

BEAT STRESS BEAT POKER

Getting Rid of the Negative Thoughts Clouding Your Mind Will Free Your Game

ALL KINDS OF STRESS – like doubts, fears, anxiety and depression and the way you deal with them – determines over the long run if you are a losing or winning poker player. Only a clear mind without distractions can alert you to the subtle hidden traps and the vast opportunities that come rushing at you in a continuing stream through an entire poker tournament.

Without that information and an ability to act decisively on it, you are walking blindly into a battlefield called tournament no-limit hold'em poker. To improve your game you must see more opportunities and instinctively sense hidden minefields that the rest of the opposition can't even dream of.

You must improve and take back full control of the most critical part of your game, namely your mind. Your mind needs military-type intelligence and must be clear of distractions to take advantage of it.

How would you feel if every time you sat down at the poker table you had used new tools and strategies to eliminate doubts and fears, anxiety and depression, anger and resentment, insecurity and many other daily stressful feelings that are particularly difficult at the poker table when the pressure is on and the stakes are high? Without all of those tenacious, negative, distracting and stressful feelings holding you back, what could you accomplish? Think about it!

Editor's Note: This is part 1 of a series by Charlie Shoten on beating stress at the poker table. At age 65, Charlie Shoten was a losing poker player – stress controlled, ran and ruined his life. At 66, he ranked in the Top 10 on the World Poker Tour. Today, his life-time poker resumé includes 70 final tables, 16 wins and 14 seconds.

