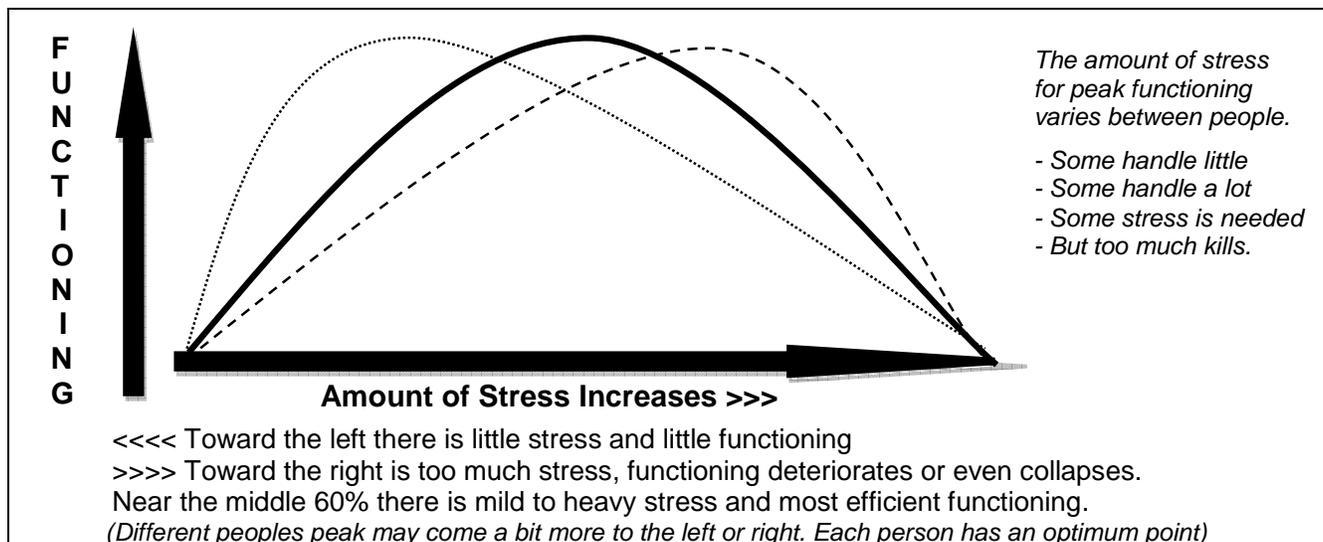


Short Bits on Stress in Missions

1. The majority of all types of writings about burnout relate it to stress.
One of the big problems for missionaries, even from fellow missionaries is the quick “spiritual formulas” or religious jargon that ignores God given advice on how we should live.
2. For missionaries, all types of stress are complicated by Cross-cultural stress, even YWAMers in their own nation who have many foreigners around all the time, home is really seldom in their control.
3. BASIC STRESS ILLUSTRATION: It is called the Stress Curve: Where do we live & function?



Some people by sheer will power have maintained an appearance of “normal” for such a long time that they should have already been deteriorating a long time ago. They do not know how to cut back and get to an optimum place. (top of their curve). People who have been over stressed for too long may no longer even know what their normal is. Their sudden crash, dropping to the bottom, is a “surprise” to all.

SOME COMMON STRESSES IN MISSIONS

- * One of the greatest stresses one can carry is **unresolved relationship** issues. This robs them of peace.
- * A **lack of humor** in their life. Everything is serious. This robs them of joy; one of Gods healing agents.
- * **Compromise**: Little types of compromise, like living a lower ethic because other missionaries are doing it, or accepting bribery/corruption, or living the convictions of others instead of their own convictions (like what their leader says). This is a constant torment like having a rock in their shoe, undealt with creates a wound. (I am not taking about lower life style, that is part of the sacrifice for the kingdom, but ethical compromise of ‘right & wrong’ choices.) This robs them of self-confidence & creates self-doubt, especially in the area of trusting God for guidance. It also robs them of emotional strength needed to face tough challenges.
- * **Being left out** of decision making that affect one’s own life leads to hopelessness. Without hope we die!

SOME EXPECTATIONS, & THEREFORE EXTRA STRESS

- 1- From the spouse
- 2- From the family
- 3- From the In-laws
- 4- From the church (they have a mythical idea of missionary perfection!)
- 5- From mission leaders (often creates even more expectations than the church, They may expect loyalty to the task to supersede all other aspects of life.)
- 6- From their mission team
- 7- From the visitors
- 8- From self (This is perhaps the deadliest as it is self-destructive, and may include trying to please the others)

Bible Studies on our responses to other people may help neutralize the impact of other’s expectations.

Illustration: Every sportsman knows that when they are exercising with a weight bar they are supposed to have a “spotter”. The spotter is another teammate, who for safety, stands alongside and watches lest the one with the load pushes too far, too much, or for too long. – *Who spots for you & who do you spot for?*