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The PHYSICIAN'S *Personal* ADVISORY®

EXCLUSIVE ADVICE ON FINANCIAL, INVESTMENT AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SUCCESSFUL PHYSICIAN'S PERSONAL LIFE

Investing

☞What the bear market teaches us

Lessons from difficult times

Trying to outsmart everyone is the greatest folly.

Oregon-based advisor W. Ben Utley, MS, CFP,[1] has that saying applied to his computer monitor. Though it sounds like it comes from a wizened investing pundit, it's actually from a slightly different source — a fortune cookie he once received.

Despite its inauspicious origin, the saying carries for Utley one of the current bear market's important lessons: that active management has little merit compared to index investing.

Active management won't protect you from downturns, Utley says. An active manager has to outsmart not just one or two people, but everyone in the market. The risk of having the manager mess up, he notes, is greater than market risk.

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• Our Purpose

To provide doctors sound, independent, physician-specific advice to better oversee their personal finances and their lives outside of medicine.

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Bonds, REITs and more

Certainly you'll want to consider Utley's point of view as we weather this current market. Also note these other lessons, from expert advisors:

- ***Hold intermediate-term bonds for downside protection,*** says Hawaii-based Harry Kasanow, CFP.[2] Treasury Inflation-Protection Securities (TIPS) and emerging market bonds have been sweet spots, and high-yield bonds are particularly attractive now.

  But Virginia-based Tom Grzymala, CFP,[3] wouldn't go long on bonds. He recommends a maturity of no longer than three years.

Know the full range of an investment's likely performance.

- ***Use funds that focus on hedging strategies.*** For instance, long/short funds carry small or even negative correlation to the S&P, suggests Kasanow.

- ***Look at alternative investments*** such as real estate investment trusts, says Grzymala. Consider buying a REIT mutual fund. Two that Grzymala likes: Vanguard REIT Index (VGSIX) and Security Capital U.S. Real Estate (SUSIX).

- ***Do your homework*** before you make any investment, so you'll know the full range of what it could do, says Utley. For instance, bond investments will take a hit if (or likely when) the Federal Reserve raises interest rates.

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[1] Contact Utley at Utley & Associates, Inc., Eugene, OR; phone (888) 465-0899; e-mail to *prosper@utleyassociates.com.*

[2] Contact Kasanow at Kasanow & Associates: Wealth Management, Honolulu, HI; phone (800) 988-4469; e-mail to *harrykhi@hawaii.rr.com.*

[3] Contact Grzymala at Alexandria Financial Associates, Ltd., Alexandria, VA; phone (703) 671-5959; e-mail to *tom@afaWealth.com.*

Enduring uncertainty

To weather these current times, Connecticut advisor Tom Gnuse, MBA,[4] offers the following suggestions in his newsletter:

- ✓ ***Don't react to short-term movements.*** Don't allocate so much to stocks that you compromise your goals.
- ✓ ***Remember the past.*** Over the past century, after declines of 40% or more, the market has averaged 8.6% annually, after inflation, in the following five years.
- ✓ ***Respect the future and its uncertainties.*** Define an asset mix compatible with your attitude about risk-return goals and lifestyle needs.
- ✓ ***Honor diversification***. The rationale for creating and maintaining a diversified portfolio has never been more convincing.

More bear to come?

What if this is the fourth year of a long cyclical bear market? asks Kasanow. The last bear ran from 1972 to 1984 and halved investors' assets. If that's the case, keeping the investment lessons of the bear in mind takes on even greater importance.

[4] Contact Gnuse at HTG Investment Advisors Inc., in New Canaan, CT; phone (203) 972-8262; e-mail to *HTG@sprynet.com.*

Planning

☞Independent 529 Plan: Private college savings

Two approaches for saving

In February, we suggested taking advantage of the Upromise program (*www.upromise.com*), which lets you fund so-called "529 plans" by making everyday purchases. The plans provide tax-favored means of funding for your children's or grandchildren's college education. Now, another program can add even more oomph to those savings efforts.

You don't have to select the college until your student is actually ready to do so.

When you join the new "Independent 529 Plan," you prepurchase tuition at select private colleges nationwide. Your plan dollars can be used at any of those elite institutions that are members of the plan.

You don't have to pick the exact college in advance, which gives you flexibility. And if your child decides not to attend one of the plan's institutions, you can still use the funds for another student.

