

» BUSY...is a Choice



I was having lunch with a client and she appeared lighter and more focused than the last time we had met. When asked what was different, she described a new workout regimen she had started a couple of months earlier. She also went on to explain how she was focusing on those things she could change and accepting those she couldn't. She couldn't have been more different from our earlier interactions when she was working crazy hours, traveling non-stop globally and frankly, was overwhelmed. What a difference taking care of yourself; both physically and mentally, can make.

As we enter this fall season, what are you doing to renew yourself? How do you take care of yourself month-in, month out? It may seem counter-intuitive to have to find more time to "do" something for yourself. It's the old adage "pay me now or pay me later".

Take a look at the stressors in your life and identify at least one that you can do something about. If you don't make the time to relieve the stress in your life, it will catch up with you. Make the time now for a *better, focused* and *more effective you*.

If you want the support of a coach to help you eliminate stressors and identify coping techniques, we should talk. In the meantime, try the exercise below.

Best regards,

Jane



Identifying Your Stress Triggers

An important step renewing yourself is identifying and managing your stress triggers. According to Betty Burrows, PhD, stressors usually fall into the following categories:

- **Emotional stressors**, which can also be thought of as internal stressors, include fears and anxieties as well as certain personality traits (such as perfectionism, pessimism, suspiciousness, or a sense of helplessness or lack of control over one's life) that can distort your thinking or your perceptions of others.
- **Family stressors** can include changes in your relationship with your significant other, financial problems, coping with an unruly adolescent, or experiencing empty-nest syndrome.
- **Social stressors** arise in our interactions within our personal community. They can include dating, parties, and public speaking.
- **Change stressors** are feelings of stress related to any important changes in our lives. This may include moving, getting a new job, moving in with a significant other, or having a baby.
- **Chemical stressors** are any drugs a person abuses, such as alcohol, nicotine, caffeine or tranquilizers.
- **Work stressors** are caused by the pressures of performing in your job. They may include tight deadlines, an unpredictable boss, or endless family demands.
- **Phobic stressors** are those caused by situations you are extremely afraid of, such as flying in airplanes or being in tight spaces.
- **Physical stressors** are situations that overtax your body, such as working long hours without sleep, depriving yourself of healthy food, or standing on your feet all day. They may also include pregnancy, premenstrual syndrome, or too much exercise.
- **Disease stressors** are the products of long- or short-term health problems. These may cause stress (say, by preventing you from being able to leave your bed), be triggered by stress (such as herpes flare-ups), or be aggravated by stress (such as migraine headaches).
- **Pain stressors** can include acute pain or chronic pain. Like disease stressors, pain stressors can cause stress or be aggravated by stress.
- **Environmental stressors** include noise, pollution, a lack of space, too much heat, or too much cold.

Identify your current stressors and list them in the table at the bottom of the next page.



Managing Your Stress Triggers

There are probably items on your list of stressors you can let go of. If doing the yard work every Saturday and Sunday is preventing you from having any leisure time, perhaps you can fit a landscaping service into your budget. If it seems like a luxury you can't afford, try to reorganize your budget a bit. Remember, your time is valuable too.

Reducing the strength of your stressors is usually a more viable option than eliminating them entirely. For example, if you are having trouble concentrating on your work because of an abundance of meetings, consider blocking your calendar for time to focus. If your morning trip to work forces you to drive an hour in heavy traffic every day, try another option such as carpooling or listening to an audio book on your commute.

Coping may be the only option for the majority of the items on your list of stressors. However, this doesn't have to be as hopeless as it sounds. There are several techniques for learning to stay calm and clearheaded under pressure. A good coach can help you identify techniques that work for you.

Go back through your list of stressors and mark an:

E for each item you can **Eliminate**

R for each stressor you can **Reduce** the strength of, or a

C for each item you can learn to **Cope** with.

For the items marked with an **E** or an **R**, jot down any ideas you have on how to eliminate or reduce the specific stressor (for example, sending shirts to the cleaners or buying a new audio book).

Main Stressors in Your Life	List Action (E, R, C) Along with Specific Ideas

