

# The Communications Doctor



**ALL STRESSED UP AND NOWHERE TO GO!**

**SUSANNE GADDIS, PHD, CSP, CEO, THE COMMUNICATIONS DOCTOR  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER \* TRAINER \* EXECUTIVE COACH \* CONSULTANT**

*The doctor's diagnosis is IN: Good communication is contagious!*



Susanne Gaddis, PhD, CSP, and CEO of The Communications Doctor recognizes there is an epidemic of unhealthy interactions in today's society. The good news is – she shares prescriptions – easy and engaging tips and techniques that help foster a climate for positive, diplomatic and motivational communications. As a communications professor, Certified Professional Speaker (CSP), author and member of the National Speaker's Association, Susanne Gaddis, PhD, has taught the art of successful communication since 1989. A recognized interpersonal communications expert, Susanne has appeared on nationally syndicated radio, TV and video programming and has authored articles appearing in: *The Journal of Training and Development, The Whole American Nurse, Shape Magazine, The Handbook of Public Relations, Corporate Meeting Planner, and on Entrepreneur.com*. Current clients, benefiting from Susanne's action-focused, solution-oriented tips, and techniques include NASA Johnson Space Center, The American Nurses Association, Oracle, SAS, Blue Cross & Blue Shield, and Bayer Corporation. For additional information on Dr. Gaddis or to subscribe to receive her FREE newsletter, call 919-933-3237, e-mail: [gaddis@communicationsdoctor.com](mailto:gaddis@communicationsdoctor.com) or visit: [www.CommunicationsDoctor.com](http://www.CommunicationsDoctor.com), Twitter: @TheCommDoctor Facebook: CommunicationsDoctor

**“Keepers”**



Jeepers, Creepers, Where'd you get those “Keepers”

A series of ten sets of horizontal lines for writing. Each set begins with a small oval icon containing a vertical line, resembling a pill or a bullet point.

# Interactive Stress Quiz For Instant Health Risk Results!

---

The following is an easy interactive stress test based on the research done by Holmes and Rahe. It is designed to assess possible health risks, based on the things that have happened in your life in the last year. Below are a variety of possible 'normal' life events. Simply add up the numbers on the right of each event that has occurred in your life in the last 12 months

Finally, a test you don't want a high score on!

According to their statistical prediction model, a score of 150 or less means a relatively low (about 30% ) probability of stress-related illness (including heart attack, cancer, stroke, etc.) . A score of 151 to 299 implies a 50% probability and a score of 300 or above implies an 80% probability of experiencing a health change - usually a negative change.

Death of a Spouse	100	_____
Divorce	73	_____
Marital Separation	65	_____
Detention in jail or institution	63	_____
Death of a close family member	63	_____
Major personal injury or illness	53	_____
Marriage	50	_____
Being fired at work	47	_____
Marital reconciliation	45	_____
Retirement	45	_____
Major change in health or behavior of a family member	44	_____
Pregnancy	40	_____
Sexual Difficulty	39	_____
Gaining a new family member through birth, adoption or remarriage	39	_____
Major business readjustments	38	_____
Major change in financial state	38	_____
Death of a close friend	37	_____
Change to a different line of work	36	_____
Major increase in fights with spouse	35	_____
Taking on a mortgage	31	_____
Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30	_____
Major change in responsibility at work	29	_____
Son or daughter leaving home	29	_____
In-Law troubles	29	_____
Outstanding personal achievement	28	_____
Spouse begins to cease work outside of home	26	_____
Go back to school	26	_____

# Interactive Stress Quiz For Instant Health Risk Results!

---

Major change in living condition (rebuilding, remodeling) 25	_____
Revision of personal habits 24	_____
Troubles with superior, boss 23	_____
Major change in working hours, conditions 20	_____
Change in residence 20	_____
Change to a new school 20	_____
Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation 19	_____
Major change in church activities 19	_____
Major change in social activities 18	_____
Purchasing a new car, or other big purchase 17	_____
Major change in sleeping habits 16	_____
Major change in number of family get-togethers 15	_____
Major change in eating habits 15	_____
Vacation 13	_____
Christmas or holiday observance 12	_____
Minor violations of the law 11	_____
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>	_____

