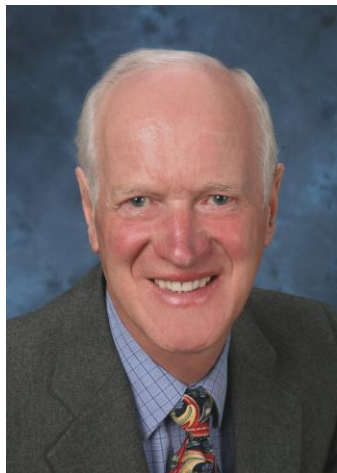


# How to Fit a Heart Attack into Your Busy Schedule!

*A Light-Hearted Look at Managing Stress*

Philip Jones does not tell you what to do. No lectures. Instead, he tells stories, shows pictures and asks questions. Gets you laughing . . . and gets you thinking.



Not exactly as illustrated

Philip encourages you to review your lifestyle choices, figure out how to deal more effectively with stress, and make just one positive change to help you live a longer, healthier, more productive life.

T: 403-225-0633; E: [philip-jones@shaw.ca](mailto:philip-jones@shaw.ca)



# How to Fit a Heart Attack into Your Busy Schedule!



## 40 Questions

### About the stress in your life:

- ✚ What factors bring high levels of stress into your life?
- ✚ How well are you coping with that stress?
- ✚ Are your family relationships stable and supportive?
- ✚ Do you have some really good friends you can totally trust?
- ✚ Is your work challenging and satisfying?
- ✚ Are your finances in good shape?
- ✚ Do you have trouble forgiving those who hurt you deeply?
- ✚ Do you utilize effective relaxation techniques?

### About your activities:

- ✚ How many hours a week do you spend at work?
- ✚ How many hours a week do you spend at a computer?
- ✚ How many hours a week do you spend watching television?
- ✚ Do you regularly get plenty of exercise?
- ✚ Do you get enough fresh air?
- ✚ Do you get enough quiet time each day?
- ✚ Do you get enough sleep?
- ✚ How many weeks of annual vacation do you take?

### About your health and fitness:

- ✚ Are you in good physical condition?
- ✚ Is your weight close to the ideal level?
- ✚ Do you smoke?
- ✚ Do you have high blood pressure?
- ✚ Is there a family history of heart disease?
- ✚ Do you get an annual medical check-up?

- ✚ Is your cholesterol at a safe level?
- ✚ Does your diet include too much sugar, salt or fat?
- ✚ Do you eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables?
- ✚ Are you addicted to caffeine?
- ✚ Are you addicted to any other substance?
- ✚ Do you often consume more than three alcoholic drinks per day?

### About your personal characteristics:

- ✚ Do you smile and laugh a lot?
- ✚ Are you generally positive and reasonably optimistic?
- ✚ Are you a worrier?
- ✚ Are you considered demanding and impatient?
- ✚ Are you regarded as a perfectionist?
- ✚ Do you easily become indignant or angry?
- ✚ Do you display or suppress your emotions?

### About your personal philosophy:

- ✚ Is your life directed by clearly defined principles?
- ✚ Are your personal objectives clearly defined?
- ✚ Are your personal objectives attainable?
- ✚ Do you have a strong faith, one that has a rational basis?
- ✚ Twenty years from now, how do you expect to view your current roles . . . assuming you are still around?

### Bonus question:

**You already know one key lifestyle change you will make after your own myocardial infarction. Do you really intend to wait?**



# How to Fit a Heart Attack into Your Busy Schedule!



## Ten Lessons

**Three years after I take an early retirement, my former employer goes broke.** No direct connection between these two events! Purely coincidental.

Drawing on my personal memory bank, I write an article analyzing the company's failure. Ten key errors are identified, along with the corresponding lessons.

### The Perils of Complacency

**The seeds of failure were sown during the decades of success.** The critical mistakes were not made during the company's final years. The fundamental errors were made during the good times. It is always that way. Complacency is a killer, in business, in life.

These lessons focus on simple, basic issues. There is nothing complicated about running a successful business. Winners pay scrupulous attention to the basics. Losers fail because they ignore basic principles.

