

DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE

**Change Your Stress, Change Your Life**

*A Series: Managing the Stress of Modern Living*

People invest a lot of money, time and energy in making physical changes for the purpose of seeing themselves in a different light. Whether change is attempted by upgrading the wardrobe, going from glasses to contact lenses or sporting a new hairstyle or color, it's a universal human phenomenon to want to feel differently about ourselves by tinkering with how we look or influencing the way we're perceived by others.



at work, at home, in relationships, during the daily commute - and in the midst of family gatherings.

Just as businesses and restaurants sometimes influence their settings by establishing a Dress Code, you can favorably influence the quality of your life by developing and living within a Stress Code. Your Stress Code isn't about what you wear or being overly concerned about how you're perceived by others, it's an agreement with yourself to practice self care by doing things differently - on purpose - whenever challenging circumstances or opportunities arise.

A personal Stress Code helps you actively embrace change rather than waiting for circumstances (or somebody else) to become different.

As the Indian spiritual leader Gandhi is famous for suggesting, make good use of your ability to "be the changes you wish to see in the world." Be willing.

A Stress Code is a holiday gift for the self. By defining and living within your Stress Code you can increase your resilience to the challenges, frustrations and opportunities you encounter from day to day. Change your responses to stress and you can experience yourself - and your circumstances - in a different light.

*For a primer on change, please read the articles in the EAP Fall 2005 Newsletter, available online in the Newsletter Archive at [www.FirstChoiceEap.com](http://www.FirstChoiceEap.com).*

For more information on this topic, for ideas about what to include in your personal or family Stress Code, or to request a referral for a supportive counseling assessment with an EAP provider, contact Team EAP at First Choice Health at 800.777.4114 or online at [www.FirstChoiceEap.com](http://www.FirstChoiceEap.com).

WELCOME NEW GROUPS

Aluminum Chambered Boats	Hayes Cabinets	Steven Silverstein, MD
American Freedom Construction	Integrated Medical Examiners	Seattle Web Group
Anderson Properties	Inspa	Scott's Tool
Ashby Homes	King County Director's Association	Snoqualmie Valley Hospital
Bald Hills Fire District #17	Lott Alliance	Tacoma Art Museum
Bayview Retirement Community	Master Electric, Inc.	Tacoma Radiology Associates
BJ's Off-Road	Medical Imaging Northwest	The Tacoma School
City of Lacey	Orion Industries	Thurston County
City of Olympia	Private Equity Group, Ltd.	Thurston Regional Planning Council
City of Tumwater	Puget Sound ESD	Washington Athletic Club
Cornerstone Financial Strategies	Rainier Fire District #4	Wildside Salmon
Foss Maritime	Sachi Furniture	Yelm Fire District #2
Go To Market Strategies	Small Vineyards	

QUALITY, CONVENIENCE, & RELIABILITY

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. If specific health or medical advice or assistance is desired, the services of a licensed healthcare professional should be sought. The information in the First Choice Health EAP Quarterly Newsletter is not meant to replace the advice or expertise of your physician or healthcare provider. If you are experiencing health problems or contemplating lifestyle changes such as diet or exercise, consult your healthcare provider ahead of time to ensure your well being.

The EAP Quarterly Newsletter is published by First Choice Health Employee Assistance Program

FCH Web Team, Web Development  
<http://www.FirstChoiceEap.com>  
Sam Tsohonis, Desktop Publisher



Bringing Balance to  
Work, Home, and Life

[www.FirstChoiceEap.com](http://www.FirstChoiceEap.com) 1-800-777-4114 [info@FirstChoiceEap.com](mailto:info@FirstChoiceEap.com)

**"Life is change. Growth is optional.  
Choose wisely."**

- Unattributed

## Book of the Month Club – *Fierce Conversations*

Each Friday in December of 2006 the EAP will give away 2 complementary copies of Susan Scott's influential book on communicating effectively in all areas of your life, *Fierce Conversations*.

Whether your goal is to build a legacy of trust between yourself and a client, co-worker or supervisor, to become effective with your child or a family member, or to sustain connectedness with a spouse or partner, the author points out what's easily and frequently overlooked: in every interaction with another person, the conversation isn't about the relationship, the conversation IS the relationship.

The author is a highly successful international consultant who believes that the purposefulness, habits, consistency, intentional care and feeding you invest in any and every interaction between yourself and another person – regardless of the

setting (work, home, community) – establish the quality of that relationship, and that the quality of a relationship substantially influences positive or negative outcomes.



Being intentional about your interaction with others – “one conversation at a time” - is a very powerful way of increasing rapport and effectiveness, maintaining trust and understanding, and minimizing the corrosive effects of stress that can impact and undermine any relationship.