**Below 150 - 35% chance of illness or accident within 2 years**

**Between 150 - 300 - 51% chance of illness or accident**

**Over 300 - 80% chance of illness or accident**

These predictions are not absolute. Health changes are the result of many different factors, including how significant those life events are to you, your personal capacity to cope with change, and the available support through family, work and friends. However, taking this quiz can give you some insight into potential risks to your health and well-being.

Holmes & Rahe (1967) Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 11:213-219.

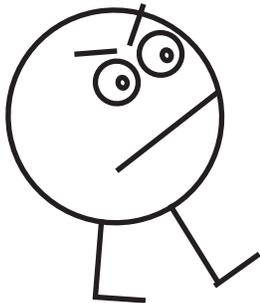


## Common Stress-Related Reactions

### PHYSICAL SIGNS

---

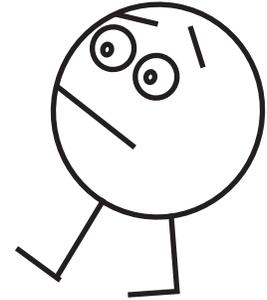
- Sleep Problems
- Frequent Illness
- Tight Neck and Shoulders
- Cold or Sweaty Hands
- Headaches
- High Blood Pressure
- Upset Stomach
- Fatigue
- Eye Strain
- Excessive Sweating
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Nervous Tics
- Rashes
- Teeth Grinding



### THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

---

- Lack of Focus
- Nervousness
- Irritability
- Impatience
- Anger
- Low Self-Esteem
- Apathy
- Depression
- Disillusion
- Helplessness
- Hostility
- Loss of Confidence
- Frustration
- Inadequacy
- Annoyance
- Anxiety



### BEHAVIORS

---

- Inability to concentrate
- Overeating
- Forgetfulness
- Procrastination
- Swearing
- Reckless Driving
- Oversleeping
- Drinking and Drug Use
- Negativism
- Increase in Smoking
- Belittling Others
- Arguing
- Avoiding Confrontation
- Frequent Accidents
- Hyperactivity
- Escape Activities

## Understanding the Importance of Optimum Stress Levels



The level of stress under which you operate is important: if you are not under enough stress, then you may find that your performance suffers because you are bored and unmotivated. If you are under too much stress, then you will find that your results suffer as stress related problems interfere with your performance.

It is important that you recognize that you are responsible for your own stress – very often it is a product of the way that you think. Learn to monitor your stress levels, and adjust them up if you need to be more alert, or down if you are feeling too tense. By managing your stress effectively you can significantly improve the quality of life.

There is a link between stress and performance. So how can you ensure that you perform at your best by optimizing your stress level?

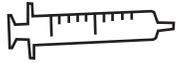
The approach to optimizing stress depends on the sort of stress being experienced:

- ① **Short-term stress** such as difficult meetings, sporting or other performances, or confrontational situations. Here, the emphasis is on short-term management of adrenaline to maximize performance.
  
- ① **Long-term stress**, where fatigue and high adrenaline levels over a long period can lead to degraded performances. Here optimizing stress concentrates on management of fatigue, health, energy and morale.

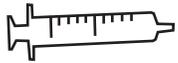


## Understanding the Importance of Optimum Stress Levels

### **The four major stages you may go through in response to sustained levels of excessive stress are:**



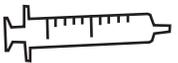
During the first phase you will face challenges with plenty of energy. Your response will probably be positive and effective.



After a period of time you may begin to feel seriously tired. You may start to feel anxious, frustrated and upset. The quality of your work may begin to suffer.



