The BAC Method©:
Transform Stress into Empowerment

How long does it take for most human emotions to run their course?

90 seconds. That's right — most human emotions will rise and fall in about a minute and a half. When we encounter stress, the trick is to train ourselves to neither avoid nor attach to the emotion that arises in response to the stress. The easiest way to do that is to learn to accept whatever we are feeling as it is and simply be with it as it moves through us… to allow the emotion to run its natural course. Then we are in a good state to notice the story we are telling ourselves about the situation and ensuing emotion, so we can determine if the story is accurate or more a habitual, fear-based perception.

If it is a habitual, fear-based story it is usually based on an unconscious belief. We can consciously choose an accurate story, one that makes more sense in relation to the current situation. To make sure we remember the new story we are choosing, it is a good idea to write it down on an index card or "Post-It" note and put this in a place we will see it on a regular basis.

Using our breath to calm our mind and body is a great way to ride the 90- second wave of any emotion and prepare us for evaluating the story that comes along with the emotion. Deep diaphragm breathing allows us to increase parasympathetic nervous system activity (which signals to the brain that we are safe and well) and to decrease sympathetic nervous system activity (which signals to the brain that we are under a threat).

I created The BAC Method©: Transform Stress into Empowerment to offer a fast and effective method that can be easily learned and regularly practiced, each time producing profound results. Over time, this method will enable you to enjoy the accumulative benefits of effectively managing stress and your emotions. What is The BAC Method? Breathe, Accept AIR, and Commit.

The BAC Method©:
Transform Stress into Empowerment

Breathe
Simply breathe for **90 seconds** using the **deep diaphragm breathing technique.** Breathe in through your nose nice and slow…then slowly out through your mouth, allowing your exhalation to be a bit longer than your inhalation. Enjoy the rise and fall of your belly and chest as you breathe nice and slow.

Accept AIR
Approach -- Studies show the best way to manage emotions, including our emotions in response to a stressor, is to approach them rather than avoid them. We can train ourselves to simply be aware of stress and our ensuing emotions from a more objective and compassionate stance. This leads to the development of what is called an **"approach" mentality** — a habit of leaning into life's challenges with a sense of competence in the ability to meet and resolve the challenge and associated stress.

Identify -- What thoughts are generating the emotion? What is the story you are telling yourself? Our **unconscious beliefs** are the basis of the thoughts that create the story we tell ourselves about our experience. Another way of saying this is that our unconscious beliefs create the meaning we assign to our experience. Identifying these beliefs and thoughts enables us to consciously evaluate the accuracy of these beliefs and the resulting stories.

Reframe –- Make a **conscious choice**. Are these thoughts objectively true or is it more that they feel true? Is this story completely accurate? Is the story fear-based or love-based? Ask yourself, "Is this a story I would tell a child — my children, grandchildren, niece or nephew, my friend or neighbor's child, the "me" I remember as a 5 year old?" Is there a different, more accurate story about this situation… one that makes as much or more sense, and that you would tell a child?

Commit
Write the new story down on a note card or "Post-It" note. Writing your new story down will support you in **establishing** this process as **a habit**. Your note will be your cue to go into your new routine/thought process. When we write something down it enhances our memory of what we have written, especially when writing by hand versus typing.

Tami Peckham, LCSW, CH   www.tamipeckham.com