

Letting Go of Stress

Coping with Change at the Worksite

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One Nation Under Stress

- **Corporate Mergers**
- **Corporate Downsizing**
- **Stock Market Jitters**
- **Urban Sprawl**
- **24/7 Accessibility**
- **Global Terrorism**
- **Technostress**
- **Health Care Reform**
- **Pension & Benefit Issues**
- **Global Warming**
- **Privacy issues**

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This slide merely highlights many of the issues specified by people in the American work force.

One Nation Under Stress

Worksite Stress Facts:

- **93% of worksite accidents are the result of human error. (National Safety Council)**
- **47% of US executives surveyed in 2003 didn't use their vacation time due to job pressures.**
- **Up to 60% of all absences are caused by stress.**
- **72% of US workers report emotional stress is pervasive in the worksite.**
- **More heart attacks occur on Monday mornings than any other day of the week.**

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This slide sets the groundwork for the need for stress management programs at the worksite by presenting data from several national polls and surveys. The sources for this information can be found at the end of this presentation.



The Nature of Stress

There are two kinds of stress:

**Good Stress: Euphoria or joy
(also known as “Eustress”)**

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It is always a good idea to give examples. Falling in love is an example of good stress. Actually, any situation that makes one feel euphoric could fall in this category. Meeting your favorite movie star or professional athlete would also serve as possible examples.

The Nature of Stress

There are two kinds of stress:

Bad Stress: Distress or simply, “STRESS!”
(also known as: anger, fear, despair,
panic, worry, anxiety, impatience, frustration,
guilt, annoyance, doubt, irritation, rage,
embarrassment, intimidation, envy, hostility,
and indignation, etc.)

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The purpose of this slide shows that there is no shortage of ways to explain the emotions associated with distress. If you wish to include some audience participation, you could ask workshop participants for additional words to include here.

The Nature of Stress

There are two kinds of “Distress:”

**Acute Stress: Very intense, but
short lived (usually around 20 minutes)**

**Examples: Speeding ticket
flat tire, email spam**

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Acute stress is very, very intense but very short lived. Since most everyone can relate to getting a speeding ticket, this makes for an excellent example.



The Nature of Stress

There are two kinds of “Distress:”

Chronic Stress: Not very intense, but it endures for days, weeks, months.

Examples: Job stress, marital stress, financial stress, chronic pain stress.

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This slide is self-explanatory. You could ask workshop participants for other examples if you wish.

Definitions of Stress

(Many definitions, from many disciplines)

- **A loss of emotional control**
- **The inability to cope with problems**
- **Wear and tear on the body**
- **The absence of inner peace**
- **Any change you encounter in your life**

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The purpose of this slide is to show that there are many definitions of stress, coming from various different fields of study (psychology, anthropology, medicine, physics, theology, etc.). Be sure to emphasize that today, the words stress and change are often used interchangeably.