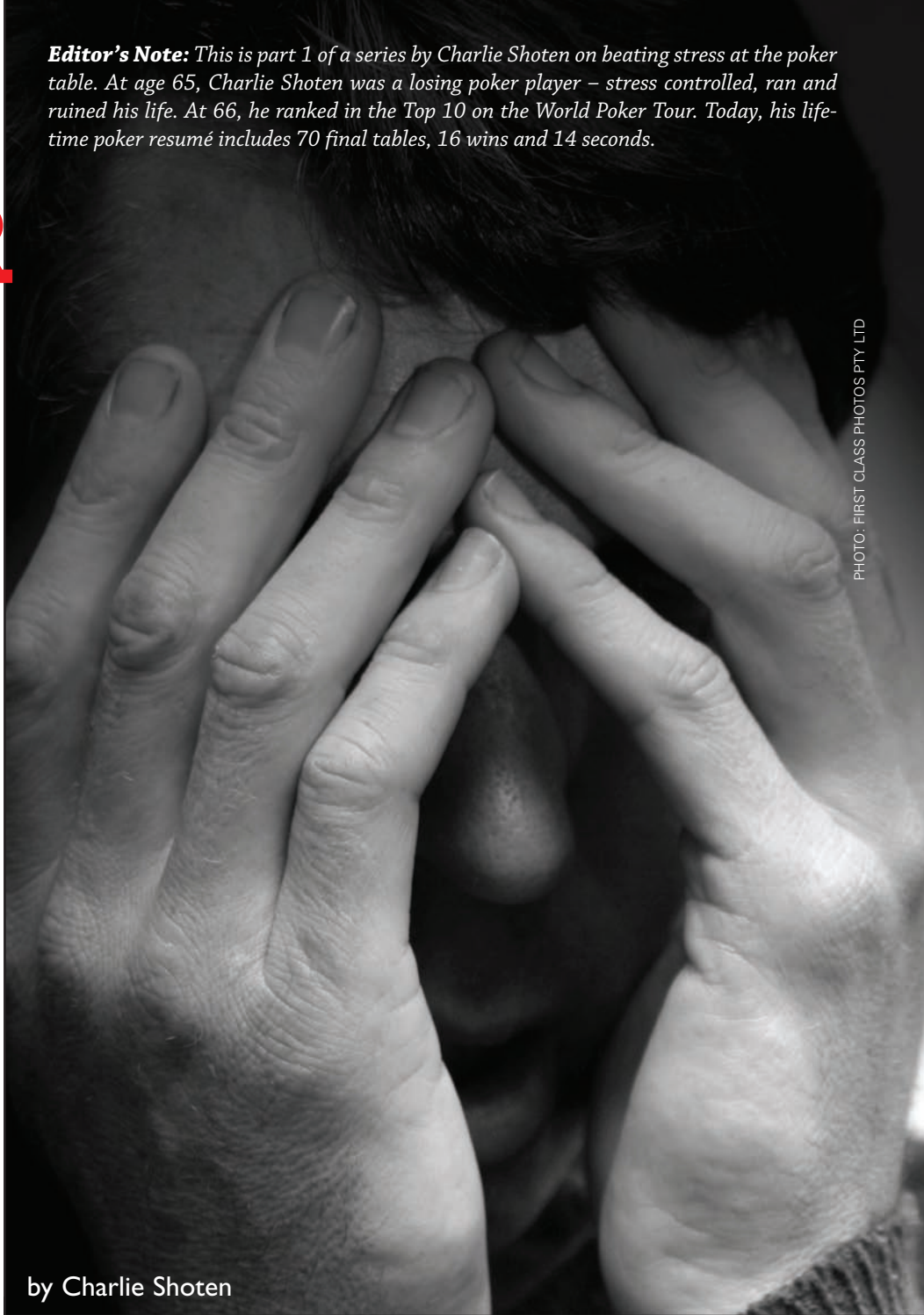


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by Charlie Shoten

What Has Stress Got To Do With Poker? Everything!

STRESS CLOUDS THE MIND

Dr. Russell Blaylock, a prominent neurologist, brain surgeon and author of the *Blaylock Wellness Report*, which is read by millions on the Internet, wrote, “Trying to stop stress is like trying to stop the sun from coming up – it’s impossible.”

But I have learned skills, tools and strategies to teach exactly that – the impossible – how to stop stress cold. I am sharing them with you in **Poker Pro** magazine.

Blaylock also says that stress causes vital areas in the brain to shrink and causes crucial brain connections to die. Stress is a killer. Billions of minds polluted with anger and fear manifested every war on our planet. Big wars and small wars, like brother not ever talking to brother ever again, because of a little resentment (stress).

Have you always suffered from stress and just put up with it as best you could with a pill or hours of TV because you assumed, as Blaylock says, that making stress go away forever is impossible? When you realize what is at stake, not only at the poker table but in every other area of your life, being a passive victim of stressful feelings will never again be palatable. If you don’t do everything you can to avoid the stressful situations that imprison you, you will not only let many of life’s fun opportunities pass you by, but you will harbor the cause of almost every mental and physical disease you have ever had or ever will have, including cancer and heart disease.

Anger and fear will never give you any edge in poker. They cloud your poker thinking and playing, as well as every area of your life where making the best decision is critical. When you sit down in a poker tournament, you need the courage to bluff, go all-in for your entire stack, make a tough call and act on your instincts (believe in yourself). If you are a victim of stress caused by anger and fears, you won’t have the courage you need to win.

AT AGE 65...

In 2002, at age 65, although I had played poker since I was a child, I was a break-even player at best. The very next

**You must improve
and take back
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your mind**

year, 2003, I ranked in the top ten players on the tour with 19 final tables, four wins and four seconds because I had mastered tools and strategies to identify the cause of my stress (untrue thoughts) and to discredit them to myself. I learned to identify and write down the thoughts that caused me stress, and then to question them.

My heart always knows the truth and rules true or false, and any false thought loses its power to cause me stressful feelings. Questioning your thinking is a skill that will bring your game up a level or two. Stressful feelings are caused by stressful thoughts you think about yourself, others and situations. Once you examine your stressful thoughts and beliefs, you will no longer be acting on faulty information.

This is how the truth can set you free. When you prove to yourself that stressful thoughts and beliefs are not true, and you realize you are acting on faulty information, your stress leaves you.

Without stress or with less stress, your poker game will be better than ever.

QUESTION YOUR PERCEPTIONS

Start to question your perceptions about yourself and others and the situations at the poker table. When you make decisions based on faulty information you are acting blindly. Also, your past experiences at the poker table are essential knowledge that only your instincts can act on. A clear mind free of stress will allow your instincts to take advantage of the present hand and the vast store of information you ever experienced from past hands. Faulty perceptions will misguide your instincts at the poker table and cause you stress. With a clear mind free of stress you will

be able to play poker in the zone more of the time than you ever thought possible.

The contributions to deal with stress from the billion-dollar pharmaceutical industry, the psychiatric profession and the tons of positive-thinking and self-help materials cannot compare to the relief from stress you receive when you master the skill of questioning your thinking. By using your mind to do “laser surgery” on yourself, your stressful thoughts will disappear, never to return to torture and kill you, and sabotage your poker game.

