

Volume 8, Issue 11

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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Motivated Vol 8, Issue 11
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Some years ago, the World Health Organization predicted that by the end of this decade, half of the top ten medical problems worldwide would be stress-related, and another study found that 54% of people worldwide complain of stress at work. In Japan, the modern era has coined the new words *karoshi* and *karojisatsu*—“death from overwork” and “suicide from overwork.”

Stress is a very real problem that affects all of us to varying degrees. There’s so much that we need to do each day, so much that we want to do, and so much that others expect of us. We feel pulled in all directions. Perhaps the most daunting aspect of stress is the way it is self-perpetuating. Just thinking about how to get out from under it puts us under more stress.

The root of the problem is simple: We often try to do too much, more than is humanly possible, and we put our mind, body, and spirit under pressures that we were never meant to handle.

Life doesn’t have to be a daily crisis, though. We don’t have to remain entangled in the unending struggle to do more and have more, and we don’t have to be a prisoner of unrealistic expectations. The pressures won’t stop, but we can break the cycle.

The inspirational stories and articles in this issue of *Motivated* were just what I needed when I felt the mounting pressure of my to-do list. They helped me to reassess, adjust my work habits, and reduce the stress I was under. I hope they will do the same for you.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Speed Up, slow Down

By Chris Hunt

The books on the shelf have similar titles: *Slowing Down Modern Life*, *The Rush Culture*, *Putting a Price on Speed* ... Most everyone agrees that contemporary life is lived in the fast lane, and we're battling the consequences in the form of stress and other maladies. It might seem as though life was much simpler a hundred years ago, but even changes taking place back then were a cause for concern for people at the time, as illustrated in the following extracts:

The cause of the ... increase in nervous disease is increased demand made by the conditions of modern life. ... Everything is done in a hurry. We talk across a continent, telegraph across an ocean, take a trip to Chicago for an hour's talk. ... What wonder if the pressure is almost more than our nerves can bear.—G. Shradly (from P.C. Knapp), "Are Nervous Diseases Increasing?" *Medical Record*, 1896

With the advent of cheap newspapers and superior means of locomotion ... the dreamy quiet old days are over. ... Men now live, think, and work at express

speed. They have their *Mercury* or *Post* laid on their breakfast table in the early morning, and if they are too hurried to snatch from it the news during that meal, they carry it off, to be sulkily read as they travel ... leaving them no time to talk with the friend who may share the compartment with them. ... The hurry and bustle of modern life ... lacks the quiet and repose of the period when our forefathers, the day's work done, took their ease.—Morley William Smith in *Ancient and Modern*, 1886

If it was seen as that bad well over a century ago, when horses were still the main means of transportation, landline phones were a rarity, and the internet had not even been dreamed of, what hope is there for us today?

Perhaps the answer is that no matter the circumstances of the world around us, we can slow down, take time to talk with a friend, to notice the daisies at our feet, to savor our food. We can lift up our eyes to the heavens and discover that the stars are still silently twinkling. De-stressing is a matter of the mind and heart. ■



Dealing with Stress

Adapted Web Reprint, <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/stress-tips.html>

Here are 10 simple tips to help manage and reduce your stress levels.

1. Avoid Caffeine, Alcohol, and Nicotine

Avoid, or at least reduce, your consumption of nicotine and any drinks containing caffeine and alcohol. Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants, and so will increase your level of stress rather than reduce it. Swap caffeinated and alcoholic drinks for water, herbal teas, or diluted natural fruit juices, and aim to keep yourself hydrated, as this will enable your body to cope better with stress.

2. Engage in Physical Activity

Stressful situations increase the level of the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol in your body. These are the “fight or flight” hormones that are hard-wired into our brains. However, stress in the modern age is rarely remedied by a fight

or flight response, so physical exercise can be used as a surrogate to metabolize these hormones, and restore your body and mind to a calmer, more relaxed state. Try to incorporate some physical activity into your daily routine on a regular basis.

3. Get More Sleep

A lack of sleep is a significant cause of stress. Unfortunately, stress also interrupts our sleep, as thoughts keep whirling through our heads and stop us from relaxing enough to fall asleep. Rather than relying on medication, aim to maximize your relaxation before going to sleep. Make sure your bedroom is a tranquil oasis with no reminders of things that cause you stress. Stop doing any mentally demanding work several hours before going to bed so that you give your brain time to calm down. Also aim to go to bed at roughly the same time

each day so that your mind and body get used to a predictable bedtime routine.