Meeting a need

The Independent 529 Plan arose from the need of private colleges themselves, according to Doug Brown,[1] president and CEO of the Tuition Plan Consortium, the nonprofit organization developing the plan. State-sponsored prepaid 529 plans are geared to paying for tuition at state colleges, he notes. What's more, what you can pay into those plans could fall short of the funds needed for tuition at a private school. Only 20 states offer prepaid 529 plans, and none guarantee tuition at out-of-state schools, says Brown.

Growing from the germ of an idea in 1996, the "Independent" program received final regulatory approval in February. Set to debut this summer, it will allow participants to choose from some 200 colleges, with more colleges expected to join later.

Schools lined up as the founding institutions represented a "gold-plated list of American universities around the country," says Timothy Lane,[2] VP of tuition financing at TIAA-CREF, which will administer the plan and manage its investments. The roster includes small liberal arts schools, Ivy League colleges and large urban institutions.

Two approaches

The Independent 529 Plan allows you to save for college with a two-pronged approach. First, as you fund the program, you'll be prepurchasing tuition at the schools in the program.

Say, for instance, you fund the plan with $20,000. College A costs $20,000/year while College B costs $30,000/year. With your $20,000, you've prepurchased a full year of tuition at College A and two-thirds of a year at College B.

In essence, you've locked in the tuition amount for that year when you fund the program. No matter what the future increases in tuition might be, you'll never pay more than the $20,000 in tuition declared by College A at that time for that year, and no more than $20,000 for two-thirds of College B's tuition.

If in 2004, College A increases its tuition to $30,000, and you put in another $20,000, you've

[1] Contact Brown in Albuquerque, NM; phone (877) 874-0740.

[2] Contact TIAA-CREF at (888) 718-7878; *www.tiaa-cref.org.*

bought two-thirds of that year's tuition. Again, you've locked in the tuition amount.

Sweetening the pot, all colleges in the plan must declare a discount off of that year's tuition, says Lane. It must amount to at least a half percent discount per year. So if you invested funds for 10 years, you'd ultimately receive a discount of roughly 5% off of that year's tuition.

Wait to select

You don't have to select the college until your student is actually ready to do so. Also note that funding the program and planning for your child to use the money at a specific college doesn't actually guarantee his or her admission to those hallowed halls of learning.

You can't fund the program with more than five years of tuition per beneficiary. And the ultimate amount of funding is capped at the tuition for the most expensive school in the consortium.

As with other 529 plans, you can open up different accounts for the same beneficiary — allowing, for instance, grandparents to contribute to the plan. The minimum initial investment is $500, and the minimum holding period is three years.

Not market return

On the downside, you won't receive a market-based return on your dollars. You're trading market returns for the assurance of locking in tuition at these private schools, says Lane. Also, the funds can be used *only* for tuition, not room and board, which is different from other 529 programs.

And be aware, as notes the *Wall Street Journal,* that funding the program could hurt your chances of receiving federal financial aid. But that's an issue for prepaid plans generally, notes Lane.

Under federal rules, prepaid program funds count as a student asset, he notes, which weighs more heavily against eligibility for aid. But this has no impact on merit-based financial assistance.

Exits

If your student decides not to attend one of the private schools in the program, all isn't lost. You can transfer the funds for another child's benefit or roll over the funds into a state-sponsored program, notes Brown.

If worse comes to worse, you can withdraw the funds and receive a refund equal to the investment performance of the underlying pool of money, capped at 2% per year, says Lane. Any losses are limited to 2% of principal.

Worth considering

If you're relatively sure that your student will attend one of the program's private colleges, the Independent 529 Plan is well worth looking into. You give up some returns on your money but lock in tuition costs, which could continue to skyrocket.

To learn more, click to *www.independent 529plan.org*. Full information should be available on the site when the plan debuts this summer. ■

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Travel

☞ Three autumn destinations

Consider these unique outings

Driving the California Coast

Billed as an exotic auto and accommodation adventure, the "Room With A Vroom" package from the Fairmont Miramar Hotel in Santa Monica includes a deluxe ocean view room, rental car, valet parking and copy of *The California Coast: A Traveler's Companion.*

Heading north, you can travel to Santa Barbara, Morro Bay/Pismo Beach and Montana de Oro State park. To the south, visit Carlsbad, Newport Beach and San Diego.