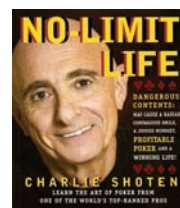
In future articles in **Poker Pro** I will share detailed information about the tools, strategies and skills you can learn to get rid of the stress that is ruining your poker game.

You need to question your thinking. Thoughts come from who knows where and they go to who knows where. When you have a thought, can you truly say you had anything to do with where it came from or what it said? It just occurred. But most of us automatically just believe it. It’s your thoughts you need to question, and thoughts are only “paper tigers” with no power except the power we give them.

Believing your stressful thoughts is arguing with reality, and it is an argument you can never win. Reality is always kinder than any of the weird scenarios your mind keeps coming up with. Questioning thoughts is now a skill you can master, like learning to play the piano.

I question my thinking 24/7, as fast as any new thought or belief appears, and you can too. We can learn to love reality, be happy and win at poker – even if we get a bad beat.

Don’t argue with the poker gods, either. Every river card is reality. ♠



Charlie Shoten is the author of No-Limit Life. Visit him at www.nolimitlife.com. Charlie does speaking engagements and “Stop Stress Cold” Workshops for Individuals and Corporations with his associate, Don Vacca. For information call 702-556-7006 or email charlieshoten@msn.com.

BEAT STRESS BEAT POKER

by Charlie Shoten

Technique for Freeing Your Mind On the Felt

How to Eliminate The Thoughts Getting in Your Way

LAST MONTH I discussed how stressful feelings distract you from maintaining focus and playing poker in the “zone” where your instincts alert you to hidden traps, allow you to see critical opportunities and give you access to the vast store of information available in your mind from past hands.

Freeing your mind from distracting stressful feelings is now a skill you can learn and master, just like playing a piano. What would playing stress-free be worth to your poker bankroll? Could you put a price on it? Read on.

Learning to play the piano requires listening to others play, learning the chords and practice, practice, practice. You don't need to know how to build a piano. Likewise, learning how to eliminate stress using only your mind and heart also requires observing others doing the work, mastering the tools and strategies and practice, practice, practice.

Stressful feelings such as doubts and

fears, anxiety and depression, anger, resentment, and even shyness are caused by stressful thoughts. Thoughts cause feelings instantly, like vibrations cause music. Stressful thoughts are the culprit. They are untrue thoughts about ourselves, others and situations.

Because they are false, they cause stress. If they were true, they would empower us.

Welcome every stressful feeling. It is an alarm clock, your best friend, alerting you like an X-ray, that you need to get rid of it. You don't need to passively put up with stress by watching TV or popping pills. Your mind can get rid of it for you.

STEP 1

When you feel stress, sit back and look in your mind for the stressful thoughts that cause it to appear and write them down. In the past you probably had a stressful feeling and automatically believed it and acted on it while your ego defended it to your death. If so, you need to take back control of your mind. Like the military needs intelligence or its weapons arsenal is useless, to get rid of stress you need to identify your stressful thoughts and write them down. Stressful feelings are like a cancer caused by stressful thoughts. They control, torture and eventually kill us through the mental and physical disease stress always causes.

It is always some form of stress that interferes with our decision-making process and helps defeat us at the poker table.

STEP 2

Master the skill of questioning your thinking. Take every stressful thought to Truth Court, where the truth will set you free. Truth Court consists of a pencil and paper, a comfortable chair, a table and quiet. The prosecutor is your mind, which will state the facts to the

Editor's Note: This is part 2 of a series on improving your results by beating stress at the poker table.

judge. The judge is your heart, which always knows the truth and will make and explain its final ruling in detail. Poker players who want to raise their play to the highest level will sit down at this table where the odds are stacked so highly in their favor.

Begin to question your thinking 24/7. When you stop believing your stressful thoughts, you stop suffering stress. When your heart as judge questions those stressful thoughts and explains and rules that the way you think about yourself, others and situations is not 100 percent TRUE, your stressful feelings leave you and never come back.

Stress keeps you from maintaining focus and being in the zone throughout an entire poker tournament. Tiger, Michael and Ivey continue to win because they maintain focus and play their sport in the zone more of the time than their competition. Their minds are clear and confident, and they act instinctively while considering all their choices and the consequences of each. Stress doesn't seem to bother them.

Consider the stressful thought: “I NEED MORE MONEY!”

“I need more money” polluted my poker game for years. It kept coming back with no warning and ruined many facets of my life, especially my play in tournaments.

