

# RELAXED RESPONSE TECHNIQUE (RRT)

*At the first signs of a stressful situation, there are steps you can take to be proactive that will counteract the negative effect stress has on your physiology. The following is a game plan you can use time and time again to keep calm and focused. If you use it often, it will become habitual and automatic, keeping you relaxed in a variety of situations.*

## **1. Continue breathing.**

We are not always aware that we hold our breath when we encounter stress, so at the very beginning of a stressful situation, be certain that you *continue* breathing without interruption. Breathe smoothly, deeply and evenly at the *very first trigger*. Breathe deep from the diaphragm, if you can, making sure to exhale completely.

## **2. Smile and throw your shoulders back.**

A smile increases blood flow to the brain and transmits nerve impulses from the facial muscles to the limbic system, a key emotional center of the brain. Smiling changes your emotional state favorably, by stimulating the release of certain neuro-transmitters. Sit up, or stand up straight, as you smile, balancing your posture by lifting up your head and chin. Relax your jaw and shoulders. Pretend that your spine has a thread running through it and out the top of your head and that someone is gently tugging on it to pull you up straight. Smile and let yourself feel happy and light, as your body relaxes.

## **3. Make a wave of relaxation spread over your body.**

Create a "wave of relaxation" through your body as if you're standing in the ocean. If the image of water is uncomfortable for you, make an image of a warm breeze blowing over you. Have the wave or breeze wash or blow away *all unnecessary tension*. Keep your mind and body calm. Feel centered and in control.

## **4. Take control of the situation.**

Take control of the situation by accepting it as it is. Avoid the paralysis of analysis. Don't start to fret with useless questions like, "Why is this happening to me?" Ask yourself, "What can I do right now that will make this situation better?" Quickly look for solutions instead of getting locked on the problem. Focus on what you can control, instead of what you can't. Choose to learn from the experience. Listen with an open mind, trying to resolve conflict, rather than create it. Apply your own personal golden rule or spiritual philosophy in place of anxiety or anger. Think clear honest thoughts and protect yourself without hurting other people.

RECORD BELOW FOUR SITUATIONS TO PRACTICE THE ABOVE RELAXED RESPONSE TECHNIQUE:

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2.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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3.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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4.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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