Tactics for Coping with Stress

Listed below are some common ways of coping with stressful events. Mark those that are characteristic of your behavior or that you use frequently.

1. ___ I ignore my own needs and just work harder and faster.
2. ___ I seek out friends for conversation and support.
3. ___ I eat more than usual.
4. ___ I engage in some type of physical exercise.
5. ___ I get irritable and take it out on those around me.
6. ___ I take a little time to relax, breathe, and unwind.
7. ___ I smoke a cigarette or drink a caffeinated beverage.
8. ___ I confront my source of stress and work to change it.
9. ___ I withdraw emotionally and just go through the motions of my day.
10. ___ I change my outlook on the problem and put it in a better perspective.
11. ___ I sleep more than I really need to.
12. ___ I take some time off and get away from my working life.
13. ___ I go shopping and buy something to make myself feel good.
14. ___ I joke with my friends and use humor to take the edge off.
15. ___ I drink more alcohol than usual.
16. ___ I get involved in a hobby or interest that helps me unwind and enjoy myself.
17. ___ I take medicine to help me relax or sleep better.
18. ___ I maintain a healthy diet.
19. ___ I just ignore the problem and hope it will go away.
20. ___ I pray, meditate, or enhance my spiritual life.
21. ___ I worry about the problem and am afraid to do something about it.
22. ___ I try to focus on the things I can control and accept the things I can’t.

Evaluate your results: The even-numbered items tend to be more constructive tactics and the odd-numbered items tend to be less constructive tactics for coping with stress. Congratulate yourself for the even-numbered items you checked. Think about whether you need to make some changes in your thinking or behavior if you checked any of the odd-numbered items. Consider experimenting with some even-numbered items you haven’t tried before.