

Less Stress = More Success

*A Business Woman's Guide to
Reduce Overwhelm
&
Create a Healthier,
Wealthier Life!*



*By:
The No-Longer Overwhelmed
Business Women of Long Island, NY*

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Reduce Overwhelm and Create
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Contents

Introduction	5
<i>by Andrea Feinberg</i>	
Section 1 — Your Body, Your Self	9
Kiss Stress Goodbye with Yoga: Three Yoga-Inspired Tips to Manage Stress	
<i>by JoAnne Layford</i> 9	
How Stress Makes Us Sick, Fat, Tired, Old and Exhausted and What to Do About It!	
<i>by Debi Silber</i> 16	
Section 2 — Natural Aids for Better Health	25
7 Ways to Manage Stress Using Unique Essential Oils	
<i>by Bonnie Taub</i> 25	
Good Health from Good Herbs – from the Earth to You!	
<i>by Therese Rose Hoffman</i> 32	
Section 3 — The Space We Live In	37
Reduce Clutter to Reduce Stress	
<i>by Lorraine Kimmey</i> 37	
How to Spend Less Time Cleaning Your Home and More Time Enjoying It	
<i>by Elissa Rand</i> 51	
Section 4 — Inner Life	62
A Practical Approach to Living a Less-Stressed Life	
<i>by Beth Johnston</i> 62	
Turbocharge Your Life While Minimizing Your Stress: Five Practical Strategies from a Life Coach	
<i>by Suzanne Muller</i> 70	

3 Life-Changing Solutions to Stop Sabotaging Yourself with
Negative Self-Talk and Create a More Balanced, Fulfilling Life
by Jennifer Nyx 78

Section 5 — Business As Usual? We Can Do Better 86

Sleep Well at Night: How to Avoid Financial Tornadoes
and Address Financial Termites
by Susan Ganz, M.B.A. 86

Reduce Stress and Have Your Dream Business: Align
with Amazing You!
by Alyse Parise 94

3 Reasons Your Small Business Gives You Headaches and
3 Ways (and 1 Kick-Ass Mind Shift) To Deliver More Value,
Make More Money & Have a Happier Life Instead
by Andrea Feinberg. 103

Section 6 — Relationships 112

Dance Your Way Back to Love – A Mind-Body-In-Motion
Experience
by Catherine G. Braun, MA 112

You Talkin' to Me?
by Yolanda Allwood 120

Pre-Wedding Stress 127
by Dr. Maripat Quinn

Meet Our Authors 137

Editor's Note, 2020:

A lot has changed since this book was first published yet the power and value of the gifts in this book, hundreds of tips by 15 women, have not. That speaks to the fundamental wisdom of their lives and professional experience. And so, when you're working to advance personal dreams and business goals, this little book will be your ally. Whether you focus on the tools of spirit, nutrition, organization or family, the women who participated in this book did so with a wealth of insight. You will find much of that here, all for your benefit and that of the people you love and interact daily.

Enjoy!

Andrea

Introduction

We live in a remarkable time. Our definitions of communication, entertainment, commerce, workplace, business choices and self are evolving and expanding at a pace unheard of just 5 years ago. Multiply this rate of change with the need to stay current, to learn the new languages of business and technology, to absorb new information from an array of sources bombarding us from all directions and what do you get? A searing measure of stress added to adult lives already complicated with too many responsibilities and conflicting personal goals.

Adding a little spice to this uncomfortable recipe is the constant sensation of transition that all these changes impose. Unplanned transitions throw us and we feel all kinds of acute feelings – relief, lightness, elation, panic, dread, anger, loss, a sense of drifting, emptiness, helplessness, and physical discomfort. Doesn't sound too appetizing, does it?

And, because you dread losing familiar situations, even if they include a dead-end relationship, lifeless job, pressured business or unpleasant living environment, you may resist change. And that resistance against the inevitable creates more stress. Sounds pretty awful.

Let's face it – you can't necessarily control the events and people who add stress to your life but you most assuredly can control how you respond.

