



HERS

OPINION

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Learning to cope with stress

BY C.M. BROOKS

The present threat of war. Homelessness. A declining economy. Crime. Pressures of the job. Racism. The disintegration of the family. Drugs... With so many crises in our lives, albeit the world, it is no wonder that so many people have trouble coping with stress today.

Whether your life is intertwined in larger issues facing the country or if family or money matters dominate your life, how you deal with the stress that accompanies these things can mean the difference between a well-balanced life and an unstable and unhappy existence.

Strangely enough, I have found that sometimes how we choose to handle stress only produces additional and unintentional pressures. You see, coping means

different things to different people. Some people like to exercise, some like to eat. Some people prefer to withdraw into themselves, others seek group therapy. Through whatever means they use, they think that it helps them to contend with the issue that is in front of them. Or at best it has a temporary soothing affect. Likewise, there are many ways of coping with stress and it does not always mean handling it properly. For a lot of people avoidance seems to be the choice method.

So many Americans do not like confrontations and by simply avoiding certain situations, they think that they will never have to face the underlying issues at the root of their stress. Avoiding the issues is unhealthy because although it is out of mind, it doesn't mean the problem has just vanished and will never re-appear. And like I stated previously, it will only produce additional pressures. Out of curiosity, I wonder how many readers have bill collectors pursuing you? I have a friend who receives bills that are past due almost everyday. Instead of phoning her creditors

and making arrangements to pay her bills, she simply doesn't open her bills. As if not opening the envelope that is stamped on the outside of it "past due" will go away. As if by not opening the letter, she will never have to pay any and all of her debts. I know that she realizes that she will, sooner or later, have to come to terms with her creditors, but she has dug herself into such a big hole, I don't think that she is able to climb out of it. Yet for her I think that there is a lot of embarrassment and shame in the fact that she is not able to manage her funds

from. Everything was taken care of by her parents. She just wasn't happy. She then became obsessed with her weight and bulimia set in. She has been battling this disease for some time now.

My friend never liked herself very much and instead of facing her problems, she avoided them by eating and making friends with people who she wanted to be like: people who were rich, happy, thin, and seemingly had it all. And why shouldn't she have these things? She, too, comes from a "good" family. They are wealthy. They are invited to the best social functions in town. She wanted to be so much like them and so much a part of them that when some type of metamorphosis that would make her a part of this lifestyle didn't occur, she tried to end her valuable life.

My friend has always had a perception of herself that wasn't real. She has avoided that person for so long and has fought that part of her because she doesn't want to be different. She doesn't want to be an individual. She wants to be like everyone else. To fit into the right sorority, to wear the "right" clothes, to drive the "best" looking car.

I told my friend a long time ago and my advice still stands the same today, that if she stopped avoiding who she really is and confront the problems that she had created because of it, maybe she would begin to heal. Maybe she would begin to see herself in a different light and just maybe, she would finally be able to find some self-worth.

The same things people use to safeguard against stress, simultaneously causes stress that we are trying to avoid. Every situation and every issue that we face good or bad has a certain amount of stress involved. So don't try to avoid it. Instead, use it to your advantage. Work harder to alleviate stress by letting it motivate you to look at the factors affecting your life.

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

Coping with stress is very difficult for some individuals. The inability to deal with stress may lead to drug or child abuse, alcoholism, withdrawal socially and emotionally, or displaced aggression. Communications between people, especially in relationships, stops when stress takes control.

How do you cope with stress? The way people deal with various stresses during their adult years is determined, to a great degree, by what happened to them during their childhood. Models, such as parents, can also determine how an individual copes when the world is about to crumble (in their mind) around them. It is impossible to go an entire lifetime without stress, high drama, or confusion. If people want to be healthy emotionally and psychologically, they had better learn to start understanding stress and learning how to make it work for them. People in my life tell me that nothing seems

