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## STRESS MANAGEMENT

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DR. GLENN SWOGGER, JR.: What I'd like to do with you this morning is to talk with you about the area of stress and to raise some questions with you and share with you some of my own experience and some of the knowledge and research in this area, hopefully to help you think a little bit about the stresses that you face, how they're related to your working roles and your family roles, some of the stresses that men and women face in our society and the differences between the stresses for men and women. My goal here will not be to suggest a recipe or formula that, if practiced, invariably will avoid stress, but really to stimulate your thinking a little bit about your own strategy, or your own philosophy if you will, in dealing with the level of stresses that you face. I hope that as we go along one of the ways that you can make this session unique and different is to flag me down at any point where you have questions or comments and raise them and that will enable me to focus what I say more on your own particular interests.

I think that you are aware that the topic of stress is one that has been very popular in the last few years, and indeed it's almost an obsession. You cannot pick up a newspaper or a magazine nowadays without some research report on a health matter or some environmental danger or some advice and admonition about what you should do to prevent stress, to keep yourself healthy. Sometimes I think that we have almost a national hypochondriasis in which we are constantly poking and probing ourselves to try to find out how we are doing and scanning the environment for risks and dangers. If you will, I think that in many ways we have become a society where everybody is a panicky actuary, trying to figure out all the risks that the future might bring. In some ways our attitudes toward science and technology have changed from a very hopeful attitude toward one where we are concerned that any sort of progress or new development or new technology is likely to bring unknown risks and dangers.

I saw a cartoon a while back which one of the characters in the cartoon asked the other, "Do you desire happiness?" and the other responds, "I don't know. What are its side effects?" We've all begun to wonder about that. You probably get this same sort of thing in the mail that I do. This is an advertisement for a new health magazine which is supposed to relieve some of your fears and concerns in dealing with the burning issues of the day. At the bottom of the envelope, it raises the question, "Does orange juice really do any good?", an issue that you are, no doubt, waiting with baited breath to find out. There is a great deal of publication of even very fragmentary research findings that I think is frightening and misleading at times to people who may not be able to evaluate them and indeed, especially from the kinds of information they are provided. My

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favorite along these lines is an article that one of our seminar alumni sent me some time ago. The headline reads, "Researcher says too much milk may drive you to crime". The article goes on to say that Alexander G. Schoust, Director of the Institute for Biosocial Research said that studies of juvenile delinquents and other youths have indicated an apparent relationship between heavy milk drinking and anti-social behavior. "I am not saying milk is bad," Schoust told the convention, "but like everything else it should be consumed in moderation." That would have been a great line with my mother, you know, if I'd only had that information a while back. But unfortunately it wasn't available.

As a result of this, we're bombarded with a great deal of advice about what to do and very often this advice takes a sort of a know-it-all attitude and tends to ignore individual differences to tell people that everybody must do this or that and that will take care of the situation. I think that there is often a sort of a utopian quality to the advice, that if only you follow these prescriptions you will never be sick or suffer from any great degree of stress. You know it's an old tradition in American society; we have a wonderful tradition of believing that mind really does conquer matter and that attitude can succeed over everything else. I'm sure it goes back even further but you can think of Mary Baker Eddy as an example of this, the beliefs of Christian Science, or you can think of Edward Coe earlier in this century, who said, "Every day and every way I'm getting better and better." In many ways we've had this outlook that there are things that we can do that have a certain magical quality that will protect us from disease and suffering and tragedy. I'm mentioning that because I think that to get too hung up on this attitude sets us up to be disillusioned and to reject the whole field of stress reduction and stress research.

I'll read you a poem by a noted commentator that expresses some of this disillusionment and perhaps some rather wise conclusions. Some of you may remember Gilda Radner, from Saturday Night Live who appeared on Saturday Night Live's news broadcasts from time to time, as Roseann Roseanna Danna. Here's a little poem that she read on one of her broadcasts:  
It's a poem by her grandmother, Nanna Roseanna Danna.

Listen Roseann and you shall hear a little poem, my grandchild dear.  
I hope this don't scare you so please don't cry  
But all foods you eat will make you die.  
If the meat is red it will make you fat.  
It's bad for your heart and you don't need that.  
If the meat is white your veins will thicken,  
Considering the chemicals they inject in a chicken.  
Hotdogs, bologna, salami, forget 'em -- no one alive knows what's in 'em.  
Since there's nuclear waste,  
I guess you ought to be careful you don't drink the water.  
"Nanna", she said, "don't make a fuss. If the food don't kill me, I'll get hit by a bus. We're all gonna die from all things or one thing. Like my Daddy used to say, 'It's always something'."

I think Roseann had a point there. That was, that we have to understand that however important it may be for us to deal with stress and to understand it, it's not going to protect all of us from sufferings, mortalities, difficulties, mistakes and risks and uncertainties, and whatever

we decide to do and whatever sort of strategy we formulate has to be within that context. I do think, however, that we have some reliable and relevant knowledge in this area and I'd like to suggest to you as an overview that I believe that coping with stress is more than just a matter of techniques or doing this or doing that. It has to begin with a process of self-assessment, of trying to understand a little bit about our own life structure, about the basic patterns of our lives, the basic satisfactions and stresses that we confront and how they relate to our temperament and personality and it's only in this broad perspective that we're going to be able to, in the long run, develop ways of dealing with stresses that are effective.

One of the implications of this perspective is that each of us needs to individualize our attempts at stress reduction. We can't take it on faith in someone else.

