

How to control your stress

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1. What is stress?

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, stress is when you develop negative emotions such as fear, worry, and or tension because you cannot cope well with your life situations or events.

Even though external things might start the stress, you can always control your stress if you are able to control yourself, your emotions. It does not matter what happens. If you have a positive mindset and look for the positive in situations, your life will become positive. However, if you have a negative mindset, your life will become negative and that will increase your stress level.

For example, imagine there was a story in the news that there was a terrible traffic jam. One of the news reporters went around and asked people how they felt about the traffic. The reporter went up to the first person and asked him how he felt about the situation. The gentleman

told the reporter that he was okay because he called his boss and told him about the situation and he had everything he needed in his car, so he was okay with the situation. Then the reporter went to the next gentleman and found that he had a different reaction. The second gentleman was furious with the situation, and he could not control his emotions. He started cursing. As you can see, each person reacted differently to the same situation.

Throughout this book, you will learn ways to control and calm down your emotions and not let them take control of you. You will also learn different tools to help you handle and respond to situations positively.

Today, stress has a negative reputation because so many people suffer so much from it. When people do not know how to manage their stress and it gets out of control, it affects their entire life. **However, if you are able to**

manage your life and your stress well you can become very happy.

2. Three types of stress

The first type of stress is called acute stress. This is short-term stress that does not last long and usually disappears after the event or situation is over. Some examples of acute stress are stress from public speaking, taking an exam or from things and events that make you feel very anxious at the current moment.

The second type of stress is distant stress. This happens when the past affects the present moment. Common examples of distant stress are traumatic events such as veterans who suffer from post-combat anxiety, people who suffer from past sexual abuse, or other events that still affect individuals in the present moment.

The third type of stress is chronic stress, ongoing stress that people cannot manage. Two common examples of chronic stress that many people experience are taking care of a sick person and unemployment.

It is important that you learn how to control your stress before it becomes chronic so it does not affect your entire life. In order to avoid chronic stress, you have to learn how to handle and cope with your life situations as soon as possible. Do not avoid them. The longer you feel stress the more stress hormones develop in your body. This will prevent your body from coping with and healing sicknesses and diseases. However, the faster you are able to control and manage your stress, the stronger you will become to help fight off unhealthy hormones, which include stress hormones. **Every time you overcome stress; even just a little bit, you become stronger.**

3. Keep stress in perspective

Remember that stress does not last forever. Nothing in this world is permanent. **Stress is just another thing that needs to be dealt with and then you move on, just like anything else.** Accept that stress is a part of life. When you go through a tough or difficult time, remember that it will eventually fade away. If stress does not go away fast, remember that nothing stays the same in this world. There is always a light at the end of the tunnel.

You just have to believe that things will get better. **With a positive attitude, and understanding that stress is a part of life and that you can become successful in dealing with anything that life has to offer, stress will somehow resolve itself.**

4. Take 100% responsibility

As a human being, taking responsibility for your actions is a big part of your life. It can also help you manage your emotions and stress. **Taking responsibility gives you the motivation to take actions to solve your problems and to be in control of your life.** Taking responsibility will instantly take some of the stress away. When you do not take responsibility, you are more likely to make excuses and blame others. This will not only make the situation worse but also take some of your inner power away.

Taking responsibility does not mean you have to know all the answers right away, but it does mean that you are willing to find the answers to solve your problems and not let problems hold you back from moving forward in life. Sometimes it might take you a while to fix a problem, but as long as you are taking responsibility and working to

fix your problems you are in control of your life. This helps to prevent stress from escalating. **Remember, your life problems are your responsibility because no one will solve them for you.**

5. How do you respond?

How stressful something is depending on how you respond to it. For example, do you respond positively or negatively when things happen? In life, things will happen that you might not like. That is just part of life and you cannot do anything about it. **The only thing you can do and control is how you respond to what has happened to you.**

Similar things happen to everyone. For example, many of us will be in a car accident at least once in our life time, but how much stress you feel depends on how you

respond to the car accident. People who have a positive mindset will feel less stress compared to a person who responds to the car accident with a negative mindset.

Another example is when you get into an argument. If you have the tools to handle the argument productively or positively you would experience less stress compared to a person who does not have these tools. Do you have a strong and positive mindset? This will help you to handle and overcome anything, which would result in a lower level of stress.