The 15 authors who've created this book have all found ways to respond and enjoy a greater degree of health, happiness and success in business and personal life. And they've chosen to share their wealth of secrets, gifts and techniques with you. Each is a business owner. Women living on

Long Island, NY who have crafted a good life through personal expression in a variety of ways: subject-matter expert, wife, parent, child, friend, volunteer, advocate for *you*. They want you to find the happiness they found – often after experiencing loss, frustration and, well, stress. They want you to improve both your physical and psychological wellbeing; they want you to enjoy your life. That’s a pretty marvelous gift! When I started this project, I didn’t know who would participate or what they would offer. And, as often happens, what came together was perfection; a perfect blend of insight and truths in 6 arenas to help you:

- Acquire new concepts, adding to the possible outcomes you might craft
- Learn skills and techniques to assist you in handling stress in a wide variety of situations
- Gain a greatly increased repertoire of personal resources to deal with life
- Access your own internal, creative, intuitive resources to make better decisions
- Increase control of your responses to life’s little and not-so-little headaches so you are at ‘cause’ rather than at ‘effect’

In other words, this book will help you *learn to respond rather than react*. And the great benefit of that is *always finding a path to the best possible outcome for you, no matter what the circumstance you’re navigating*. We authors are no Polyannas; we’ve all had our share of life’s surprises. Yet, we’ve each learned to exert the most powerful force on earth and use it to our advantage: making a positive choice, no matter what confronts us. Just knowing you can do the same will reduce your stress and that will have a spiraling impact, too; as you learn to reduce stress in the face of stressful situations, calmer, more reflective, healthier options will appear to you. Easier ways to find the result you seek. The content in this book will open those great choices to you.

As you might guess, stress is not healthy to experience or endure; beyond the mental and emotional anguish it causes, our bodies suffer too. A rise

in blood pressure is one common result. But there's more - stress, either when experienced or remembered, can reduce a critical component of your immune system called immunoglobulin A. Some time ago, a group of scientists from the Heartmath Foundation performed a test. They measured the amount of IGA in the saliva of participating subjects at the beginning of their study. They then asked their participants to recall some previous incident in which they felt resentment or anger and dwell on it for five minutes. The level of IGA was then measured and measured again over the next 6 hours. Throughout those hours the IGA level was reduced, just with the recollection of a stressful incident! So, you can see the implications of stress for your long-term health.

Let's face it: you are the steward of your own mind and body. It's up to you to deal with life in ways that take care of yourself, both physically and psychologically. Stress may be a common feature in life, but you have choices in how to handle it! This book is your guide to get that done.

Bottom Line: *The way you respond to the realities and circumstances of your life can have a fundamental impact on what those realities and circumstances are.*

If you can learn to shift your habitual responses to a given situation, you may find quicker, more productive results. The ability to make this shift, to take the strongest, healthiest action in reply to an event, obstacle or opportunity is one of the most powerful changes a person can make. It gives you choices: for your body, mind, emotions. Here is your toolkit for choice; choices you can make for happier change and easier transition from 15 no-longer overwhelmed businesswomen of Long Island, NY.

Warmly,

Andrea Feinberg, MBA; Cert. SBL Coach; Cert. EQ Mentor; Cert. Prof'l. Behavior Analyst

Editor, "Less Stress = More Success"

[Coaching Insight LLC](#)

Port Jefferson Station, NY

Your Body, Your Self

KISS STRESS GOODBYE WITH YOGA: THREE YOGA-INSPIRED TIPS TO MANAGE STRESS (KEEP IT SIMPLE SWEETHEART)

by JoAnne Layford, Ed D, AADP, CHC

Leading a fulfilling personal life while growing a successful business is an exciting challenge. The very things that excite and fulfill you can also overload you and create stress. Challenge and stimulation can become anxiety and frustration in a heartbeat. Yoga has sustained and steadied me throughout a wonderful roller coaster ride of marrying, divorcing and parenting while working full time and getting a doctoral degree, remarrying, blending families, grand- parenting and managing three fulfilling careers. I share the lessons I've learned with my clients, savvy survivors focused on bettering their lives, the lives of those they love, the lives of those they serve in business, and the lives of their businesses. Here's how to apply yoga and a variation on a familiar saying "KISS" (Keep It Simple, Sweetheart) to simply navigate the complexities of life.