Definitions of Stress

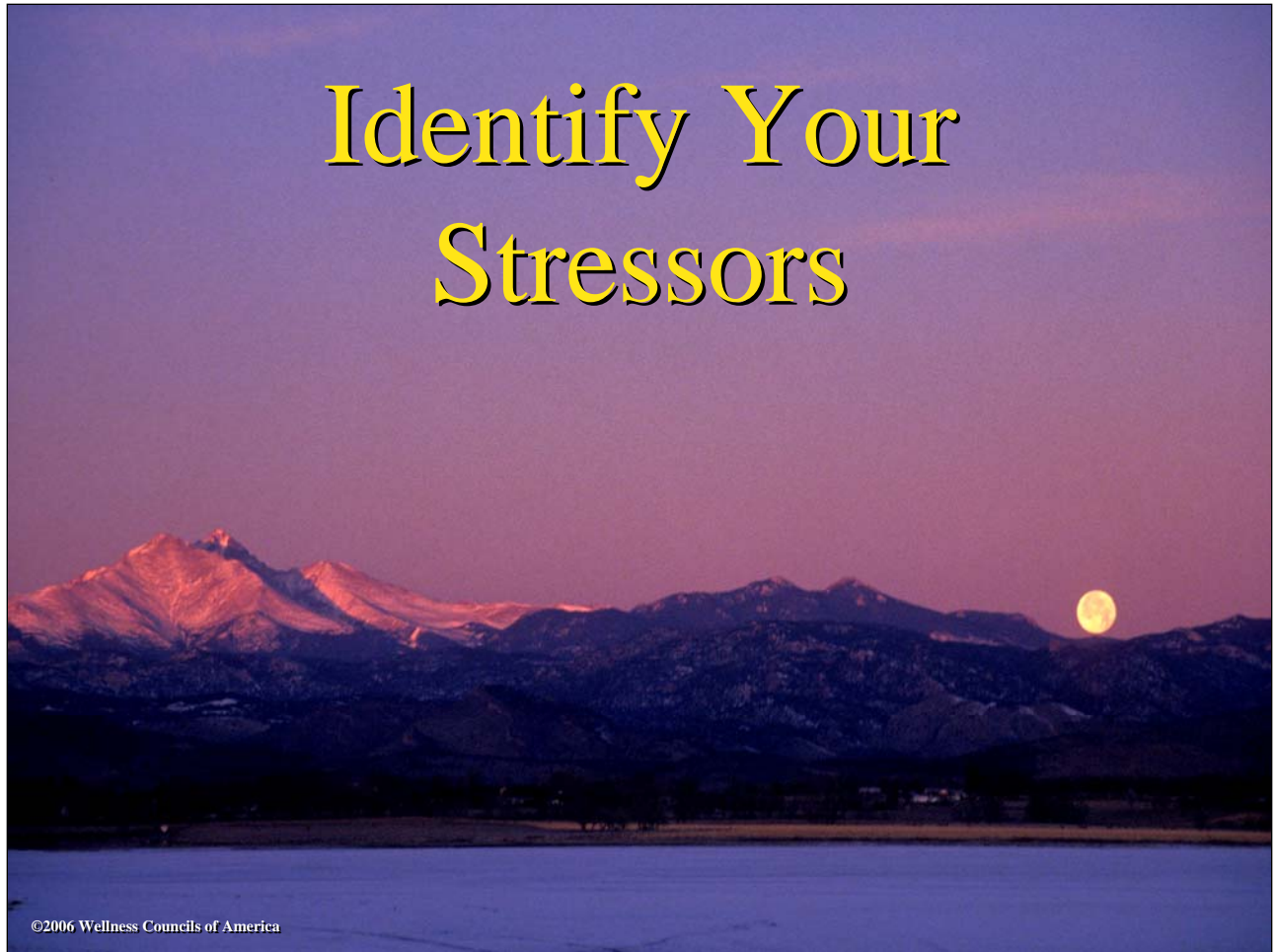
A common definition, agreed by leading experts:

*“Stress is a “perceived” threat
(real or imagined)
to one’s mind, body, spirit or emotions.”*