4. Try Relaxation Techniques

Each day, try to relax with a stress reduction technique. There are many tried-and-tested ways to reduce stress, so find one that works best for you. (See page 10 for one such technique.) Don't worry if you find it difficult to relax at first. Relaxation is a skill that needs to be learned, and will improve with practice.

5. Talk to Someone

Stress can cloud your judgment and prevent you from seeing things clearly. Talking things through with a friend, work colleague, or even a trained professional, can help you find solutions to your stress and put your problems into perspective.

6. Keep a Stress Diary

Keeping a stress diary for a few weeks is an effective stress management tool. Note down the date, time, and place of each stressful episode, and what you were doing, who you were with, and how you felt both physically and emotionally. Use your diary to understand what triggers your stress, and how effective you are in stressful situations. This will enable you to avoid certain stressful situations and develop better coping mechanisms.

7. Take Control

Stress can be triggered by a problem that on the surface may seem impossible to solve. Try writing down the problem and coming up with as many solutions as you can. Decide on the good and bad points of each one, and select the best

solution. Then write down each step you need to take as part of the solution: what will be done, how, when, and where it will be done, and who is involved. Record the outcome and see what changes take place in your stress level.

8. Manage Your Time

Accept that you cannot do everything at once and start to prioritize and diarize your tasks. Note what tasks you need to do personally and what can be delegated to others to do. By editing what might have started out as an overwhelming and unmanageable task list, you can break it down into a series of smaller, more manageable tasks spread out over a longer time frame, with some tasks removed from the list entirely through delegation.

9. Learn to Say "No"

A common cause of stress is having too much to do, and too little time in which to do it. Learning to say "no" to additional or unimportant requests will help to reduce your level of stress. Many people find it hard to say "no" because they want to help, are trying to be nice, and to be liked. For others, it is a fear of conflict, rejection, or missed opportunities. You might feel reluctant to respond to a request with a straight "no", at least at first, so try to think of some pre-prepared phrases to let other people down more gently.

10. Rest If You Are Ill

If you are feeling unwell, do not feel that you have to carry on regardless. A short spell of rest will enable the body to recover faster. ■

Steps to Happiness

Author Unknown

Everybody knows...

You can't be all things to all people.
You can't do all things at once.
You can't do all things equally well.
You can't do all things better than everyone else.
Your humanity is showing just like everyone else's.

So...

You have to find out who you are, and be that.
You have to decide what comes first, and do that.
You have to discover your strengths, and use them.
You have to learn not to compete with others,
because no one else is in the contest of being you.

Then...

You will have learned to accept your own uniqueness.
You will have learned to set priorities and make decisions.
You will have learned to live within your limitations.
You will have learned to give yourself the respect that is due.
And you'll be a most vital mortal.

Dare to believe...

That you are a wonderful, unique person.
That you are a once-in-all-history event.
That it's more than a right, it's your duty to be who you are.
That life is not a problem to solve, but a gift to cherish.
And you'll be able to stay one up on what used to get you down. ■



Living Life and Having Fun

Author Unknown

A house becomes a home when you can write “I love you” on the furniture. I can’t tell you how many countless hours that I have spent cleaning. I used to spend at least 8 hours every weekend making sure things were just perfect—“in case someone came over.” Then I realized one day that no one came over; they were all out living life and having fun!

Now, when people visit, I find no need to explain the condition of my home. They are more interested in hearing about the things I’ve been doing while I was away living life and having fun. If you haven’t quite figured this out as yet, please heed this advice.

Life is short, so enjoy it! Dust if you must, but wouldn’t it be better to paint a picture or write a letter, bake a cake or plant a seed, or even ponder the difference between want and need? Dust if you must, but there’s not much time, with rivers to swim and mountains to climb, music to hear and books to read, friends to cherish and life to lead. Dust if you must, but the world’s out there with the sun in your eyes, the wind in your hair, a flutter of snow, and a shower of rain. This day will not come around again.

