



Coping Strategies™

This special multi-media CD is the off-line version of the Patriot Outreach website.

Healing Power

Dear Colonel Monaco,

Thank you for the energetic and hopeful dialogue we have entered into regarding Patriot Outreach. I am always looking for morally and psychologically sound materials that a chaplain can use to boost a unit's morale and enhance a Soldier's resilience. Your Coping Strategies CD is an effective and practical tool that enhances stress management and builds resilience within the mind and emotion of the warrior.

I am especially thankful for the Be Still and Know Exercise. It is a good self awareness exercise, comparable to the concept of mindfulness used within the field of empirically researched psychology. I have integrated the exercise into my own personal life as a Christian Chaplain. It assists me in being effective in what I call a listening prayer. My foundational written statement for listening prayer is found in Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know I am God." The essence of this spiritual discipline calms my soul, improves my emotional regulation, and enhances my critical thinking skills.

I read a small, but powerful book by Charles Swindoll, *Intimacy with the Almighty*, several years ago. This book helped transform my life as a war veteran chaplain. The book clarified if I am to be resilient in this difficult world, I must practice the four spiritual disciplines of simplicity, silence, solitude, and surrender. The Be Still and Know Exercise helped me practice these four disciplines on a consistent basis.

My average day is filled with phone calls, emails, visits, and deadlines. It seems to me the Blackberry and computer tends to escalate distress signals in my brain as I suffer with an overload of information and tasks to be completed each day. Charles Swindoll said it best when he stated, "Everything around us works against reordering and simplifying our lives. Everything! Ours is a complicated and cluttered world." The Be Still and Know Exercise used as a listening prayer decreases the clutter in my mind and helps me be more effective and creative in my thought process.

The practice of silence and solitude is at the very core of the Be Still and Know Exercise. Learning to be still is one of the most needed, yet most difficult spiritual disciplines today. I remember my struggle when I first became intentional about practicing being still. It was just like the noted Roman Catholic Priest, Henri Nouwen stated, "Time in solitude may at first seem little more than a time in which we are bombarded by thousands of thoughts and feelings that emerge from hidden areas of our mind. It can feel like a multitude of confusing

thoughts are jumping around in the mind like monkeys in a banana tree." Indeed, this was my experience early on. However, I have observed as I continue the practice of silence and solitude my mind becomes more rested. It also seems my resilience in thinking straight under pressure is improved.

Last of all, there is the issue of surrender. It is an issue of how I want my day to go versus how my day actually does go. A few years ago, while practicing the essence of be still and know, I came to a powerful awareness of what my core daily struggle is. I want my day to go my way. I am finally learning to let go of those things I cannot control or change. I am finally learning that surrendering my days and future to God, not as I would have it, is the most responsible act of obedience I can do. This transformative attitude is a lighter burden for me to carry. It certainly decreases my frustration and distress levels.

Colonel Monaco, I need simplicity, silence, solitude, and surrender in my life to be an effective, resilient military chaplain in today's complex world. Thank you for introducing me to the Coping Strategies CD. It is a helpful tool that can help many other military personnel become the resilient leaders we all need to be in the rapidly changing environment in which we live.

God Bless and Keep the Faith,

Chaplain (LTC) Phillip L. Pringle
US Army (Southern Baptist)

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Veterans, Government Civilians,
Battlefield Contractors
and their Families***

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