To enter the book drawing, contact

the EAP by email or by phone. Provide your name, the name of the company through which you have EAP services, and a phone number or valid email address at which you can be contacted (and where a message can be left) if your name is drawn. Your name and contact information will not be shared and you will be contacted only if your name is drawn.

The first drawing will take place on December 1st, 2006 and there will be a drawing every Friday during the month.

***This promotion in no way implies endorsement of the book's contents (nor of the author or the publisher) by First Choice Health or First Choice Health EAP. The EAP makes this book available as a free-standing educational tool and resource for interested participants.***

[www.FirstChoiceEap.com](http://www.FirstChoiceEap.com) 1-800-777-4114 [info@FirstChoiceEap.com](mailto:info@FirstChoiceEap.com)

## Convenient Online Work/Life Resources:

A robust self-serve menu of learning tools, information and state-of-the-art resources on topics and stages from infancy to adolescence to adulthood to senior living – and everything that happens in between – is available 24/7 at

[www.FirstChoiceEap.com](http://www.FirstChoiceEap.com)

At the Work/Life Resources button enter

Username: **firstchoice**  
and

Password: **health2005**



## Dollars and \$ense!

### Getting Energy-Ready for Cold Weather

Energy prices are on the rise and heating costs consume an increasingly larger portion of a household's energy budget. It's important to ensure that your money isn't being unnecessarily wasted.

#### Check for Leaks

Weather-stripping and caulking are simple, effective ways to cut down on energy waste. Improperly sealed homes waste 10 to 15 percent of the homeowner's heating dollars. Check around doors and windows for leaks and drafts. Add weather-stripping and caulk any holes you see that allow heat to escape.

Make sure windows and doors seal properly.

Every duct, wire or pipe that penetrates the wall or ceiling or floor can be an energy waster. Plumbing vents are especially problematic because they begin below the floor and go all the way through the roof. Seal them with

caulking or weather-stripping.

Electric wall plugs and switches can allow cold air in. Purchase easy-to-install, pre-cut foam gaskets that fit behind the switch plate and prevent leaks.

The damper needs to be open if a fire is burning, but if the damper is open when the fireplace is not in use your chimney functions as a vacuum that draws warm air out of the room and creates a draft. Close it!

#### Check Your Heating System

Get a routine maintenance and inspection of your heating system each year to ensure good working order. Replace your heater's air filter monthly. The heating system will last longer and use less energy. Most filters are easy to replace and available at your local home improvement store. If you live in an older home consult with a professional to determine whether or not existing attic and wall

insulation is as efficient as possible.

A set-back thermostat allows you to automatically turn down the heat when you're away at work or when you're sleeping at night, and then boost the temperature to a comfortable level when you need it. It takes less energy to warm a cool home than to maintain a warm temperature all day long. Properly using your set-back thermostat could cut your heating costs from 20 to 75 percent.

#### Change a Light Bulb

Lighting our homes can represent 20 percent of home electricity bills and is one of the easiest places to start saving energy. If everybody changed one bulb in their home to an ENERGY STAR® bulb, together we'd save enough energy to light 7 million homes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to that of 1 million cars.

*Adapted from information available through the California Energy Commission*

## Kids, Families and the Need to Read

It's important to create an environment that promotes the love of reading. Not only is it necessary for success in today's world, reading sparks creativity and imagination, it relieves stress, and reading is a healthy habit for a lifetime of learning.

- The most important thing a parent can do to teach a child to love reading is set the example (see Book of the Month Club in this newsletter).
- Perhaps as part of your family Stress Code (see Change Your Stress, Change Your Life in this newsletter), set aside a time each day when everyone in the family reads. Perhaps it's for 30 minutes after dinner or just prior to bedtime every evening. Be consistent.
- Read to your children. Even after they're old enough to read themselves, it's always a treat to have a parent read to them.
- Never punish your child by taking away books or limiting reading activity.
- Share books you loved growing up.
- Create a tradition of reading one chapter from a book each night before bed. Children can't wait to find out what will happen next. This motivates your child.
- Start a family book club. Everyone reads the same book and pick a night to discuss it. Get books from the library to avoid buying several copies of the same book. Or take turns reading from the same book.
- Let your child choose his or her own books. Don't limit the choice of reading materials (within reason). If he or she wants to read educational books, comic books or music magazines, let it be. The goal is to spark your child's love of reading.
- If your child only shows interest in music magazines, for example, bring home books such as a biography on one of his or her favorite musicians, books on musical history, books that teach how to play music, etc.

*Adapted and used with permission from <http://www.greatestkidsbooks.com>*