



“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.”

William James

GOT STRESS?



If there is one thing that I have learned in over three decades in business, especially in the deadline driven event business, is that we have control over our stress. There will always be more emails than we can possibly read, unexpected visitors, fire drills, distractions, change and disruptions. Living in a pattern of constant, high level stress is unhealthy – for your emotions and physical health. As you address the stress in your life, it will assist you with being more productive and healthier.

So, how can you manage the stressful situations that seem to fill your day? Let’s review a few tips – you have more control than you think!

It Starts with YOU!

Stress management starts with your mindset. What are you putting into your head? What feelings are you carrying with you? It’s time to take charge and realize that *you* control your days and your decisions. As Bob Dimuccio, President of Amica Mutual Insurance, professes; *“Always be the calmest person in the room.”* When you are confronted with a situation that is disturbing or disheartening – take a breath and remember there are two, if not more, sides to every story.

Be Open to Learning

There is an adage – the more you know, the more you realize how much you do not know. It may be time to consider the way you have “always” done it and try something new.

Bless and Release

If there are negative people in your life who cause you stress with their negative attitude, it may be time to bless and release them out of your life or limit your time with them. Surround yourself, as best you can, with people who possess a positive attitude, strong work ethic, integrity and a more than a semblance of gratitude. Likes attract likes – do your best to avoid negative clusters of people or situations. Avoid people and conditions that stress you out!

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall?

What is the cause of stress in your life? Is it your job, colleagues, home, spouse, or certain friends? Are you “stressed out” all the time by your family, boss, clients? Do you blame this stress on others? Do you thrive on stress? Take a good look in the mirror – could you be the source of your own challenges? Perhaps it is time to take responsibility for your own stress. Keep a journal and track the causes of stress - in addition to who and what you are surrounding yourself with.

Busy is NOT A Contest!

There is a way to say “no” that does not make the person asking feel insulted or hurt. We have all had times in our lives when we have said “yes” to many things, making our plate very full. While a full plate is attractive, and perhaps in a sense, comforting, we only have so much time in a day. We want to do our best to avoid “buyer’s remorse,” regretting that we signed up for an activity or program that we do not have time for. Set your boundaries and recognize your limits!

When you do say “no”, say “no” nicely without a dissertation on how busy you are. No one cares how busy you are – busy is not a contest! We all know people who rant on and on about what they are doing. Nobody cares how “busy” you are!

Get Your ZZZ’s.

Make sleep a priority. Aim for 8 hours or whatever amount of time you feel that you need. Maintain an exercise schedule, ideally on a daily basis. Physical activity will serve to relieve stress – even a 10-minute walk will do wonders for your health. Instead of enjoying a coffee or cocktail with a friend, plan a “walk and talk!” Stock up on healthy foods – be conscious of what you put in your body – including your head! Make sure you schedule enough “you time” with activities that relax you and bring you joy.

Relationships

Value the people in your life who make you feel good about you. The people who champion and appreciate you are a gift in your life. Cultivate these relationships and make time for them. It can be so easy to take people for granted, especially the ones we are closest to. Spending time with people who are interesting to be with and interested in your life, will serve to relieve your stress.

Gail Lowney Alofsin is a keynote speaker, author, adjunct professor and business executive. Her book, *Your Someday is NOW – What are you Waiting For*, focuses on becoming your best you. A lifelong student and humanitarian, Gail believes that we all have the capability to be a leader in our own lives, influencing the lives of others for positive peak performance and success. She can be reached at 401-640-4418 and gail@gailspeaks.com. Follow her on twitter: [@gailalofsin](https://twitter.com/gailalofsin) and visit her website: gailspeaks.com.