

# BEAT STRESS BEAT POKER

by Charlie Shoten

**Editor's Note:** Last of a series on improving your poker by reducing stress.

# Question Your Thinking!

## Laughter and Truth Are the Best Rx for Tilt

**LAUGHTER/TRUTH** grows your poker bankroll. A good belly laugh clears your mind so you can maintain focus and play in the zone. Have you ever seen a laughing poker player on tilt? Of course not.

Laughter brings the quality of your life up a level or two. Your poker game rises along with it. A good sense of humor, particularly about yourself, keeps you in the flow, not on tilt, through tough situations at the poker table. Questioning your thinking reveals the truth and you might laugh at your perceptions of the way you think about disappointments playing poker.

If laughter were a drug it would sell off the shelves. Feeling better is the stone cold nuts. Is there a better feeling in poker than when your cards are the stone cold nuts? The absence of stress is the stone cold nuts.

### THE TRUTH/LAUGHTER/ NO STRESS/NO TILT

The quality of your poker play has everything to do with how you feel. Again, silly stressful thoughts bring with them stressful feelings. I say silly because when you question your stressful thoughts you realize how ridiculous they are. When you are able to laugh at

them, stress magically disappears. Stop believing the lies in your mind and the stressful feelings lies cause leave and never come back. Untrue thoughts cause stressful feelings. Question them until you stop believing them. Without stress holding you back, tilt and compulsive play are stopped cold. A clear mind free of stress allows access to more correct information than your competition. What follows are better decisions and the ability to act on and seize more opportunities.

Eliminating doubts and fears, anger and resentment (stress) is a skill (process). Learn and master it. Don't put up with stress anymore or you will continue to be its victim and suffer.

Surgery is the first choice to remove a malignant tumor. Silly stressful thoughts are like malignant tumors. The stress they cause sabotages hopes, dreams and aspirations, tortures and eventually kills us. We pass stressful thoughts on to everyone, especially to our children.

When asked, many heart surgeons agree that a good attitude is the most important factor determining the quality and length of the healing process after surgery. It's your mind, attitude, how you

think about yourself, others and situations that determine if you win or lose, heal or get sick. Truth and laughter are the best Rx for a good attitude.

### ACCEPT REALITY

When I was in college, I complained that reality was my only problem. I didn't realize then how important and true that was. Reality is the solution to all problems because when you love reality (truth), you are who, where and what you really are. Don't argue with reality. You will lose. You can't reach any goal, like winning a poker tournament – or accomplish anything else – until you start from who, what and where you really are.

A friend was suffering fear and extreme anxiety. His concern was about how he would play at a final table the next day. Doubts about his abilities caused irrational fears. I pointed out that he had the poker knowledge and experience that he had, no more or less (reality), and he was sitting on a couch watching television (reality). He didn't get it until I repeated it to him about 20 times. When he finally accepted reality, who and where he really was and accepted his current poker skill level, his doubts and fears left. He was transformed. Now he felt calm, confident and was looking forward to playing in tomorrow's tournament. He didn't need to compare himself to mythical opponents anymore or allow his thinking (mind) to distract him from the job at hand – playing his best, whatever that is, in the tournament tomorrow.

To get rid of a contagious disease like cancer, you don't ignore it. Your physician studies everything about it and if possible, surgically removes it. Better yet would be to remove the root cause of a cancer so it never comes back, but physicians rarely know what that is or how to do it. Stress is usually involved as a root cause of all illnesses, including cancer. When you realize how silly stressful thoughts are and have a good laugh at them, they leave, never to come back, and of course you feel better.

Ego is your enemy, especially at the poker table. It wreaks havoc on your game. Ego is also very fragile and can't handle ridicule. When you laugh at your silly thoughts, ego won't defend them any-

## Untrue thoughts cause stress

more. Don't put up with ego and let it control, limit and ruin your game anymore.

Ego is a paper tiger residing in your mind that you need to discard while playing poker. No ego, no tilt.

### GETTING RID OF ANGER AND RESENTMENT

In 2002, I flew to Las Vegas to visit my daughter and grandchildren. I called her at the airport and asked, "Where is the car you promised me?"

She said, "I gave it to someone else."

I replied, "I will call you back." I was experiencing extreme anger and resentment targeted at my daughter.