6. Do not complain

Complaining will not help you; instead, it will make the situation worse and create more stress.

First, complaining releases negative energy. Second, it reinforces your failures and disappointments

into your mind. This makes it more difficult to move forward the next time you face a challenge or setback. It is important to become aware of the reasons why you failed, but do not create more stress by complaining. Third, when you complain, you use time and energy that you could use for other things. If you do complain, think about how much time you spend complaining. This adds to your stress and makes you even unhappy.

The next time you think about complaining, use that time instead to do something positive that will decrease your stress.

7. Positive thinking

Everything in life happens for a reason. Even if something seems negative at the moment, it will be revealed as a positive outcome if you are patient and take

the time to analyze why it has happened to you. Often the positive aspect may need more time to become obvious than the negative aspect.

Even though you might not have a clear picture of how the positive side has manifested when you are suffering, the positive side is there. **There is a positive side to everything, no matter how bad or terrible the situation is.**

For example, the left side would not exist without the right side. The color black would not exist without the color white. The term positive would not exist without the term negative. In our discussion, a negative outcome would not exist without some form of positive outcome.

To help you see the positive side faster, stay calm and focus on identifying the positive aspect of the situation. Find a way to help you overcome your suffering. Do not complain or whine about how terrible things are at

the moment. This will make your focus on the negative aspects of the situation and increase your stress.

When you learn how to react and believe that there is a positive side to every experience, you can stay focused on your current situation and solve your problem. When you believe that a benefit will manifest from solving your problem, you are more motivated to solve your problem as soon as possible because you want to see and experience the positive. This will help to decrease your stress. However, if you believe that your situation will not lead to any benefit, it will increase your stress.

8. Solve your problems on paper

A major cause of stress is when you do not clearly understand your problem and how to solve it. The brain

needs a path to follow to solve your problem; otherwise it will create fear and worry. This will increase your stress level.

In order to clearly understand your problem and how to solve it, write it down. **When your problem is written down, it will be separated from the other thoughts and problems inside your mind and help your brain to clearly understand it.** However, when the problem is only in your mind, other thoughts may distract your brain from seeing the problem clearly.

After you write down the problem, quickly make a list of options to solve it, then pick the best option and take action right away. When your brain has a path to follow to solve your problem you will feel less stress because your mind knows that there is a way out of the problem.

As long as you make it clear to your brain what the problem is and what steps could solve your problem, your brain will not create as much stress for you.

9. Take action

To prevent your problems from taking too much of your attention, solve them as soon as possible and do not let them persist in your mind. Your brain will create a lot of stress when you have unsolved problems. The kinds of thoughts that will cause the most stress are the ones that you keep on thinking about day and night. The longer you keep those problems inside your mind the higher your stress level will, and the less mental strength you will have to handle anything productively.

Whatever problem you are facing, do something about it, even if a negative outcome may develop. If your plan needs other people to be successful, do not wait until everyone agrees before you start taking action. Since you are the one feeling stress you are the one who need to take the first step. Do not be afraid to ask for help because there is a good chance that others might feel the same way as you do. When you start to take action, resources and people will manifest to help you become successful. The world will find ways to help you.

When a problem develops, quickly write down a list of options or solutions to it. Next, arrange them in order from best to worst for solving your problem. Take action right away using the best solution. If the best solution does not work, go on to the next one. Do not quit until your problem is solved. Sometimes it might take three or four tries before the problem is solved. Remember, if there is a problem, there will also be a solution to it. **As long you are**

taking action to solve your problem, your brain will focus on solving your problem instead of how stressful the problem is.

10. Get out

If you have tried many ways to solve your problem and nothing has worked yet, and your stress level is the same or increases, it is time to GET OUT of the situation as soon as possible. **Nothing is worth keeping and no situation is worth staying in that cause you to feel great amounts of stress.** When a problem increases your stress level day and night, you will not be as productive in anything you do. One problem can affect your entire life. Remember, you still have other priorities in your life that you need to take care of.

Do not feel guilty about getting out of a situation if you have to. It does not mean you are a failure. It could mean that you are not meant to solve that problem because the time might not be right or the resources were not available to you at that time. The most important thing is to control your stress.