I'll mention another research program which I think illustrates this very well. It has to do with a project that is reported by Allen McClain, who's a psychiatrist at IBM, one of the deans of occupational psychiatry. He tells a story that during the second world war, there was a great deal of concern about the stresses of the Alaskan environment for those that were being sent up there to deal with the military installations, the construction projects and other things that were going on as part of the war effort. It was decided to study very carefully the people who were going to be selected to go to Alaska in order to try to understand what would predict the ability to deal with this very difficult environment. It's an environment that was cold, dark, isolated, dangerous; it really had many very stressful elements in it and there was a lot of concern about this. So a great deal of data was collected. Medical records were collected, questionnaires were administered, psychological tests and so forth. At the end of the war an attempt was made to correlate this information with the records of how people actually got along when they went there. It turns out that the results were very meager. They couldn't find much. As a matter of fact there was only one question that reliably predicted successful adjustment to the Alaskan environment. That was the question, "Do you like to work in cold climates?"

That may be a little bit more meaningful result than at first it appears. What it suggests to me is that for each of us to be able to deal with the stresses that we face, we have to be willing to ask ourselves some fundamental questions about who we are and what we're doing and to try to give ourselves some honest answers and maybe to listen to others who may have some feedback on those issues. It's only if we begin that process that we'll be able to take it further and utilize some of the knowledge that is available to us.

I think that our pre-occupation with stress has some elements of value in it as well as some extremes. For one thing, it does give us some motivation to learn about some of the knowledge that has developed about what sorts of stressors and problems we do face. There is a great deal of knowledge about the impact of the physical environment and the psychological and social environment on people. We know, for example, that situations of rapid personal change predispose to stress. Social isolation, lack of social support and leadership in work situations, role

conflict in which it's not clear what a person is supposed to do in their job or in other roles, Type A behavior; all these elements pose stresses, pose difficulties that we have to try to understand and cope with in some way.

We also have some knowledge of the buffering effect of mature coping mechanisms and the ways in which positive attitudes may help us to deal with some of the load of stress that we face.

We've also begun to develop an awareness that rapid social and organizational change poses stress for individuals. We see this a lot in our consulting roles. In many organizations, because of the rapid changes in our economy that are occurring, special stresses are apparent. Some of our basic industries which have tried to recapitalize and develop have found it necessary in that process to reduce levels of management hierarchy and to redefine roles for people at all levels of management, to eliminate piecework and make other basic changes in work arrangements. These have big psychological implications and we've done some consulting with organizations to try to help the leadership of these organizations recognize the impact of these changes, however necessary and desirable they may be.

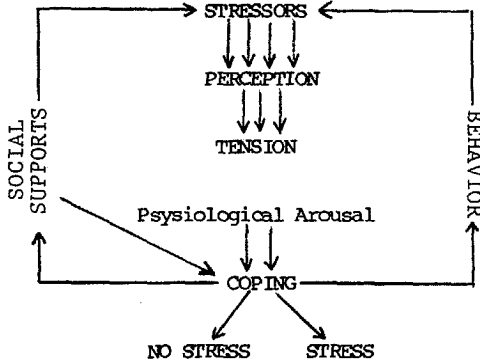
Male and female roles are changing in many ways in our society. The entry of women into professional, managerial positions is causing stresses and strains on expectations and psychological contracts, not only in the workplace, but also in families where roles are changing, where attitudes are changing. This comes up often as conflict that's felt as a very personal matter and not as the result of a broad change. Sometimes I think all of us have a sense that our society is a little bit out of control, that things are just going too fast in directions that we can't predict or handle in some respect and this is stressful for us. This increases our level of background anxiety.

I saw a little cartoon the other day in which a fellow in pajamas is looking out the window at the rising sun of the new day. A sign flashes in the sky which says, "Portions of the coming day may be offensive to some. Participant discretion advised." Not a few of us approach our days occasionally in that way.

I think that the concept of stress and the use of the term of stress has had another positive consequence for us, another function for us. That is that the notion of stress allows us to talk about ourselves and our discomforts and our distress without feeling quite so embarrassed about it. In the past, evidence of personal discomfort, of anxiety or depression or other symptoms tended to be interpreted as evidence of weakness or neurosis. To talk about not feeling good, to confess to a colleague that you were tired or worried or depressed or uncertain, did something bad to your image. I think that's still to some extent true, because all of us have such an investment in our capacity to be tough and durable, stable and persistent. It's very difficult for us to admit our own ups and downs. But, I think that that's loosening up just a little bit. We're recognizing that all of us have our moments and all of us have our Achilles heels and that it's more important and in many ways more courageous to be able to recognize thoroughly a problem as it comes up than it is to just struggle on. The concept of stress in some ways is something that is honorably acquired. If we say we have a stressful job, people are less likely to put us down. It's a little bit like a purple heart which you can wear with pride.

There's another reason why this concept has been useful to us and that is that it has helped to crystalize an increasing awareness of our own personal responsibility for our health. I think when our knowledge was more limited and our options were more limited there was a greater tendency to look upon illness and disease as more or less an act of God, perhaps a punishment or at any rate something that was certainly outside of our control, something that struck us down. Of course all of us do experience some of our illnesses and diseases in that way. But I think that as we go along we are more and more recognizing that our own behavior, our own ways of coping, the choices that we make about what sorts of risk we expose ourselves to, has a very important impact on our health. We therefore have more control over our health, even if not absolute, than we used to. I'm sure that you can see this in the insurance field. I see policies, for example, offered in which the rates vary according to one's behavior, whether you smoke or not, your driving habits and so on and so forth. We recognize that people's behavior influences their risk, even in the very broad sense such as this. So the fact that we know this then allows us to take a more active and a less passive attitude towards situations that we face.

Let me try to give you a map, so to speak, of how you might think about how you react to stress situations. I'm going to show you a rather complicated diagram which summarizes some of the knowledge in this area to familiarize you with one approach that you might take.