“I need more money” caused stressful feelings of doubts, fear and panic. These feelings prevented me from being dominant and aggressive at the poker table.

“I need more money” prevented me from taking essential risks in every stage of a tournament.

“I need more money” polluted my mind and distracted me from acting on my best choice. The fear it caused ruined my attitude and confidence.

“I need more money,” like all stressful

thoughts, wreaked havoc on my poker game and almost killed it.

HOW IT WORKS

A very short overview and summary of a typical “questioning your thinking” session will give you some insight into how it works. This represents a few minutes of what can be an hour or more session. Each stressful thought you question will put you on the road to getting rid of more and more stressful thoughts.

I question every stressful thought as it appears 24/7. It is a mind-clearing process you also can master.

1. Sit back with pencil and paper and focus on feelings like doubts, fears or panic. The stressful thoughts hiding behind your tense feelings will appear. Assume “I need more money” is a stressful thought that appeared. Write it down and all other thoughts supporting your belief “I need more money.” Now you know the cause of your stress.

2. Take each stressful thought to Truth Court, where your mind as prosecutor presents the facts to the judge, your heart, and it (as judge) explains and makes the ruling to your mind.

3. Mind: I have children to educate, retirement and emergency funds to make me secure. “I need more money.”

Heart: Is “I need more money” true?

Mind: I definitely need more money!

Heart: In this moment, is it possible for you to have any more or any less money than you actually have?

Mind: I guess not in this moment.

Heart: Have you always supported yourself and your family with food and a place to sleep?

Mind: Yes.

Heart: How do you feel when you

Stress interferes with our decision-making process and helps defeat us at the poker table

believe the impossible thought, “I need more money?”

Mind: I am stressed out and in a panic.

Heart: Who would you be, how would you feel if you realized “I need more money” wasn’t 100 percent true and you didn’t believe that impossible thought anymore?

Mind: I would be happy, confident and have much more peace within myself.

Heart: So, when you believe “I need more money,” you are stressed out, and if you don’t believe “I need more money,” you would be fearless, stress-free, at peace and happy. Your impossible belief that you need more money is the cause of your stress. It is impossible to have any more or less money than you actually have. Are you more likely to earn or win the money you need under stress or when you are fearless, happy, confident and at peace (stress-free)?

Mind: When I am stress-free I am much better equipped to win the money I want.

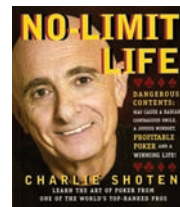
Heart: Is the thought “I need more money” 100 percent true? When you believe it is true you suffer because you are arguing with what is, reality. Believe your stressful thoughts and suffer, or prove to yourself they are not 100 per-

cent true and be stress-free, happy, fearless, creative and productive. Pick one!

“I need more money” is a great example because you can substitute any stressful thought for it. The Buddhist writings teach: “When you desire exactly what you already have, no more or less, you achieve peace.”

It is so simple and true because it is impossible to have any more or less of anything than what you actually have in any moment. Needing more is a stressful thought that causes stressful feelings. When you believe stressful thoughts you are less likely to be creative and win playing poker. You also will suffer from the mental and physical dis-ease stress always causes. ♠

Next issue: *Why how you think about river cards puts you on tilt and haunts you for years.*



The author of No-Limit Life, Charlie Shoten runs stop stress cold workshops for individuals and corporations with his associate, Don Vacca, ten years practicing the work of Byron Katie. For information call 702-556-7006 or email charlieshoten@msn.com.

BEAT STRESS BEAT POKER

by Charlie Shoten

Editor's Note: This is part 3 of a series by Charlie Shoten on beating stress at the poker table. At age 65, Charlie Shoten was a losing poker player – stress controlled, ran and ruined his life. At 66, he ranked in the Top 10 on the World Poker Tour. Today, his lifetime poker resumé includes 70 final tables, 16 wins and 14 seconds.

IF WHAT YOU THINK about yourself, other players, the cards, implied odds or any other information isn't true, your decisions at the poker table will be off target. False information will always put you on the wrong side of the odds.

A clear mind, however, allows correct information to get through. You will act confidently and be a dominant force when your data is accurate and you know your choice is correct. Worries, doubts, fears and other stressful feelings sabotage your ability to make the correct decisions.

To stay focused and sharp, memorize this mantra and repeat it each time your mind wanders at the poker table: "I am calm, confident and clear, wait for my best choice to appear, after considering all of my choices and the consequences of each."