Sometimes getting out of a situation is a good thing, because when you are in the middle of a problem you may not be able to see the solution clearly. **Getting out of the situation it will calm your mind down so you can see the problem better, and then you can come back to it with a fresh point of view and find a better solution to the problem.**

11. Take care of your rumination thoughts

Rumination thoughts are thoughts that keep on manifesting inside your head, the thoughts you keep on worrying about day and night. It is important to take care of these thoughts as soon as possible. **The repetition is a sign that the thought is important to you.** Also, negative repeated thoughts will also cause you the most stress if you do not take care of them.

When you do not take care of your persistent thoughts your mind uses its energy to keep on thinking about them, which means it has less energy to focus on other things in your life.

It is important for you to create a plan and resolve persistent thoughts as soon as possible. Even though the problem might involve other people, you are the person who is feeling stress. This means that you need to take action to decrease your stress. For example, if you

need to talk to another person about something that you keep thinking about, then you need to take the first step and talk to that person. Don't wait for the other person to talk to you. Even if you might think that the other person might not understand you or even if you are afraid it may have a negative result, the fact that you took the action step will help to decrease your stress level.

12. Write down your thoughts

When you write down your thoughts, it will help you to release them so you can focus and concentrate on what you are doing in the current moment. Otherwise, your thoughts could distract you from focusing on your current task.

Whatever comes into your mind while you are doing something, jot it down immediately. For example,

if you are typing something and the thought “I have to call my friend Anna tonight” comes to your mind, write it down right away. By writing down your thoughts they will be out of your mind. This will help you to stay focused on your current task. Your brain will know that your thought is in a safe place so you can access it later. Then, your brain will stop focusing on that thought so you will not forget it. It is best to have a piece of paper or a notebook, or even a smartphone with you so when things come up you can make a note of them. Writing down your thoughts also helps you to remember them. For example, sometimes if you do not write down your thoughts right away you will completely forget them, and you may regret it later on. After you write down your thoughts, solve them as soon as possible because writing them down will only put them out of your mind temporarily. You do not want the same thoughts to keep manifesting in your mind. The brain does not like to see the same thing over and over again. As you

accomplish each task on your list, delete it. Keep on adding new thoughts to the list.

13. De-clutter your mind

Make sure your work and home areas are as clean as possible. One simple thing that causes a lot of stress is a cluttered mind being exposed to many material objects. The more objects the mind sees, especially unused things, the more the mind becomes cluttered. For example, when a machine receives too many things at once it will get stuck. This decreases its productivity or even stops it from working. When your mind sees too many objects it could also become cluttered, which results in less productivity and could lead to stress.

Make sure your work and home areas are neat and organized at all times. The best way to keep an area

neat is to do one thing at a time. For example, before you start on the next task, make sure you clean up and put everything away from the first task. When you see too many things at the same time it can be overwhelming. This would create stress for you. At the end of each work day make sure your work area is clean and neat, ready for the next day. You do not want to walk into a messy work area the first thing in the morning. Also, before you end the day and go to bed, make sure your house is clean and tidy. When you wake up, your bedroom is the first place you will see. If you have a messy home, it may also carry over to your workplace.

Experts suggest that it is best to clean the areas you use every day at least once a week, or whenever there is a mess or dust developing on things. In addition, if you have not used something for over six months throw it away or donate it. These items are unlikely to be used in the future. This includes clothes, papers, or anything that is

lying around unused. When you donate things you are helping others who needed them, but most importantly, you are helping yourself.

Do not feel guilty when you donate or throw away unused things at cost a lot of money. It does not matter how much something cost. It is worthless if you do not use or enjoy it. If guilt develops after donating or throwing away expensive things, it is important to remember the experience. Learn not to make the same mistake again when you decide to purchase something in the future. The next time you decided to purchase something, stop and ask yourself this question. “Do I need this object or do I just want this object?” Most of the things that you think you need in life, you really don’t.

For seasonal things such as holiday decorations, make sure they are in a storage area where they are not

visible on a daily basic. Only take them out when you are going to use them.

14. Do not cram your schedule

When you plan your schedule for the day, week, or even month, make sure you have enough time to do your activities comfortably so you can enjoy them.