The word at the top, STRESSORS, has to do with all the sorts of things that each of us face every day that we have to cope with. What this diagram as a whole suggests is that there is a whole series of processes whereby we deal with what we face in life which may eventuate in psychological stress symptoms, physical symptoms, psychosomatic ailments, and so on, or may eventuate no stress but rather a feeling of satisfaction and challenge and competency in having coped with what we faced or what we sought out. So, one has to understand a process by which each of us deals with what we face each day in order to understand how we handle stress. Stressors include things outside of us, all the phone calls and announcements of organizational changes, what your wife says to you, which then force us to adapt in one way or another. The types of things that are important or that are difficult for each of us is different. For one person, being alone or being isolated may be less of a stressor than being around people, whereas

for another person the opposite may be true. Sometimes jobs or family situations change so that a person is exposed to more stress as a result. I've seen several situations in groups that we've worked with where people got into data processing, for example, at a time when it was a very low-man, isolated occupation, something that a person could do all by themselves off in some small, isolated room in a company and nobody else understood it and nobody else wanted to know as long as a certain product came out. That was very satisfying to the persons who selected themselves for the roles. Then companies expanded their data processing operation and began to put terminals all over the place and suddenly that same person's role was changed into one in which they had to deal with users who knew nothing about computers, didn't understand the constraints of data processing and were very sloppy and careless in their ways of entering information. The same job, the same title, suddenly had a whole different set of stressors associated with it and a different set of challenges that posed new problems for people who had selected themselves for the original job.

So each of us faces a whole variety of internal and external challenges that we have to deal with in some way. Now we register these and we perceive them and some of you may have a tendency to be over-sensitive or over-reactive to all of the slings and arrows that you face. But I would suspect that the majority of you in this room may have a tendency in the other direction. Susception acts as a filter for us and each of us finds ways of labeling and filtering what we face in order to decide how we're going to deal with it. It's very easy, because of the need to be strong or dependable for us to filter out too much of what we face and not allow ourselves to recognize when we have some difficulty. That's often where our friends or spouse can be very helpful to us if we're willing to listen to them, in finding out how we're reacting to some of the things that we're dealing with.

When we're faced with stressors and we perceive them, we register them, our bodies and our minds fully begin to activate in order to deal with the new situation. One of the things that is very impressive in the physiological stress research is the exquisite sensitivity that each of us has to what's happening around us. It's possible to show that almost any kind of mild stimulation produces a measurable change in our hormonal output and the activation of brain waves and so on. We're a little bit like a human seismograph that picks up all kinds of small tremors in our environment and responds to it in some way. This has a very worthwhile biological function. It revs us up in order to deal with what we have to deal with.

At a psychological level tension performs the same function, so that we begin to become worried, alert, anxious, restless, uncomfortable, perhaps a little depressed, when something important is going on that we need to attend to.

Unfortunately there is a problem with this. That is, that especially when levels of tension become greater, most of us get uncomfortable and don't like to feel that way. There's a strong tendency for us to do things to get rid of the tension as opposed to using it as a sign, a troubleshooting event that will tell us that we need to react to find out what the problem is. We find ways of dealing with the tension. We may deal with it chemically; we may drink too much or use some other sort of drug. We may

deal with it by all sorts of other behaviors as a way of relieving the tension without dealing with the underlying problem. One of the paradoxes that we face is that coping, to some extent, involves being willing to tolerate pain and discomfort. Just as pain is relatively unpleasant and we try to get rid of it, it's also biologically necessary. A child that's born without pain receptors because of a hereditary defect is in constant mortal danger. So pain, although unpleasant, is necessary. In the same way, tension, though unpleasant, is very important as a guide to let us know what we need to attend to or what we need to handle.

All of this process of reacting to stressors activates our ways of coping and each of us has our own style of dealing with what's coming in. One of us may tend to blame others when something happens so that our first reaction is to search for somebody in the environment to get mad at. Sometimes the people in our environment are not too cooperative in that respect. They may even want to retaliate by using the same technique. Sometimes we use denial. We find ways of rationalizing or not letting ourselves know or think about what's happened. Sometimes we use impulsive behavior when we are faced with a problem. We allow ourselves to get in a fight with somebody, to raise Cain, go out and divert our own attention to some other area.

Each of us has styles of coping and one of the important elements in assessing how we deal with stress is to be able to become aware of our typical ways of reacting under pressure. What is it that we usually do. The chances are that it's a habit and it may be very, very difficult for us to change that habit but at least we can see it coming as we do it and perhaps avert the process more rapidly than we ordinarily would be able to do.

Let me give you an example of how this process works by talking a little bit about some of the research that has been done by Holmes and Rye on stressors. Holmes and Rye developed the idea that it would be possible to make a list of problems that people have to deal with in order to understand the load of stressors that people were facing.

#### LIFE CHANGE UNITS

Death of Spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital Separation	65
Jail Term	63
Fired at Work	50
Gain of New Family Member	39
Change in Number of Arguments with Spouse	35
Outstanding Personal Achievement	20
Vacation	13
Christmas	12

I'll read some of the items to you to give you a feeling for it. "Death of the spouse" is at the top of the list as a major stress. "Divorce, marital separation, jail term, fired at work, gain of a new family member, change in the number of arguments with spouse." It doesn't say up or down it just

says the number of arguments. "Outstanding personal achievement." These things aren't necessarily good or bad. They're just things that necessitate us having to do something, having to cope. For example, an outstanding personal achievement may involve a promotion, may involve a radical change in lifestyle, may involve changing the structure of work relationships of people that are available, losing a secretary, so on and so forth. So that, although very desirable and very pleasant, also imposes a load on us. At the end of the list "vacation" and "Christmas" are listed. You may wonder whether Christmas is rated highly enough as a stressor, but I'll leave that up to you. There are actually 41 items; these are only a few of those on the list. It's then possible, with a list like this, to ask somebody to look at the list and check off all of those that have happened within the last 12 months. That can be done quite quickly and you can then add up the numerical values and you can get a crude estimate of how much this person has had to deal with in the preceding period of time. It's then possible to relate that to the incidence of how frequently a person goes to a doctor or psychiatrist about major or minor mental or physical ailments. There's a correlation, which is a very definite one, although it only explains part of the variance, that shows that an increase in life change results in more frequent visits to health professionals.

