



stress relief ...

FROM MIKE GOONEY & THE KEEPERS OF THE VINE

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I'm not sure where I first heard the claim - but I DO remember just recently, refusing to believe it. I remember thinking that comments like that were for the weak-minded or the highly-strung - not me, Mr 'Laidback' Mike! And I remember promising myself that I would cruise through the experience and come out the other side without adding a single grey hair to my beard ...

You see, during some blurry period towards the end of last year, my wife and I packed up the kids and headed for the coast - and not just for a holiday. After many years talking about the possibility, we'd finally done it. We'd sold our little oasis south of the Bombays and were moving to the Coromandel.

We were about to become beach bums ... so to speak!

It was some friends who first made the comment (just after our house went on the market): that *moving house was one of the most stressful things you could do ... that it rated right up there with marriage, divorce and DEATH!* But I bravely scoffed at their outlandish claims. We were going to take it all in our stride!

In fact, I was so relaxed about it that, a week from having to get out of our house, we still hadn't packed a single box (much to the disgust of my friends and my increasingly nervous wife). Our houseful of stuff was still full of stuff - and my barn was as chocka as it'd ever been. But, no, I was adamant: this move would be a piece

of cake, and there was no need to hire a removal company. "That's just not the DIY way!"

Well, our last load on that last night was a sight to behold. The day beforehand had been less-than-cruisey, and it was now midnight. My wife's station wagon had just enough room for her to squeeze in, and there were two big mattresses strapped to the roof.

Thankfully, our kids had all been farmed out, otherwise they'd have been on the roof too!

My truck was so full I had difficulty closing the doors. The dog, our two cats and nine baby chickens were sharing the front passenger seat. The roof-rack was loaded high. And the huge tandem trailer I was towing was loaded even higher, with our big walk-in chook-house (plus chooks) squeezed on the back along with our goats, lawn mowers, tools, troughs, kennels, posts and all matter of shed paraphernalia.

We were ready, at last, for our ultimate trip to the coast!

We paused to say an emotional farewell to our home for the last decade. That house had been built with our own hands, and those hillsides cleared of gorse. It was all our children had ever known, and the memories were countless. And it proved more difficult to leave than I'd imagined.

But, finally, with my wife following, we drove off slowly into the inky darkness ...

It was nearly 3am before we reached the coast and collapsed on the floor of our new home. And as I lay there, exhausted, with just enough energy to breathe, I had to concede: this had been one of the most stressful weeks in my life ... darn it!

I wish I could categorically say that stress is avoidable ... that, so long as you have the right attitude or the right set of skills, you can live a stress-free life. I mean, there are plenty of people who seem to cruise through the years without a care in the world - have you noticed?

But maybe all is not what it seems? Maybe, even the most laid-back amongst us is not exempt? Maybe there are times for *all* of us when stress comes knocking ... when we worry over the health of a loved one ... when we wonder if there'll be enough money to pay the bills ... when we desperately hope that a relationship will stay together ...

It's never been easy finding the right balance between work and family. And our modern, fast-paced lifestyles are only adding to that stress. But RELIEF CAN BE FOUND - whether by heading up the coast for a surf (my personal favourite!) ... or by sitting down with the latest Grapevine and allowing a bit of humour or some heart-felt advice to give you the 'pick-me-up' you so badly need.

Friends can be a HUGE help when the pressure's on. And I've come to realise that Grapevine's "secret weapon" is our nationwide network of friends, who believe in a better future and are each doing *their* bit to make New Zealand a great place to raise our kids. These are friends, just like YOU, who recognise the value of our little magazine and the big difference it's making in the lives of so many Kiwi families.



All of us on the Grapevine Team know what it's like to receive a timely 'pick-me-up'. As you probably remember, we had a tough start to the year, financially - and we're not yet out of the woods. But your generosity has already made a difference, so THANK YOU for the stress-relief!

In just a few days, the first Grapevine for the year is going to hit the streets - and I honestly can't wait to see it! We've got an outstanding feature-length interview with **Doctor Leonard Sax** (a genius on gender-differences between boys and girls) ... some down-to-earth tips on **how to get along with prickly people** ... a **mountain-biking** adventure ... a chat with **Sophie Gray** (the destitute gourmet) ... lots of healthy **laughs** ... and so much more!

Would you please join us in providing some welcome relief to stressed-out Kiwi homes throughout the country? A generous March donation will go a long way in helping us grow our sponsorship message ... and reach more letterboxes ... and give more families a lift.

Every dollar counts. And your \$20 ... or \$50 ... or \$100 ... or \$500 ... or \$1000 will be used to provide the greatest benefit, I promise you.

If you're not yet sponsoring any magazines why not give it a go? Your street, workplace, school, church, club, or whatever will thank you for it.

You see, it's not just a cliché: it's the TRUTH!
Together we really CAN make a difference!

Mike ...



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