to bother or upset me. My disposition is basically mellow. I rarely display a great deal of emotion and I've also been accused of being too calm. Some would go so far as to say that I've a stress-free existence, but this is not true. I have stress in my life like every human being, but the way I handle stress is the key to my sanity. I find it easy to deal with the stresses associated with my employment, relationships with people, and my family. Before I stress out over an issue that may evolve during the course of a given day, I ask myself if the event or reality is the worst thing that has ever happened to me? Chances are, the reality or event is very nominal compared to the way I grew up in the nation's capital. Furthermore, nothing can be worse than losing both of my parents before the age of fourteen. Nothing could ever hit me with that type of impact again. A few friends suggest that my thinking or ra-

tionale is morbid or gross, but it works for me. I use my parents' deaths to set my tolerance level for coping with stress and adversity. In many instances, most stress-related circumstances are self-inflicted or even worse, not as bad as you make them out to be in your mind. A stress-related predicament can be, in some cases, only as bad as the thoughts you're thinking. You are what you think. On the other hand, what one person finds stressful, someone else finds

to learn how to relax mentally. People can still be mentally working while participating in various activities and still be tensed. Some of the symptoms related to stress are backaches, fatigue, teeth grinding, tension in the neck and back. Sometimes, doctors prescribe drugs to people to help them relax, but that only leads to another problem: dependency. I am not an advocate of drug use to help people relax or decrease tension. People have the power within themselves to control their individual destinies and lives. One way that I've learned to "chill out" mentally is to spend hours listening across my bed listening to music from special periods of my life. Music like the Isley Brothers, the Delphonics, and Gil Scott-Heron. I also turn off my answering machine and ignore the outside world. There have been times where I've stayed in the house all weekend without acknowledging the outside world or leaving in order to regain my psychological balance. It's not so much coping with the stress or daily realities I'm confronted with, I just need time and space to heal spiritually.

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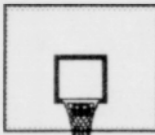
Another factor that might help people cope with stress is for them to try worrying about elements they can control. There is nothing I can do about the Middle East situation, racist attitudes, an economic recession, or the stock market for that matter. However, I can control my attitude and how I react to these realities. You can't control the length of your life, but you can control its width and depth. You can't control the contour of your face, but you can control its expression. You can't control the weather, but you can control the atmosphere, but you can control the atmosphere of your mind. Why worry about things you can't control when you can keep yourself healthy controlling the things that depend on you...

enjoyable. I love working in television, but there are those who can not envision themselves working in such an intense environment. It's fun to me. Now, working as a brain surgeon, police, or an undertaker is another story. I couldn't deal with the stresses associated with that type of work. For athletes, stress or pressure can enhance performance.

When familiar ways of handling stress fail, people have a tendency to get depressed, frustrated, and withdraw socially as mentioned. Some people eat less, eat more, or lose hope that a solution can work out. If people could put the same energy into solutions that they spend on stressing out, then maybe we would have a healthier world. People need to learn how to relax and "chill out". There are several types of simple ways to relax: biking, sex, walking, hiking, swimming, and gardening are physical ways to relax, but people need

Portland Observer

THE LOCKER ROOM



Some things in sports to wonder about

by Aaron Fentress

As an avid sports fan I often find myself caught up in the triumphs, trials and tribulations of those involved in various sports. For some the road is rough and unfair. For others the bumpy road is one they paved themselves. For others the road seems to only lead to better things. Here are some little pieces of food for our thoughts around the sports world today.

What was Buster Douglas thinking? How can a man who knocked out Mike Tyson turn in such a bad showing eight months later. After proclaiming that it wasn't a fluke, James "Bubble butt" Douglas showed up to his title defense against Evander Holyfield only to make it back to his dressing room before the Domino Pizza man had arrived. \$20 million buys an awful lot of pizza. But not much respect. Douglas embarrassed himself, the sport and all those who backed him. If he had any conscience he would donate most of his purse to the Jenny Craig clinic that purchase his own wing and stay awhile.