A few years pass and I notice that, with a little imagination and a weird sense of humour, these same lessons can be applied to the topic of managing stress. Learn how to be successful in your struggle to maintain a balanced life!

#### 1. KEEP THE CORPORATE VISION CLEAR.

How clear is your personal vision? As with a business, we need to know what we want to be when we grow up. The picture needs to be crisp, clear, current and comprehensive.

#### 2. FOCUS ON THE CONSUMER.

This is you. Consume too much and your central circumference increases. Consume too much of the wrong stuff and you get hardening of the hearteries.

#### 3. ENCOURAGE INNOVATIVE THINKING.

Take a fresh look at your way of life. Challenge the status quo.

#### 4. INVEST IN TRAINING.

This is where an energetic dog can help.

#### 5. RESOLVE PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS.

Don't look for someone else to blame. If there's a problem, you're it. If there's a problem, fix it.

#### 6. INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY.

High tech stuff like a bicycle for outdoors and an exercise bike for indoors. And running shoes. Or walking shoes.

#### 7. INVEST IN FACILITIES.

Check out the gymnasium or the health club.

#### 8. CONTROL COSTS.

A heart attack is costly in many ways. The financial cost is only one of your prospective concerns.

#### 9. WATCH THE COMPETITION.

Where your heart's health is involved, powerful competitors include greed, self-indulgence and laziness. Strong competition can kill any business. In this case, it could kill you.

#### 10. MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS.

Your heart thrives when you succeed in doing the right things well.

There is nothing complicated about running a successful life. Difficult perhaps, but not complicated. Those who fail do so because they ignore basic principles.

### Personal Principles

Does your life, in all its aspects, reveal a clear sense of purpose?

Are your personal principles soundly based, clearly defined and scrupulously followed?

Your values and principles have a powerful impact on your general health and wellbeing. They strongly influence the quality of your life.



# How to Fit a Heart Attack into Your Busy Schedule!

## Management By Drift



**Management By Drift** is a particularly popular approach to many aspects of life. Periodically, when a crisis arises, this is displaced by **Management By Panic**.

This applies in the management of personal health and personal relationships as much as in the spheres of business, government and other collective activities.

Once we conclude our current methods are good enough, we can easily become smugly self-satisfied and start to drift. A simple experiment illustrates that drift only ever leads in one direction. Try it yourself:

- ✚ Locate a creek.
- ✚ Gather a statistically significant number of sticks.
- ✚ Throw the sticks, one at a time, into the middle of the creek.
- ✚ Make careful note as to the direction in which the water is flowing. The way it is heading is called "down the creek." The other way is "up the creek."

(Incidentally, this experiment will not work when the water is frozen. I tried that.)

The critical question is: **Which way do the sticks drift?**

Have you ever seen a stick drifting purposefully upstream? Probably not. That is why a mismanaged organization can aptly be described as heading "down the creek."

### Personal Implications

Drifting along in our personal lives inevitably propels us in that same direction. If we drift through life in an undisciplined, unfocused fashion, or if we operate in a driven, unbalanced manner, we should not be surprised when the outcome proves unpleasant.

Many critical factors affecting our health and wellness remain within our ability to control.

**In any aspect of life, the only reason we perform no better than we actually do is that we do not fully intend to perform any better.** If we decide to improve, we could do so. This applies equally to lifestyle issues as to any other activity.

### A Snappy Acronym

Fortunately there is an alternative to the ever-popular Management By Drift (MBD):

**MBFOWYAAWYWTBAHTG  
FWYATWYWTBTGFI!**

Most acronyms come equipped with a mere handful of letters. As one indication of its exceptional value, this one has 31, plus an exclamation mark. Indisputably this gem is in a league of its own. Once you have memorized this snappy acronym, its full form will come readily to mind:

**Management By Figuring Out  
Where You Are And  
Where You Want To Be And  
How To Get From Where You Are  
To Where You Want To Be  
Then Go For It!**

This is a complicated four-step process:

- 1. Figure out where you are.** Assess your current situation.
- 2. Figure out where you want to be.** Clarify your objectives.
- 3. Figure out how to get from where you are to where you want to be.** Decide what you need to do.
- 4. Go for it!**

And in that process, I wish you well.