I want to emphasize that this is not an absolute sort of thing. Once when I was talking about this I saw a fellow in the back of the room working furiously on his calculator. Finally, he threw up his hand and he said, "Listen, I've had 485 life change units in the last year. How come I'm not dead?" He was making a very valid point because this only measures the stressor, the load that we face. It doesn't say anything about what strategies we use to handle them, what resources we have to handle those stressors.

It has been possible to couple this kind of work with some studies of how people cope with stress. There has been some work by Suzanne Kobasa and Salvatore Maddi and they've been able to show in the study of Illinois Bell Telephone middle and upper level managers that when you take a group of people who face the same amount of life change you can isolate certain attitudes toward life and toward coping that influence whether they will be able to handle that level without having to get sick. They have summarized their results in terms of three C's --commitment, control and challenge, which they collectively refer to as a person's hardiness.

Commitment has to do with a willingness to be involved in dealing with new or stressful situations, to think about it, talk about it, learn about it, do something about it, as opposed to taking an attitude of helplessness or pacity or disinterest, and saying "why should I think about that, there's nothing I can do about it anyway, what's the use", sort of alienation.

The second attitude has to do with control. One pole of that being conviction that there's something useful that I can do in response to this situation, as opposed to a feeling of helplessness. This doesn't mean that the person manifested a feeling that they had to be in control of everything, but that there was something they could do that might be helpful.



The third element that they isolated they called challenge, which has to do with a willingness to look on new situations as an opportunity, or as a situation that involves some hopefully positive outcomes, or possibly positive outcomes, as opposed to a tendency to react to new situations by trying to reinstate the past or hang onto it. So that with a company that would reorganize, for example, does one deal with all of the stress and uncertainty of that situation by trying to retain one's past status and position or by trying to exploit the new situation and make it productive and helpful for oneself and the organization, obviously a pole of activity that not only has practical consequences, but also consequences in terms of how we stand up physiologically and psychologically under the impact of these sorts of changes.

I think you can see then that the level of stressors, while important in determining how we get along, is modified by all of these ways of coping and the result of that may be that we show some evidence of less than optimal functioning. Or it may be that we are able to handle a situation and even to enjoy it and find it exhilarating because all of us need a certain level of stressors. All of us have to have some action, some input, some novelty, some challenge, even some risk, in order to feel good. People who don't have that in their organization will create it, will create problems, or they'll go out and do things that are risky just in order to make some excitement.

At the same time, our capacities to cope are also influenced by our abilities to ask others for help and to get advice, encouragement, resources and so on from others. We sometimes see executives and their spouses in our so-called Executive Consultation Program, and when I'm involved in one of those consultations one of the questions that I always ask the person is, "Do you have any allies in the organization?" Of course, if the person says that they don't, I take that as significant information and try to explore the reasons for that, a significant lack of resources within that organization. If the person says that they do have some trusted friends or allies in the organization, then I ask them, "Have you talked with that person, or those persons about the problem that you brought here to Topeka?" Sometimes they'll say yes and report that it has been very valuable to them. Sometimes they'll say, well, I didn't want to bother them, or they're working in a different department, a different part of the country, or they feel embarrassed about it. So then one part of our advice to that person is obvious. Why don't you utilize those very valuable resources, because all of us, as part of our efforts at coping, send out signals to people around us that say, "something's going on — I need help, I want your advice, I need some feedback, I need the resources that you can provide me." Sometimes an obstacle to using those sorts of resources is our own investment in our sense of self-sufficiency, which is so important a part of our image.

Another element in the equation that I want to mention briefly although it is a very important element has to do with behavior incompetence. Sometimes problems are defined as stress problems that are really organizational problems or competence problems. Being able to do something well is a tremendous stress reduction technique and being unequipped or ill-equipped to handle a task is very, very stressful and all of the relaxation

techniques and exercise programs in the world won't alter that. So in trying to understand how we or how somebody that we're working with is manifesting stress symptoms we have to raise the question about whether they have the competence to deal with the problem that they are facing. If they don't, that may need to be the primary focus of our efforts, rather than exploring other aspects of the way that they respond to stress or cope with it. Any questions or comments about what I have presented so far?

QUESTION FROM THE FLOOR: Up until now you have been talking about stress as a degenerative type of thing and we can cope with it or manage to deal with it but it won't help us out at all. I feel that a certain amount of stress is really helpful and without a lot of stress or without any stress at all, that kind of thing can be just as degenerative.

DR. SWOGGER: I agree with you completely and that's what I was driving at when I said that if we don't have that level of stressors or stimulation, we'll go out and find it. Why else would people go sky-diving, or take on a new job that perhaps didn't pay much more money but represented a bigger load. All of us search that out and I would suspect that you all are a group of people who have to have a pretty high level of activity and stimulation in order to feel comfortable. Indeed, boredom is a stressor.

QUESTION FROM THE FLOOR: You mention the value of personal support. Are there varying values in the source of the support?

DR. SWOGGER: The question you're raising is that is it important where the support comes from, whether it is a subordinate, a superior, whether it is somebody at work or somebody at home. I think it's difficult to generalize. Some organizations are characterized by a great deal of peer group support at some distance from the superior. In some ways I think the ideal situation is when you can get some support from your boss, because that's usually the person who has the most power in relation to you in your environment. So that's a little bit more reassuring. But in some organizations, for whatever reasons, peers are more where the action really is. There's also a kind of comfort and sense of equality and unguardedness that goes with that. You always have to be a little bit on your toes when you're talking to a superior. There has been some research that shows that too much support from the family in a problem involving the work situation may undermine a person's efforts to deal with the work situation. It becomes a form of flight. I'm not going to deal with this problem here but I'm going to go home and complain about it and be pampered and commiserated. Of course they always take my side, or nearly always. So that's another issue. In that sense it may be quite important where the support comes from. I think it's very easy in work situations to forget on the one hand how important in our roles as leaders we are psychologically to the people who report to us and also it's very difficult to remember that our bosses need support. We may tend to stereotype them as people who are strong or independent or have more power than we do and are without those needs.