Maintaining focus and being in the zone separates great players from average ones. Questioning your thinking helps you get rid of stressful feelings that prevent you from maintaining focus and being in the zone. Being free of doubts and fears allows you to play at a higher level. Take back control of your mind and become calm, confident and clear, then worries, doubts or fears won't distract you at critical times in a tournament.

REALITY CHECK

Reality is your goal. Bad-beat river cards are a great example of reality. No matter how long you argue with a river card, it will never change. You are trying to teach a "snake to walk" when you continue to fantasize about what your life would be like if a different river card hit the board.

Consider the hurtful events you wish had never happened. You will suffer if you continue to wish that a different

Don't Argue With Bad-Beat River Cards – You Will Lose!

Bad Beats Are a Good Metaphor for All Life Experiences That Devastate Us and Then Haunt Us

river card hit the board. Only when you accept reality can you uncover the silly stressful thoughts hiding behind – and causing – your stressful feelings. Reality defeats your biggest enemy, your ego. Ego cannot handle reality, the truth. Truth demolishes ego, sets you free and empowers you.

How will you feel and what will you accomplish in poker when you are able to uncover every stressful thought as it occurs, realize how silly it is, have a good laugh at it and then watch as it leaves you and never comes back? Without stress, you will not want pills or engage in distractions or addictions anymore. Stress is an alarm clock alerting you that your thinking is false and it is time to question it. When you prove to yourself that your stressful thoughts are not true, without any conscious effort, stress will leave you never to come back to sabotage your poker game.

River cards are a great example of real-

ity – they represent the way we, others and situations really are, not the way we wish they are or hope they will be. No matter how many thousands of times we moan and groan over some river card that cost us, it will never change.

Now is the time to look into your mind and remember a few river cards that are still haunting you from past hands. Accept them or continue to suffer.

HOW DID YOU REACT?

When a river card hit the felt and cost you big, do you remember how you reacted? If you go on tilt each time a bad-beat river card shows up – or when you think about a costly river card from the past – you are hurting your chances of winning. You will relive that anguish over and over again until you question your thinking. Until you do, it will remain in your gut like a bad toothache. Do you really want to keep arguing with reality and spend your time and efforts

trying to do the impossible: change the outcome of something that occurred in the past?

Everyone who gets to a final table has experienced bad-beat rivers many times. They aren't bothered by them because they know they are part of the game and don't stress out and go on tilt when they happen.

Bad-beat rivers are a very good metaphor for all life experiences that devastate us and then haunt us. The reason they haunt us is because we are not willing to accept the simple reality that they occurred and that we can never change them. We need to stop trying to change them, go on from there and make the best of our lives. We blame ourselves or someone else or fantasize about what our life would be like if we hadn't lost that particular hand – or any other precious possession or person.

Can you see how you might be attached to your thoughts and be reliving the anguish they cause over and over again? You don't need to feel helpless about the way you feel. The way you think causes the way you feel. When you question the way you think about bad beats or any other tragic experience from the past and realize it can never change, that stressful feeling will leave and never comes back.

What you think about yourself, others and situations, if not 100 percent true, causes stress. Reality is where you are at (current location). Arguing with reality is like demanding that mapquest send you accurate directions without disclosing your current location. Without critical accurate information to base your decisions on, how can you win any poker tournament?

ACCEPTANCE

Begin by loving reality, accepting what is, every river card and every other painful experience from your past. Don't concoct potential disasters in the future anymore. What happens in the future is usually much kinder than the scenarios our mind makes up. Focus on reality, what is, and you can confidently go on from there. Continue to argue with reality and you will suffer.

A young man was knocked out of a poker tournament and was very deject-

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ed and angry. He was blaming the poker gods and everyone else for his so-called bad luck. I asked him what his thoughts were about his final hand. He replied, "I waited for my best opportunity and raised three times the blind from the small blind with K-K. I had three callers. The flop was 4-7-8 rainbow. First to act, I bet 1½ times the size of the pot. This took approximately a third of my stack. I was called by two others. Another eight hit the board."

I asked him why he bet only three times the blind with the second strongest hand in hold'em and gave three others a relatively cheap opportunity to outdraw him, and why he went all-in when the board paired the eight.

"I felt that kings-up must be the best hand. I was called by someone who had 8-9 of spades and was knocked out of the tournament."

When I asked him why he was so angry, he said, "How could someone call my raise with 8-9 before the flop?"