When you have too many activities on your schedule, you are more likely to rush through and not enjoy them. Also, you may not have enough personal time to relax and rest, which would increase your stress level.

In life is about enjoying your activities, not about getting as many things done as possible.

Remember, you do not need to do many things to become successful in life. For example, when you spend enough time with someone you will experience more joy and

happiness, and most importantly, your appreciation for the other person will increase. However, it is difficult to appreciate something or someone when you rush or do not spend enough time with them. If you don't appreciate what you are doing, it could add to your stress.

15. Slow down and take breaks

Throughout the day, slow down and take breaks to help you stay productive and avoid stress from escalating. Your brain is like a machine; it cannot run forever. For example, if you use a machine for a long period of time, it will get hot and not be as productive as in the beginning, or it might shut down.

Remind yourself to take breaks. When your brain is busy working on a task you may not realize that you are becoming tired. Your brain will keep on working, no matter

how tired it is. For example, you could go through the whole day without feeling tired, but you are actually tired. Your brain is still working even when you sleep, telling your body to breathe. It is important that you rest for at least 10-15 minutes after every two hours of work because that is how long your brain can stay productive. For example, if you attend a class or an event that is longer than two hours, you will start to feel tired and lose your focus after two hours. The longer you force your brain to work after that two-hour period the more unproductive you will become. When you force your brain to do something that it does not have the energy for, it will be more difficult to get the job done successfully.

Your brain needs to rest in order to recharge itself. When you come back to work after your break your brain will be recharged, which means you will be better able to work, and to work faster and better. For example, a productive mind may be able to accomplish a project in

four hours compared to a tired mind that may need five or six hours to finish the same task. Also, when you get great results from your mind being productive you will develop a good feeling within yourself, and this will increase your enjoyment level and decrease your stress.

Do not take your breaks for granted. Make sure you take them. Whenever you feel tired it is important for you to rest. Every hour, stand up and go away from your work area so your brain can see something else. The brain needs a rest from seeing the same thing.

16. Create a life foundation

Everything in life needs a good foundation. For example, before you can build a house you need a strong foundation underneath it. If there is a strong foundation it will be easier for you to fix or rebuild the house if

something happens. It is the same with your life. In order to pull yourself back up after a setback or failure, you need a strong life foundation. When you have a strong life foundation, it does not matter what happens, you will always be able to tackle any situation successfully.

To create a strong life foundation, there are five aspects of your life that you need to develop. The first area is to build your self-esteem. Good self-esteem gives you the ability to believe in yourself and know that you can overcome anything in life. The second is to know and unleash your passion. Your passion gives you motivation and inspiration. The third is to have good health. Good health gives you the energy and strength to keep on moving forward. Fourth is stress management skills, as they give you the ability to stay in balance. And fifth is goal-setting skills. The skills give you the ability to stay focused in life, and to pursue what is important to you the stronger those five aspects of your life become, **the**

stronger your life foundation becomes, and they will help you to face any life obstacles, challenges, and failures you may encounter.

17. Take care of your priorities

Make sure your top priorities are well taken care of. For example, if you have three priorities, such as your health, family and career, make sure you take care of them. When you give priority to something or someone, it means that particular something or someone is important to you. The more you ignore your priorities the higher your stress level will become. **Also, the better you take care of your priorities, the less stress you will experience. Every day, make sure to put time aside to take care of your top priorities.**

Sometimes it is okay to give other issues more attention when certain important things come up. For example, if your priorities are your health and family, but there is an emergency that related to your family that requires the entire day to take care of, it is okay to do so. However, when you give your family 100% of your attention on certain days, make sure you do not feel guilty about neglecting your health. If you feel guilty, then the extra time that you spent taking care of your family was not as important or an emergency. If something is truly important, you will not develop any guilt or negative emotions when you spend time on it.

18. Live a simple life

Living a simple life will bring you more happiness because you will worry less. When you

worry less, your stress level tends to be lower. For example, when you have many things that you are afraid to lose, you may feel worried about losing your things. The stronger the fear, the more stress you would develop, and the unhappier you would become. **Living a simple life is not only about having less material things, but also about the things you do and the people who are in your life.** For example, if you have too many people in your life you might not have enough time for everyone, and most importantly you might not have enough time to take care of your priorities.

