

## I-ama-guerrilla in Islamabad-almost - Week 1, 12 May 2012

**Aha**, now the *solar heater* has kicked in. Swimming in our back-yard pool is delightful, especially at around 5-7 p.m. as the heat of the day passes and white-wing and mourning and Inca doves, yellow crows, yellow- and orange- breasted finches, and grey Gambel's quail, Gila woodpeckers, roadrunners, cactus wrens, thrashers and countless hummingbirds fill our yard. Some come to eat from the trees and bushes and put-out gadgets. Others to sip the water from the sub-water bridge between our spa and the main pool. Tomorrow, we'll have friends and family over for Dave's BBQ per the American Mother's Day. Can't help thinking how important family, education, hard work and dumb luck have been for me!

**New assignment:** As Team Leader/ Environmental Assessment for the \$240-million *Afghanistan Agribusiness Project*, I need to help fill several local Pakistani environmental consultant/ staff assignments for experts with USAID environmental procedures (22CFR216): Agricultural, Animal Production and Processing, Work Site Safety, and Waste Disposal Specialists for Slaughterhouses, Dairy, Cattle Colony, and Food Processing and Storage Plants. If you have experience, expertise, and interest, please advise me!

**Song from my MWF Senior Exercise Class – Enhanced Fitness, Northwest Community Center, Tucson:**



Bop bop bop bop bopopopopopopop

She was afraid to come out of the locker  
She was as nervous as she could be  
She was afraid to come out of the locker  
She was afraid that somebody would see

Two three four tell the people what she wore

It was an Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini  
That she wore for the first time today  
An Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini  
So in the locker, she wanted to stay

Two three four stick around we'll tell you more

Bop bop bop bop bopopopopopopop

She was afraid to come out in the open (badadup)  
So a blanket around her she wore (badadup)  
She was afraid to come out in the open (badadup)  
So she sat, bundled up on the shore (badadup)

Two three four tell the people what she wore

It was an Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini  
That she wore for the first time today  
An Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini  
So in the blanket, she wanted to stay

Two three four the stick around we'll tell you more

Bop bop bop bop bopopopopopopop

Now she's afraid to come out of the water  
And I wonder what she's gonna do

Now she's afraid to come out of the water  
And the poor little girl's turning blue

Two three four tell the people what she wore

It was an Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini  
That she wore for the first time today  
An Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini  
So in the water, she wanted to stay

From the Locker to the blanket  
From the blanket to the shore  
From the shore to the water  
Guess there isn't any more I love this song!!

## **From Harvard Medical School **HEALTH**beat: 10 simple steps to help de-stress**

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There is no shortage of angst-inducing news these days: natural disasters, economic woes, political unrest. Add to this backdrop stresses in our personal lives, layoffs, illness, money woes, temper tantrums, and traffic jams, and it is clear that stressful situations are constant and inevitable.

Just as serious as the stressors themselves are the adverse effects stress can have on your emotional and physical health. Many well-respected studies link stress to heart disease and stroke — the No. 1 and No. 3 causes of death, respectively, in the United States. Stress is also implicated in a host of other ailments such as depression and anxiety, chronic lower respiratory diseases, asthma flare-ups, rheumatoid arthritis, and gastrointestinal problems.

Stress is not all bad. Your perception of a real or imagined threat can spark the stress response, which prepares the body to fight or flee. That swift reflex was encoded in you for survival. Thanks to the stress response, you might suddenly jump out of the path of a speeding car or flee from a burning house. But when your stress response is evoked repeatedly, your body experiences unnecessary wear and tear — such as high blood pressure — that can lead to poor health.

Even if you only have a few minutes to spare, the stress-busting suggestions described below can make your days calmer, if not easier.

### **Take the sting out of 10 common stressors**

Sometimes just thinking about embarking on a program of stress control can be stressful. Rather than freeze in your tracks, start small and bask in the glow of your successes. Give yourself a week to focus on practical solutions that could help you cope with just one stumbling block or source of stress in your life. Pick a problem, and see if these suggestions work for you.