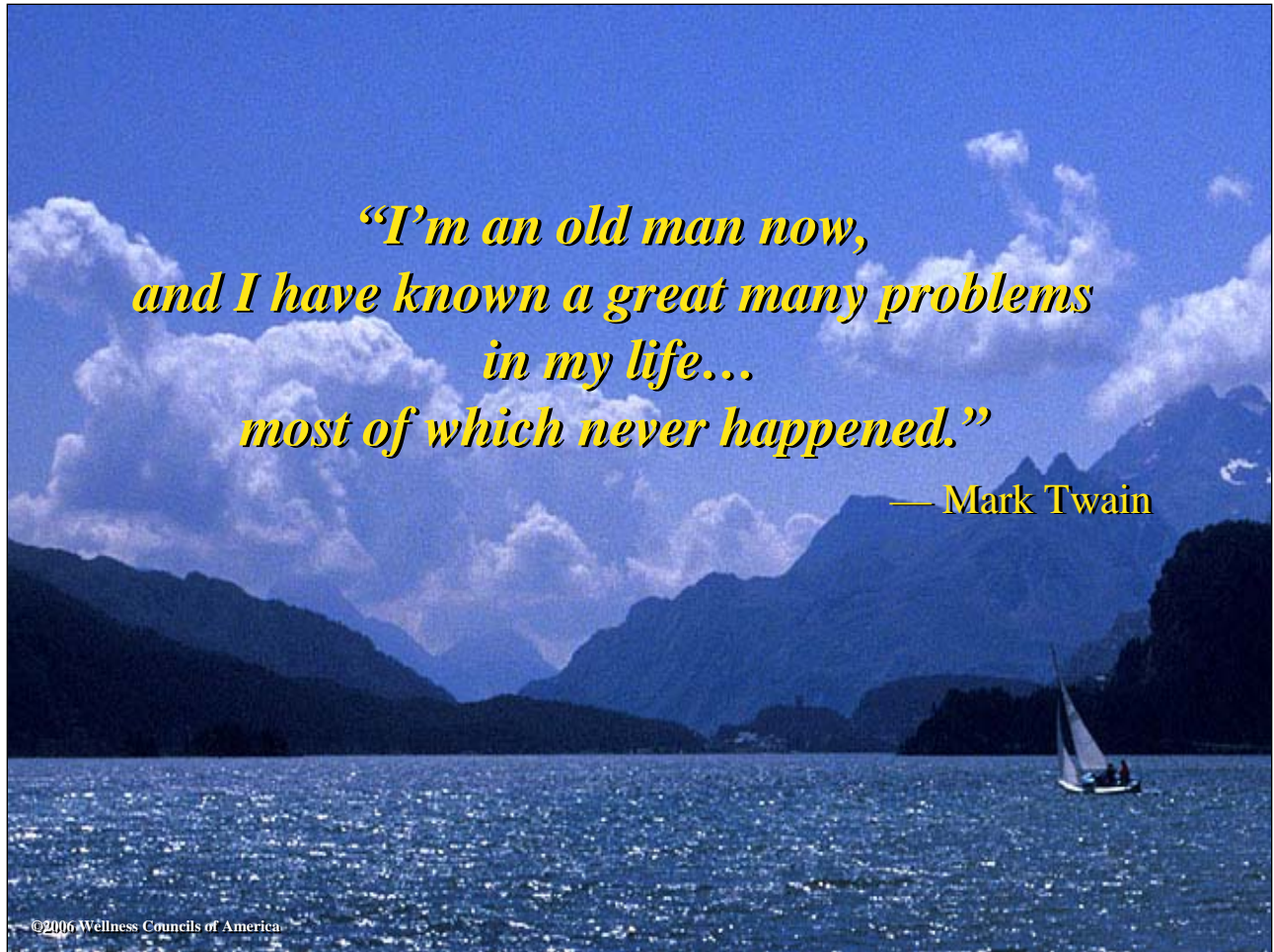
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Although there is no agreement on what stress really is, this definition comes close to a consensus.

Identify Your Stressors



During this slide, consider passing out the enclosed stress survey. Please allow about 2-4 minutes for participants to complete the survey, and then continue on with the next slide



It is always a good idea to read quotes out loud.

The Fight or Flight Response

A survival dynamic for physical stressors... physical danger.

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Everyone has the flight or flight response. In case you are asked, women also have what is known as the “tend and befriend” response, a more nurturing response to stress.

The Fight or Flight Response

Today, the fight or flight response is used primarily (and inappropriately) for non-physical stressors, and herein lies the problem: a stress-hormone cocktail that wrecks havoc on the body under repeated bouts of chronic stress.

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Be sure to reiterate that the fight or flight response is ideal for physical threats, (e.g. a burning building). It is not appropriate for non-physical threats.

Short Term Effects of Stress Physiology

Biochemistry of stress hormones released during the flight or flight (stress) response include:

- **Epinephrine (Catacolamine)**
- **Nor-epinephrine (Catacolamine)**
- **Vasopressin**
- **Aldosterone**
- **Cortisol**

This “stress cocktail” is known to do the following:

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This slide had some stress physiology concepts that may look technical, but you will do fine. The purpose of the combined effect of these stress neurotransmitters is to prepare the body for fight or flight by increasing heart rate, blood pressure, and so forth. You don't have to know much about stress physiology to appreciate all that goes on.

Short-term Effects of Stress Physiology

- **Increased heart rate**
- **Increased blood pressure**
- **Increased rate of breathing**
- **Increased muscle tension**
- **Increased perspiration**
- **Increased metabolic activity**

All of these physiological responses are triggered specifically as part of the fight or flight response for physical survival.

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This slide is self-explanatory.

Short-term Effects of Stress Physiology

- **Increased heart rate**
- **Increased blood pressure**
- **Increased rate of breathing**
- **Increased muscle tension**
- **Increased perspiration**
- **Increased metabolic activity**

These are very ineffective for mental, emotional or spiritual stressors.

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This slide is self-explanatory as well.