Room with a Vroom starts at $419 per night for a Mercedes SLK or BMW 323, $449 for a Porsche Boxter, and $1,669 for a Bentley. You can arrange to pick up the car at the airport or hotel, which is located 9 miles from Los Angeles International Airport. The 302-room hotel is close to Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade pedestrian shopping area.

For information and reservations: (800) 441-1414; *www.fairmont.com*

Deluxe Rail Travel in New England & Quebec

Aboard the American Orient Express, touted as North America's premier private train, you can enjoy

We typically describe travel opportunities well in advance. That's because we focus on trips and accommodations that are special and we want to provide you the best chance for optimal travel arrangements. We know that, as a busy physician, you typically have to arrange your schedule far in advance, so we try to give you plenty of time to plan ahead.

the "Autumn in New England and Quebec" itinerary. You'll visit Boston, Montreal and Quebec City before circling back to Boston, visiting less-traveled routes through mountain passes, river valleys and small towns, according to tour materials. Excursions off the train explore points of interest.

Appointments in the 16-car train include polished brass in the sleeping cars, inlaid mahogany paneling in the dining cars and ebony, brass and leather in the club cars.

The eight-day, seven-night tour includes overnight accommodations the first night at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston, one night at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City, and deluxe rail accommodations for five nights. Tours run from September 4 to mid-October. Prices range from $3,190 to $5,290 per person double occupancy.

For more information: (800) 320-4206; *www.AmericanOrientExpress.com*

State Fair, Stampede & Sculpture in Dallas, Texas

Said to be the largest state fair in the nation, the 2003 State Fair of Texas takes place September 26 through October 19.

Opening day features a large parade in downtown Dallas. Held at Fair Park, which is near the city center, it includes nine museums open year-round. For more information: *www.bigtex.com.*

From November 7-9, take in the third annual Texas Stampede at the American Airlines Center near downtown Dallas. The stampede features the top rodeo riders in the country. After each rodeo, you can attend a full-length musical concert. Proceeds benefit Children's Medical Center of Dallas as well as the pediatric program at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. For information: (877) 210-5425; *www.texasstampede.org.*

Finally, in mid-October, the Nasher Sculpture Center is slated to open in the Dallas Arts District in the heart of downtown. It will feature a 54,000-square-foot building and a two-acre sculpture garden. The garden will feature outdoor rotating collections of modern sculpture from philanthropist Raymond Nasher. For more information: (214) 891-8570; *www.nashersculpturecenter.org*. ■

Mutual funds

☞Use tax-managed funds to squeeze out returns

Minimizing the tax bite

Mutual fund expenses like front- and back-end loads and management fees can put a serious dent in your portfolio, as we advised last month. Besides these drains on your investment return, pay attention to another profit-gobbler as well: taxes.

Note these numbers: As of the end of February 2003, large cap blend mutual funds (a core portfolio holding for many investors) provided a 10-year return of 7.26%. Deducting normal income taxes, that return drops to 5.15%, says Peter Di Teresa of Morningstar.[1] That's a full two percentage points coming out of your return.

To counter that tax hit, you can invest in funds that are specifically managed for their tax profile. These funds sport various names, such as "tax managed," "tax sensitive" or "tax aware."

Still important

Given the recent bear market, the tax factor actually represents less of a threat to your portfolio than in times past. Many funds, says Di Teresa, carry losses on the books that they can charge against future taxable gains. So a typical mutual fund may have a higher degree of tax efficiency than usual.

Still, don't ignore the income-tax impact on your mutual funds. At some point, those losses will disappear. And if a fund experiences a large inflow of cash, that will dilute the write-off's impact, says Di Teresa.

Finally, financial pundits don't expect a return to the double-digit returns of a few years ago anytime soon. It's crucial to keep more of the modest returns you're likely to obtain during the next few years — that is, keep any returns you obtain undiluted by tax outlays.

How tax-managing works

Fund managers use a number of strategies to minimize taxes:

- limiting turnover (buying and selling stocks)
- avoiding investing in stocks that pay dividends, which are taxed at ordinary income rates rather than lower capital gains rates
- matching gains with losses. If the manager sells

[1] Contact Di Teresa at *prof@morningstar.com.*

a winning stock, s/he will also try to sell a losing stock to offset the gain.

