



## What Does Stress Mean to You?

-- Al E. Bavry, President Emeritus, Kimal Lumber & Hardware

A gentleman I'll call Jim, that I've known for twenty plus years, retired (for the first time) at the ripe old age of forty-eight...He's a banker. No, really he's a "Banker's Banker." In his thirties, he founded a bank that became very successful, then he and his investors "cashed out." He got bored quickly and started another bank...Same story. He sold out, and is now in his "third" banking career.

Jim, on his third go at it, bought a small, struggling community bank with several of the past investors, about a year ago. They hit the ground running. When I asked him about not actually retiring, but instead going right back into the stressful world of banking, he commented, "Yes, banking...especially start-up banking...is very stressful" ...but he wisely added, "Absence of stress doesn't mean happiness!!"

After hearing about his latest venture, and his comment, it reminded me of another comment given by a wise boss of mine many years ago. When my question to him was: "Is stress good or bad?" His correct answer was..."Yes!" And here's another apropos comment that fits stress well... "If you spend your whole life waiting for the Storm, you'll never enjoy the Sunshine!"

I don't have to remind any of you, that we are not in a "calm" business. Really!! LOL. Many days have gone well beyond what I call "organized Chaos"...but those of us (most of us, I might add) who are good at this game see stress as a valuable tool in our tool belt. If we've learned how to control stress, and "work with it," it serves us well. We tend to play the "What if" scenarios better. We are good at evaluating "downside risks" and when we try new things, it tends to be the catalyst that keeps our minds sharp. Maybe razor sharp!

By "parking" stress in the "Now" and not moving it constantly into future situations, we have learned how to control it and work with it. I'll even add a kind intangible: There's a real adrenaline high when you work on a tough project, and finally (not always) it does come to fruition. Got to say...After the sweaty palms, the sleepless nights, the uncertainty...darn, it feels good when you (and I mean the whole team) actually pull it off and see real results.

So the next time someone goes off on "Stress," and comments or asks, "Is it good or bad?" The answer should always be YES!