Dust if you must, but bear in mind, old age will come and it’s not always kind. And when you go—and go you must, you, yourself will make more dust! It’s not what you gather, but what you scatter that tells what kind of life you have lived ... and remember, a layer of dust protects the wood beneath it. ■



WHEN WORK IS PLAY

By Catherine Neve

PARENTING
FROM THE HEART



Believe it or not, young children like to help out. It's true! Children actually enjoy and take pride in being helpful until they are "taught" otherwise. It's only when they hear their parents or older siblings grumbling about "having to do" this or that around the house that helping out becomes a chore.

If approached positively, helping out can seem more like play. It can also help build self-esteem, self-discipline, initiative, diligence, perseverance, self-reliance, and responsibility—all qualities that are useful in life.

There is at least one educational system that uses this "work as play" principle in a big way. Departing from traditional teaching methods in favor of capitalizing on a child's natural interests, Maria Montessori (1870–1952) gentled some of the most undisciplined preschool children in Naples, Italy, into highly motivated, creative, and accomplished

students. One facet of Montessori schooling called "practical life" involves teaching children the basic skills they will need in everyday life, such as dressing, hygiene, and food preparation. Two-year-olds, with their "I can do it myself" attitude, are at the perfect age for practical life training, but there are plenty of practical life challenges for every age and stage of development.

As a busy mother, I usually found it quicker and easier to do the little jobs myself than to teach my little ones to help. But I soon realized that I was being shortsighted. I needed help, and my children needed opportunities to learn and feel "grown up." Later, I found that even rascally children were usually happy to channel their energy into doing little jobs for me if I approached them right.

Preschoolers can help with simple meal prep, beginning with washing vegetables, spreading peanut butter onto

sandwiches, or mixing cookie dough or pancake batter. Young children enjoy sweeping, wiping spills, and sorting silverware. If you keep it fun and reward them with praise and recognition, they will be thrilled each time they “graduate” to a new job.

This does not need to end when your children reach school age. It was a milestone for my children when they were considered old and responsible enough to use the vacuum cleaner. Some children like to clean bathroom sinks and change the hand towels. Others like to rake leaves, mow grass, or help wash the car. The list is endless—just look around!

Assigning game names to household jobs is good “marketing strategy.” The first such game I taught my children was “ant hill.” They pretended they were ants and scurried around, taking every toy, block, or stuffed animal left out back to the “ant hill” (where it belonged). Even babies can learn to play this game, sitting in your lap or next to you as the two of you take turns putting blocks or other small toys into a box—then you make sure to lavish them with praise.

Some possible pitfalls and how to avoid them:

- **It can be frustrating for both of you** if the job is beyond their ability or attention span, so don’t expect too much.
- **Make it easy for your children to succeed** by making sure they understand the job and how to best go about it.
- **Make helping out voluntary** or give your children a choice between jobs, when possible. If you’ve succeeded in keeping it fun, your

children will be quick to volunteer.

- **It helps, especially when the job may seem daunting** or tedious to the child, to talk about something fun as you tackle the job together. Be their coach, teammate, and cheering section.

- **Don’t wait till the job has gotten too big** or your child is too tired to tackle it cheerfully.

- **Teach your children to put away one thing** before getting out another and to clean up as they go, whenever possible.

- **If you leave your child alone to do a job**, don’t be surprised if you come back and find he or she has gotten busy with something else. Children get distracted easily without supervision. Don’t wait till time is up to find out how it’s going.

- **Be careful how you express disappointment** and always try to counter it with words of encouragement and reassurance. Stay positive!

There are so many benefits to making work fun for children. Not only do they learn practical skills and develop character, but they also learn to work as a team and gain appreciation for how much you and others do for them.

Finally, if you want your children to get into the habit of helping cheerfully, then get in the habit of thanking and praising them. Thank them on the spot. Reward them with hugs and the occasional special treat. Sing their praises to your spouse, family members, and friends—preferably within your children’s earshot. Nothing builds self-esteem like praise and appreciation from those we love most! ■

How to Get Rid of Stress and Anxiety in 10 Minutes



By Irma, adapted

Many people, have two daily companions—stress and anxiety. They wake up together, go to school or work together, make decisions together, and even try to relax and have fun together.

Seriously, these bad emotions are taking our energy, health, and happiness away. In this crazy world we are living in now, we have to find a way to get rid of these emotions.