Hot rod not so hot. During the off-season the Cleveland Cavaliers signed forward Hot Rod Williams to a \$5 million a year contract. Williams is currently the highest paid athlete in either basketball, football or baseball. He makes more than Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Joe Montana, Ryne Sandberg and Ricky Henderson. But unlike those players, just mentioned Williams fails to lead the NBA in any statistic. In fact Williams can't be found on any of the NBA leader boards except in blocked shots where he is ranked 13th. What was Cleveland thinking?

What is the sports world in Cleveland thinking? In addition to the bumbblings of the Cavaliers the Browns aren't looking too much like rocket scientists either. Cleveland Browns owner Art Modell recently fired head coach Bud Carson after only a year and a half on the job. Needless to say the Browns are a more 2-7 but is it the Carson's

fault? Remember, Carson did guide the Browns all the way to the AFC championship game last year. This season the Browns offensive line features two free-agents, a twelfth round draft pick and a Plan B acquisition. Only one starter returned from last seasons team. Consequently Brown's quarterback Bernie Kosar often finds himself on his back. Maybe Modell should hire some linemen before he fires his coach. Just a thought.

Jose is still Okay. Despite his lackluster performance in this years world series Jose "one for twelve" Canseco is still Okay. In my book. Even though I kind of ripped him in my recent article concerning the world series I have no doubts that he is as good a baseball player in the game today. Canseco is the first player ever to hit 40 homeruns and steal 40 bases in a single season. No one in baseball possess Canseco's combination of speed power and defensive abilities. Now if he can only get more than one hit in the world series.

A model of heart, Bernard King. After tearing up his knee four years ago Bernard King has regained his old form that made him one of the most feared scorers in the NBA. King is currently averaging 31.5 points, second highest in the NBA ahead of Michael Jordan's 29.3. Imagine if the New York Knicks still had King to go along with Pat Ewing.

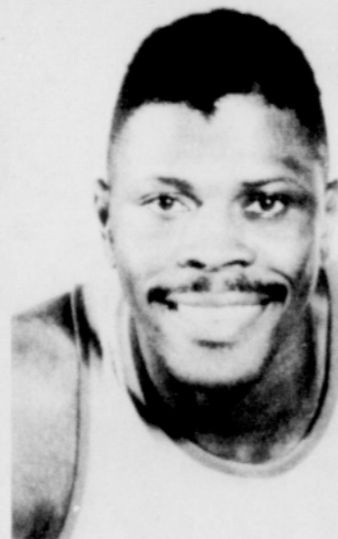
Where's Sugar Ray? It's time for Sugar Ray Leonard to put up his dukes and prove himself the champion he so dearly wants everyone to think he is. After Leonard's unbelievable defeat of Marvin Hagler in April of 87 Leonard has lost respect in the boxing world by fighting Donny LaLond. Thomas Hearn and Roberto Duran. LaLond and Duran were no match for Leonard while Hearn knocked Leonard on his butt twice only to see Leonard sneak away with a questionable draw. What Leonard should do to regain respect and

go out on top is to fight Hearn a third time. Whip his butt then fight the younger Michael Nunn. If Leonard can beat Nunn he will prove that he isn't a washed up old fighter just fighting people he knows he can beat for money. He will prove himself the best middle weight in the world at the age of 35.

What if Magic were a coach. Wouldn't that be a trick? With the Lakers sitting on a pitiful 1-4 record, as of last Tuesday, the Lakers have to start wondering where the Magic went. Looking at the roster the Lakers are as strong as they have ever been since Kareem Abdul Jabbar started to fade in 1987. The off-season acquisitions of Terry Teagle and Sam Perkins spruced up the Laker bench while Vlade Divac has more than done his job at center averaging 15 points and 10 rebounds a game. As for Magic he's averaging his usual MVP numbers of 22 points and 15 assists. So what's the problem? For one thing the rest of the West has caught up to the Lakers. They are not old or untalented they are just in better company. But they shouldn't be 1-4. Maybe the Lakers need another coaching change. Maybe people are realizing that Pat Riley was good and it wasn't just the talent he had on his roster. If the Lakers continue their losing ways first year coach Mike Dunleavy could be fired by mid-season. Laker owner Jerry Busse will either hire back Pat Riley (wouldn't that be a Hollywood story) or he will turn to Magic Johnson to double as a player and a coach. If any player in the NBA could do it it would be Magic. His understanding of the game is well documented as his ability to relate to his teammates.