Keep It Simple Sweetheart includes techniques from the ancient art of yoga; it can bring clarity and steadiness in the midst of the modern world's high stakes of change and chaos. This doesn't necessitate interrupting a meeting or postponing a deadline to roll out a yoga mat, sit cross -legged and chant "Om" in order to proceed!! Here are three simple, subtle stress reduction techniques anyone can do as derived from the practice of yoga to focus, improve health, and prosper.

1. Clear Your Mind

Every day brings unexpected claims for precious time and attention, sometimes making it necessary to throw carefully crafted plans out the window and readjust at a moment's notice. When expectations and reality disconnect, stress fills that gap. As the gap between what is expected and what is happening grows, stress increases. Yoga brings mental clarity, helping you to pay attention to what is happening while keeping you centered and realistic about abilities and limitations.

Maintaining a clear mind is essential for managing stress. I help clients design unique personal rituals and methods for beginning and ending each day to boost their mental clarity. Immediately upon awakening, some clients choose to spend a few moments in quiet prayer, meditation or contemplation.

Many people have trouble meditating. Here's an easy technique to begin clearing the mind with meditation. Put on some soft instrumental music. Set a timer for one minute. Light a white candle in a glass holder (that way you won't worry about starting a fire!). Sit comfortably, with both feet on the floor, an erect spine and your hands in your lap, staring at the candle. Take three deep breaths. Close your eyes, sit still, and concentrate on visualizing the flame of the candle in your mind's eye until the timer sounds. As you become more adept at holding the image of the candle in your mind, gradually add 10 seconds to the timer.

If meditation isn't a good fit, you might choose to read a brief inspirational passage from a book or listen to beautiful music. Next, set your intention for the day. You may choose to enter these thoughts in a lovely journal, or jot them down in a calendar or day planner. Daily intentions might be lofty. For example, "Today, I will radiate love to everyone I meet." Another day's intention might be more practical, perhaps "Today, I will stop procrastinating and reorganize my filing cabinet." Whether the intention is heavenly or earthly, make sure that it is feasible. As the day passes, remind yourself of your intention. At the end of the day, revisit

your intention and contemplate or briefly journal about how the day's intention actualized.

2. *Change Your Body*

In *Boomer Yoga: Energizing the Years Ahead for Men and Women* (2009) Beryl Bender Birch, renowned yoga therapist and author, claims “shift happens” (p. 9). Your body is an instant feedback system; practice listening to the signals it is sending you. Trust your body's rhythms - if your heart rate is booming like a bass drum, it means something needs to be addressed! Mindfulness doesn't mean some form of egotistical self-contemplation. It means paying attention to what is going on inside you as things change around you. One of the best natural remedies for stress is right under your nose. Conscious breathing connects your mind to your body and brings calm and focus.

Stop, take a deep breath, and consider this. Continued stress is toxic to the body. Breathing is one of the most powerful aids to stress reduction and it costs nothing!! The average person takes about 23,000 breaths a day, and studies show that 70-75% of the body's natural toxins are released through exhalation. Proper breathing alleviates stress and aids digestion, mood, and energy. Incorrect breathing can produce tension and lead to exhaustion. What could be more natural than breathing? Breathing heals yet many of us don't know how to breathe properly!

One of my greatest pleasures is customizing breath work for each of my individual client's unique body and circumstances. Teaching clients how to tap into their breath and use breathing techniques to assist them during challenging situations is deeply rewarding for both of us. The ancient yogis realized the power of the breath; in fact one of the most important aspects of yoga is mindful breathing.

In his book *Spontaneous Happiness* (2011) Dr. Andrew Weil explains.

“For many years, I have taught medical students and doctors the importance of breath and the practical utility of breath control to improve physical and emotional wellbeing...When people are anxious, angry, or upset, their breathing is always rapid, shallow, noisy, and irregular. Slow, deep, quiet, regular breathing simply cannot coexist with emotional turmoil, and it is much easier to learn to regulate the breath than to will negative moods to end.”
(p. 146)

Proceed slowly and carefully with breathing techniques; you can contact me with any questions. If you have high blood pressure, suffer from migraines, asthma, or dizziness, proceed very gently and consult your physician for approval.



