Simple ABCs for school stress management

By Dr. Ron Rubenzer

How the Best Handle Stress - Your First Aid Kit 2018

Tips From Top Students:
Advice from top students in the most stressful academic courses of study is provided here, so the reader hopefully will take home some helpful tips for school success. School success is not magic, but method. Educational-Burnout is possible, not necessary. Most college (bound) students find academic rigors the most stressful aspect of school, but some of it is based on attitude.

• Follow the ABC Approach to School Stress Management
  Practicing healthy Attitudes, Breathing and Choices can increase the chances of your success, even under school stress.

• Attitude:
  World renowned astronaut, Scott Kelly quotes explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton (1915) “A man must shape himself to a new mark, directly the old one goes to ground” (Kelly, S. 2017. Pg. 2).

• Ask Yourself – “Why Are You Accepting This Challenge?”

• Remember – Tested is Trusted
  Passing tests builds trust in yourself and others. Some folks (even politicians) are ‘legends in their own mind.’ Imagine if you will, a very young looking commercial airline pilot saying, “I’ve flown a lot, so I’m sure I can fly this plane.” The distance between a thought and a thing, is closed by calm, strategic, and persistent focus.

• Working From the Inside Out
  No one can rob you of your free will. Focus on what you want (success) not what you don’t want. “If you think you can do a thing or think you can’t do a thing, you’re right.” (Henry Ford)
**Breathe:**

Doctor Recommended, wave-crest breathing – the cure to stress is right under your nose!

- Breathe in deeply to the count of five, hold at the crest of your breath
- Breathe out slowly to the count 6-7-8-9-10.
- Repeat as needed.

The famed Dr. Herbert Benson speaks of the Harvard Mantra as just being ONE. Focus your mind on ONE thought, one picture. Enjoy the sensation of relaxation.

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**Choice:**

- **Develop a Plan** *(on a big calendar) and Stick to It.* – Celebrate that big exam AFTER you take it (not before). The National Education Association (3,000,000 members strong) researchers found that not having a plan for test-anxiety etc. lowers scores by 15 points (on a 100-point scale). A premier planning guide is the College De-Stress Handbook (www.heartmath.org, (831) 338-8500; email: info@heartmath.org).
- **Get Positive Peer Support** – Personalities are catching. Calm breeds calm. Choose successful, positive peers. Join a Pep Rally, not a Pity Party.
- **Journal Your Journey** – A Gratitude Journal is the best. Have a fun only, no-judgment zone (no worries about correctness).
- **Enjoy Wet Pets** – Watching swimming fish tends to relax us.
- **“Candy IS Dandy”** – For Test Performance. Even the taste of peppermint has been found to improve performance. But try avoiding stress-snacking. Enjoy your treat just prior to your performance.
- **Make Fun of Stress** – I took an IQ test and the results were NEGATIVE.
- **Doctor Recommended. Least But Not Last** – Remember, exercise is the miracle drug without the drug. And realize the best, most faithful exercise equipment you can have is, your dog.

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**In Conclusion:**

What IS the Heart of your school success?

In the end, the Heart of your school success, IS your heart. Learn by heart and by using your head. Your ‘head’ is equivalent to 100 laptops in memory capacity! But it is knowing by heart, what questions to ask and why, that makes you smarter than your smartphone.

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