- selling the stock with the highest cost basis to minimize capital gain taxes

Competitive results

With fund managers performing these gyrations, you might suspect that a tax-managed mutual fund's performance will suffer as opposed to more general funds. But that's not the case, as the chart below from mutual fund analysis firm Lipper, shows.

In essence, you pay no premium for tax management. Good tax-managed funds, says Di Teresa, tend to be competitive with those that aren't tax-managed. About 80 funds, says Morningstar, are managed for their tax posture (not counting municipal bond funds).

Find them using Morningstar's Premium Fund Screener tool, which offers a two-week free trial. Search for all domestic stock funds, and under special criteria, select "tax managed."

In selecting these funds, attend to the same sorts of metrics as with any mutual fund. They include reasonable long-term ranking, low expense levels and consistent performance, notes Jeff Keil of Lipper's Global Fiduciary Review Group.[2]

Helping yourself

After sales charges, taxes represent the largest impact on a mutual fund's net return, says Keil. Pay attention to both and help yourself to the biggest potential return from your mutual fund investments. ■

	1 year (3/14/02-3/13/03) Cumulative Total Return	3 years (3/16/00-3/13/03) Annualized Total Return	5 years Annualized Total Return	10 years Annualized Total Return
Tax Managed Equity Funds	-26.17%	-14.01%	-3.23%	6.72%
Equity Funds (excluding Tax-Managed Funds)	-24.7%	-14.76%	-3.3%	6.06%

[2] Contact Keil at (303) 603-8309; e-mail to *Jeff.keil@lipper.reuters.com.*

Insurance

☞Get top value for your disability coverage, Part 3

Which way to pay?

In purchasing disability insurance, you need to make more than a few choices, ranging from how much disability insurance coverage you'll buy to whether your policy should include a cost-of-living provision. But after making so many choices, there's at least one more big item to decide — how actually to pay for it.

Practice or personal?

If you let the practice pay your yearly disability premiums, it might tax-deduct those premium payments without their being taxable to you; but if you later become disabled, you'll have to report the benefits as income. On the other hand, if you pay the premiums personally, you can't tax-deduct them but the benefits come to you tax-free.

The choice involves a calculated risk. If the practice pays the premium, you gamble that you'll never need the benefits. On the other hand, if you pay the premiums personally, you pay for them on an after-tax basis.

Choosing which works for you takes a careful consideration of your financial picture and willingness to take risks. About 90% of his doctor clients pay the premiums personally, estimates Ronald Perilstein, CLU, ChFC.[1]

His doctors have the mindset, he says, that they're buying a certain amount of coverage each month, and they want the full amount if they ever need it. Otherwise, you take a chance that the benefit amount, after taxes, won't meet your needs.

Buying more

If you decide to have the benefits (if needed) taxed, the insurance company may allow you to purchase a larger amount of coverage up front, says Perilstein. As an example, one insurance company will allow someone making $100,000 with no other disability coverage to purchase a tax-free benefit of $4,800 per month. If it's to be taxable, the amount increases to $6,000 per month.

But, he says, you'll typically find that the tax bite will make your monthly net benefit less than what you'd receive tax-free.

Group coverage

If your practice provides your disability coverage as an employee benefit, usually for physicians only, realize that those benefits will be taxable, says Jonathan D. Liss, CLU, CSA.[2] Typically, the plan provides for 60% of income. Paying taxes on top of that means you might not have enough money to make ends meet.

[1] Contact Perilstein at The Arjay Group, Inc. in Narberth, PA; phone (800) 562-7529; e-mail to *rperilstein@arjaygroup.com.*

[2] Contact Liss at Financial Concepts & Strategies in Bala Cynwyd, PA; phone (610) 766-3004; e-mail to *jliss@finsvcs.com.*

But you can set up a group plan to receive the benefits tax-free, says Perilstein. Just tell the insurance company up front that the physicians will purchase their coverage personally.

The insurance firm, however, will likely assume that physicians can choose whether to participate or not. And they'll further assume that the doctors opting for coverage are less healthy than those who don't choose it — thus potentially increasing the premiums.

To address this, tell the insurance company in advance that 100% of employees will participate in the plan, says Perilstein, and that the coverage will be 100% employee-paid.

Avoid this gimmick

In past years, we've described a way to pay for disability premiums that nets you a two-way tax advantage. It's always been dubious enough for us to offer it with reservations and call it the "disability insurance gimmick." Recent changes call for still more caution.