1. I knew the anger was inappropriate and said I would call her back. I felt like checking into a hotel and not even visiting her, I was so mad.
2. I hung up the phone because if I didn't, I would have ruined her day and my vacation.
3. I realized this was an opportunity to see if the ideas and concepts I was writing in my new book to be, *No-Limit Life*, really worked.
4. I sat down, focused on my anger and resentment, waited for the stressful thoughts and beliefs to appear that were causing me to be so angry at my daughter, and wrote them down.
5. Three thoughts that were the core beliefs supporting my anger and resentment showed up: a. All I did for her; b. She owes me; c. She doesn't care about me or love me.
6. I took those three thoughts to Truth Court, questioned them and laughed at how silly they were when my heart, the judge, gave its ruling.

**Mind:** She promised me the spare car and gave it to someone else. I needed it. She owes me because "All I have done for her." "She doesn't care about me or love me."

**Heart as Judge:** Your daughter has the right to feel about you any way she experiences you. All you did for her was because you love her. You also hurt her in a lot of ways. She doesn't owe you anything. You have no case against her. You are guilty.

**Mind:** Those thoughts are definitely not true. The judge's ruling rings true in my heart. They are silly. I laughed at

myself for believing them.

In a moment, a miracle happened. I wasn't angry or resentful at my daughter anymore. I called her back and asked, "What happened with the car?"

She replied, "An emergency, had to give it to someone else. I didn't think it was a big deal and you would rent a car. When are you coming over?"

I said, "As soon as I rent a car."

From this experience I learned that I was a carrier of anger and resentment all my life. No one could make me feel those feelings if I wasn't already harboring them. Because of the law of attraction and my need to rid myself of anger and resentment, I was continually creating artificial situations to experience anger and resentment. They had been sabotaging relationships ever since I could remember and were the cause of a great deal of anguish in my life. I also realized that my anger and resentment were formed 60 years ago in my relationship with my mom. On her deathbed, neither of us would give an inch. Another miracle occurred. I wasn't angry or resentful at the memory of my mom anymore. I felt strong compassion for both of us.

Since that beautiful day seven years ago, anger and resentment have never affected any other relationships, especially my relationship with myself. Those stressful feelings were toast. I had permanently removed anger and resentment from my mind. Now I knew how to get rid of any stressful feeling as soon as I experienced it. Wait for the stressful thoughts that caused stress to appear, question them and have a good laugh at how silly they are.

### MINDSET AFFECTS PLAY

What does this little story have to do with playing poker? Imagine if I stayed angry and resentful, checked into a hotel and played poker all weekend in that frame of mind. I would have played stakes too high for my bankroll, I wouldn't have chosen the best games to play, I would have played many hours longer than I should, my decisions would not be as good, etc., etc., etc. As it turned out, that weekend I did very well at the poker table and even won a tournament.

What accomplishment have the tons of positive-thinking, self-help books, videos, seminars, the psychiatric profession or the pharmaceutical industry (pill pushers) ever given us to rid ourselves of stress that compares in magnitude with the skill of questioning your thinking I just described? In the past I availed myself of tons of self-help and positive-thinking materials, memorized *Think and Grow Rich* at age 20, visited a psychiatrist for 27 years, and I still suffered doubts and fears, anxiety and depression, anger and resentment and many debilitating physical diseases those feelings caused.

Those efforts didn't tell me what I really needed to know. My problem was incorrect thinking and the only solution was to question it, laugh at it and get rid of it.

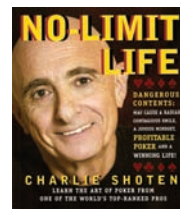
### DON'T DELAY

Don't wait until age 65 to start questioning your thinking, like I did. This is not new to you. You agree with it because you already know truth and laughter heal. I am simply introducing my version of how to take advantage of it for **Poker Pro** readers.

Spread the word to everyone everywhere that there is a new skill (process) you can learn that eliminates stress and keeps you from going on tilt in poker and life.

Everyone has a good laugh when they realize how silly their stressful thoughts and beliefs are, but only after they question them. As more of us question our thinking and have clear minds free of stress, stress will be stopped cold everywhere.

Untrue (stressful) thoughts are a contagious disease that must be questioned. Global lying, especially to ourselves, is the real cause of pollution on planet Earth. ♠



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