

# Oakville doctor's third book is practical guide to relieving stress

Author prescribes easy-to-read solutions for stress relief

By Angela Blackburn  
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

Dealing with stress is like breathing – everyone alive is doing it.

Just ask Oakville's Dr. David Posen who recently saw his third book, *The Little Book of Stress Relief*, published by Key Porter Books.

Th \$18.95 soft-cover fare is a friendly read that can be absorbed all at once or read chapter-by-chapter for all 52 weeks of the year – each chapter ending with Posen's prescription for handling stress.

A 32-year resident of Oakville, Dr. Dr. Posen first worked as a family doctor from 1971 to 1985. In the early 1980s, after attending a seminar on stress, Dr. Posen slowly changed his practice to one of stress management and lifestyle counselling.

That came out of his attendance at a seminar that was simply meant to beef up his medical knowledge and be a nice trip to Montreal.

Instead Dr. Posen said it was "absolutely pivotal."

It led Dr. Posen to a way of thinking medically in which he said, "suddenly it all made sense to me."

The "orderliness" of how stress can



Peter C. McCusker • Oakville Beaver

Dr. David Posen holds up his latest book, *The Little Book of Stress Relief*, which offers an easy-to-read practical guide to relieving everyday stress.

affect a person and manifest itself as various symptoms – like headaches, back pain, sleeplessness, to name but a few – clicked for Dr. Posen, who described himself as a Type A individual who was overloading his schedule, fighting the clock and taking on more and more activities.

Recognizing that stress is a problem is a first step, said Dr. Posen.

"Usually people hit a wall, get some kind of message and usually it's from their body, a health scare," he said.

It could be, however, a health danger

experienced by a friend or family member or simply recognizing oneself described in conjunction with a story in a media report.

"There are any number of wake-up calls," said Dr. Posen.

The physician first wrote a book after seeing another family doctor do the same thing.

His first book in 1994 was the best-seller *Always Change a Losing Game*. His second book in 1998 was called *Staying Afloat When the Water Gets Rough*.

Dr. Posen has penned articles for

*Canadian Living* and *Reader's Digest* and has lectured extensively across North America.

His latest book actually grew out of the compilation of articles that he'd written for the Web site canoe.ca under doc.calm.

There's a book launch Thursday at Oakville's Bookers bookstore, 172 Lakeshore Rd. E. The formal launch is from 7-9 p.m. and Dr. Posen will speak at 7:30 p.m.

The vision for a 52-prescription, easy-read for the stressed out came from Key Porter editor-in-chief Clare McKee.

Dr. Posen said this latest book is "more fun" with its light tone, anecdotes and sidebar information than his other fare.

What's the point of a heavy, stodgy read for those who may be overloading on stress? Instead each chapter is a five to seven-minute read and ends with a practical suggestion for action (a prescription) from Dr. Posen.

"Everybody wants a silver bullet solution, but I think that may be too simplistic and facile," he said.

Stress, said Dr. Posen can come from within and without. We all need certain levels of stress in order to be motivated, stimulated and achieve.

However when stress starts to tip the scale, stress becomes distress and can begin to make us ill, explained the doctor.

"If there's too much, it lasts too long or comes too often, that's when there's a problem. It's often said that a pinball machine will go tilt when pushed too

much and our bodies go tilt, too," said Dr. Posen.

The physician said he usually asks people to rate their stress level on a scale of 1-10.

"Usually people can give you a number just like that," he said.

Stress in the range of five to six is fine, said Dr. Posen. A score of seven or eight may be cause for concern, but at nine or 10, something must be done, he explained. A rating of two or three would actually indicate that a little more stress wouldn't hurt either.

"We're not aiming for zero stress," said Dr. Posen who said distress can manifest itself in difficulties with physical, mental, emotional or behavioral function.

If a friend or family member is able to comment on someone being edgy, moody, irritable, abrupt, sad or withdrawn, it may be time to take stock of stress, said the physician.

Dr. Posen studied medicine at the University of Toronto, interned in Edmonton and practiced in the Arctic and Middle East before settling his practice in Oakville.

Besides his Oct. 2 book launch, Dr. Posen will tackle *Stress Mastery: Success Strategies to Handle Procrastination, Anger and Difficult People* on Wednesday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m. at the Galaxy Club in Oakville at 475 North Service Rd.

The seminar is part of the free Living Healthy seminars presented by Halton Healthcare Services.

THE OAKVILLE BEAVER

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But Agabi offers more than just chicken. Essam is always hard at work devising new menu items his clients will love. Most recently added to the menu are his Frito Misto De Mari (a mixture of fried seafood) and Braised Lamb Shank.

"I try to use the method of French cuisine to enhance Mediterranean food. I am always working on expanding the menu to offer the best to my customers," he says. "We make everything from scratch, from A to Z. But we try to keep the menu small, so it will always be fresh."

If it's vegetarian you're after, Agabi caters to those seek-



Owner Essam Farag takes pride in the fresh and healthy meals Agabi offers its customers. The secret to Essam's healthy chicken is Agabi's slow roasting, vertical broiler that melts away all the fat in chicken (pictured above).

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