With the gimmick, your corporation adopts a plan to reimburse each qualified employee (usually the physician-employees) for disability insurance premiums as they're presented for payment. Assuming no illness, you make the request at the end of the policy year and receive the reimbursement tax-free.

But if you suffer a disability, you don't submit the premium for reimbursement. You could then argue that the benefits weren't employer-provided and thus not reportable on your personal tax return.

Running a risk

With this tactic, though, you take the risk of running afoul of the IRS. A 1979 IRS Private Letter Ruling had stated that merely being eligible for premium reimbursement is the same as receiving it. More recent IRS rulings also call the practice into question.

The IRS frowns on such "gaming" at the end of the policy year, suggests Pennsylvania-based healthcare attorney Robert J. Landau.[3] His firm recommends against this practice and advises making your decision at the start of the policy year.

More aggressive clients still pay for disability premiums using this strategy, says suburban Philadelphia healthcare lawyer Vasilios "Bill" Kalogredis, JD, CHBC, CFP.[4] The strategy probably doesn't come up to the level of tax fraud, he says.

But the worst case scenario isn't very appealing. If the IRS disallows the tactic, you could pay tax both at the corporate and personal level — and that could amount to a hefty 75% hit.

An alternative

As an optional approach, let the practice reimburse you in early years when you're in good health. Then, switch to taking over the premiums as you get older or become aware of a potential disability. But make sure to record the decision in the corporate minutes. ■

[3] Contact Landau at Wade, Goldstein, Landau & Abruzzo, P.C., in Berwyn, PA; phone (610) 296-1800; e-mail to *rlandau@wadegold.com.*

[4] Reach Kalogredis at Kalogredis, Sansweet, Dearden and Burke, Ltd.in Wayne, PA; phone (800) 688-8314; e-mail to *bkalogredis@ksdbhealthlaw.com.*

Investing

☞ Beware of venture capital and private equity funds

Others have gotten the best deals

Venture capital and private equity funds might sound attractive, especially given the stock market's dismal performance. The lure: Get in on the ground floor of a young company and watch your profits soar.

But these investments, typically offered as limited partnerships, carry a good deal of risk. You'll need to look at them carefully if you invest, and then look again.

Slim pickings

Though similar, venture capital and private equity funds differ in the companies in which they invest. Venture capital funds put money into early-stage companies, perhaps even before they've developed a product. Private equity funds invest in more mature firms that need capital.

When your broker calls with an investment in a private equity or venture capital fund, s/he's typically offering you an investment from a pool that has already been picked through by larger institutional investors, notes Pennsylvania-based advisor Charles Boinske, CFA, of Independence Advisors.[1] The really good venture capital funds — those destined to fund the next Microsoft — don't need your capital, the firm notes. The institutional investors have already obtained the best deals.

Numbers to ponder

Recent figures note the slowing performance of such funds. For the period ending September 30, 2002, the three-year performance figures for venture capital and

— see **Beware** on page 7

[1] Contact Boinske at Independence Advisors, Inc., in Berwyn, PA; phone (610) 695-8070; e-mail to *cboinske@independenceadvisors.com.*

Personal Advisory Rx

Quick tips to save you money and time

Physician income drops, study finds

If your take-home pay feels a little lighter than it has in the past, trust those feelings. Average physician net income from the practice of medicine dropped 5% in real dollars between 1995 and 1999, according to a study from the Center for Studying Health System Change (HSC). By contrast, other skilled professionals' average income increased 3.5%, says a press release.

Primary care physicians' income took a bigger hit than specialists' between 1995 and 1999. Internists, pediatricians and other PCPs saw their net income decline by an average 6.4%, adjusted for inflation, compared with 4% for cardiologists, surgeons and other specialists, according to the release.

On a bright note, medicine remains one of the highest paid professions, the study finds. More than half of all physicians earned more than $150,000 in 1999, while average physician net income was about $187,000. Specialists earned an average $219,000 in 1999, compared with $138,000 for primary care physicians.

Avoid mistakes when setting up a trust

1. ***The wrong trustee.*** An individual can die; a lawyer can have a conflict of interest; an institution can be impersonal. Consider co-trustees: an individual and institution.
2. ***Naming a termination date.*** It you don't name a termination date, the trustee would be able to hold back payments and thus protect assets from creditors.
3. ***Lack of flexibility.*** You could include, for instance, a clause that allows you to change trust location if trust laws change.
4. ***Mandatory income.*** Instead of, for instance, having a wife receive all trust income after the husband's death, give someone you trust the discretion to make distributions.
5. ***The wrong lawyer.*** Look for a specialist in estate planning.