Or, you may try to do too many things and believe that the more you do the more successful and happy you will become. However, happiness is not about how many things you do. For example, you may do a few things very well. When you do them they will bring you more happiness than trying to do too many things and not being very good at doing them.

You, make sure you have enough energy and focus to take care of your priorities, and do not be distracted by unnecessary things and people. These tend to develop from living a complex life.

If you ever feel that you do not have enough time to take care of your priorities, examine your life to see what or who you can take out so you can have more time to focus on your priorities.

19. Know life and happiness

Stress can develop when you do the wrong things without realizing it, especially when it comes to your choices and your happiness. **Take some time to learn more about making good choices and happiness.** When you have a clearer and deeper understanding about how to make good choices you can make better decisions. This

will help you to find and follow the right path to living the life you want and decrease your stress.

First, it is important that you develop the right mindset for life. For example, learn more about being a human being, what the purpose of being alive is, understand what you can and cannot control, and the different life areas that you need to manage to develop a successful lifestyle. For example, if you try to control something that you cannot control, but you believe you can control it due to your lack of understanding about life, you would develop a higher level of stress.

Second, you should learn what happiness is. When you know what happiness is, then you can develop thoughts, behaviors, and actions that will help you to experience more happiness. However, if you do not know what happiness is, then it does not matter how much time

and effort you spend; as you are unlikely to experience or recognize happiness.

Below are some popular and well-known definitions of happiness.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “Happiness is the pleasure, contentment, satisfaction, joy, delight, well-being, and bliss.”

According to positive psychology, “Happiness is defined as experience frequent positive emotions such as joy, interest, life satisfaction, and appreciation for life.”

According to the Dalai Lama, happiness is about “reflecting on what is truly valuable in life, what gives meanings to our lives, and set our priorities on the basis of that, developing basic good human qualities such as warmth, kindness, and compassion. Then our life becomes meaningful and more peaceful, and happier.”

Take some time out to learn more about life and happiness. In today's society, no one will teach you about happiness. Your parents do not teach you and schools do not teach you, so you need to teach yourself.

20. Avoid the media

It is important to avoid the media as much as possible. The main purpose of the media is to persuade you to attain gratification, not happiness, by influencing you to buy this or that or to become this or that. If you would like to know how much the media have influenced you, look through your home to see how many things you have purchased that you do not use. If something is useful to you, then you will have used or enjoyed it already. And remember, the more dust you see, the more cluttered your mind becomes, and the higher your stress level becomes.

Try to avoid the news. **If you pay attention, most of the news that you see is negative, not positive.** For example, you are more likely to see stories about violence, gangs, murders, disasters, and other negative stories that would have a negative effect on your mind. In addition, most news stations do not provide you with complete or adequate information to help you make good decisions. The news and the media do not provide much information that motivates and inspires you to be yourself and to live a successful lifestyle, or even to help you manage and reduce your stress.

The more your mind is exposed to the negative information the faster your brain starts to develop doubts and fear about how negative and terrible life is, and the more stress you will experience. In addition, you do not need the news to tell you how negative society and the world are because in our daily life we already see many negative activities, and that is enough.

21. Play

You are never too old to play. **Playing is something you should do throughout your life because it keeps your spirit young and alive, and that will help reduce your stress level.** Playing is one of the qualities of the human being spirit. When your spirit is alive, you are more motivate to take action to make things happen in life. The more action, you take more likely it is to reduce your stress.

Playing could include games. You might want to try to play as many different kinds of games as possible because each game requires a different kind of thinking and strategy. This will force your mind to be creative and to come up with different solutions to win the game. When your brain is encouraged to be creative by playing games, it may come up with solutions to your problems as well. **Life is a game, so make sure you are creative enough to**

come up with creative solutions to your life problems.

Solutions always decrease stress, as does the enjoyment of playing games.

You can also play with children. Being around children will increase your positive emotions. Children like to play, and play brings out their joy. When you play with children you also become more joyful, and this will also reduce your stress.

22. Have a plan

Another cause of stress is not knowing how to deal with the unknown or the future. If you tend to be afraid of the future and it causes you to feel stress, it is important to create a plan for your future. Remember, your brain needs a path to follow in order to minimize your stress level.