I asked him if he was sure he played the hand properly. He said he assumed he did. I asked him if he wanted to learn what he did wrong. He reluctantly said yes. I explained that his assumption that kings-up was the best hand on the turn was faulty. Without more critical information, it was not prudent to risk all his chips and go all-in on the turn.

When a chip leader, you must protect your chips, especially with K-K or A-A because if you only raise the normal amount you usually can't know if your hand is best after the flop.

Many players will call an average raise with small pairs or suited connectors. It is practically impossible to know where you stand with A-A or K-K after a flop of

small or medium cards.

With a big stack you need to raise a lot more to discourage the smaller pairs and suited connectors from calling.

With big pairs, unless you are short-stacked, you also want to get heads-up if possible. In a multi-way pot it is harder to determine if you are beat after the flop.

SUMMARY

Have the courage and be committed to experience every stressful feeling so you can identify the stressful thought causing that feeling. Stress is real. It's hurting your game. Get rid of stress before you sit down at the poker table.

Patiently wait for the stressful thoughts and beliefs to appear.

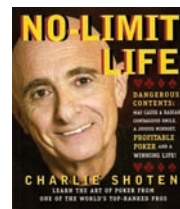
When they appear, write them down before you lose them. They are precious. Question them in truth court.

Your mind can act as prosecutor and make your case to your heart, the judge. Your heart always knows the truth and will make the final ruling and explain it in detail to your mind. Now you will know the truth and it will set you free.

When you know in your heart that the way you think about yourself, others and situations is true, stress will leave you. Unless you face reality, stress will never leave you.

Your mind can make you well or torture and kill you. Stop believing your thoughts like a robot. Question them. All of the positive thinking in the world will never overcome the damage done to you by your distorted memories, ideas, thoughts and beliefs that have been implanted in you by outside forces, or that you have created in response to neglect or abuse.

With less stress you will make better decisions and see more opportunities. ♠



Charlie Shoten, The Stress Terminator, is the author of the award-winning book No-Limit Life, available at Amazon.com (Category: Psychology/

Mental Health). Visit him at www.nolimitlife.com. Charlie does speaking engagements and "Stop Stress Cold" workshops for individuals and companies. For information call 702-562-1505 or email charlieshoten@msn.com.

BEAT STRESS BEAT POKER

by Charlie Shoten

Editor's Note: Last of a series on improving your poker by reducing stress.

Question Your Thinking!

Laughter and Truth Are the Best Rx for Tilt

LAUGHTER/TRUTH grows your poker bankroll. A good belly laugh clears your mind so you can maintain focus and play in the zone. Have you ever seen a laughing poker player on tilt? Of course not.

Laughter brings the quality of your life up a level or two. Your poker game rises along with it. A good sense of humor, particularly about yourself, keeps you in the flow, not on tilt, through tough situations at the poker table. Questioning your thinking reveals the truth and you might laugh at your perceptions of the way you think about disappointments playing poker.

If laughter were a drug it would sell off the shelves. Feeling better is the stone cold nuts. Is there a better feeling in poker than when your cards are the stone cold nuts? The absence of stress is the stone cold nuts.

THE TRUTH/LAUGHTER/ NO STRESS/NO TILT

The quality of your poker play has everything to do with how you feel. Again, silly stressful thoughts bring with them stressful feelings. I say silly because when you question your stressful thoughts you realize how ridiculous they are. When you are able to laugh at

them, stress magically disappears. Stop believing the lies in your mind and the stressful feelings lies cause leave and never come back. Untrue thoughts cause stressful feelings. Question them until you stop believing them. Without stress holding you back, tilt and compulsive play are stopped cold. A clear mind free of stress allows access to more correct information than your competition. What follows are better decisions and the ability to act on and seize more opportunities.

Eliminating doubts and fears, anger and resentment (stress) is a skill (process). Learn and master it. Don't put up with stress anymore or you will continue to be its victim and suffer.

Surgery is the first choice to remove a malignant tumor. Silly stressful thoughts are like malignant tumors. The stress they cause sabotages hopes, dreams and aspirations, tortures and eventually kills us. We pass stressful thoughts on to everyone, especially to our children.

When asked, many heart surgeons agree that a good attitude is the most important factor determining the quality and length of the healing process after surgery. It's your mind, attitude, how you

think about yourself, others and situations that determine if you win or lose, heal or get sick. Truth and laughter are the best Rx for a good attitude.

