

Managing Stress

By Maureen Tazzioli

"The only difference between a diamond and a lump of coal is that the diamond had a little more pressure put on it." – Anonymous

Are you feeling overwhelmed and are easily frustrated? Have you wished that one day you could wake up from the nightmare you are living and all would be wonderful again, as your workload would be all caught up? If you can relate to these questions consider yourself to be in good company as many of us, especially those of us working as professional administrators know, stress can be a direct result of others placing unrealistic demands upon us as they forget that we are just one person.

Understanding the importance of keeping stress levels healthy, here are three gentle reminders that I incorporated into my daily routine helping me to remain relaxed, productive, and calm when everything else around me is in complete chaos.

You are just one person – For many of us, being able to multi-task is talent and gift unto itself. But do we recognize the dangers associated with taking on too much? Helping to combat the cycle of multi-tasking consider this. Set a limit as to how many tasks you wish to have on the go at the same time. My limit is set at five which reflects the number of fingers I have on one hand, which reminds me that I am only one person. After that I begin to delegate more, asking assistance from those who may not be quite as busy. During my delegation process I make sure that I am not merely *dumping* my workload onto some unexpected individual, but rather I ask how comfortable they are to take on another task. If found to be too overwhelmed themselves, I will seek another person, who is just as skilled and qualified to assist me for I have learned that it does no good to me, if I am responsible for overwhelming someone else I care about.

Doing it this way allows me to better understand the importance of staying on track and pacing myself. In the end, I am able to keep my stress level down while the quality of my work continually improves, allowing me to do more work in less time.

Respect your body's messages - One of the key factors to becoming stressed and overworked is when we choose to ignore our body's messages and what it is trying to tell us. For example, if we are constantly yawning, or having difficulties concentrating, we may be tired, and so the best thing that we can do for ourselves and our body is to get some sleep.

If however, we choose to ignore these signs then we run the risk of losing concentration; making rash decisions and being abrupt with those closest to us. Keep the pace going and we can become increasingly frustrated as simple tasks become extremely difficult forcing us to shift all our energies on who to blame versus recognizing what we could have prevented had we acknowledged our role in accepting too many tasks to begin with. By listening to our bodies we can become better equipped to handle more things at the same time keeping all emotions and actions in alignment with desired outcomes.

Learn to let it go – It has been my experience that if you hang onto negative emotions then moving forward at a healthy pace, is next to impossible. You see, I used to be easily offended. If someone said something to me that sounded abrupt or harsh, I would instantly be hurt by their actions and the tone that they used to express themselves. However, what I have since learned is that most of us, when in a state of being overwhelmed and extremely busy responses to questions asked appeared to be rather abrupt. However, all they knew was that they were in a hurry and did not have the time to explain things fully in a pleasant manner.

How quickly it is for us to forget that although we may be busy and overworked, our tone and actions may be hurting someone else's feelings and in turn preventing a healthy working relationship from growing. Putting things into perspective think about this.

In order to be effective as people, we must be willing to remain calm and nonjudgmental when communicating with each other. Appreciating and accepting the goodness in each other, healthy working relationships can become a common occurrence. For negative stress, if not carefully worked through, can create much damage in its path and so the best gift we can give ourselves and each other is the gift of letting go.

Remember, stress, if properly managed can be a wonderful thing, for with it, the heart and soul of a person is granted an opportunity to shine.

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