You probably heard about yoga, meditation, breathing exercises for stress reduction and life quality improvement. While these techniques are really beneficial, it is not always so easy to implement them into your daily life. Especially if you are new to things such

as meditation, and you are going through hard times in your life, it will be nearly impossible to practice meditation and to see its benefits.

I want to introduce you to a deep relaxation technique, which immediately makes you feel relaxed and happy, and if practiced daily, you soon will see big shifts in how you feel, think, and perform. Regular practice will also enhance memory and learning capacity, awaken creativity and intuition, and bring more positivity, joy, and fulfillment, and release stress at its deepest levels.

Following are some simple steps to a life with less stress and anxiety:

1. Lie down on the floor on a yoga mat, or on your bed. Your body should be straight, but comfortable. I suggest to put on a light blanket or sheet.

2. Close your eyes. Take a couple of deep breaths. Imagine that with every exhalation all worries, problems, and bad thoughts flow out of you.

3. Then start to move awareness through your body parts. Begin by feeling your forehead, then eyes, nose, lips, chin, whole face, neck, and so on, until you reach your toes.

4. Mentally repeat a few times: I am calm, relaxed, and creative. Feel it. Imagine yourself as the most relaxed and creative person in the world.

5. Concentrate on your breathing. When you inhale, say mentally: 21, when you exhale: 21, inhale 20, exhale 20, inhale 19, and exhale 19, and so on until

you reach 1. Every number brings your closer to deep relaxation and a better life quality.

6. Repeat again: I am calm, relaxed, and creative.

7. Listen to the sounds outside and inside your room. Begin to move your toes and fingers, slowly open your eyes.

You are feeling better now, aren't you? I practice a little longer version of this deep relaxation everyday (about 45 minutes), and can't find words to say how grateful I am that I found it. I believe it can transform everyone's life. So if you are wondering whether or not to try it, give it a go, and let me know how you feel. ■

About the author: Irma is a relaxation coach. She is the creator of www.fightyourstress.com

What Am I?

Author Unknown

I am seldom considered, though I do more to influence everything about you than virtually any one thing in your life. I often control the time you get up in the morning, the time you go to sleep, what you eat and drink, and the very thoughts that run through your head. I can make you either happy or sad, loving or hateful, cheerful or remorseful, congenial or spiteful, and in doing so, control the very capacity that you have for success.

No, you don't often think of me, instead you blame the problem I create on the shortcomings of others, or the state of the economy, or your family or a million other reasons. Often, when you are unable to find anyone else to blame, you

look for shortcomings within yourself on which to lay the blame.

When my impact on your life is considered fully in your every thought and action, when you are mindful of my awesome power, when you nurture and groom me for positive use in your life, I can become more contagious than the most prolific disease ever witnessed by man. My influence will spread to every person you come in contact with.

Groomed and nurtured in a positive manner, there will be no person or obstacle that can stand in the way of my success, or fail to be impacted for the better.

I Am Your Attitude! ■

Slow down

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Slow down and enjoy life. It's not only the scenery you miss by going too fast—you also miss the sense of where you are going and why.—**Eddie Cantor**

Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice, but for those who love, time is eternity.—**Henry Van Dyke**

Don't be in a hurry to achieve your dreams. Take a day to play with your kids and relax. Your dreams will still be there tomorrow.—**Lindsey Rietzsch**

One of the best pieces of advice I ever got was from a horse master. He told me to go slow to go fast. I think that applies to everything in life. We live as though there aren't enough hours in the day but if we do each thing calmly and carefully we will get it done quicker and with much less stress.—**Viggo Mortensen**

The trees that are slow to grow bear the best fruit.—**Moliere**

For fast acting relief, try slowing down.”
— **Lily Tomlin**

It's important to slow down, every now and then, for no other reason than to call someone to say “Hi”. It doesn't have to be a long conversation. Just calling out of the blue does more to let someone know you still care about them than nearly anything else.—**Simon Sinek**

Wisely, and slowly. They stumble that run fast.—**William Shakespeare**

Sometimes our stop-doing list needs to be bigger than our to-do list.—**Patti Digh**

Stop rushing. Slow down and enjoy the beauty of life.—**Debasish Mridha**