ACCEPT REALITY

When I was in college, I complained that reality was my only problem. I didn't realize then how important and true that was. Reality is the solution to all problems because when you love reality (truth), you are who, where and what you really are. Don't argue with reality. You will lose. You can't reach any goal, like winning a poker tournament – or accomplish anything else – until you start from who, what and where you really are.

A friend was suffering fear and extreme anxiety. His concern was about how he would play at a final table the next day. Doubts about his abilities caused irrational fears. I pointed out that he had the poker knowledge and experience that he had, no more or less (reality), and he was sitting on a couch watching television (reality). He didn't get it until I repeated it to him about 20 times. When he finally accepted reality, who and where he really was and accepted his current poker skill level, his doubts and fears left. He was transformed. Now he felt calm, confident and was looking forward to playing in tomorrow's tournament. He didn't need to compare himself to mythical opponents anymore or allow his thinking (mind) to distract him from the job at hand – playing his best, whatever that is, in the tournament tomorrow.

To get rid of a contagious disease like cancer, you don't ignore it. Your physician studies everything about it and if possible, surgically removes it. Better yet would be to remove the root cause of a cancer so it never comes back, but physicians rarely know what that is or how to do it. Stress is usually involved as a root cause of all illnesses, including cancer. When you realize how silly stressful thoughts are and have a good laugh at them, they leave, never to come back, and of course you feel better.

Ego is your enemy, especially at the poker table. It wreaks havoc on your game. Ego is also very fragile and can't handle ridicule. When you laugh at your silly thoughts, ego won't defend them any-

Untrue thoughts cause stress

more. Don't put up with ego and let it control, limit and ruin your game anymore.

Ego is a paper tiger residing in your mind that you need to discard while playing poker. No ego, no tilt.

GETTING RID OF ANGER AND RESENTMENT

In 2002, I flew to Las Vegas to visit my daughter and grandchildren. I called her at the airport and asked, "Where is the car you promised me?"

She said, "I gave it to someone else."

I replied, "I will call you back." I was experiencing extreme anger and resentment targeted at my daughter.

1. I knew the anger was inappropriate and said I would call her back. I felt like checking into a hotel and not even visiting her, I was so mad.
2. I hung up the phone because if I didn't, I would have ruined her day and my vacation.
3. I realized this was an opportunity to see if the ideas and concepts I was writing in my new book to be, *No-Limit Life*, really worked.
4. I sat down, focused on my anger and resentment, waited for the stressful thoughts and beliefs to appear that were causing me to be so angry at my daughter, and wrote them down.
5. Three thoughts that were the core beliefs supporting my anger and resentment showed up: a. All I did for her; b. She owes me; c. She doesn't care about me or love me.
6. I took those three thoughts to Truth Court, questioned them and laughed at how silly they were when my heart, the judge, gave its ruling.

Mind: She promised me the spare car and gave it to someone else. I needed it. She owes me because "All I have done for her." "She doesn't care about me or love me."

Heart as Judge: Your daughter has the right to feel about you any way she experiences you. All you did for her was because you love her. You also hurt her in a lot of ways. She doesn't owe you anything. You have no case against her. You are guilty.

Mind: Those thoughts are definitely not true. The judge's ruling rings true in my heart. They are silly. I laughed at

myself for believing them.

In a moment, a miracle happened. I wasn't angry or resentful at my daughter anymore. I called her back and asked, "What happened with the car?"

She replied, "An emergency, had to give it to someone else. I didn't think it was a big deal and you would rent a car. When are you coming over?"

I said, "As soon as I rent a car."

From this experience I learned that I was a carrier of anger and resentment all my life. No one could make me feel those feelings if I wasn't already harboring them. Because of the law of attraction and my need to rid myself of anger and resentment, I was continually creating artificial situations to experience anger and resentment. They had been sabotaging relationships ever since I could remember and were the cause of a great deal of anguish in my life. I also realized that my anger and resentment were formed 60 years ago in my relationship with my mom. On her deathbed, neither of us would give an inch. Another miracle occurred. I wasn't angry or resentful at the memory of my mom anymore. I felt strong compassion for both of us.

Since that beautiful day seven years ago, anger and resentment have never affected any other relationships, especially my relationship with myself. Those stressful feelings were toast. I had permanently removed anger and resentment from my mind. Now I knew how to get rid of any stressful feeling as soon as I experienced it. Wait for the stressful thoughts that caused stress to appear, question them and have a good laugh at how silly they are.