Here is a simple exercise to get you started with conscious breathing. Sit straight with both feet on the floor. Place your hands flat on your chest and abdomen with your left pinkie finger on your navel and your right thumb below your throat. Spread your fingers so that your right pinkie finger is touching or close to

touching your left thumb. Close your mouth, and relax your tongue. Inhale gently through your nose. Concentrate on taking the breath gently downward, expanding your ribs outward as you gently inhale. Your goal is to expand your chest while breathing down to the abdomen so that both of your hands move as the air travels into your lungs. Pause for a second with your lungs full, and then exhale through your nose, keeping your mouth closed. Again, as you exhale the goal is for both hands to move as your lungs deflate. When you begin practicing this breath, you may not be able to move both hands. Be patient and gentle, do not push

or strain. Your body will gradually become accustomed to it and your lungs will begin to expand further.

Once you are accustomed to the feeling of this diaphragmatic breath, you can begin counting to regulate the length of your inhalation and exhalation. Try to practice holding your breath briefly while your lungs are full and pausing briefly between breaths while your lungs are empty. Remember, the body releases toxins through exhalation so the goal is to exhale for a longer count than you inhale. Begin by inhaling for the count of two, holding the breath for the count of three and exhaling for the count of four. Try to pause for the count of one before inhaling again. Consider building the breath by inhaling for the count of three, holding the breath for the count of four, exhaling for the count of six and pausing for the count of one before inhaling again. Experiment with a pattern that works best for you. For advanced breath work, consult a practitioner such as yours truly!

3. Claim your life

Many of my clients cope with chronic conditions; alleviating stress eases their symptoms. I design a specific sequence of yoga postures for each client's particular chronic health issues and help the client to maintain the postures with correct alignment, creating steadiness and ease in the midst of challenge. That steadiness and ease begins to appear in other areas of the client's life. The word yoga means union; practicing it connects the mind, breath, and body creating steadiness and ease. Though yoga is a discipline, practicing it doesn't mean sweating, straining and over-exerting; practicing yoga means maintaining equilibrium and developing steadiness and ease in the midst of changing circumstances.

Here is a simple centering technique that you can use during a challenging situation. Running a successful business or being responsible for a business' division requires expert communication skills and this exercise will assist with that. Different parts of your body are centers for different

functions. For example, the throat is the seat of self-expression. Many of my clients suffer from chronic thyroid disease; it is no coincidence that many of them also find it challenging to speak their truth in a simple, clear assertive manner. This subtle exercise focuses on the throat, which touches on the thyroid and parathyroid glands.



If you are alone, you can do this while lying down or sitting erect. If you are at work or in public, the sitting variation can be adapted so that it is unobtrusive. Lie down or sit in a chair. (If you are in public rest your elbows on the desk or table in front of you and lean slightly forward). Put the heels of your hands lightly together over the hollow of your throat and allow your fingers to wrap around your neck

with your palms facing in, thumbs resting on your collarbone and your arms resting gently on your chest. Don't squeeze your neck or press in on your throat; simply maintain a light contact on the neck with your fingers. Experiment with what feels best; the heels of your hands might be a quarter inch in front of instead of touching your throat. Now breathe in and out gently feeling your throat move as the breath flows. Think about what you want to express and ask yourself these questions "Is it honest? Is it kind? Honesty without kindness is cruel. Kindness without honesty is fake. Honest and kind. Never one without the other" (used here with permission of Dr. Crew Lauterbach, psychotherapist).

Breathe gently thinking "honest and kind" and the right words will come to you!! As you perfect this technique, you will become more and more "impeccable with your word (p. 25)", as described by Don Miguel Ruiz in the first tenet of his book, *The Four Agreements*. As he asserts, "Through the word you express your creative power. It is through the word that you manifest everything" (p. 26).

Medical Disclaimer: This material is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

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HOW STRESS MAKES US SICK, FAT, TIRED, OLD AND EXHAUSTED AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT!

by **Debi Silber, MS, RD, WHC, FDN**

Stress creates aging, weight gain, illness and disease. In other words, stress makes us sick, fat, tired, old and exhausted!

