

Stress Management and the Limits of the Human Psyche

By David Chernoff

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In this current time of tremendous turmoil, where is our breaking point? How much can we take? Which straw will break our back and put us over the edge? Where is our limit?

What is our breaking point? How much can we really take?

Most teenagers think they are invincible, and yet on the other end of the spectrum, most seniors take an entirely different approach to life, taking what remaining energy they have to fill in whatever life has in store...knowing full well that their clock is running out of time. In this current time of tremendous turmoil, where is our breaking point? How much can we take? Which straw will break our back and put us over the edge? Where is our limit?

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Let's look at a few extreme examples: The mother of three young children, whose father skipped town years ago without a second thought to alimony or love lost, alone as she struggles to keep food on the table and a roof over her head. Or what about the retiree with debilitating health issues who lost his family's life savings in the stock market or in an investment ponzi scheme and is forced to return to the workplace for a much degrading and less compensatory position? Or perhaps instead of these dramatic examples of one's ability to overcome adversity, do we give ourselves enough credit for what it takes to succeed in life? These days it is the everyday American who is trying to afford even a minimalist lifestyle, struggling to afford just the basics of a "traditional life" including a place to live, food to eat, and perhaps even health insurance.

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Clearly none of us are immune to the tremendous pressure of our world...but how much can we take? It seems that even amidst our life, potentially full of challenge, where it seems like we already hit our limit, we are forced to make room for yet another obstacle. Regardless of gender or nationality, race or status, the pressures of this life can be debilitating, and although some of us handle stress better than others, death is not optional, as it is merely what happens between now and then that determines the quality of our existence. With the enhanced economic pressures we all currently face, how do we fare? Many of us are unemployed or have seen earnings reduced, and there is tremendous instability in the financial infrastructure of our world. Some believe that our spendthrift nation is taking us down the wrong path, but how big must our shoulders be to carry the burden before us?

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Where do we break? For each of us it may be different but could represent itself as a health issue or heart attack, a nervous breakdown or simply the burnout of our thyroid. Perhaps it will present itself in the way we treat our spouse or our children, or for some it may be a return to smoking and ultimately even suicide. As human beings, we can only physically handle so much before we break. Every generation has had their own challenges to face, and every decade or so there is a national or global crisis that has a way of trickling down to every household, to every pocketbook, where nobody is immune. Whether it's the war on terror (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_on_Terrorism), the failed and faulted war on drugs (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_on_Drugs), the invalidated war on the environment or even the MIA war on wall street...we are each left holding the bag defined only by those who've walked before us, for better or

worse.

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The quality of our life is predicated entirely on our ability to adequately and powerfully deal with the adversity before us, all while maintaining our composure and staying true to our path and purpose in life. In order to deal with the adversity before us, we need to find balance not only by nurturing and caring for our being, but by finding our faith and understanding that we are so much more than this physical body. There is an energy beyond our being whether we refer to it as God or spirit and with some faith combined with the ability to release and let go of that which stands in our way, we will not only survive but conquer the world before us with grace and magnificence.

In the meantime just trust and take a breather...it will all work out in the end.

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