MINDSET AFFECTS PLAY

What does this little story have to do with playing poker? Imagine if I stayed angry and resentful, checked into a hotel and played poker all weekend in that frame of mind. I would have played stakes too high for my bankroll, I wouldn't have chosen the best games to play, I would have played many hours longer than I should, my decisions would not be as good, etc., etc., etc. As it turned out, that weekend I did very well at the poker table and even won a tournament.

What accomplishment have the tons of positive-thinking, self-help books, videos, seminars, the psychiatric profession or the pharmaceutical industry (pill pushers) ever given us to rid ourselves of stress that compares in magnitude with the skill of questioning your thinking I just described? In the past I availed myself of tons of self-help and positive-thinking materials, memorized *Think and Grow Rich* at age 20, visited a psychiatrist for 27 years, and I still suffered doubts and fears, anxiety and depression, anger and resentment and many debilitating physical diseases those feelings caused.

Those efforts didn't tell me what I really needed to know. My problem was incorrect thinking and the only solution was to question it, laugh at it and get rid of it.

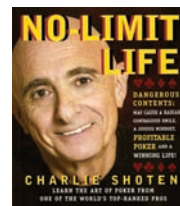
DON'T DELAY

Don't wait until age 65 to start questioning your thinking, like I did. This is not new to you. You agree with it because you already know truth and laughter heal. I am simply introducing my version of how to take advantage of it for **Poker Pro** readers.

Spread the word to everyone everywhere that there is a new skill (process) you can learn that eliminates stress and keeps you from going on tilt in poker and life.

Everyone has a good laugh when they realize how silly their stressful thoughts and beliefs are, but only after they question them. As more of us question our thinking and have clear minds free of stress, stress will be stopped cold everywhere.

Untrue (stressful) thoughts are a contagious disease that must be questioned. Global lying, especially to ourselves, is the real cause of pollution on planet Earth. ♠



Charlie Shoten, The Stress Terminator, is the author of the award-winning book No-Limit Life, available at Amazon.com (Category: Psychology/Mental Health). Visit him at www.nolimitlife.com. Charlie does speaking engagements and "Stop Stress Cold" workshops for individuals and companies. For information call 702-562-1505 or email charlieshoten@msn.com.

TRUTH & LAUGHTER BEST RX TO STOP STRESS COLD

QUESTION YOUR THINKING WORKSHEET

- Poisonous memories, ideas, thoughts and beliefs are implanted in our minds by outside, alien forces, or we have created them in response to neglect or abuse. Prove to yourself your beliefs about yourself, others and situations are not true. Your stressful feelings will leave and never come back to cause mental and physical disease or to sabotage your hopes, dreams and aspirations.
1. Close your eyes and embrace & describe any stressful feeling you experience in the moment you experience it. Stressful feelings are caused by untrue thoughts, memories, ideas and beliefs.
 2. Patiently wait for the thoughts, core beliefs that support those thoughts and the story you have made up because you believe them to appear. **Write them down! FALSE THOUGHTS CAUSE STRESSFUL FEELINGS!**
 3. Take each thought to **TRUTH COURT**, quiet, a comfortable chair, a table, pencil and paper. Your mind is the prosecutor and your heart the judge. Your mind makes your case to the judge, your heart, who rules. If the judge rules 100% true you still have work to do. Revisit and question with a fair and open mind from every angle. **Truth cannot cause stress! Truth must set you free.**
 4. When you realize those thoughts are not only false but silly and ridiculous and you have a good laugh at them stress will leave never to come back. **Ego cannot handle ridicule.**

How did you feel when you believed those thoughts, beliefs and your story?

A. Describe in detail.

B. What would you fear if you no longer believe them? Look at it from every angle. Make you the other. Make it impersonal. When you can laugh at how silly and ridiculous your thinking is ego can't defend it anymore. Untrue silly ridiculous thinking causes stress.

C. How would you feel, who would you be now if you no longer believe your untrue silly, ridiculous thoughts, the core beliefs that support them, and the story you made out of them? **DESCRIBE IN DETAIL.**

Charlie Shoten, **THE STRESS TERMINATOR**, is the author of the award winning book "No-Limit Life", category: Psychology/Mental Health available at Amazon.com. Visit him at www.nolimitlife.com or **Google Charlie Shoten**. Speaking Engagements & Stop Stress Cold workshops for Individuals and Companies e-mail charlieshoten@msn.com or call **702 556-7006/702 562-1505**.