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S.E.L.F. is key to well being

Elizabeth Huff
The Enquirer

Flight attendants warn airline passengers that in an emergency, each person should put on their own oxygen mask before helping others.

The same principle is true when dealing with stress, said Kathleen Hall, founder and chief executive officer of The Stress Institute in Atlanta. Her advice has been featured on many major television networks and news groups.

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"Number one is self care," Hall said.

She plans to show the public how to manage work-life stress by making personal choices at 7 p.m. Tuesday, at the Battle Creek Country Club.

The free event is hosted by the Health Care Leadership Forum. The organization's goal is to foster education among health care leaders of Calhoun County. Hall

also plans to speak to staff at Oaklawn Hospital in Marshall and Battle Creek Health System.

"People in the health care industry are trying all day to help others, but first they need to help themselves or else they really are no good to others," Nancy Lassen, Health Care Leadership Forum executive director, said. "I think anybody in any job can relate to that feeling."

Hall said according to recent studies, 80 percent of workers say they feel extremely stressed. Inefficiencies caused by work place stress cost an estimated \$300 billion per year to American businesses.

Unmanaged stress affects mental and physical health in ways scientists are just beginning to understand, Hall said.

While genetically some people are predisposed to reacting strongly to stress, a person's environment plays a much bigger role, Hall said. An incessant barrage of global news, quickly evolving technology, high divorce rates, lack of sleep and disconnect with the natural world all contribute to a person's stress level.

No one can be stress-free, but the differences between those who manage stress well and those who don't are because of the choices they make, Hall said.

"We can prevent suffering in the world on every level — physical, mental, spiritual — by being more mindful," she said.

Hall developed a stress management model that she'll present on Tuesday using the acronym S.E.L.F.:

- **"S" stands for serenity**, which is the opposite of stress, Hall said.

One way to achieve serenity is to choose words of affirmation and to repeat

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For the Enquirer

Kathleen Hall, founder and chief executive officer of The Stress Institute in Atlanta

If you go

- **WHAT:** Presentation on stress management and work-life balance by Kathleen Hall, founder of The Stress Institute.
- **WHEN:** 7 p.m. Tuesday.
- **WHERE:** Battle Creek Country Club, 318 Country Club Drive.
- **COST:** Free.
- **RSVP:** 965-5572.

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those words, almost like a mantra, when you find yourself getting stressed out. Hall said her personal words are, "I'm strong. I'm in balance. I'm centered," but asserted that each person should pick words significant to themselves.


- **"E" stands for exercise.** While it's important to exercise the body to improve physical health, often the brain is overlooked. Hall suggested playing games online, singing and listening to music at least a few minutes every day.
- **"L" stands for love,** which Hall defines as a connection to others. She suggested joining a study group, reconnecting with an old friend or having a pet.
- **"F" stands for food.** Hall said studies have shown blueberries and bananas have brain-boosting nutrients. Foods rich in omega 3 fatty acids, like salmon, might help patients reduce their dependence on pain medications.

"These are easy, simple things to incorporate into your day," she said.

Hall said she practices what she teaches. She meditates, exercises daily, eats no meat except fish and does not smoke or drink alcohol. She said she has tremendous energy as a result.

"So, it works," she said.

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Comments by: **abbeydabbey** Posted: Mon Mar 03, 2008 8:25 am
We are in a quagmire in Iraq. Unemployment is high. Corruption in Washington is rampant. We have over twenty million illegal Mexicans on our soil. This country has no business telling others what to do when we cannot even take care of ourselves. Self-care barely exists in this country.

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