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How Stressed-Out Are YOU?

By Dr. David L. Thomas

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Are you feeling stressed out? Too many things to do, too little time? One more thing added to the To-Do list and you feel like you'll explode?

Whoa there, no exploding allowed! You can handle it—just listen in.

Listen? To what?

To your self-talk. Not yourself talk, but your SELF-TALK. Listen in to the demands you're making of your time, but more importantly listen in to how you're saying them and what you're saying.

Many of us don't pay particular attention to what we're saying to ourselves. We've never been taught the importance of how damaging it can be to us nor have we been shown that we can use it to feel much better. You can literally un-stress yourself by using your own self-talk.

Listen in for -need-, -have-to-, -must-, type statements that you make to yourself.

"First I need to drop the kids off, then I have-to go to the grocery store, then I need to stop at the bank, then I have-to get home and work on those taxes before having to go back out and pick up the kids."

You've just created a lot of demands on yourself. And yes, in order for your life to continue like you want, you would prefer to do all those things exactly as you have envisioned. But you don't NEED to, HAVE-TO or MUST.

By using demanding statements on yourself, you open up a lot of opportunities to say irrational things to yourself that create stress.

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When you use demanding statements, you then create a scenario of "what-if" in your head. And when the "what-if's" back-up, then watch out stress level!

"What if I don't get it done, what if I don't get there in time to get the kids, what if this, what if that." This is when you really go into stress mode!

Asking such open-ended questions is the origin much of your stress. You often answer with "that would be awful, that would be terrible" which compounds the stressful feelings even more.

Since awful and terrible are labels way beyond bad, (actually labels that are beyond definition) you've created a situation in your head that ends up with you saying to yourself "...and I couldn't stand it if that happened," or "...I couldn't stand feeling that way!"

It's indeed a vicious cycle of thinking that is common to all of us. Fortunately, once you know how, you can think your way out of these situations as quickly as you got in.

So where do you start?

First, flag such have-to, must, need-to statements in your head. Then replace the needs, musts and have-tos with preferences, desires, and wants.

Then when something doesn't go according to your desires, reduce the awfuls and terribles to simply, bad. Then rest-assure yourself that you can stand it.

What if you don't make it to the bank? What if you're late picking up the kids?? Well, it's not what you wanted, it may indeed even have consequences which may be bad, but in the overall scheme of things it isn't awful and you CAN stand it.

A great deal of stress is caused from within by this "I-can't-stand-it-it is."

Remember: whenever you hear yourself saying "need-to, have-to, got-to, etc" replace it with want-to or would like to. Substitute needs with desires; musts with preferences.

And remind yourself that awful things will not happen if your desires are not met. You may not like the results if things don't go your way, but you can indeed stand the feelings. It may not be good if things don't fall into place like you want, but the world will continue to spin and you will be able to handle it.

It takes some practice. Don't expect it to happen for you like magic. Pay attention to your self-talk, listen for the what-if statements, flag the must and need statements. Dispute them with wants and desires. Do it vigorously. With time it will become second nature, and you'll notice the lack of stress in your life.

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to learn more.

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Stress Management Technique

By John Furnem

Stressed out? Nothing seems to be going right? Don't worry; you are among the millions of people worldwide who reportedly are stressed out. This article will help with stress management techniques that will help manage the stress in your life.

Meditation

There is nothing mystical about meditation, its something that can easily be done by following the following steps

- Find a place where you can sit quietly and comfortably.
- Close your eyes
- Start with contracting and relaxing the muscles of your feet, work up your body all the way to your face
- Focus your attention on your breathing. Breathe in deeply then let breath out. Count your breaths as you let them out. This will give you something to focus on, Do this technique for 10–20 minutes at a time. It should help to relax you help minimize the impact of stress on you both physically and mentally.

Use Music and Relaxation Tapes

A alternate approach to relaxation is listening to calming music or relaxation or hypnosis tapes. It takes little effort to listen to these tapes and music, and will be very welcome at the end of a long stressful day. You can buy relaxing music and meditation tapes most places. A good source is to look online and get one that you would be interested in. A good site to look at is *Relaxation tape music*. They have a lot of good resources that will help melt the stress away.

Self Hypnosis

Self hypnosis is when you hypnotize yourself. Often this method is more effective than normal

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hypnosis as you do it yourself, causing no added stress of meeting with a hypnotist.

- Find somewhere comfortable and quiet to sit down.
- Relax your body. One way to do this is to imagine waves of imagination running down your body starting from your scalp moving downwards.
- Deep the relaxation. Saying statements like I am feeling relaxed and comfortable. With every breath I am becoming more relaxed and more comfortable. You can use several different statements to become more comfortable and relaxed.

Typical self hypnosis sessions typically last 15 and 25 minutes however, they can last as long as you like.

In conclusion, there are several methods that you can use to relax and help minimize the stress in your life. Use some of these ideas, and in no time you will be less stressed and more ready to tackle the problem of stress in your own life. Good luck!

John Furnem is a dot com veteran, specializing in human resources and work psychology he has written articles and held workshops/seminars for stress relief and stress management. John currently writes articles for

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