Let me raise another sort of question with you that I think is very important in understanding some of these issues. I want to talk with you a little bit about the psychological importance of work, the psychological meanings of work. Let me introduce that by asking you a question that I'd like you to think about and for the group to develop some responses and answers to that question.

Why do you work? What does work mean to you? What are your thoughts about that?

ANSWER: Probably your first natural reaction would be to make a living, but I think more basically it's to provide a sense of accomplishment.

DR. SWOGER: I'm not going to focus a lot on the reality and economic elements but that is obviously a crucial element in working. Work is different from play in that respect and it has certain realities attached to it that we can't ignore. I think in addition to that there are these other elements that you started to mention. You mentioned the need for accomplishment. You need to be able to do something.

ANSWERS: Need for recognition, status. Recognition usually from other people at work or people in the community.

Power. Being able to exercise power, control, to be the one that determines what happens.

To be involved in some way. The need to have contact with others outside of the family.

Some altruistic desire to advance the human condition.

DR. SWOGER: I wouldn't underestimate that and I think that you can generalize it just a little bit. I think that all of us, no matter what sort of work we do, have some sense of wanting to contribute or participate, to be a dues-paying member in society. We gain some very important sense of ourselves in that process. If you look at the devastating effect of unemployment on people, you realize that's part of a sense of disconnectedness from any kind of meaningful contribution or participation.

You've talked a little bit about social contact. You've talked about making a contribution. Let me suggest some other aspects that you might consider.

I think that work gives us a great deal of structure in our lives. It tells us what to do with our days, where to go. People who are facing retirement not only have the question of social contact but, "what am I going to do with myself; where am I going to go; how am I going to be during the day?" The element of social contact has to do not only with just being around people but feeling a part of the group and for some people that's one of the most important elements in their worklife.

Some of you may have had the experience of, at one time or another in your career, working with a group that had very high morale, a real team, where there was a sense of pride and cohesion. Often when people reflect on their careers and their work experiences they'll tell you that was extremely satisfying to them. They have some very positive memories of being part of a working group like that.

There's also another element that I'd like to suggest to you that you didn't bring up. That has to do with work as a very good symptomatic treatment for feelings of anxiety and depression. One of the things that

we can do when we feel anxious and worried is to plunge ourselves into our work. If you have ever talked with a person who has gone through a serious depression or suffered significant losses, death of a family member, divorce, or something like that, very often what they will tell you is, "You know during that time, I worked more than usual, because it was the only thing that made me feel halfway decent, the only thing that helped me forget what I was going through." So work is often a very important buffer for many of us against painful feelings, unpleasant feelings.

QUESTION FROM THE FLOOR: What if the stress is work-related? Is the reaction the same?

DR. SWIGGER: There I think the relationship is a little more complicated. Again, there might be individual differences. If you think, for example, of some work-related stress that you've faced, the problem there is how do you decide upon some course of action which will effectively deal with the stress. What I'm getting at is, sometimes you see people in stressful situations at work who are a little perplexed, and what they do is just more of what they've always been doing, which may not respond to the problem. In that case it's probably only mildly helpful at best. In order to be able to deal with work-related stress by increasing your efforts at work you have to be able to clarify a role or define a strategy which deals with the problem. In that situation it is very important. In a sense, what I'm saying is similar to the notion of competence and you can't deal with the work-related stress without doing something about the problem at work in one way or another.

There are situations in which the stress is to some extent outside a person's control or perhaps to a great extent. In that case, the only ways of dealing with it through work may be to shift one's focus, if that is realistically possible, to another area and use some denial. Suppose that an edict comes down about a policy change that you find very disappointing and very stressful. You've given all of your input and done everything you could to try to influence the course of that decision. You may be able to handle that only by shifting your focus to other areas. Sometimes people find ways of surviving in organizations through that strategy.

There are times when a person may be well able to deal with work-related stress or work issues but not so well with family stresses or family issues. Very often that can become a motivation for overwork. Because what people can sometimes do who have family or other personal problems which they're having difficulty with is to hide themselves in their work and then that becomes sort of a refuge from problems in other areas in life. Unfortunately what happens then is that that process can be self-sustaining. A person who develops an over-commitment to work as a result of problems in other areas may further isolate themselves from their family or from other aspects of their life that they're having difficulty with and then their families learn how to get along without them and that perpetuates and sustains the problem.

A few years ago I talked to a person who expressed that very poignantly, although somewhat humorously. He said, "You know, I go home and my wife is at the country club and the kids are at their high school activities and I try to talk with the dog and the dog walks away." A person who has gotten

over-invested in work can develop a very painful sense of isolation within the family as this kind of invisible wall develops around them.

**QUESTION FROM THE FLOOR:** You're talking about dealing with stress but your diagram seems to imply that stress may be the result of ineffective coping. When you deal with the tensions but you don't deal with them properly, then stress results? Or, is it that stress comes first?

**DR. SWIGGER:** I think that in a way that's related to the question that was asked from the back of the room a moment ago. The terminology can become confusing here and is used in different ways by different people, but what I'm trying to do is to distinguish between stressors, all of the things that happen that necessitate that we deal with them in some way, and our coping, which if effective may mitigate the effects of those stressors and not lead to any stress reaction, or ineffective coping, which may result in some stress symptomatology. By stress, I'm referring not to the things that happen in life that we have to deal with, but symptomatology — psychological problems, insomnia, depression, anxiety, physiological problems, various types of psychosomatic ailments, and so on.

Though all of us have to recognize that we want and need a certain level of stressors and we've got to have it if we want to get a paycheck, there's still the question of what we do about it.