During the summer Magic made an appearance on the Arsenio Hall show where Hall brought up the possibility of Magic becoming a player/coach. Magic said he wouldn't necessarily want to take on that responsibility but "would if it meant winning a championship." For the Lakers it may come down to that.

Knicks take on the Blazers tonight



PATRICK EWING

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR

Patrick Ewing and the New York Knicks invade Memorial Coliseum tonight at 7:30 p.m. The Knicks are coached by former Oregon product Stu Jackson. Also on the Knicks coaching staff is Paul Silas, a member of three NBA Championship teams (Boston and Seattle) and veteran of sixteen NBA seasons. Rumor has it in New York that Silas is actually coaching the team in terms of respect from players. Silas, who also served as a head coach (80-83) in San Diego and as an Assistant with the New Jersey Nets, is one of the most competitive people in the league. What GM/VP Al Bianchi was thinking about when he bypassed Silas as the top man is beyond the comprehension of most league experts. Some say its the same thought process that provoked him to trade for Kiki Vandeweghe or (from Portland) allowed free-agent sharp-shooter Johnny Newman to slip away (Charlotte Hornets) without compensation. The Knicks should have re-signed Newman long before his contract expired and many New Yorkers are still crying over the Rod Strickland trade to San Antonio.

Newman recently called his former teammates a bunch of backstabbers. When questioned about who, he simply said that it wasn't the "white guys"!



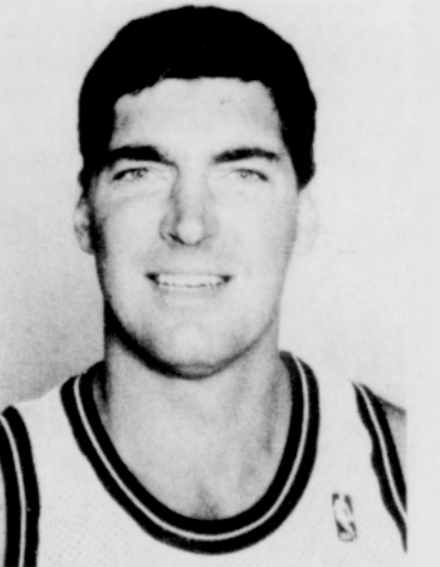
PAUL SILAS, Assistant Coach

Perhaps Bianchi will realize, after the Knicks are bounced from the early rounds of the play-offs, that his team will never flourish under the helm of Stu Jackson and give Silas a chance, that's if he is not removed first. Silas deserves another shot as a head coach.

Heros come in all shapes and sizes. Mack Calvin, the pre-Spud Webb Mugsy Bogues-sized former ABA/NBA star and Assistant coach with the Milwaukee Bucks proved that recently. He saw smoke and flames billowing out from under a school bus while driving south on Interstate 94 in Milwaukee and assisted in rescuing 68 children from the bus without anyone getting injured.

"It was a gut situation," said Calvin. "We were evacuating the kids (from the Milwaukee YMCA Day Care Center) as quickly as we could. It was a situation where you don't fear for your life or think of the bus exploding or

anything. The kids were scared, and a couple of them were crying." Calvin was one of a number of passersby who stopped to help safely rescue the children, ranging in age from two to four years, who were on their way from visiting a pumpkin farm in Racine, WI. Whiel the bus filled up with smoke, Calvin, who jumped up in the bus, handed down the children to the teacher and others helping.



BILL LAIMBEER

"I just felt that I'd helped a situation that needed help," Calvin said. "I was in a situation where I was able to help someone. I feel real good about it."

"It is very difficult straight quotes from members of the Detroit Pistons, defending NBA Champions. After the Blazers outplayed them last weekend, Bill "Flop" Laimbeer was asked by The Locker Room if Portland was a stronger team than the ones they beat in the NBA Finals last year. "It's the same team," he replied. What about the im-

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