Long Term Effects of Stress Physiology

- **Hypertension (High blood pressure)**
- **Chronic pain (muscle tension)**
- **Suppressed immune system**
- **Colds and flus**
- **Symptoms of disease or illness**
- **General sense of fatigue**
- **Insomnia**
- **Depression**

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The purpose of this slide is to show that when chronic stress persists, with subsequent stress hormone activity, it WILL affect all kinds of health aspects from hypertension to insomnia.

Stress and Disease

- **Eighty percent of visits to primary care physicians are due to chronic stress.**
- **The relationship between stress and disease is no longer thought to be an Association, but a direct causal link.**

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This slide cites commonly known facts about stress and disease to share with your participants.

Stress and Disease

Landmark Research Findings

Cohen, S. et.al. *Psychological Stress and Susceptibility to the Common Cold*. New England Jr. of Med. 325:606-612, 1991.

Kiecolt-Glasser, J. et.al. *Stress, Personal Relationships and Immune Function: Health Implications*. Brain Behav. Immunology. 13:61-72. 1999.

Wittstein, L., *Neurohumoral Factors of Myocardial Stunning Due to Sudden Emotional Stress*. New Eng Jr. of Med. 352(6): 539-548, 2005.

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These are three of hundreds (if not thousands) of studies to reveal the link between stress and diseases, from the common cold to heart disease.

Stress and Disease

*“Ultimately the body becomes
the battlefield for the war games
of the mind.”*

—Brian Luke Seaward, Ph.D.

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This slide is self-explanatory as well. (*Remember to read quotes out loud.*)

The Stress Emotions: Anger & Fear

**Anger is the Fight Emotion
Fear is the Flight Emotion**

**Left unresolved, anger and
fear become control issues**

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This is where you make the link between emotional stress and physical stress (anger/ fight and fear/ flight).

