

## Stress *RELIEF* in 6 Easy Steps

Everyone is stressed these days. Time seems to have sped up significantly, technology can leave one dazed and confused and there never seems to be enough time to regroup and relax.

The wise flight attendants always remind us of the simple, yet hard to attain concept of:

***"Put your oxygen mask on first and then assist your children."***

I would like to offer 6 ideas to consider for *relief* of stress:

- **R = Retreat.** Sometimes you have to shut out the world and even your family and simply retreat. That could mean locking the bathroom door and enjoying a relaxing Epsom salt bath, escaping to a beach chair in the back yard with a mindless mystery, magazine or all of the numerous catalogs that find their way into your mailbox, going out for a meal alone, spending a Saturday morning cruising the yard sales or giving yourself permission to do anything that gives you an opportunity to tune out the real world.
- **E = Energize.** That may sound contradictory to the retreat section, but sometimes you need to do something new, different and spontaneous to energize your spirit. Take a new road home from work, change your exercise routine or actually start the exercise program you resolved to do New Year's day, call your best friend and enjoy some "girl talk", experiment with a new recipe, go for a long walk with your dog and get the energy flowing.
- **L = Light.** We all need sunlight to increase vitamin D levels in our body, increase serotonin, the neurotransmitter that helps to regulate our mood, sleep, learning and intestinal movement and support our immune system. Spend 20 minutes absorbing sunlight and feel the benefit.



- **I = Infuse.** When you find yourself feeling as if the glass is half empty, it's time to infuse positive thinking and positive talk. Listen to what you are saying. Are you a "shoulding" on yourself, are you able to receive compliments, are you inspiring yourself? Take time to investigate your strengths, abilities and gifts. Infuse yourself with positive thoughts and watch how the outside world responds.
- **E = Examine.** Periodically you need to step back and look at your life, your thoughts, the direction that you are going in and decide if you need any revisions. Think of it as spring cleaning. Examine where you put your priorities. Use a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is a top priority and 1 is something you could do without and it just isn't that important. For example, on a day when you feel anxious and stressed, stop and consider where this feeling is on the scale. If it is a 10, then take care of the situation immediately. If it is a 5, do you want to put out this much nervous energy with it? Could you relax and let it go for now? Using scales can help identify where to put your energy. Take time to examine.
- **F = Fascination.** Who or what fascinates you? When you are doing what fascinates you, your true spirit comes out. Think of a time when you were caught up with a project, hobby, conversation, etc. Were you thinking about anything else? Did you care what anyone thought? Were you stressed? You were probably too fascinated to worry about anything. So, become fascinating!



Often we get so used to reacting in the same way that we don't see other options or alternatives. When stressed, choose to stop, take a deep breath and decide how you would like to respond. Perhaps the above suggestions might allow you to change a negative pattern into a positive one. Find some relief!