Source: *Alexandria Financial Associates, Ltd.* newsletter, First Quarter 2003.

Try 'hybrid' approach when buying a PC

Shopping for a new computer at a retail store lets you get an in-person look at the device, but you probably won't find a rock-bottom price there. For the best of both approaches, try a hybrid shopping approach: Order a system online, then pick it up at the store (Circuit City offers such a deal).

Source: *PC World*, April 2003.

Mutual fund vanishing act

Have you recently withdrawn money from a mutual fund? Striking information on equity fund flows from fund analysis firm Lipper reveals that you're not alone.

In 2002, January through May saw inflows. July, though, saw the largest outflow ever for equity funds with $53 billion flowing out of them. The outflow continued but wasn't as severe during the remainder of 2002. This represents the first annual outflow since 1988.

Year	Equity fund flow
2002	-$10 billion
2001	+$41.5 billion
2000	+$270 billion

Beware — *continued from page 6*

private equity were 15.1% and 1.0%, a significant decline from 26.0% and 5.4% for the previous period ending June 30th, 2002, according to Thomson Venture Economics and the National Venture Capital Association.

High costs

On top of these figures, recognize that the limited partnerships originated by brokers tend to carry high costs, says Boinske. They also call for a minimum investment of $25,000 for 5 to 10 years, and they're difficult to leave once you're invested.

While it's possible that a good venture capital or private equity fund might get Independence's attention, the firm hasn't found one to recommend to date. "Never say never," says Boinske, but approach such investments with "an incredibly skeptical eye." That's sound investing advice for all seasons. ■

Well-Being

☞Check your communication style

Here are three behaviors to avoid

Are you an indulged communicator? Or perhaps you're a bulldozer, or anxious and avoidant.

Physicians, especially when under stress, can adopt one of these dysfunctional communication styles. Although stereotypical, these can harm your encounters both at home and at work, suggests Scott Stacy, PsyD, program director of the Kansas-based Professional Renewal Center.[1] If you recognize yourself in the following descriptions, work on your communication skills before they come back to haunt you.

Stress tends to exacerbate those behaviors that are most unbecoming.

Three styles

1. ***Indulged.*** In this category, you base your communication patterns on your expectation that others should anticipate and meet your needs. For instance: "You should have known I wanted that lab test ordered." People who use this style may receive feedback along the lines of, "I can't read your mind," says Stacy.

2. ***Bulldozer.*** In this style, you're *authoritarian* as opposed to *authoritative.* Instead of leading with appropriate compassion, power and confidence, arrogance and tyranny reign. You bark orders instead of making requests. What's more, you micro-manage staff. But this narcissism is typically a defense against unrecognized feelings of insecurity and inadequacy, according to Stacy. By puffing yourself up, you hide from others and yourself, and instead make others feel inadequate.

3. ***Anxious and avoidant.*** Here, you feel challenged or attacked when others question your actions or decisions. As a consequence, you avoid confrontations. One physician that Dr. Stacy treated had his partner confront troublesome patients instead of doing it himself.

Not easy to change

As you might expect, changing these ingrained communication patterns is no piece of cake. Your way of communicating, says Dr. Stacy, finds its roots in neurological templates formed over the course of your development.

Unfortunately, stress tends to exacerbate those behaviors that are most unbecoming. Changing a dysfunctional communication style requires a readiness and desire to change, the capacity to reflect on behaviors and motives, the opportunity to practice new ways of listening and responding, and time.

Realize, though, that no one possesses perfect communication skills. In fact, and somewhat ironically, having some combination of these different communication styles can help balance things out. For instance, if you're a little anxious, you may become less arrogant (bulldozer).

An ounce of prevention

If you recognize yourself in any of the above three styles, take a closer look at how you communicate with others. Your style has probably been apparent to others for some time, since it's more difficult to recognize and evaluate one's own behaviors than those of others.

If you're feeling courageous, consult with a professional or ask for feedback from peers and subordinates. Be prepared to hear an honest answer and to do something positive with the information you obtain. ■

[1] Contact Stacy in Lawrence, KS; phone (785) 842-9772; e-mail to *sstacy@prckansas.org*.