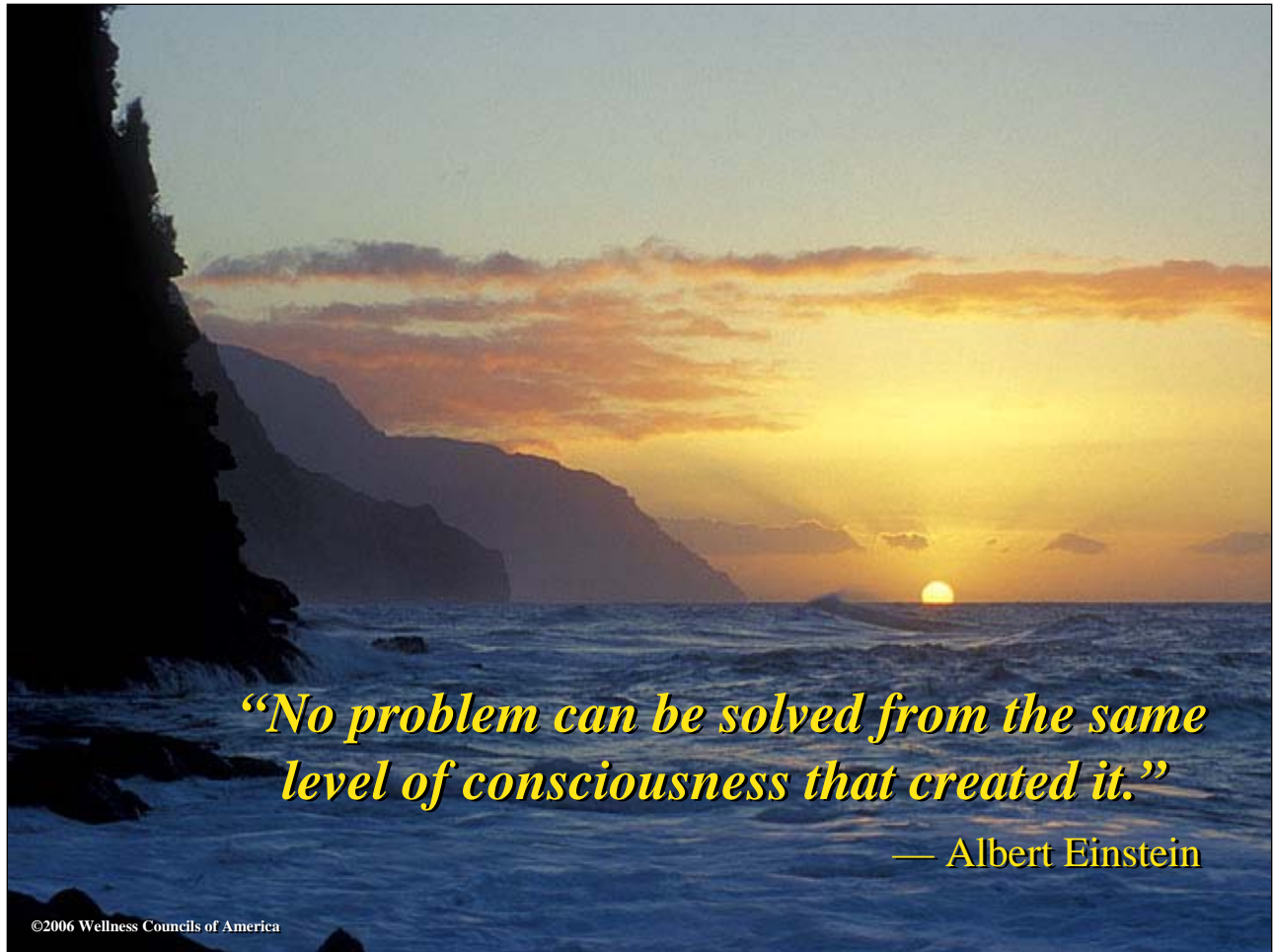
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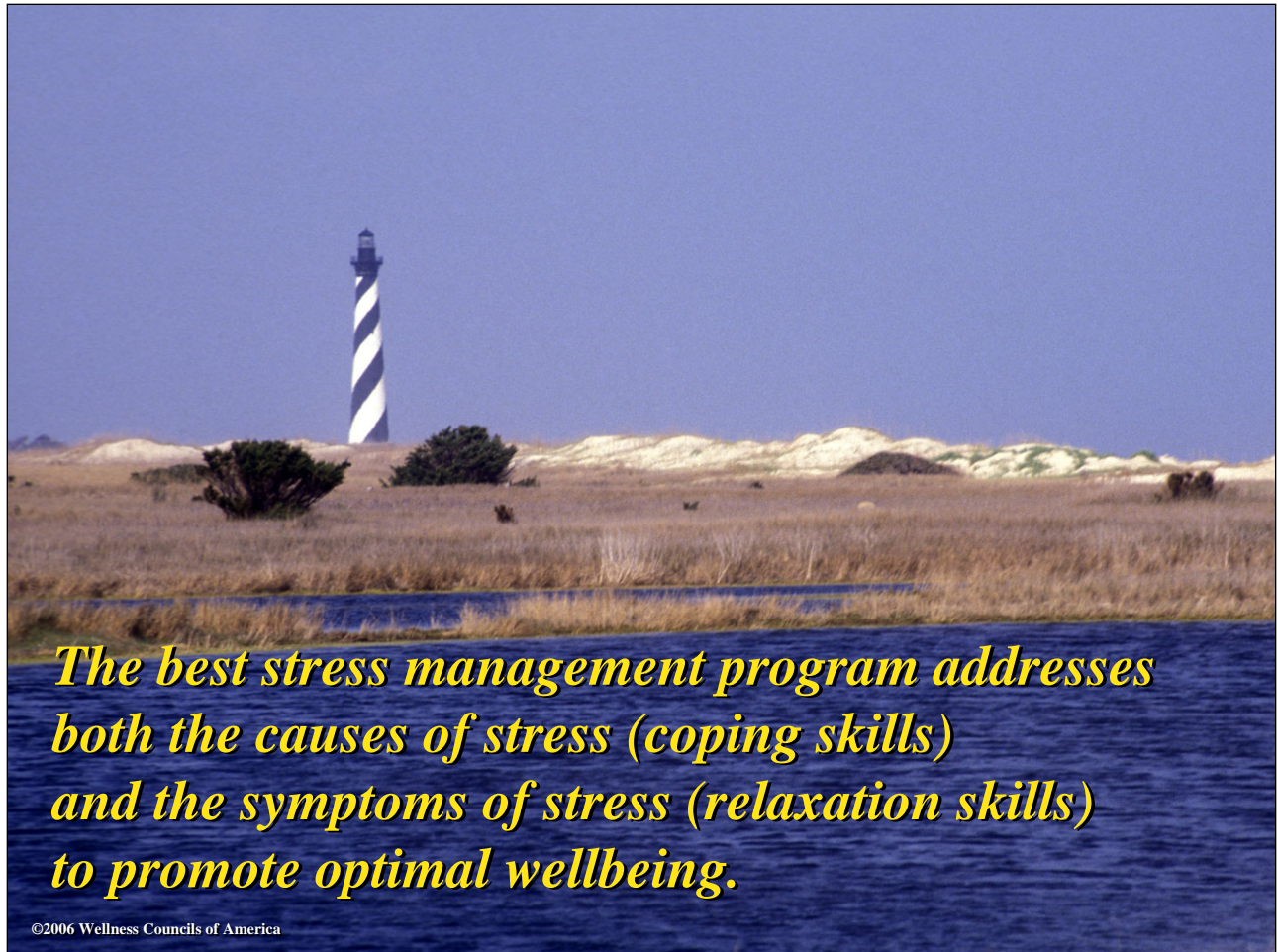
**Left unresolved, they may become
chronic health issues (e.g., Lupus,
Migraines, TMJ, Rheumatoid
Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, ect.)**