1. **Frequently late?** Apply time management principles. Consider your priorities (be sure to include time for yourself) and delegate or discard unnecessary tasks. Map out your day, segment by segment, setting aside time for different tasks, such as writing or phone calls. If you are overly optimistic about travel time, consistently give yourself an extra 15 minutes or more to get to your destinations. If lateness stems from dragging your heels, consider the underlying issue. Are you anxious about what will happen after you get to work or to a social event, for example? Or maybe you're trying to jam too many tasks into too little time.
2. **Often angry or irritated?** Consider the weight of cognitive distortions. Are you magnifying a problem, leaping to conclusions, or applying emotional reasoning? Take the time to stop, breathe, reflect, and choose.
3. **Unsure of your ability to do something?** Don't try to go it alone. If the problem is work, talk to a co-worker or supportive boss. Ask a knowledgeable friend or call the local library or an organization that can supply the information you need. Write down other ways that you might get the answers or skills you need. Turn to CDs, books, or classes, for example, if you need a little tutoring. This works equally well when you're learning relaxation response techniques, too.
4. **Overextended?** Clear the deck of at least one time-consuming household task by hiring help. If you can, hire a housecleaning service, shop for groceries through the Internet, convene a family meeting to consider who can take on certain jobs, or barter with or pay teens for work around the house and yard. Consider what is truly essential and important to you and what might take a backseat right now.
5. **Not enough time for stress relief?** Try mini-relaxations. Or make a commitment to yourself to pare down your schedule for just one week so you can practice evoking the relaxation response every day. Slowing down to pay attention to just one task or pleasure at hand is an excellent method of stress relief.
6. **Feeling unbearably tense?** Try massage, a hot bath, mini-relaxations, a body scan, or a mindful walk. Practically any exercise — a brisk walk, a quick run, a sprint up and down the stairs — will help, too. Done regularly, exercise wards off tension, as do relaxation response techniques.
7. **Frequently feel pessimistic?** Remind yourself of the value of learned optimism: a more joyful life and, quite possibly, better health. Practice deflating cognitive distortions. Rent funny movies and read amusing books. Create a mental list of reasons you have to feel grateful. If the list seems too short, consider beefing up your social network and adding creative, productive, and leisure pursuits to your life.
8. **Upset by conflicts with others?** State your needs or distress directly, avoiding "you always" or "you never" zingers. Say, "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_." "I would really appreciate it if you could \_\_\_\_\_." "I need some help setting priorities. What needs to be done first and what should I tackle later?" If conflicts are a significant source of distress for you, consider taking a class on assertiveness training.
9. **Worn out or burned out?** Focus on self-nurturing. Carve out time to practice relaxation response techniques or at least indulge in mini-relaxations. Care for your body by eating good, healthy food and for your heart by seeking out others. Give thought to creative, productive, and leisure activities. Consider your priorities in life: is it worth feeling this way, or is another path open to you? If you want help, consider what kind

would be best. Do you want a particular task at work to be taken off your hands? Do you want to do it at a later date? Do you need someone with particular expertise to assist you?

10. **Feeling lonely?** Connect with others. Even little connections — a brief conversation in line at the grocery store, an exchange about local goings-on with a neighbor, a question for a colleague — can help melt the ice within you. It may embolden you, too, to seek more opportunities to connect. Be a volunteer. Attend religious or community functions. Suggest coffee with an acquaintance. Call a friend or relative you miss. Take an interesting class. If a social phobia, low self-esteem, or depression is dampening your desire to reach out, seek help. The world is a kinder, more wondrous place when you share its pleasures and burdens.

**A week doesn't pass** without someone asking me to look at their resume and give them some advice on it and for the dreaded job interview. I think the resume should be somewhat targeted to the client and the job; it should clearly demonstrate their understand both and how their specific education, experience and decisions would benefit their potential bread payer. As to interviews, I think they should be able to say: 1) why they want this job for this company now; 2) what's their strengths and weaknesses; 3) what they know about the job and the company; and 4) for provided situations asked about, what actions did they take with what result.

**Good stress release: Open Floor at Hookah Lounge, Luxor Café, Tucson, last Thursday of the month at 7-8 p.m.:**



**Have fun, be happy, and don't worry! It doesn't help! It's really more fun in the Philippines! And Tucson!**