Create a plan or pathway for whatever you want to achieve in life. For example, if you want to lose weight, create a realistic plan stating how you will lose weight. Sometimes your plan might not work out the way you hoped, but as long as you have a plan and take action to make it happen, your brain will focus more on the plan and become less worried about the future. If your current plan is not working, develop a new plan. **As long as you have a plan and are taking action to make it happens, your stress level will become lower.**

Remember, the brain never stops thinking. The brain always tends to focus on something. If you have a problem, the brain will focus on a plan if you have one, or think about how stressful the problem is when you do not have a plan. So you choose, feel more stress without a plan, or enjoy success and feel less stress with a plan.

23. Goal setting

Since your brain needs a path to follow to avoid stress, goal setting is the best tool to help you map out your plans successfully. Goal setting helps you make a step-by-step path to whatever you want to achieve. This will help your brain to stay focused, which will reduce your stress level.

Goal setting helps you to feel more in control of your life because you have created your own action steps for achieving your goals. Whenever you have created something, you tend to feel that you have more control of the situation, which means your brain becomes less fearful and feels less stress.

Goal setting helps to decrease fears of the unknown or of the future because you have a plan that tells you how to achieve what you want in the future.

However, if you do not set goals, you are more likely to take random steps or allow others to determine your action steps. This means that your brain will not see a clear path with specific action steps, so it tends to create more worry, and more worry leads to a higher level of stress.

24. Have tools at your disposal

It is important that you know your skills, so you will be ready to use them successfully. If not, when something happens and you do not have the tools to fix your problem, you might fail, which means stress is more likely to develop. When you do not have the tools you need and a problem manifests, your brain may have a more difficult time coming up with a productive solution

because it is so worried and focused on the problem, which could create even more stress.

To make sure you have the necessary tools to prepare for any problem, become a lifelong learner.

The more you learn, the more methods, knowledge, skill and tools you will have to use.

In addition, knowing that you have good problem-solving tools can also help to decrease any fears you have. For example, many people are afraid of the future because they might not have the tools to deal with what could happen in the future. However, when you have helpful tools at your disposal you are less likely to be afraid because you are ready to tackle anything. **The more tools you have, the less fear you would have, and the less stress you would experience.**

25. Do puzzles and play coordination games

Stress has a higher chance of developing when you have a difficult time coming up with quick solutions to your problems, especially when you are under pressure or have a limited amount of time to fix the problem. In this case, make sure to train your brain to make quick decisions.

One way to help you build a strong mindset and to make quick and good decisions is to do puzzles and play coordination games. Puzzles and coordination games allow your brain to solve problems and put things together. You will face many different problems and challenges in your life that require you solve and put things together as well.

The harder and more challenging the puzzles and games are, the stronger your mind will become. Also, it is important to do a variety of puzzles to keep your brain active. When you do the same type of puzzle or game over

and over again, the brain is used to it, which would make it more difficult for your brain to become stronger.

There are many different types of puzzles and games that you can do or play such as crosswords, word search, Sudoku and others that come in many different formats such as books, magazines, journals, online, and even video games. **You should also play brain games that force you to think quickly.** When your brain is trained to think quickly it will help you make quick and helpful decisions in life.

26. Develop a positive attitude

Make sure you have a positive attitude when tough situations occur. **A positive attitude will help you see that challenges, obstacles and setbacks are not negative**

experiences but opportunities for you to grow and understand yourself.

Try applying the following tips to develop a positive attitude:

1. **Sleep well.** Getting enough sleep every night will give you energy to start the day without feeling cranky and irritated. A sleep also helps you to make quicker and better decisions.
2. **Eat breakfast.** Breakfast provides you with physical and mental energy and helps you to concentrate better and stay alert.
3. **Be around positive people.** Positive people will encourage you to step outside of your comfort zone and to build your strengths and talents.
4. **Spend some time doing what interests you.** Doing things that make you happy will help to control your stress hormones.

5. **Play with children.** Seeing an innocent child smile or laugh will brighten up your day.
6. **Always smile.** You will use less physical and mental energy when you smile as compared to frowning.
7. **Reinforce positive affirmations.** The more you reinforce positive affirmations the stronger your mind becomes and the more positive you will become.
8. **Avoid exposure to negativity, such as the media.** The less you are exposed to negative attitudes, news and opinions the less you will be influenced by them. This will help to keep your attitude positive.