Our body is a billboard telling the world how we're handling stress. When we're healthy internally, it shows externally and when we're unhealthy internally it shows externally as well. Here's what I mean: Have you ever seen someone and thought, "Wow, they look like they've led a hard life." The way they've handled their stress is written all over them. Stress impacts the way we look, feel and live so buckle up, I'm about to explain how that happens and give you some tools and strategies so you can do something about it.

Let's start with how stress makes you exhausted:

Stress impacts you physically, mentally and emotionally. It lowers your energy level because when you're in a chronic state of stress, you exhaust your adrenal glands which produce cortisol, the stress hormone. Your body will do everything possible to keep you safe. If you feel your safety is in question, you have a stress response that allows you to quickly get out of harm's way. This response is designed to handle short bouts of stress. For example, if a car was coming towards you, you would most likely decide that this is a threat to your safety and as a result, you would ignite the stress response. That response is what allows you to quickly jump the curb to safety. With chronic stress however, the stress response is ignited and not turned off. It's as if that car is chasing you 24/7.

What does that lead to? Just picture being in a state of heightened alert for an extended period of time. Your heart rate and blood pressure increase, there's more oxygen pumping to your lungs, your breathing gets short

and shallow, your pupils dilate, digestion and other systems are shunted as your body tries to “save you” from the perceived stressor. When the adrenals continuously secrete cortisol in response to your perceived stress, at first you have lots of energy, then you’re “tired and wired” and eventually, just exhausted. Cortisol levels peak and eventually, over time, they tank leaving you as exhausted as your overworked adrenals.

When you’re stressed, you don’t sleep well and look for energy from two sources to help get you through the day. Those sources are sugar and caffeine. Neither option gives you the quality, restorative sleep your body really needs to heal, repair and restore yourself. They only deplete you further while wreaking havoc on your body and energy levels in the process.

When you’re exhausted your goal may be to simply get through your day. You lack the focus, clarity and motivation to *power* through your day. It’s as if you’re expecting your car to run on empty and when it’s time to refuel, you choose something other than gasoline. That’s what happens when we don’t eat the right diet or burn ourselves out because of chronic, unmanaged stress.

What are some ways to increase your energy?

First, take a look at your diet. Eating a diet filled with whole, real, nutrient dense food gives you the fuel your body needs. Unfortunately, you may eat a nutrient deficient yet calorically dense diet that offers nothing to fuel you; it just fills you while laying the groundwork for illness and disease.

Second, look at the quality and duration of your sleep. Enjoying 7 – 8 hours of quality, restorative sleep in a calm, soothing environment is optimal.

It’s important to become aware of the choices you’re making throughout the day. Are they bringing you further or closer to the health, energy and lifestyle you want? If they’re taking you further away, what immediate

steps can you take to change? Can you exercise earlier in the day to ensure a workout gets done, pre-plan your meals and snacks so you're not at the mercy of what's available but don't have what you need? Can you spend less time with people who drain and deplete you (energy vampires), learn to delegate, take on less or find better ways to manage your stress to preserve your energy and health?

Being exhausted depletes you in so many ways. It can lead to feeling unfit, overweight, overwhelmed and unhappy because you simply lack the energy necessary to turn things around. With a plan in hand, you can do anything.

How Stress Makes You Sick:

As a Functional Diagnostic Nutritionist I test my clients (through non-invasive testing) to see their level of adrenal function and see how internal stressors (like food intolerance, food sensitivity, inflammation, parasites, bacteria, trauma, etc.) and psychological stressors (mental and emotional states) affect them. They may be exhausted, irritable, not able to “get it together” like they used to, have hormonal issues, low libido, back or neck pain, gained weight, lost the desire to work out, lack patience, feel overwhelmed, irritable, unfulfilled, etc. So often these are signs of adrenal fatigue/dysfunction yet you attribute these symptoms to age or are willing to believe “that’s just the way it is.” It’s not. It’s typically the result of chronic, unmanaged stress along with a lifestyle that’s gotten out of control. The good news is, it can be fixed.

Stress also suppresses your immune system. Your immune system is like an internal army; when it's strong it protects its borders and when it's weakened, it's as if that army is fast asleep and invaders that normally wouldn't be able to get through, easily do. Studies show how a many students get upper respiratory infections around the time they take their finals. That's no coincidence. The stress of the testing suppressed their immune system and they became more susceptible to invaders they normally would have been able to fight off.

