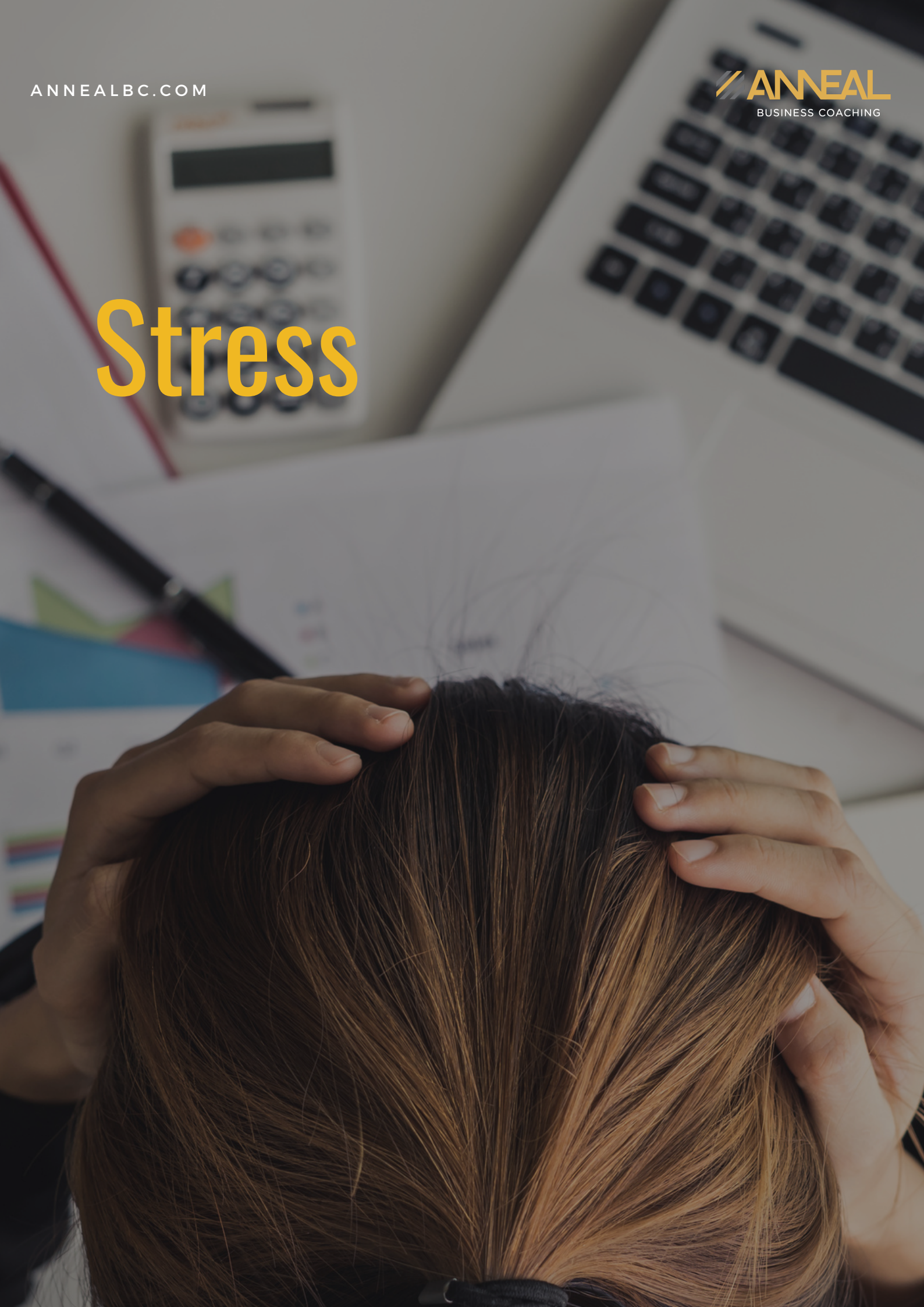


Stress



STRESS

The tagline for both my business and our podcast is “less stress, more free time, and more money.” It speaks to most business owners because stress is a big factor in our lives.

Notice that my tag line says less stress, not no stress. The bad news is that, from my personal experience and that of my many clients, we will never be fully rid of stress. If you are going to own a business, there will be stress.

TYPES OF STRESS

The good news is that there are two types of stress, one causes bad adaptations, and the other causes good adaptation. For example, when you put your hand on the plow to begin work, you adapt in either of two ways. Your skin can respond to the stress with a blister or a callous. A blister is bad for the obvious reason that it is an injury. It is damage that has to heal before you can move forward. A callous is good because it toughens you against future stress.

When dealing with my clients, we work to reduce or eliminate bad stress, and to manage and even encourage good stress. We encourage good stress because, in the same way it takes stress to strengthen your bones and muscles in the gym, it takes stress to strengthen your ability to thrive in business.

Bad stress often results from missing or bad information, which results in uncertainty, indecision, fear, and doubt, which lead to decision paralysis, poor communication, misunderstanding, and even health problems. Bad stress shows up in business as resistance to change, cash flow problems, missed opportunities, lack of vision, poor planning, bad customer relations, bad pricing

decisions, troubled company cultures, high employee turnover and in many, many other ways.

HOW TO REDUCE BAD STRESS

When working to manage stress, I like to begin by addressing a probable cause, and in most cases the probable cause is missing or bad information. The starting point for every client I work with is information, specifically, financial information.

Good financial information is the objective arbiter that tells you what you need to know, whether or not you want to know it. The highest and best use of financial information is not to pay taxes, or to placate your bank, but rather to answer one question: "What should I do?" Good financial information replaces the bad stress resulting from "gut decisions" with good stress that comes with making and measuring informed decisions. Good financial information replaces doubt and uncertainty with clarity, reason and logic.

My advice for your first step toward reducing bad stress is to get your bookkeeping and accounting records in order – hire it done – then to learn how to use the information they provide to make better, less stressful decisions. Getting your books in order will cause you stress. It will be a confusing and stressful exercise, but you will never regret it.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to mail me at Martin@annealbc.com or visit www.annealbc.com



Martin Holland

Martin Holland is the son of a successful entrepreneur. He grew up hearing about margins and markets, R&D and sales, risk and return on investment. He learned to love the language and rigors of business and grew to believe that business is both the most human of all endeavors and the highest calling. After selling a company in 2011, Martin became a coach in order to help other owners build profitable businesses that do not require their day-to-day involvement.

A native of Norman, Martin earned a B.A. degree from Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska and a Masters in Business Administration degree from the University of Oklahoma. Over the past 7 years he has written business plans that have raised over \$52.4 million in bank and investor financing. He has helped 157 (and counting) business owners reduce stress and increase performance through clarity of purpose, better marriages, more money, and more free time away from the business.