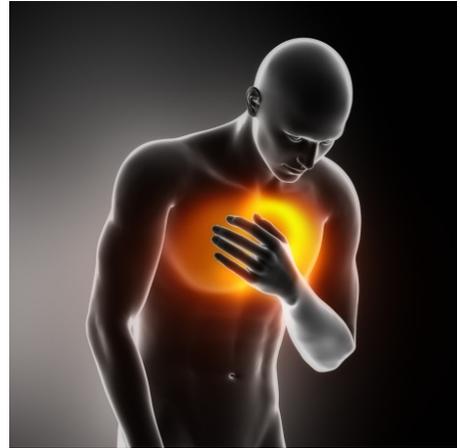


Transforming Type-A (the Heart Attack Personality)

Don Joseph Goewey

As you may know, the term Type-A is shorthand for the highly driven, win-at-all-costs individual, who often feels oppressed by time and impatient with people he or she perceives as slowing things down. The upside is that Type-A personalities can make a lot happen fast.

But there is an enormous downside. When researchers took a closer look they found this personality type was essentially driven by fear that often led to a chronic condition of extreme stress. If you've been reading my blog, you know that chronic stress is a very bad condition. It can kill you.



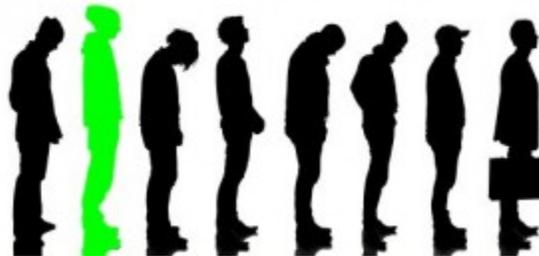
Type-A, as a definable personality type, comes out of the landmark research of cardiologist Meyer Friedman of the University of California, San Francisco. Friedman found that a Type-A personality has the highest risk for developing serious heart disease.

Dr. Friedman developed and tested a series of exercises that teach Type A's how to be more at peace in order to avoid an early grave. If you've been reading my blog you also know that developing your capacity to be at peace builds the neuro-circuitry that delivers the brain power for a healthier, more successful, more intrinsically rewarding life.

Neurologically, 'peace' represents neural networks wiring and firing together to sustain the proverbial calm under siege that enables you to see a problem fearlessly, analyze it intelligently, engage it creatively, and make the best decision. A dynamic attitude of peace builds a brain that can extinguish stress reactions and, at the same time, expand

the brain structure that can sustain peak performance and the creative intelligence that enables you to hit the bull's eye.

Friedman found that attaining peace was actually simpler than one might think. You don't have to renounce the world and check into a monastery; peace arises from changing the way you relate to the day-to-day world you're already in. And, you don't have to be Type-A to benefit from this approach. It not only improves your heart function; it strengthens your higher brain function.



Stand In the Longest Line

My favorite but most challenging task that Meyer Friedman prescribes is to stand in the longest line at a store. The challenge is to use the time to practice choosing to be at peace. As you stand in line, notice the resistance in you to doing this task. Become aware of the strong pattern of thinking that says you have to hurry up to get to the next thing you have to do. Become aware of the judgments your brain is making about how long the clerk is taking or judgments about how somebody is dressed or the junk you think they are buying. Just be aware of all the noise in your head and practice reminding yourself that you could see peace instead of it.

Here are other steps Dr. Meyer Friedman developed.

- Look out the window for thirty seconds and let your mind go. Watch the wind blow or the sun shine or the rain fall.
- Do one special thing for yourself today.
- Drive home in the slow lane.
- Smile more today.

- Listen to calming music instead of the news on the drive home.
- Practice listening without interrupting.
- Buy a small gift for a friend or family member.
- Call a good friend you haven't talked to in a while.
- Look for the best in someone you know.
- Devote today to seeing your strengths and positive qualities.
- Practice forgiving trivial errors.
- Use a measuring stick other than business to measure your accomplishments, such as your talents, creative abilities, human qualities, or close relationships.
- Quietly do good deeds and acts of kindness.
- Practice receiving compliments graciously.
- Accept that life is unfinished business.
- Take five minutes today to recall times when you were happy.
- Commit to stop judging yourself for your lack of perfection.
- Consider the notion that perfection is in the imperfections.
- When you feel conflict today, tell yourself, "I am not going to let this person or situation control how I feel."
- Today, feel more and think less. Become skillful at knowing how you feel by making *I feel* statements, such as *I feel anxious* or *I feel confident*.

Some of you might judge these simple practices as "touchy-feely." Make no mistake; the research definitively shows that these steps can generate the higher brain function to succeed and at the same time protect your cardio-vascular system from failing. Put it to the test yourself. Check off several that you are willing to practice and do one a day.