27. Focus on your breathing

When you feel any negative emotions, stop and take at least three deep breaths, in and out, slowly. **Focusing on**

your breathing can instantly relieve your emotions and help you to focus on the situation at hand, and to stop your emotions from controlling you, so you can come up with a productive solution to solve your problem.

Using your breathing to calm yourself down is a learning process. If you have never learned how to focus on your breathing before, it might be difficult for you to benefit from it at the beginning. You have to practice focusing on your breathing to make it easy to use this technique to calm yourself down when you needed. Below are some ways to help remind yourself to practice focusing on your breathing.

- Set a timer on your laptop, computer, or cell phone have it every 15, 30, or 60 minutes. Whenever you hear the sound, stop and focus on your breathing.
- Whenever you hear other ringing sounds (telephone, door bell, and clock), stop and focus on your breathing.

- Whenever you stop in front of stop signs or red traffic lights, focus on your breathing.
- If you have a headache, focus on your breathing.
- In quiet moments, focus on your breathing.
- When you are in nature, focus on your breathing.
- Whenever you need a moment to yourself, focus on your breathing.
- When you are in a line or waiting for something or someone, focus on your breathing.

As you keep practicing, focusing on your breathing will come more naturally. Focusing on your breathing can help you when you need to calm your emotions.

28. Do not fight fire with fire

When you fight fire with fire, you are harming yourself because you are the one taking the action, not the other person. When you fight fire with fire, you are only making the situation worse because you will make the other person angrier and that will force them to fight back even harder. This will increase your stress level. The higher your stress level becomes, the harder it is for you to come up with a successful solution to solve the problem.

Your main job is to make sure your stress level does not increase in difficult situations. **The only way to minimize your stress is to respond with understanding and love.** Those two approaches will help you to stay calm and also help to calm the other person. It does not matter how negatively a person has treated you, you have to be stronger and not let your negative emotions take control of you. When you respond positively in any

situation, remember that it is really to help you, and not necessarily to help the other person.

It is important for you to have positive methods available to help you respond to stressful situations successfully. When a stressful situation happens, do not give it a chance to escalate your stress level. For example, if a fire develops, you want to put the fire out immediately to avoid it spreading; that would make it more difficult for you to put out the fire. The moment the fire gets a chance to spread, it will spread very quickly and you may not be able to control it anymore. It is the same with a stressful situation. **When a stressful situation develops, it is important to respond to it as positively and calmly as possible at the beginning and not fight back with fire to make the situation worse.**

29. Do not stereotype or discriminate

The more you assign stereotypes to other people or discriminate against them, the higher your stress level becomes because you hold a negative mindset. The main reason why many people might assign a stereotype to others is because of lack of knowledge about different people, ages, races, backgrounds, cultures, and interests. For example, when you see someone who is not the same as you, you may tend to avoid them more than others who are similar to you because you do not know what to expect from them and are afraid that they might do something negative to you. This creates a lot of negativity in your mind, increasing your stress level. It is important to note that this happens only in your mind, and the other people don't even know what you are thinking and probably have no intention to treat you negatively. Don't allow your thoughts to create more stress for you. You don't need more stress!

Since you are living in a multicultural country with people from a variety of races, backgrounds, cultures, and interests, it is more important for you to understand them than to apply stereotypes and discriminate and create stress in yourself.

30. Take care of yourself

You want to take good care of your body, mind, spirit, emotions, self-esteem, career, family, and every other aspect of your life. **When you take care of all aspects of your life, there will be nothing negative in your life to make you feel negative.** For example, when you eat well your body will feel good, and then you will feel good. When you are around positive people they will make you feel good.

If not, when you have poor physical health, you would more likely to feel tired and not be as successful in what you are doing. If you have poor self-esteem, you are more likely to doubt yourself, which makes it harder for you to move forward when you face an obstacle.

When your body, mind, spirit, and emotions are in balance, you are in a good position to tackle anything in life.

31. Nutritional intake

Do you know that the number one cause of mental retardation is malnutrition? Yes, it is true. Our brains and our bodies need adequate nutrition to function well.

Below are some suggestions to help you get the nutrition you need for your mind function well.