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This is where you make the obvious link between emotional stress and disease or illness. Just a reminder that western medicine is still slow to accept this fact, despite the plethora of research data to substantiate it.



This slide is self-explanatory as well. *(Remember to read quotes out loud.)*



The best stress management program addresses both the causes of stress (coping skills) and the symptoms of stress (relaxation skills) to promote optimal wellbeing.

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Here you are making a case for a solid approach to teaching stress management programming that involves both effective coping techniques and effective relaxation techniques. Most programs only focus on relaxation techniques.

Effective Coping Skills

The purpose of effective coping skills is to increase your awareness of the issue and work toward a peaceful resolution.

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This slide is self-explanatory.

Effective Coping Skills

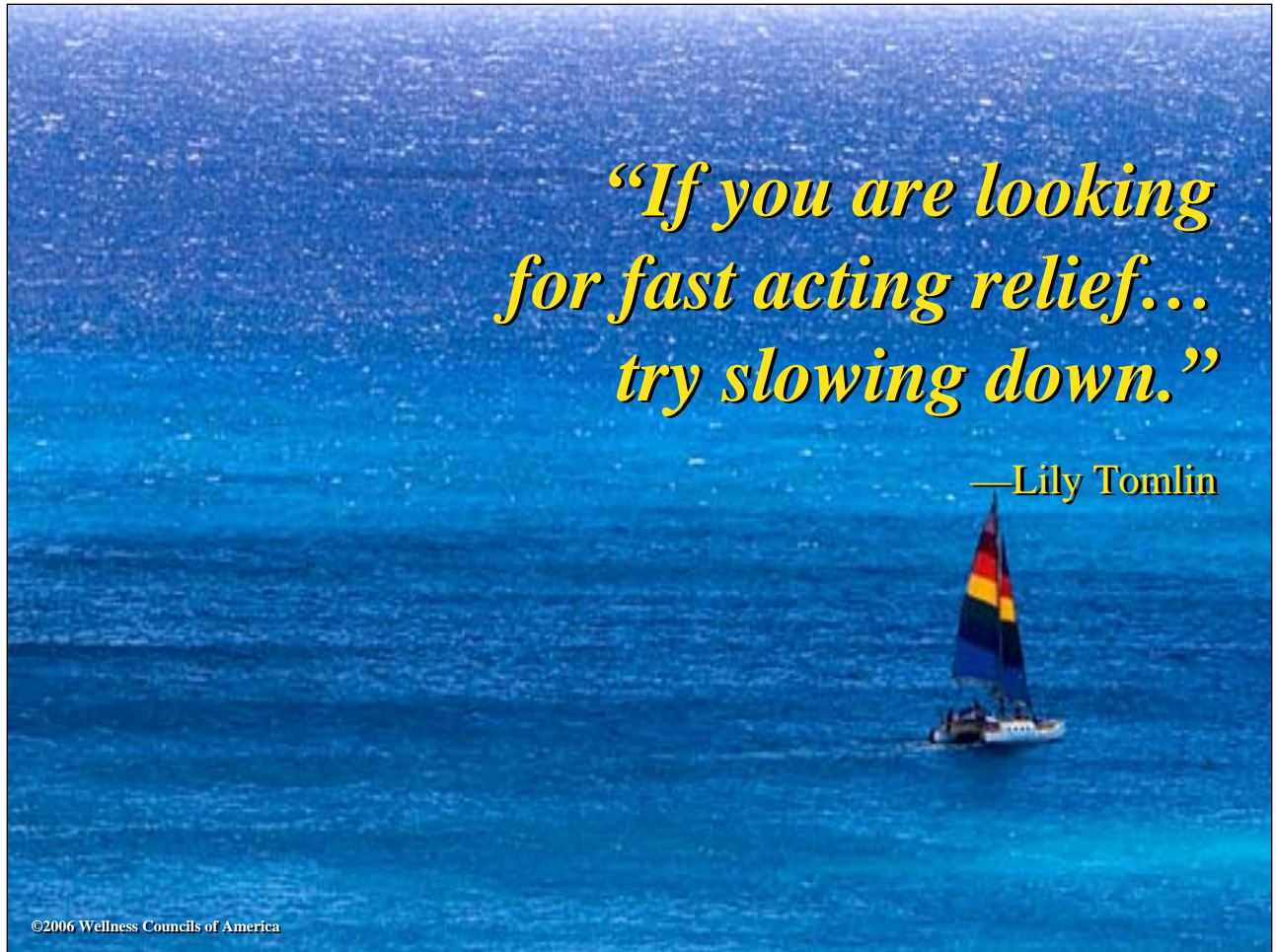
- Reframing
- Comic Relief
- Time Management
- Communication Skills
- Information Seeking
- Journaling
- Social Engineering
- Hobbies
- Social Support Groups

