

# Help for the Stressed Teacher

TED QUINQUENNIAL  
EDUCATION CONVENTION

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# Learning Objectives

1. Understand the scope of stress in teaching.
2. Identify the principal sources of teaching stress.
3. Discuss the consequences of stress and effective ways to face it.
4. Demonstrate how relaxation routines can prepare for biblical meditation and mitigate the effects of stress.

# Are you stressed?

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How often is work stressful?

[Results](#)

[Cockpit](#)

# Teacher Stress and Health

Effects on Teachers, Students, and Schools



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This issue brief, created by the Pennsylvania State University with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is one of a series of briefs addressing the need for research, practice, and policy on social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL is defined as the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Learn more at [www.rwjf.org/socialemotionalllearning](http://www.rwjf.org/socialemotionalllearning).



## PennState University Study

### Four main sources of Teacher Stress

1. School Organization / System
2. Job Demands
3. Support & Autonomy
4. Personal Resources / Social-emotional competence

# A stressful occupation

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## How often is work stressful?

Always	23%	→ 61%
Often	38%	
Sometimes	30%	
Hardly ever	7%	
Never	1%	

Source: American Federation of Teachers – Educator Quality of Work Life Survey (2017), N=5000



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# 1. School Organization / System

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# School Organization / System—a source of stress

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- **State/Government**
- **Church Authority**
- **Principal**
- **Legal environment**

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## 2. Job Demands

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# Job demands—a source of stress

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## **A key predictor of teacher stress**

- **Pressure from parents**
- **Issues with students**
- **Overwork**
- **Low pay**

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# 3. Support/Autonomy in Decision-Making

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# Lack of Support/Autonomy in decision-making—a source of stress

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- **Teachers that are...**
    - **not listened to**
    - **not allowed to try their good ideas**
    - **not given sufficient autonomy**
- ...experience the highest levels of stress.**

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# 4. Personal resources / Social-emotional competence

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## Lack of Personal Resources & Social-emotional competence—a source of stress

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- Teaching skills
- Classroom management skills
- Social support
- Communication skills
- Empathy
- Stress-management

# Needed skills

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- Social support
- Prosocial behaviour, empathy
- **Thoughts**
- **Religious coping**

# The power of thought / EGW

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“Your imagination was not given you to be allowed to run riot and have its own way without any effort at restraint or discipline. If the thoughts are wrong the feelings will be wrong, and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. When you decide that as Christians you are not required to restrain your thoughts and feelings you are brought under the influence of evil angels and invite their presence and their control. If you yield to your impressions and allow your thoughts to run in a channel of suspicion, doubt, and repining you will be among the most unhappy of mortals, and your lives will prove a failure.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, v. 5, p. 310).

# The power of thought / EGW

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“We are to use every means that God has placed within our reach for the government and cultivation of our thoughts.” (EGW *In Heavenly Places*, p. 164).

# Bringing every thought into captivity...

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“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**”. (2 Corinthians 10: 4, 5).



# Jacobsen's Progressive Relaxation and Biblical Meditation

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- Setting, environment
- Mental disposition
- Times
- Posture

# Jacobsen's Progressive Relaxation and Biblical Meditation

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## Steps

- Hands
- Arms
- Shoulders
- Neck
- Face
- Mouth
- Tummy
- Buttocks
- Legs
- Feet

# Jacobsen's Progressive Relaxation and Biblical Meditation

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At Capernaum Jesus dwelt in the intervals of His journeys to and fro, and it came to be known as "His own city." It was on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and near the borders of the beautiful plain of Gennesaret, if not actually upon it.

The deep depression of the lake gives to the plain that skirts its shores the genial climate of the south. Here in the days of Christ flourished the palm tree and the olive, here were orchards and vineyards, green fields, and brightly blooming flowers in rich luxuriance, all watered by living streams bursting from the cliffs. The shores of the lake, and the hills that at a little distance encircle it, were dotted with towns and villages. The lake was covered with fishing boats. Everywhere was the stir of busy, active life.../...

# Jacobsen's Progressive Relaxation and Biblical Meditation

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Jesus in the synagogue spoke of the kingdom He had come to establish, and of His mission to set free the captives of Satan. He was interrupted by a shriek of terror. A madman rushed forward from among the people, crying out, "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God."

All was now confusion and alarm. The attention of the people was diverted from Christ, and His words were unheeded. But Jesus rebuked the demon, saying, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not."

# Jacobsen's Progressive Relaxation and Biblical Meditation

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While the congregation in the synagogue were still spellbound with awe, Jesus withdrew to the home of Peter for a little rest. But here also a shadow had fallen. The mother of Peter's wife lay sick, stricken with a "great fever." Jesus rebuked the disease, and the sufferer arose, and ministered to the wants of the Master and His disciples.

Tidings of the work of Christ spread rapidly throughout Capernaum. For fear of the rabbis, the people dared not come for healing upon the Sabbath; but no sooner had the sun disappeared below the horizon than there was a great commotion.

# Jacobsen's Progressive Relaxation and Biblical Meditation

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From the homes, the shops, the market places, the inhabitants of the city pressed toward the humble dwelling that sheltered Jesus. The sick were brought upon couches, they came leaning upon staffs, or, supported by friends, they tottered feebly into the Saviour's presence.

Not until the last sufferer had been relieved did Jesus cease His work. It was far into the night when the multitude departed, and silence settled down upon the home of Simon. The long, exciting day was past, and Jesus sought rest. But while the city was still wrapped in slumber, the Saviour, "rising up a great while before day, . . . went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

# Jacobsen's Progressive Relaxation and Biblical Meditation

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## Prayer

Jesus is near people in the cities, towns, villages, at work and at time of leisure. He is always willing to help me and to attend my needs.

Like that demon-possessed man, I also have my burdens, fights, and troubles. I am also prey of Satan and his demons.

Like Peter's mother in law, I also have health problems or worries that I may be affected by a serious disease. Lord, give me faith to believe that you can intervene and you will intervene if that is the best. Help me remain open to your influence and help me get rid of disease or fear of disease.

Like all inhabitants in old Capernaum, you can heal us as a people. You healed the entire town and you can also heal your people here. Father, bless this person and this group!

# Conclusion

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”  
(Philippians 4: 6, 7).