What about a person who is addicted to stress and to work as a part of that? They may be having ulcers or hypertension or marital problems or other problems, but they can't let go. That has to be answered in a general way. I would wonder whether such a person was protecting themselves against something that they feared would be worse than the situation that they have. In other words, sometimes people in that situation are afraid that if they slow down, if they let up, they will recognize a long-standing problem and become terribly sad and depressed about it. If I stop overworking I may recognize the fact that my relationship with my son is terrible; I feel awful about that and it would just make me feel very depressed. So I'm going to keep everything in an uproar, keep acting like what I'm doing makes any difference in order to protect myself against that, even though it doesn't make sense to people that look at me because they say, "Glenn, why are you acting that way? You'd be better off if you slowed down." So very often you have to try to understand what the other elements are in the equation for that person. It may not be immediately apparent. In a sense it's an example of the use of work to avoid other feelings where the process has not been effective. Sometimes that's a very effective process; sometimes it isn't.

We have jumped into some of the problems related to work and I want to make one other point about the positive aspects of work before I go into those any further.

You mentioned, and I added, a number of great satisfactions that most of us get from our work. It performs many functions for us and we can see that in the fact that many people work who, for a variety of reasons would not have to, but do so anyway because of the amount of satisfaction. Many people face retirement or other situations with a good deal of trepidation because work is so psychologically important to them. Another element in

this has to do simply with the satisfaction or pleasure that many of us get out of doing something that we really like to do, exercising our competency. There is a psychologist in Chicago who studied a number of years ago how people felt about and what the psychological dynamics were of doing things that you really like to do. He studied chess players and rock climbers and people who were very involved in certain sports and he studied people who really loved their work.

One of the groups that he studied was surgeons. Surgeons really love to cut. If you've ever been in a surgical amphitheater and not as a patient, you know that there's something terrifically absorbing about that little world, about the way that one can become completely focused on that activity, so much so that time disappears, nothing else is thought about, the only thing that exists is that arena, the rules of that game, what's going on there, the events that occur. That can be a very absorbing experience.

What the psychologist found was that in some ways the distinctions that we make between work and play are a little bit artificial, because for many of us we become immersed in our work in such a way that it is enormously satisfying. One of the problems that you may face if you find that you experience many of these positive elements in your own work lives is that it may be hard to draw the line between a very positive feeling and relationship in your work and when that veers into workaholism, when that begins to have some negative consequences that you don't like and that are problematic. Sometimes this can happen almost inadvertently when somebody becomes so immersed in their work for a variety of reasons that they discover that things have gotten a little bit out of balance or this process of isolation that we were talking about has occurred.

There are a number of elements, in addition to the positive elements, that can contribute to our overinvolvement in work. I think somebody mentioned that work also is a "should". Work becomes something that we're all so driven to do by our conscience and if we don't work we feel uncomfortable, ill-at-ease, or even guilty.

Many of us have picked up a good deal of the training and admonition from our families and from our parents that we grew up with, which makes us feel that we really have to work, we have to achieve, we have to do something in order to feel decent about ourselves, in order to justify ourselves. Sometimes this sense of guilt can become excessive. Many people find that the very qualities that have led them to a good deal of success, their conscientiousness, their sense of responsibility and obligation, sort of overshoot so that enough is never enough and it may be very difficult to relax, to enjoy the fruits of one's labors, to do something just for oneself, to let others handle some of the load, and so on. So that although our consciences can be assets in terms of giving us a reliable inner standard for what we need to do, they can also be liabilities for us as well. This is one sort of problem that many of us face. Another element of this that's related is that our own egos, our own sense of self-pride can become very much involved in our work activities and in our need for constant achievement so that we then become addicted to our need for a sense of self-worth and for the honors or the status that we can get in our work activities.

I'll share with you an experience that I had a while back which kind of brought this home to me. I was asked to be on a selection committee at the Foundation. We have a process at the Menninger Foundation that when an important position is to be filled a selection committee is formed that makes recommendations of candidates for that position and then they're chosen. So I came home and I was kind of partly complaining, partly bragging to my wife that another committee, evening meetings, it was going to be dull and boring and I really didn't want to do it and on and on. So finally she asked the logical question and she said, "Glenn, why are you on the committee?" I was really surprised and I looked at her and said, "Clair, this is an honor." She looked at me and she said, "Glenn, you'd do anything if it was an honor." I realized in a way she had a point. I had gotten hooked on this and this was kind of an eternal carrot out in front of me to do these things, to not be able to say no.

So in various ways our work can be compelled or driven by our ego needs or our sense of guilt, our sense of having to achieve, of having to demonstrate to others what we're doing. This can be a bit of a trap for us. One of the things that happens to all of us as we get older is that we begin to reflect on this a little bit and we begin to try to develop some capacity to say no as well as yes and to shape our working lives more in line with what we like to do and with what really gives us some balance between the rest of our lives. This is not an easy process because it means doing some psychological work in relation to all those things that drive us and often if you try to say no you find that you feel a little uncomfortable when you do it.

It's also possible for us to become too task-oriented and too utilitarian so that we really focus only on what we're trying to accomplish and everything else begins to fade into the background and we think about people and events and activities only in terms of how they relate to our work. Perhaps a little bit like my father, who could only think in psychiatry in terms of lending, we begin to look at the whole world just in these terms and at times this can make us very blind to whatever else might be going on around us in our lives or in our families.

Sometimes this process of over-involvement or over-commitment can be incorporated in what has been called Type A behavior. Let me tell you just a little bit about that, how that notion is developed and then I'll describe some of the characteristics of it.

Two cardiologists out in California, Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman, made the observation in the 50's that many of their heart attack patients seem to have something in common, a sort of a pressured, driven style of living that distinguished them to some extent from other people. So they decided to study this and they set up a prospective study in which they did video-taped interviews of people and assessed the degree to which they showed this behavior style and then they followed these people over first seven years and then it was extended for a longer period and noted who developed heart attacks and who didn't. What they found was that even when other risk factors were controlled, such as smoking and cholesterol and so on, that this behavioral style itself seemed to be associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease. This has led to quite a few other studies which have pretty much substantiated their original study and they've tried

to isolate what are the elements in this and what seemed to be the most important factors and how can one change this style of behavior.