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This slide lists nine of the most common effective coping techniques. You don't have to go into a lot of detail about these. Simply mention that despite the differences, they all promote the same means: increased awareness and steps toward resolution.



This slide is self-explanatory.



This slide is self-explanatory. *(Remember to read quotes out loud.)*



It is really good to emphasize this point. Homeostasis is the goal for each and every relaxation technique. You may also wish to say that relaxation and sleep are NOT the same thing.



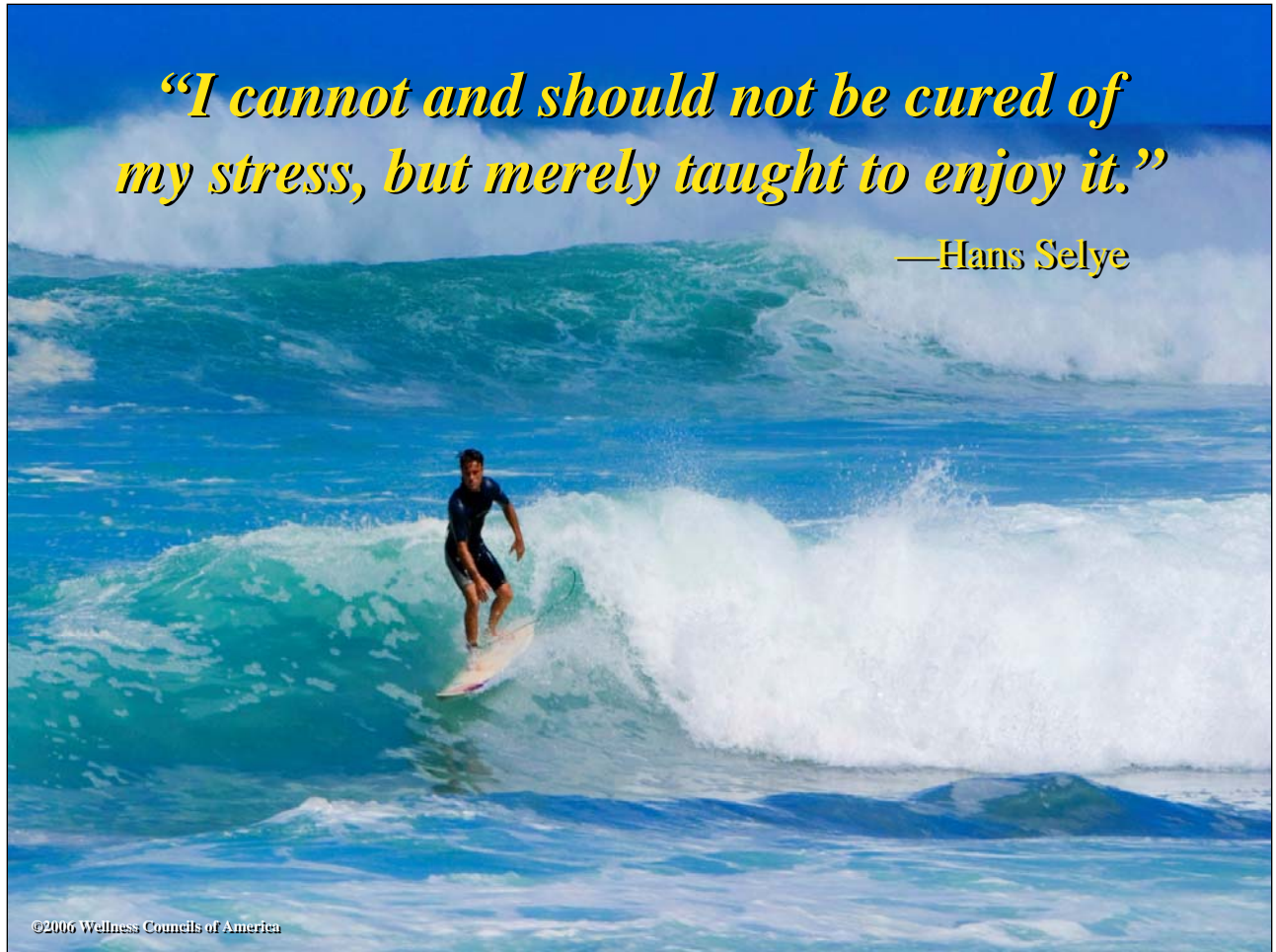
Effective Relaxation Techniques

- **Physical Exercise**
- **Hatha Yoga**
- **Tai Chi**
- **Meditation (Centering)**
- **Diaphragmatic Breathing**
- **Progressive Muscular Relaxation**
- **Guided Mental Imagery**
- **Music Therapy**

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This slide lists several types of relaxation techniques. Some points to make:

- Physical exercise helps flush the stress hormones out of your body.
- Hatha yoga is perhaps best described as muscle stretching with breath work.
- Tai Chi is a Chinese form of exercise that works with the universal life force of energy.
- Meditation is a means to clear the mind of the ego's mental chatter.
- Diaphragmatic breathing is belly or abdominal breathing.
- Progressive muscular relaxation is a systematic way to reduce muscle tension throughout the body (Muscle tension is THE number one symptom of stress).
- Guided mental imagery is the use of relaxing images to calm down.
- Music therapy is listening to calming music (instrumental music works best).



This slide is self-explanatory. *(Remember to read quotes out loud.)*

Some Final Thoughts

- **Stress (change) is, and most likely will be, part of the worksite environment. We must learn to adapt to change.**
- **You cannot fight or flee from most 21st Century stressors.**
- **Chronic stress is now linked to many illnesses.**
- **Unresolved anger and/or fear become control issues that only perpetuate stress.**
- **Effective Stress Management programs include both effective coping skills and relaxation techniques.**
- **To see balance in your life, consider striving for some good stress every now and then.**

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These final thoughts serve as the conclusion of your slide show. Read through each one slowly to reinforce the content you have presented.

Resources

Books:

- **Carlson, R., *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*. Hyperion Books. 1997.**
- **Luskin, F., Pelletier, K., *Stress Free for Good*. HarperSanFrancisco Books. 2005.**
- **Ruiz, D.M., *The Four Agreements*. Amber Allen Books. 1997.**
- **Seaward, B.L., *Achieving the Mind-Body-Spirit Connection*. Jones and Bartlett. 2005.**
- **Seaward B.L., *Quiet Mind, Fearless Heart*. John Wiley & Sons. 2005.**
- **Seaward, B.L., *Stressed is Desserts Spelled Backward*. Conari Press. 1999.**
- **Seaward, B.L., *The Art of Calm*. Health Communications, Inc. Deerfield Beach, FL, 1999.**
- **Tolle, E., *The Power of Now*. New World Library. 1999.**

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Resources

Websites:

Unused Vacation Time

<http://www.braunconsulting.com/bcg/newsletters/winter2004/winter20044.html>

American Work time

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_n3_v44/ai_11882284

Stress Facts

<http://www.timelessnow.com/factsaboutstress.html>

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