

Bluebird Lights, Bridge Falls

It would be well for each of us to see the message in a story appearing in the *New Yorker* magazine.

Approaching a small bridge plainly marked **Load Limit 8 Tons** was a truck, also bearing a note on its side: **8 Tons**.

When the 8-ton truck was about in the middle of the bridge with the 8-ton limit, a bluebird lit on the top girder. At that point, the bridge gave way and crashed with the truck into the river below – to the obvious surprise of the bluebird.

The bridge was built, as indicated, for 8 tons; the truck weighed exactly that. The bridge could hold up under its load limit, but not under 8 tons and one bluebird.

Of course, this story is wonderfully ridiculous. Most bridges could stand up under their load limit and several thousand bluebirds extra. But, to be sure, all bridges have a breaking point somewhere – that point at which the bluebird would be just much too much.

But, dear reader, it really isn't the bluebird that breaks it down. It is the fact that 8 tons are already present.

We all have bluebird troubles, don't we? We are all burdened by the facts of our lives that we allow to take us to the point of "load limit." We let the little things get the best of us, the little bluebirds of nothingness, tiny bluebirds of no importance, but just the thing to bring us down.

Every person has a limit, and we would do well to watch for the warning signs of one bluebird too many. There is always a load limit.

The American Heart Association offers some stress-stoppers to help us avoid that load limit, including ...

- Go for a walk, even if it is just to the restroom and back. It can help break tension and give you a chance to think things through.
- Try a quick prayer to get some perspective.
- If it's not urgent, sleep on it and respond tomorrow. This works especially well for stressful emails and social media trolls.

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- Break down big problems into smaller parts. Take one step at a time instead of trying to tackle everything at once.
- Turn on some chill music or an inspirational podcast to help you deal with road rage.
- Take a break to pet the dog, hug a loved one or do something to help someone else.
- Do something active. Exercise is a great antidote for stress.

The Bible offers this advice: *Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad* (Proverbs 12:25 ESV).

See the role each of us can play? An encouraging or affirming word helps keep someone from reaching his or her load limit. And ours as well.

– Beecher Hunter

