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**What The Most Dangerous Job In The World Taught Me About Coping With Stress**

**By Kevin Thompson**

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by: **Kevin Thompson**

I just got through reading some troubling news in the New York Times this morning.

62% of employees now say that work-related stress leaves them overwhelmed and overtired.

And for many of us, who bring work home from the office, the problem is even worse.

So what's going on?

Why are most of us so stressed?

I'll tell you what a major part of the problem is... lack of job security.

I remember as I was growing up, my father only had two jobs. He was a high school teacher for the earlier part of his life, and later on he went into the real estate profession.

Two jobs, and they spanned his entire lifetime!

And the one career change he made was something he wanted to do. He didn't make the change because he was losing his job as a teacher. In fact, the school district wanted him to stay.

But that's a far cry from the way things are today. In fact, the days of job stability, and working for a single employer for your entire working career are long gone.

You'll probably change jobs at least 11 times before you retire.

Downsizing, rapid business expansion and outsourcing are terms that we're all too familiar with.

## What The Most Dangerous Job In The World Taught Me About Coping With Stress

Before I got involved in the health industry and started my own indoor air quality business back in 1996, I'd already held 5 jobs in 5 completely different industries.

I worked as a telecommunications technician (in the Army), as a framer, on the green chain at 2 separate lumber mills, as a farm hand and finally as an Alaska fisherman for seven years (which was the hardest and most stressful job I ever had).

Now, you may be thinking to yourself, "You must've been a problem employee".

But the fact is, nothing could be further from the truth.

I was in fact a model employee for every company I worked for, and never left a single employer on bad terms.

For example...

I began working as an Alaska fisherman in 1988. My main motivation for doing this was the money. Quite honestly, that's the only reason I took the job.

And if you've ever seen that movie "The Perfect Storm" or watched those shows on the discovery channel, you have an idea of what it's like to fish in Alaska.

My own story isn't much different and it taught me why being an Alaska Fisherman is know as "The Most Dangerous Job In The World".

The winter of 1995 had been an especially bad winter in Alaska. Fishing boats and fishermen's lives were being claimed by the Bering Sea almost weekly.

I was working on the outside deck after dark and we were in an unbelievable storm. It was the worst I'd seen in my 7 years of fishing. The kind of thing you only see in the movies.

I was scared to death!

But I had my own way of dealing with my fears. I'd never look out at the horizon when we were in a storm like this because I didn't want to see the big picture. I didn't want to know how high the waves really were. So I'd just concentrate on my job, which was to get all the fish onto the boat. As long as I did my job, and didn't look up, I could almost convince myself that the storm wasn't that bad.

While this certainly wasn't the best way to deal with stress, at the time, it was the only way I knew how.

As always, the captain was in the wheelhouse driving the boat. His job was to keep an eye on me and watch for the dangerous rogue waves that would come out of nowhere and slam into us broadside. He'd tell me if I was in any real danger.

And then it happened!

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I heard the captain's thundering voice over the intercom system.

Kevin! Hit the deck!

Before I could react, I was buried under a wall of water that hurled me all the way across the deck of the boat, face first into the railing on the other side.

When the water settled, and I realized what had happened, my immediate thought was, "Thank God I'm still on the boat" The impact had knocked out my front teeth and caused serious facial damage, but at least I was still alive, and on the boat.

If that wave would have lifted me just a few inches higher, I would have been thrown right over the top of the railing into the freezing waters of the Bering Sea. And there's one thing I knew for sure. In a storm like that, there's no way in hell the captain would have got that boat turned around in time to save me. I would have died right then and there.

It was at that moment I decided my life as an Alaska Fisherman was over.

While it was a great experience, I've never regretted my decision to leave the fishing industry. I just didn't want to deal with that much stress in my life.

Decades of research has linked stress to everything from heart attacks and stroke to diabetes and a weakened immune systems, and none of us want to deal with that.

I've since found much better ways to deal with stress, and you can too by going to

Kevin Thompson is a national authority on indoor air quality and health issues. His free Health Articles & News Update service gives you instant access to the world's most respected and sought after health experts in 70 categories, including Men's Health, Women's Health and Children's Health just to name a few. Find out how this free service is changing people's lives and how you too can live a longer, healthier and more prosperous lifestyle... beginning today. Go to

### **Your Work and Your Stress**

**By Catherine Pulsifer**

We all want less stress in our lives. Do you think today's workplace is too stressful?

I know at times it may be difficult to accept, but, you and only you can control your stress.

Stress is not only created by how we see a situation, but also how we react to it. We do, in fact, control our own stress. So, if you are feeling "stressed out", you are responsible for creating that feeling.

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I am not saying there are no situations which are stressful. What I am saying, however, is that how you choose to react to those situations will determine your own stress levels. These reactions will affect how you behave, how you communicate with those around you, and how you respond to your customers and clients.

When I start to feel stress, I ask myself a question: "how much will this matter in five years?" In the majority of cases, it doesn't matter. It is amazing, how this one, simple question can change your thought processes, and lower your stress levels resulting in less stress.

Another technique I use when my job seems overwhelming is to keep it all in perspective by saying to myself: "My job is important but it only forms part of my life – it is not my entire life." So, by thinking this way, I am altering my thoughts from one where my job controls and rules my entire life to one where I realize my job forms only a part of my life's equation.

So the next time you feel your job is causing you stress, ask yourself how am I reacting? You may find that it is not your job creating the stress but you are creating the stress.

We all need some stress in our lives, but less stress is better than more stress!

Catherine Pulsifer is one of the authors of *Stress Less Country* – a lifestyle change! A journey to a simplified lifestyle – visit the site for a collection of articles, thoughts, quotes, and stories on: simplicity, stress, gardening, recycle & reuse, country crafts, saving money tips, and Atlantic Canada.

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