How Stress Makes Us Gain Weight:

There's a strong link between stress and weight gain. Here are a few of the reasons why...

1. Stress suppresses your thyroid, which impacts metabolism and weight. So often you think you have a sluggish thyroid leading to a sluggish metabolism. So, in an effort to boost your metabolism you take medication (synthroid for example) with the hope of giving your thyroid a boost. But the thyroid is often suppressed because of chronic, unmanaged stress so if you lessen the stress, the thyroid may heal naturally.
2. Think about it. When consumed with stress you may not take the time to make healthy choices, read labels, etc. You want what you want and often look at healthy eating as yet another task on your already over extended to-do list.
3. You look for comfort foods when under stress. Not only do you look for those foods, you're looking for that soothing feeling you enjoyed when they were served to you long ago. Those foods are typically loaded in calories. I have yet to meet someone whose comfort foods are grilled chicken and steamed broccoli!
4. You may not know that you're looking for a hit of 2 neurotransmitters: serotonin and dopamine. Serotonin gives you that feeling of peace and calm. Dopamine signals the reward and pleasure centers of the brain. You get a blast of these neurotransmitters from sugar- and carbohydrate-loaded foods which also happen to be highly addictive, nutrient void and calorically dense.
5. When under stress, you're flooding your body with cortisol, the stress hormone. Cortisol drives fat storage, particularly around your middle. So if you've noticed your middle getting a little bigger recently, it's probably due to stress.
6. If you're an emotional eater, you may eat under stress. You'll use food to soothe, calm, numb and relax your problems and

pain. You're using food to feed an unmet need whether it's stress relief, time off, intimacy, friendship, a deeper sense of purpose or fulfillment and more. As an emotional eater you self-medicate; food is simply your drug of choice.

Any and all of these reasons contribute to the link between stress and weight gain.

How Stress Accelerates Aging:

If you take a look at the lines on your face you'll see the expressions you've made so often are etched permanently into your skin. What expressions do you see: laugh lines or worry lines?

Stress also causes oxidative stress that accelerates aging. It impacts the tone and texture of your skin and, as if that weren't enough, stress also influences your estrogen levels which then impact your sense of youth and vitality.

So Now that You Know What Stress Can Do, What Can You Do About It?

First, identify the areas of your life that are difficult and may contribute to an unhealthy level of stress. Is the stress causing a food addiction and sleep issues? Is it coming from toxic relationships, or a lifestyle that's gotten out of hand and isn't in line with your values and priorities? Typically, many things combine and contribute to your internal and external stress. Identifying your stressors is a great place to start because once you determine the root cause of your stress and how it's affecting you, you can create a plan to heal.

Next, it's helpful to realize how your body reacts to stress. Do you have back or neck pain, do you clench your teeth, get a headache or suffer from digestive issues? Let's say that when you're under stress your body reacts

by getting a headache. When you have a headache, you take an aspirin to find some relief. When you take that aspirin, you're only handling the symptom (the pain) and never getting to the root cause of what brought the headache on in the first place (your stress). By identifying how your body reacts to stress, the next time you get a headache, you can trace it back to the trigger - the person, place, thought or feeling that led to the headache in the first place.

The next step is finding a healthy way to manage your stress that will work specifically for you. It may be exercising, meditating, journaling, listening to music, calling a friend, playing with animals, taking a walk in nature, etc. Finding your healthy outlet to handle stress provides some much needed self-care and can manage your stress in a healthier way.

Here's Something Else to Consider:

Stress lessens when you become more proactive versus reactive. When you're reactive, you're at the mercy of everything that's out of your control - a perfect recipe for stress. When you're proactive, you take full responsibility for your choices, behaviors and the way you react to things around you. Many of the factors that cause stress may not change but when you change how you respond to them, you reduce stress and the wear and tear it can cause.

It's also helpful to take a look at your current outlook and perspective. How you look at things changes your stress level and almost every other aspect of life. For example, take two people sitting in traffic. It's the same situation for both but you may find one driver banging on the steering wheel and drowning in a sea of stress hormones while another driver is enjoying music and quiet time before arriving at the next destination. I can assure you that the one who's found a healthier way to handle stress is healthier physically, mentally and emotionally.