Eat enough, but not too much

Eat enough healthy foods for your body, not too little or too much. To find out how many calories you should be eating each day research online, in a library, or ask a health professional.

If you eat too little you will not have enough energy to function well and your body will not be properly nourished. When you eat too much, your body uses extra energy to process, store, and carry around the extra calories. This decreases your energy level. Have you ever felt tired after a big meal, such as on Thanksgiving? Eating too much can also make you feel physically uncomfortable or guilty, increasing your stress.

Eat breakfast

The first meal you should eat every day is breakfast. Do you know what the word “breakfast” means? Let’s split

the word in half. Break means you want to stop something. And fast means not eating. Since you are supposed to eat every 3 to 4 hours, but you are supposed to sleep for at least seven to eight hours, so you skip a meal while you sleep. Whenever you skip a meal, you are going on a fast. So you want to break your fast. And that is how the word “breakfast” comes into play.

You want to break the fast as soon as possible once you wake up to provide your body with the water and healthy nutrients it needs. Eating breakfast makes it easier to concentrate; feeling hungry does not! That is why schools encourage students to eat breakfast before going to school. Eating soon after you wake up each day will stop you from feeling hunger. Hunger increases stress.

32. Water intake

In order for your brain to come up with a productive solution to solve your problem, make sure it is not dehydrated. Your brain needs as much water as your body to become productive and successful. Studies and research have shown that when you develop headaches, frustration, lack of focus and concentration, one of the common causes is dehydration.

How many glasses of water do you need to drink daily?

The best way to know how much water you need to drink is to take your total weight in pounds and divide it by two. That is the number of ounces of water you need to drink per day. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds, you would divide it by 2 to get 100. You would need to drink at least 100 ounces of water daily. If you want to know how many cups are in 100 ounces, then take 100 and divide it by 8, because a cup has 8 ounces.

Remember to re-calculate your water intake as your weight changes. If you gain weight you would need to drink more water. If you lose weight you need to drink less water.

Make sure to drink your water evenly throughout the day. For example, do not drink most of the water in the morning and not have enough in the afternoon and evening. For example, you do not want to be dehydrated in the evening if a problem manifests then. You do not want to feel stress because of lack of water. This is something that you can easily prevent.

33. Exercise

Exercise benefits your body and your mind. This will help you become even more productive. **First, exercise is known to reduce stress because it helps to**

release the negative tensions you have within you. We all know that a stressful mind is a less unproductive mind. Exercising regularly helps your mind to become calmer and more relaxed, helping you to overcome any stress that you may feel.

Second, exercise is known to increase endorphins, your happiness hormones. **When you have more happy hormones than stress hormones, you will feel happier.**

34. Sleep

Since you use a lot of mental energy throughout day, it is important for you to get enough sleep to recharge your energy levels. In addition, today our minds are exposed to more negative energy because of the high level of negative influences from the media and society.

How much sleep do you need?

The amount of sleep you need depends on two factors; the state of your well-being and your age. People who have special conditions such as pregnancy or illness need to sleep more to get more energy to function well. People who have no special health condition, the amount of sleep mainly depend on their age.

Infants need generally around 16 hours of sleep each day. Children between one and five years old need about 10 to 14 hours. As children get older, their need for sleep will decrease. Infants and children need more sleep because they are more vulnerable to illnesses and infections and because they are growing.

When children reach their teen years, they need about nine hours of sleep, on average. It is important for teenagers to get enough sleep because their bodies develop

rapidly to become adults. For adults, seven to eight hours a night are recommended.

35. About the author --- Mykim Tran

Mykim Tran is a personal transformation expert, speaker, educator, life coach, and author. She seeks to help transform individuals to become the best version of themselves and in reaching their full potential. Mykim is a national best-selling author of *Self-Esteem Building: How to live your life as YOU* and other self-help books on life and happiness topics such as self-confidence, goal setting, stress management, health and wellness, and career development. Mykim is the founder and CEO of Wake-Up Foundation, a non-profit agency, in transforming individuals to become social change agents to promote stronger communities. Mykim is a certified Recovery Coach. She received her bachelor's degree in Media Communications from California State University of Sacramento, and her master's degree in Psychology at Walden University. She is currently a PhD student at

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