As high stress continues you may begin to feel a sense of failure and may be ill more frequently. You may also begin to distance yourself from your employer and from your social network.



If high levels of stress continue without relief you may ultimately experience depression, burnout, nervous breakdown, or some other form of serious stress related illness.

Different people may move between these stages with different speeds under different stress conditions.

At a simple level it may appear that a measure of “toughness” is how well you keep on going under extreme stress. This is simplistic. It is certainly possible to be self-indulgent and use stress as an excuse for not pushing yourself hard enough. It is, however, also far too easy to let yourself be pushed to a level where your work, and physical and mental health start to suffer.

The strongest and most flexible position is to actively manage your levels of stress and fatigue so that you are able to produce high-quality work over a long period, reliably.

High performance in your job may require continued hard work in the face of high levels of sustained stress. If this is the case, it is essential that you learn to pay attention to your feelings. This ensures that you know when to relax, take a short break, get more sleep, or implement stress management strategies. If you do not take feelings of tiredness, upset or discontent seriously, then you may face failure, burn-out or breakdown.

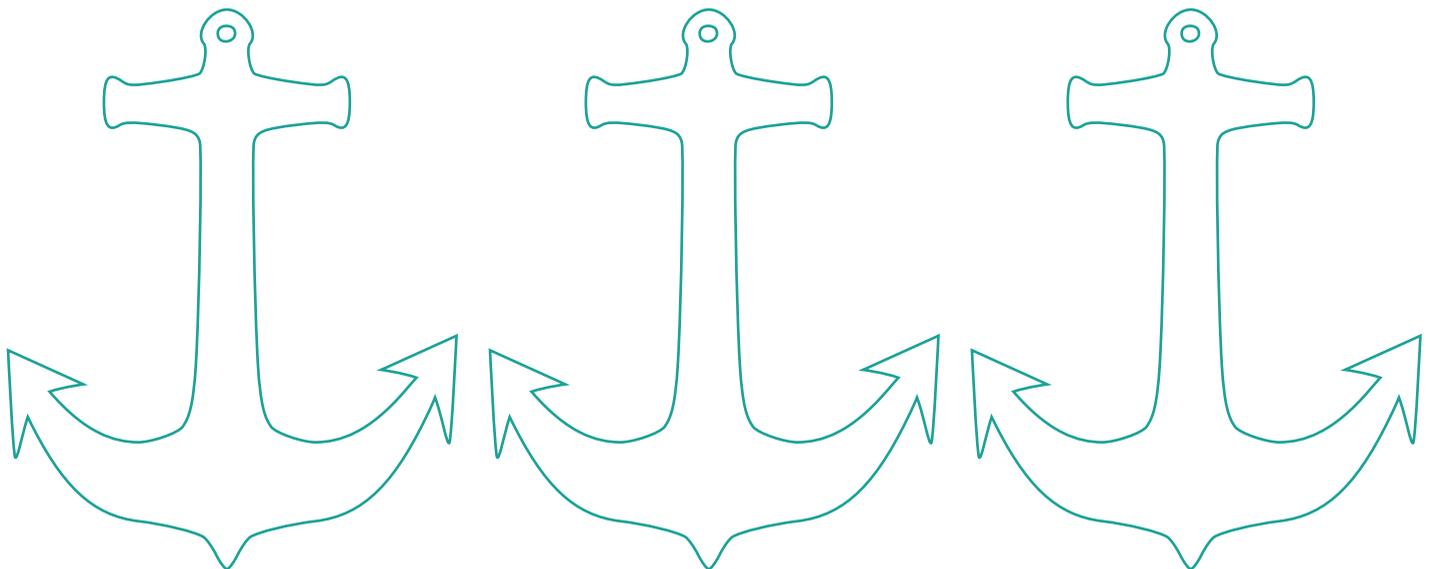
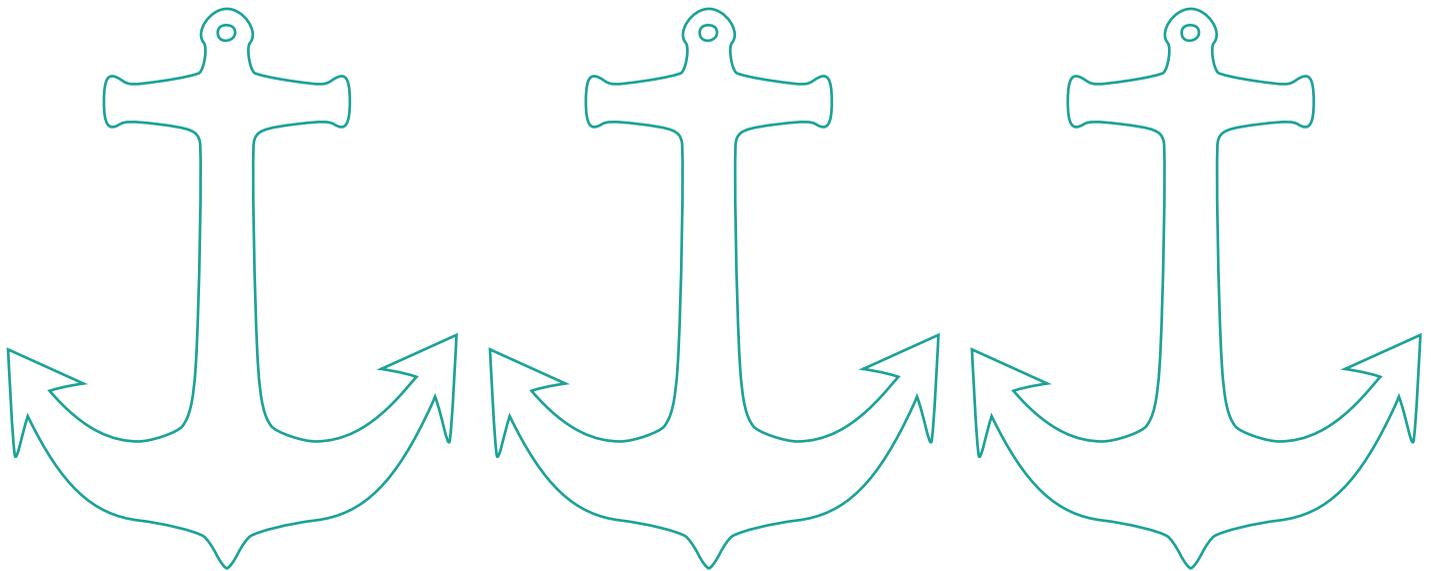
As well as paying attention to your own stress levels, it may be worth paying attention to the stress under which people around you operate.