Now, While it May Seem Like a “No Brainer” to Alleviate Stress, Here are a Few Things that May be Holding You Back from Making Changes:

Fear, limiting beliefs, a mindset that doesn't serve you, poor habits, relationships and a lack of awareness are the biggest factors contributing to sabotage that I see daily.

1. Fear holds you back from the best of everything; that can be fear of failure, fear of success, fear of the unknown and fear of change.
2. Limiting beliefs keep you “safe” *and* stuck at the same time. You believe something old, negative or outdated that doesn't serve you yet you hang onto that belief at the expense of your health and well-being.
3. A mindset and perspective that's negative and pessimistic prevents you from being, doing and having more.
4. Poor habits: You may have habits that prevent you from looking, feeling and living your best. Since most of what you do is conditioned, ritualistic habit, it's crucial to recognize your habits and then exchange the ones that don't serve you for new ones that will. Exercise fits into this category perfectly. Until you make exercise a priority it will be the first thing to get bounced off your busy “to-do” list. A new habit could be getting up early, putting on the fitness clothes before leaving the bedroom and working out at the first opportunity you have. Wearing the clothes gives you that mental head start which is half the battle and is a way to create new, healthy habits.
5. Your relationships propel you forward or hold you back. If you're spending time with people who are critical, judgmental, negative and walk around with a “lack” mentality, you'll eventually take on those qualities and think less of yourself. When you're with people who are inspiring, uplifting, positive and filled with energy, you step up your game. Take a look at who you're spending time with and I'll tell you how you feel :)

6. A lack of awareness: Unfortunately, it often takes an illness, crisis, tragedy or trauma to “wake yourself up” and evaluate how you’ve been living or if you’re headed in a direction you want to go. Without that shake up, you may unconsciously go through your days with the greatest goal of simply getting through your day. My clients discover what they really want, personally and professionally. And, regardless of the circumstances they’re contending with, they learn to find the shortest and most direct path to get there so they can live the life they want most.

How Can You Break the Habit of Self-Sabotage and Begin to Create Lasting Change to Reduce Stress Once and for All?

Awareness comes first. You can’t change anything you’re not aware of and I use mindset tools to create awareness of habits and behaviors that create stress, illness and unhappiness.

Another way to find out what’s behind the sabotage is to pick up a pad and pen, take a deep breath and honestly answer these questions:

I can’t...

I’m so...

I’ll never...

I shouldn’t...

Don’t judge or critique your answers, just let them flow and see what you come up with. Once you’ve answered those questions, ask yourself where those beliefs came from and if they serve you. If they’re not valid, if they no longer serve you, if they bring you further from the results you want, let them go.

So many of us live in an overextended, 24/7 lifestyle. One of the biggest problems I see with my clients daily is that because they can handle so much, they do...but they pay a difficult price.

It is possible to get a handle on your stress...and prevent the physical, mental and emotional wear and tear that stress can cause. When you do, you CAN heal once and for all, becoming your personal and professional best.

Gift for You

<https://pbtinstitute.com>

It's a download of my e-book: "How Your Biggest Crisis Reveals Your Greatest Gift"

Natural Aids for Better Health

7 WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS USING UNIQUE ESSENTIAL OILS

by **Bonnie Taub**

Ever have one of those days when you are frazzled and ready to tear your hair out? Nothing seems to be going right? No time to finish what needs to be done? Seems you have no time to take a breath? You are eating on the fly so your digestion gets screwed up? Can't sleep due to worry over sick family members? Perhaps you dread going to work? Notice that stress is causing some weight gain? Then this information is perfect for you.

I remember having many days like the ones described above. There were times when my Mom was very ill and I could not sleep over worrying about her. Another time I was teaching in massage therapy school. I loved the material and imparting knowledge to future massage therapists, but hated the administrative side of my role. After awhile I started to wake up every morning, not wanting to go to work.

Then I found these unique essential oils. They helped me stay relaxed so I could get through all the trying times that I faced. I have since incorporated these into my daily life and never travel without them.