People who manifest Type A behavior show a tremendous sense of grim urgency. Everything is very serious and very oriented toward the task and time must not be wasted. This comes out in a feeling that only by this kind of unrelenting effort will anything really get done. When we get into this style of behavior we become very intolerant of people who don't do the same thing, so that somebody, for example, who tends to speak rather slowly — come on, finish it, I know what you're going to say, say it, let's get on. We interrupt them, we move them along, we get them going. Don't waste time. What are you doing in the slow lane. Get into the fast lane. Come on, come on, come on. Why is that person waiting. A tremendous sense of this, a sense of having to do a lot of things at once, having to keep everything going just as rapidly as possible. When you talk with somebody who is in this style it is very much a part of themselves and this is one of the reasons why it is so difficult for people who manifest a good deal of type A behavior to change this style, even if they've had a heart attack, because there's a feeling if I change this in myself, how will I be able to do anything, who will I be, what will be left of me if I change this. The people who manifest this often have the feeling, they say well I'm in a very busy job and the only way you can get this job done is to be real Type A and so just let me be; I'll pay my price and that's the way I've got to be in this job. So there's a sense of necessity and urgency about it. You can usually see the excessive quality of it when you take a look at areas where it's obviously inappropriate. For example, in eating, in sports and leisure activities, where these also tend to become very grim tasks that have to be done as quickly or as competitively, every race must be a marathon, must be your absolute best. Rosenman and Friedman have some terrible stories about runners who have increased their pace despite their chest pain because they were so bound and determined that they were going to measure up to these internal standards.

One of the stories that they tell, which kind of illustrates not only how far this attitude spreads, but in a way how it gets transmitted to the next generation. They accidentally learned when interviewing people who manifested a good deal of Type A behavior, that one of the ways that these people related to their children was that they never let them win when they were playing games with them, never let them win at checkers, or whatever, even if they were six years old. They wanted to show the little buggers what life is really like. I think it's not hard to imagine and there have recently been some other studies of how mothers of Type A children relate to it, if the task in the test situation is to put blocks on top of one another and the child puts six blocks on top and the mother anxiously asks about the seventh, and so on.

So you can see how such a pattern would be transmitted from one generation to another and how it gets kind of locked in to a person's sense of what they have to do in order to get along in this world or be acceptable.

Did you ever take a Type A vacation? I hope you're not taking one in Toronto here. But all of us can be so ambitious. We've got to see everything that's here in this city. After all, it's only a city of several million people, we should be able to do it in three days, right.



There's this tremendous sense of driven ambitiousness that all of us can kind of get caught up in at times and which can extend to leisure and non-work activities and which really robs us of a capacity to enjoy life.

There are other characteristics here that are listed, part of which I've covered. The last one is, often people who manifest a good deal of Type A behavior, even if they recognize it, will not report that they feel anxious or angry or depressed, or other feelings. You really get a sense of the emotional load of their behavior by talking to the people around them. If you've ever had a Type A boss, you know what I mean; the sense of hostility, obtrusiveness, interference with work, and so on. It's not very pleasant to be around a person who manifests this type of behavior. They're always kind of wound up and sparking off on everybody else. So this is a major problem and issue that is faced.

QUESTION FROM THE FLOOR: Is it possible to go from a Type A behavior to a non-Type A behavior?

DR. SWOGER: You asked the question in a more appropriate way than somebody did not long ago. I was talking along and somebody threw up their hand and said, "What's the quickest way to get rid of Type A behavior?" I knew I had the right subject for the right audience.

It's not an easy process, and I think I've already mentioned how it's so much a part of us to get into that style and I should say that most of us have a spectrum of behavior. There are extremes and most of us are somewhere in the middle. Some people will say that I'm a Type A at work but at home I am able to change gears and slow down so it's not an all or nothing process. Just for convenience sake I'm describing the extremes.

Let me mention a couple of things in relation to that. I think it's a kind of change that's not easy to accomplish. One of the studies that's going on that's been reported on in San Francisco is the so-called Recurrent Coronary Prevention for people who have had one heart attack are being worked with to see if there are ways of helping them change this pattern of behavior.

The major study involved in this is using a control group, which is getting ordinary medical care; another group which is meeting regularly for educational sessions in which they hear about cardiovascular risk factors, diet, smoking, nutrition, so on and so forth; and another group which is specifically oriented to helping its members change their Type A behavior. That group is organized a little bit like a sort of a Weight Watchers or an AA for Type A people. In the meetings the participants report to each other on what they've been doing the previous week and they focus on specific behaviors and their plans to change them. They talk about, "Ok, the next two weeks I'm going to try not to keep shifting lanes back and forth to always be in the fastest lane, or I'm going to stop interrupting my wife when she's saying what I know what she's going to say already," or you know things of that sort. They try to get very specific behaviors and then they give each other a lot of support and recognition for trying to change those behaviors. Then they meet again and they follow up and see how did it go and what did you do and so on.

The study is not completed but it has gone on for several years and some of the interim reports have shown that there's a measurable and significant decrease in cardiovascular mortality in the third group, in the recurrence of heart attacks. So there's some evidence that they seem to be on the right track.

What can we draw from that? I think what this suggests is first of all that one has to try to become very specific about just what it is that one's going to do. You can't make a New Year's resolution, I'm going to stop being Type A. I think that's doomed to failure. You have to think of some specific things that make sense to you and that you can really observe in yourself. Then you may want to try to find ways of monitoring and reinforcing that, by keeping a journal, maybe by talking with your wife, or with somebody else that you really could share a little bit with how it was going in your efforts to do that, getting some kind of support and encouragement and reinforcement, either through reinforcing yourself or through using others to help you do that. Recognizing that you're talking about making a change in the pattern that you may be able to change only bit by bit and only quantitatively.

There are some people that have suggested and there's been some research on this that has been inconclusive, that maybe a vigorous exercise program is a way of blowing off some steam and then allowing yourself to really relax and slow down and to get into the habit of being slow.