# Let It Go

---

What do YOU need to let go of in your life? If you're really honest with yourself, there are thoughts, feelings or actions that may have worked well in the past, but aren't working well for you anymore. Think about people, relationships, commitments, habits and judgments that stress you out and just don't serve you anymore. Just let them go.

**Directions:** In the middle of each anchor below, write something that you are ready to “Let Go” of so that you can move on with your life.

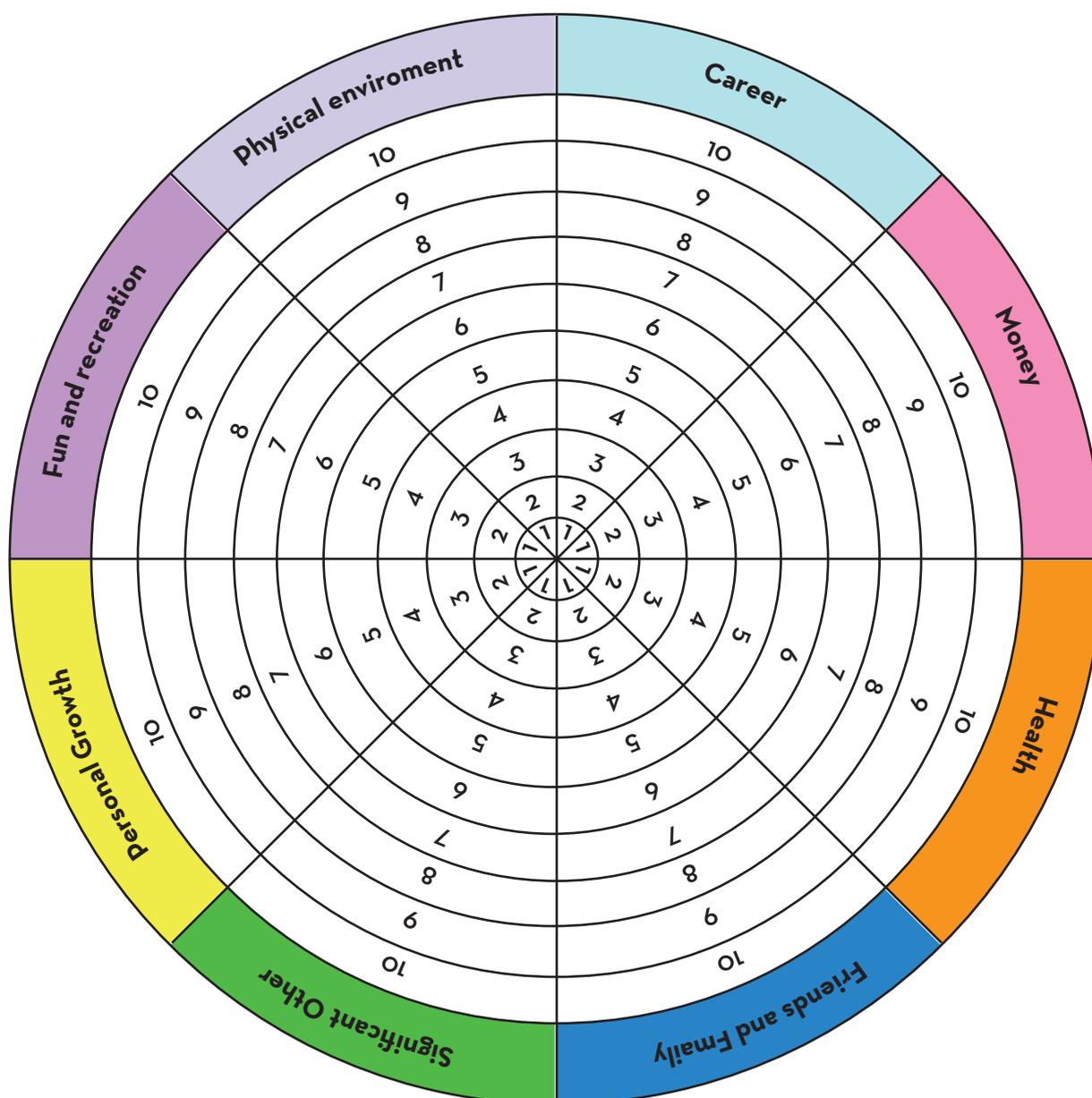


# The Wheel of Life

---

**Directions:** This wheel contains eight sections that, together, represent one way of describing a whole life. This exercise measures your level of satisfaction in these areas on the day you work through this exercise. Taking the center of the wheel as 0 and the outer edge as an ideal 10, rank your level of satisfaction with each life area by drawing a straight or curved line to create a new outer edge. The new perimeter represents your Wheel of Life. How bumpy would the ride be if this were a real wheel?

This tool allows you look look at areas where you want to improve your level of satisfaction and think about what you might do to accomplish that.



# Conversation Checker



Please list the 10 people who you talk with the most. Now think about on a scale of 1 to 10 (1=extremely negative and 10=extremely positive) what your conversations with them are like.

Name	Negative									Positive
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What have you learned from doing this activity?

Now that you know this information, what changes will you be making?