



Letting Go of Stress

Most of the daily stressors typically have to do with the issues of control. In many cases we expend much time and energy trying to influence and manipulate things which we have no control over. This is what letting go of stress is all about—focusing on the Self rather than on events and people within our environment that we cannot change.

Letting go of stress is possible, with some skillfully applied effort. Consider these skill areas:

1. Learn to **respond rather than react** to situations which you find upsetting or a violation to your rights as an individual.
2. Learn to **refine your expectations** and build a healthy tolerance toward situations that often disturb your inner balance.
3. Randomly **give yourself positive feedback** by way of daily affirmations to validate your own self-esteem and worthiness. Self-esteem, like a house, plant, or pet, needs regular attention. This practice may seem awkward at first, but give it a try.
4. Make a habit to **get out and exercise** to burn off any residual stress hormones which may be circulating in your body from a stressful day. When your motivation is low, remember, walking is a great form of exercise. Better yet if you can do it in nature.
5. Balance your scale of emotions with some **comic relief** by incorporating some humor into your daily routine.
6. **Nurture the connectedness** of those people in your circle of friends and family. If you feel that your personal network is lacking in support, then take the time to meet new people with similar interests and build new relationships.
7. **Diversify your interests and activities** so that your identity is not based too heavily on any one or two areas, i.e. *I am=my looks* or *I am=my relationship*, or even *I am=a straight "A" student*. This can actually improve your performance and attitude in all areas.
8. Learn to **recognize and become comfortable with all your emotions**, spanning the spectrum from anger and fear to love, and to express them creatively—not destructively.
9. **Exercise your creativity** in daily life—sing, dance, cook creatively—create your life!
10. Learn to **resolve issues and concerns with others when they arise**, through peaceful and diplomatic dialogue rather than aggression or avoidance.
11. **Take short breaks** in the course of each working day to relax and give your body a chance to return to a normal resting state.
12. Make it a habit everyday to **dedicate personal time for you** and you alone without feeling guilty. Take a few moments at the start or end of each day to sit quietly and meditate or reflect on who you are and where you are going in your life. As little as 5 minutes goes a long way!

The creation of a stress management program is a very personal undertaking, because no two people are alike. If you need help with developing yours own stress and time management routine, come to the Counseling Center for a workshop, a support group, or a personal consultation. We are located in the **Old Gym Building, room 114**. You can call us at **(718) 960-8761** and make an appointment or just walk in.

We are here for you!