The other thing that I'd like to mention in this respect is that many of you may have some sorts of activities in which you do feel relaxed and not rushed, things that you just happen to like to do, whether it's working on your workbench or playing with your kids if you have a small child, or some other activity that for you is relaxing. I'd like to suggest that you give that some greater significance and priority for yourself and some greater time in allowing yourself to do that. Maybe step 1 is not to try to change your pattern for 24 hours a day but to change a part of your day so in that part at least you're kind of going with the flow of time rather than trying to push through time, changing your relationship to time, where you are able to do something that's relaxing and enjoyable. It may be that you can extend out from that.

There's another type of thing that I think is important. Sometimes the environment is such that it promotes Type A behavior. There are some aspects of your environment that you can't change. One of Rosenman and Friedman's suggestions for changing Type A behavior is to avoid irritating, competitive people. Now if you can figure out a way to do that call me collect. I'll include it in my next talk and really have something special I want to say.

There are things that we can do at times. If you look at the way that you structure your working life, for example, you may find that you're letting yourself be unnecessarily bombarded with stimulation. If you're a person who answers every phone call yourself, or never closes your office door, or who in other ways doesn't delegate or doesn't structure your worklife realistically so that you allow yourself some barriers against stimulation, then you may be setting up a situation in which your reactions to what is coming in move you very quickly into a Type A style of behavior. So you

may want to do a sort of analysis of the structure of your work situation to see if you can find some elements in that that would be appropriately changed. That may be an important element in that.

One of the things that you'll find is that people get very used to us being that way and if your door has always been open people may find it very convenient for them to be able to come in and burden you with every question that they have or in other ways to do this. There may be some resistance from the system when you're changing. They say, "What's happening. Glenn used to always be available; now he closes his door all the time. He must be getting lazy." You might have to deal with some of the reactions to the work system to any changes of that sort. They may try to move you back into the same pattern. But those might be some things that you can consider.

Well, we're just about at the end of our time. One of the problems that I have felt I have some material on is the ways in which women handle some of the issues of work. Let me throw out a question to you, maybe to include and to touch on that just a little bit. I'd like to address this to the women in the audience. When I went over the list of satisfactions relating to work, you as a group made the assumption that I was talking about paid employment, at least I didn't hear any questions or comments that specifically related to work in the home. What about those of you who work at home, who are mothers or homemakers. What similarities and what differences do you see in the satisfactions that work offers here?

One issue is that it is the type of work that is done and undone, that has to be repeated numerous times and that even though it may be very valuable in the sense of contribution to growth of the next generation of our society, there still is a sense of frustration, what am I really accomplishing by making another breakfast or making the beds again today.

ANSWER: She does work in the home. She doesn't work for pay anywhere but she does a lot of volunteer work...I think quite the opposite, if she were being paid for what she did on a voluntary basis that might create a stressful situation for her because then she would feel obligated to do it because she was being paid for it as opposed to doing it because she wants to.

DR. SWOGER: So there would be a different set of motivations that might make new problems if she were paid for doing what she's doing in the home. That's often an issue when women complete the task of raising children if that's the task that they have gone into as adults, then do they assume other commitments, or do they want to be free of some commitments, at least for a while.

Very unsocial. Let me highlight that because I think that somebody over here mentioned that one of the elements in one of the satisfactions of work is getting out of the home and the social contact with people outside of the home. You see, there's a certain paradox there. On the one hand in terms of relatedness, a woman who is raising children in the home and relating to her husband is more closely and meaningfully related with a small group of people, very small group, mainly her family, than the majority of most relationships in the work situation. But the boundaries

are very tight and the social relationships outside of the home are missing. The kinds of relationships that are possible within the home are somewhat limited, and often this makes a problem for husband and wife in that situation, because husband has been communicating and talking and interacting with other adults all day. You have been involved in guerilla warfare with the children. He comes home, he wants to stop communicating for a while, he's not fit for human companionship. You want to talk to an adult. Often there can be a real conflict and a real difference in needs there, because then you start talking and all of a sudden you realize that he's got a glazed look in his eye. He hasn't heard the last ten minutes of what you said.

Couples find a variety of ways to deal with this. This is a very significant difference between the work of being a mother and being a wife and work outside the home. Some couples have a sort of a ritual of one sort or another where either they stay away from each other for a while until the husband recharges or they ban the children for a while and have a drink together or they regularly go out to dinner, or some other pattern, go for walks together. It's very important, especially if you have very young children, to try to find some way, because the nature of your needs is quite different at that point and yet they're both important.

One of the motivations that many women have for working outside of the home is they wanted to find themselves outside of the family circle. It may be partly an economic matter that a second income may be of value, but even where that's not a factor, there's a need, because of the narrowness of that circle, to define oneself in some relationships outside of the home, to define something about yourself that you can't define quite the same way within the home.

It's a role that we're very ambivalent about. On the one hand we praise this person to the skies, and they're all the images of the Madonna and the mother and so on and so forth, and we certainly react to any threat of its loss, of losing the person who takes this role. At the same time we assume that they're infinitely available and that their time is not worth anything.

COMMENT: It's a job that you're given whether or not you have any aptitude.

DR. SWOGER: It's assumed that you're going to get the job and take it and feel bad if you don't do it well. Do you think that your sons and daughters, figuratively speaking, are making those same kinds of assumptions? I think that younger people are much more reflective and willing to exercise choice than we were.

Let me make one other point in terms of some of the meanings of working within the home. I just want to emphasize that one of the values that work has for us is that it helps us establish our sense of our own identity. I don't know whether that was mentioned so strongly. Very often when we define ourselves, our self-definitions will be of work roles; we'll say, "I am a psychiatrist," or, "I am an actuary," or whatever it might be. I think that very often women who may have been very happy and gained a great deal of pride and gratification out of their roles within the home want to establish some sense of identity outside of the home as well. They may extend themselves and make commitments in several areas that make for a very hectic life in order to do that.