



How to Fit a Heart Attack into Your Busy Schedule!



40 Questions

About the stress in your life:

- ✚ What factors bring high levels of stress into your life?
- ✚ How well are you coping with that stress?
- ✚ Are your family relationships stable and supportive?
- ✚ Do you have some really good friends you can totally trust?
- ✚ Is your work challenging and satisfying?
- ✚ Are your finances in good shape?
- ✚ Do you have trouble forgiving those who hurt you deeply?
- ✚ Do you utilize effective relaxation techniques?

About your activities:

- ✚ How many hours a week do you spend at work?
- ✚ How many hours a week do you spend at a computer?
- ✚ How many hours a week do you spend watching television?
- ✚ Do you regularly get plenty of exercise?
- ✚ Do you get enough fresh air?
- ✚ Do you get enough quiet time each day?
- ✚ Do you get enough sleep?
- ✚ How many weeks of annual vacation do you take?

About your health and fitness:

- ✚ Are you in good physical condition?
- ✚ Is your weight close to the ideal level?
- ✚ Do you smoke?
- ✚ Do you have high blood pressure?
- ✚ Is there a family history of heart disease?
- ✚ Do you get an annual medical check-up?

- ✚ Is your cholesterol at a safe level?
- ✚ Does your diet include too much sugar, salt or fat?
- ✚ Do you eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables?
- ✚ Are you addicted to caffeine?
- ✚ Are you addicted to any other substance?
- ✚ Do you often consume more than three alcoholic drinks per day?

About your personal characteristics:

- ✚ Do you smile and laugh a lot?
- ✚ Are you generally positive and reasonably optimistic?
- ✚ Are you a worrier?
- ✚ Are you considered demanding and impatient?
- ✚ Are you regarded as a perfectionist?
- ✚ Do you easily become indignant or angry?
- ✚ Do you display or suppress your emotions?

About your personal philosophy:

- ✚ Is your life directed by clearly defined principles?
- ✚ Are your personal objectives clearly defined?
- ✚ Are your personal objectives attainable?
- ✚ Do you have a strong faith, one that has a rational basis?
- ✚ Twenty years from now, how do you expect to view your current roles . . . assuming you are still around?

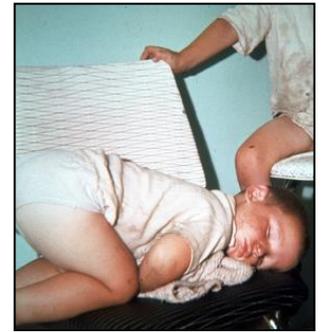
Bonus question:

You already know one key lifestyle change you will make after your own myocardial infarction. Do you really intend to wait?



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Management By Drift



Management By Drift is a particularly popular approach to many aspects of life. Periodically, when a crisis arises, this is displaced by **Management By Panic**.

This applies in the management of personal health and personal relationships as much as in the spheres of business, government and other collective activities. Once we conclude our current methods are good enough, we can easily become smugly self-satisfied and start to drift. A simple experiment illustrates that drift only ever leads in one direction. Try it yourself:

- ✚ Locate a creek.
- ✚ Gather a statistically significant number of sticks.
- ✚ Throw the sticks, one at a time, into the middle of the creek.
- ✚ Make careful note as to the direction in which the water is flowing. The way it is heading is called "down the creek." The other way is "up the creek."

(Incidentally, this experiment will not work when the water is frozen. I tried that.)

The critical question is: **Which way do the sticks drift?**

Have you ever seen a stick drifting purposefully upstream? Probably not. That is the reason a mismanaged organization can aptly be described as heading "down the creek."

Personal Implications

Drifting along in our personal lives inevitably propels us in that same direction. If we drift through life in an undisciplined, unfocused fashion, or if we operate in a driven, unbalanced manner, we should not be surprised when the outcome proves unpleasant.

Many critical factors affecting our health and wellness remain within our ability to control.

In any aspect of life, the only reason we perform no better than we actually do is that we do not fully intend to perform any better. If we decide to improve, we could do so. This applies equally to lifestyle issues as to any other activity.

A Snappy Acronym

Fortunately there is an alternative to the ever-popular Management By Drift (MBD):

**MBFOWYAAWYWTBAHTG
FWYATWYWTBTGFI!**

Most acronyms come equipped with a mere handful of letters. This one has 31, plus an exclamation mark. Indisputably this gem is in a league of its own. Once you have memorized this snappy acronym, its full form will come readily to mind:

**Management By Figuring Out
Where You Are And
Where You Want To Be And
How To Get From Where You Are
To Where You Want To Be
Then Go For It!**

This is a complicated four-step process:

- 1. Figure out where you are.** Assess your current situation.
- 2. Figure out where you want to be.** Clarify your objectives.
- 3. Figure out how to get from where you are to where you want to be.** Decide what you need to do.
- 4. Go for it!**

And in that process, I wish you well.



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A Clear Vision

In a message to the employees of a major western Canadian department store chain, the company President once wrote:

"Your company has made great strides and, so long as we never forsake our basic principles, we will continue to do so . . . friendliness, for instance; a sincere and genuine effort to be of service to our customers and to the community in which we live; cheerfulness; a resolution to see that all who shop in our stores are given the fullest possible value for their money; good neighbourly feelings towards one another. These basic principles are a vital part of this company."

For many subsequent years, this company was tremendously successful. Eventually, its sales per capita, in its trading area, were higher than any other department store chain in North America.

Clear Vision

As long as the corporate purpose was clear and the company's principles were sound, the employees took pride in what they were doing, so they performed effectively, the customers were satisfied, and the company was successful. This sequence warrants repetition, because it is relevant to every organization, operating in any sphere:

- + Clear purpose
- + Sound principles
- + Employee pride
- + Effective performance
- + Satisfied customers
- + Success

Blurred Vision

When the vision became blurred, when basic principles were abandoned, employees no longer took pride in what they were doing, so they became ineffective, customers were dissatisfied, and the company failed. After being in business for 100 years, this retailer went broke. The process:

- + Blurred vision
- + Principles abandoned
- + Lack of pride
- + Ineffective performance
- + Dissatisfied customers
- + Failure

The critical mistakes were not made during the company's final years. The seeds of failure were sown during the decades of success.

It is always that way. Complacency is a killer, in business, in life. At the moment, the situation appears to be working well. So we smugly let things drift. Same story in countless other organizations throughout the world. Thoughtless neglect of basic principles is always the cause of death.

Personal Principles

Does your life, in all its aspects, reveal a clearly defined sense of purpose? Are your personal principles soundly based and scrupulously followed? Do you have a clear vision for your own life?

Our vision, our values and our principles have a powerful impact on our general health and wellbeing. They are major influences in determining the quality of our life.