It may be lonely at the top, but now someone is providing targeted information that gives you exactly what you need to succeed. *The Executive Essentials™ Series*.

Introduction to *The Stress Solution*

The Executive Essentials™ Series was created to address the core challenges that you face by providing thorough and practical guides. Why was *The Stress Solution* chosen as the first in the series? Numerous sources have referred to chronic overstress and burnout at the executive level as an epidemic. Reports from major health services and surveys in business publications regularly report alarming statistics about the health consequences of chronic stress, and the cost to organizations of stress-related absences, accidents, poor productivity and morale problems.

Stress is part of life. Due to the nature of executive life, however, it happens to be more of an issue as you gain more responsibility. For example, as the size of your staff increases, you are aware that there are more individual lives and families that depend – directly and indirectly – on your leadership and decisions. That dependence can be a stressor. Also, expectations are higher for your performance, and the consequences of not meeting goals will be greater. Not surprisingly, your ability to handle stress will impact how successful you are.

Stress is a complex subject. For example, there's good stress ... the kind that motivates you in a healthy way to get out of bed in the morning and go to work. And bad stress ... the kind that leaves you feeling tense and anxious, awake at night ruminating about the day or eating antacids two at a time because your stomach is upset.

In terms of sources, stress can come from external sources as well as internal ones. External sources might include deadlines, aggressive goals, a long commute to and from work or conflict with your peers.

Internal sources include how you think – what you tell yourself – when you're in a stressful situation. That's right. Your way of thinking about the people and events around you determines, in part, how stressful the situation seems.

In addition to your own typical way of thinking, your general physical health, your physiological response to stress, even your posture have implications for how well you'll meet the external stressors you face every day.

Finally, many executives experience stress regularly over such a long period of time that they may become accustomed to it. So accustomed, in fact, that it may take a serious negative life event – a failed marriage, ruined friendships, a serious alcohol or drug problem, or a heart attack – for the executive to be forced to confront the fact that he or she was overstressed for an extended period of time.

In that sense, stress is like thirst: Experts say that by the time you experience thirst, your body already needed water. By the time you feel overstressed, it's likely that you were overstressed for quite some time.

Getting started. The fact that you purchased this volume and that you are reading it now means that you are either concerned that you're overstressed, or you know someone who is. In this volume, I'll be discussing stress with you as if we were meeting one-on-one. It's a conversation you and I will have about stress.

- First, we'll take a look at a vignette together that illustrates some common signs of an overstressed executive.
- Then, we'll talk about what stress is and how to recognize it in yourself.
- Next, I'll give you some specific recommendations on what to do to manage stress at the executive level.
- Finally, I'll provide a list of resources that you can use to continue to learn more about how to reduce and cope with stress successfully in your life.

The first two sections include bulleted summaries entitled "Key Discussion Points." Think of them as a post-meeting review of what we discussed ... the key

information you want to take away from that section. You might even glance at them first as a survey of what will be covered in the section.

Let's get started.

Please note:

The symptoms of stress can be related to a number of factors, including various medical conditions either brought on by stress or made worse by it. If you are experiencing stress-related symptoms, or if others have indicated that you seem overstressed, see your personal physician right away. This document is not a substitute for appropriate medical or mental health care.

Sample Section

Building Overall Resources

It helps to think of good stress coping like a ledger sheet. On one side of the sheet are the stressors the person is experiencing ... all of those things that you listed among your external stressors, including stress that you experience in your personal life. Those stressors are debits against the account.

On the other side of the ledger are the resources. All the positive, health-promoting things that make you feel good. They are the credits that exist in your account. They come from having a healthy lifestyle that includes exercise and a healthy diet; a good salary that exceeds your financial needs; having a happy and supportive family life; having friends who you enjoy and with whom you can share your thoughts; and recreational activities that take you out of your normal routine.

To cope effectively with stress, you regularly need more on the resources side of the ledger than on the stressors side. That way, in the event of an acute stressor, like the loss of your job, a salary cut or some other major problem, you will have plenty of resources to help cope with that emergency. Good stress management is no different than good business management.

As you complete the Stress Management Action Plan Outline on page 54, spend some time looking for ways that you can increase the resources you possess. If your spending exceeds your financial resources, that's an area you'll need to review so that you can get it back in balance. If you've stopped spending time with your spouse or your children, or if you regularly skip family functions because you have to finish a big project, a gut check is in order to see where your real priorities are. Your family is more important than any project. Don't wait for trouble to arise before you realize just how important they are to you.

If you can't remember the last time you went out with friends to relax and enjoy a good time, I suggest you go through your address book, pick up the phone and make a few calls to reconnect with people. They will supply you with the good feelings you need to have a happy and balanced life.

Finally, I'd like you to recall a hobby or pastime that you used to enjoy but that you stopped doing because you thought you no longer had the time. No matter how far back in your life it was. Maybe it was fishing or jogging, playing the guitar or making quilts. Now I want you to ...

That concludes the sample section. Want to learn what to do next? One executive who read the very next section told me the book was worth twice the price just for that one piece of advice.

[Buy it now!](#)