

Is Stress Sabotaging Your Life???

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by

Dr. Madeline Ann Lewis

What rhymes with "mess" has six letters, and has no business in your life? Stress! If you are like most people, stress has a way of creeping into your life and trying to make a mess of things. Hectic commutes, impending deadlines and a demanding boss, long lines at the grocery store, climbing gas prices and poor customer service. What do these things have in common? They all ratchet up the stress factor in our lives. And that doesn't even take into account the stressful issues we face at home. To put it simply, many of us don't even realize how much stress we're subjected to on a daily basis and the negative impact it can have on our lives. That's the bad news. The good news, once you identify the stressors in your life, you can stop stress from sabotaging your life.

Recognizing Stress

We all know that we have stress in our lives but most of us don't truly recognize all the sources. I recommend "taking inventory" to fully identify those stress sources. Look at it this way---until you know what the problem is, you can't solve it! Statistics have shown that women are especially susceptible to the ravages of chronic stress because they try to take on so many roles. For example, women are far more likely to work a double day of homemaking and career. One woman put it this way: "The hand that rocks the cradle also cradles the phone, sweeps the floor, writes the memos, and meets the deadlines."

We are all vulnerable to the health risks of stress. And women may find themselves walking a higher tightrope so to speak because they try to be so many things to so many people. From childhood women have been conditioned to put others first. It's commendable to be a compassionate and giving person, but not at the sake of your own health and well-being. You have to set limits.

Are You Stressed To The Limit?

Among its many detrimental effects, prolonged stress can make you depressed, irritable and it can trigger disease. Here are some of the other "side effects" of excessive stress:

- Can alter your personality
- Cause you to lose perspective
- Make you feel sick
- Make you forgetful
- Trigger weight loss or weight gain
- Compromise your immune system

These examples demonstrate why it's critical that we learn how to make stress our friend! By making some changes in your life, you can actually make stress work for you. If you think of stress as your friend and start setting boundaries, you create some mental lines that stress is not allowed to cross. Learn to relax. It's amazing how something as simple as sitting in a tub of warm water can melt the stress away. Take care of yourself. If you won't, who will? And my personal favorite of all is laughter. Good humor does wonders for your psyche. It helps put things into perspective and keep you from "sweating the small stuff." When it comes to curing stress related ailments, laughter is by far one of the best medicines. It's an effective and fun stress buster.

Stress Is Here to Stay!

Stress may be here to stay, but you don't have to let it get the best of you. Taking pro-active, simple measures takes the bite off stress. Even if you are the busiest person in the world, you can fit in stress-free moments to give yourself a chance to recover from the stressors that bombard you day in and day out. You can relieve stress while you take a shower, by taking short breaks throughout your day to stretch, by changing harmful habits, by practicing deep breathing, which can be done anytime, anywhere and even while you drive to work by listening to an entertaining or soothing tape. Keep in mind you have the ability to take control and create a less stressful, more enjoyable life---it will be good for you, in so many ways.

About the Author

Dr. Madeline Ann Lewis is President/CEO of the Deline Institute for Professional Development. She conducts workshops and seminars geared toward the personal and professional development of women. Dr. Lewis is a passionate believer in moving women forward, helping to guide women in achieving their best mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health. She is the co-author of *Overcoming the Superwoman Syndrome*, and *A Women's Journey to Wellness: Mind, Body and Spirit*. Website: www.delineinstitute.net Email: women@delineinstitute.net