Here's a true story: A few years ago, after my Mom died, my siblings and I were together in Florida where she had lived. Needless to say this was an extremely stressful time. One of my sisters happened to be driving and

passed by the place where our Mom had lived. She was overcome with emotion and had to pull over. When she got back to our third sister's house and walked in, I immediately opened a blend for stress and anxiety. She was perhaps 12 feet away and sighed and uttered "I feel better now". I thought "Wow. These oils really work!"

What is an essential oil? It is an aromatic liquid that is distilled from flowers, leaves, trees, roots, and seeds. What makes these oils so unique? They are 100% pure therapeutic grade. What does this mean? The oil is distilled under low pressure and low temperature to ensure that none of its chemical constituents are destroyed. Therefore, these oils can be used topically, are sometimes ingestible, as well as aromatically and maintain their therapeutic properties. It can take up to 1000 petals to make 1 drop of Rose oil. 1 drop of Peppermint oil can equal the amount you would get from drinking 20 cups of tea.

How do essential oils work? When inhaling the aroma, the molecules travel up the nose and make contact with the lining inside the nose. There are receptor sites, which allow the odor molecules to trigger impulses to the olfactory bulb of the brain. The olfactory bulb then transmits these impulses to the center that controls taste, the area where emotional memories are stored and to other parts of the brain that control heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, stress, and hormone balance. The sense of smell is the only one of your five senses with a direct connection to these areas of the brain. So you can see how the fragrance of essential oils influence your appetite, weight loss through the thyroid hormones, and your emotional state.

The following information can be a little technical, but will help you understand how essential oils affect you. There are hundreds of chemical constituents that make up essential oils. They are divided into many categories, each having specific influences. The following information is adapted from: *The Chemistry of Essential Oils Made Simple* by David Stewart, PhD and *Reference Guide for using Essential Oils* by Connie and Alan Higley.

1. Phenols - believed to have antiseptic and anti-bacterial properties, so can be helpful to the immune system. Found in wintergreen, thyme, basil, and tea tree. Examples are eugenol, thymol and carvacol.
2. Alcohols - energizing, cleansing, anti-viral, anti-bacterial, sweet aroma, antiseptic. Found in lavender, coriander, rose, and geranium.
3. Aldehydes - antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory. Usually responsible for the fragrance of an essential oil and are often calming. Found in cinnamon bark, lime, lemon, and lavender.
4. Ethers - balancing and calming, they help release emotions and have an anti-depressive effect. Found in tarragon, fennel, and basil.
5. Ketones - characterized by a strong odor, decongesting, analgesic, and promote healing. Found in spearmint, peppermint, rosemary and lavender.
6. Carboxylic acids - stimulating, cleansing, react with alcohols to make esters. Found in valerian and cinnamon.
7. Esters - soothing, balancing, anti-fungal, and stress and emotional releasing. Found in peppermint, wintergreen, and lavender. Examples are methyl salicylate and linalyl acetate.
8. Oxides - known for decongesting the respiratory system and clearing the sinuses. Found in eucalyptus, rosemary, thyme, peppermint and lavender. Examples: 1,8-cineole (most common), linalol oxide, pipertone oxide.
9. Monoterpenes - inhibits the accumulation of toxins, helps discharge toxins from the liver and kidneys. In general, are stimulating and soothing to irritated tissues. Found in most essential oils, especially orange, pine, balsam fir, ginger and frankincense. Examples: Pinenes have a strong antiseptic, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and expectorant properties, *B*-Myrcene is a cancer preventative, d-limonene is anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-viral and found in 90% of citrus oils.

10. Sesquiterpenes - anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, soothes irritated skin, calming and cross the blood brain barrier to enter the brain tissue. Found in ginger, sandalwood and myrrh. To a lesser extent in lavender, peppermint, clove and frankincense. Example: *B-Caryophyllene*

There are many factors that can alter the constituents of an essential oil and thereby alter its strength. One is where the oils are grown. The condition of the soil, the climate, and the altitude can all affect the above-mentioned constituents. Even the time of year that the distillation takes place can affect the potency. As an example, thyme that is distilled later in its growing season, which is mid-summer to late fall, contains more thymol. When pesticides are used in the soil, the oils can become toxic. Many pesticides are oil-soluble and mix into the oil during distillation. It is extremely important to know that the oils you are using are grown under the best conditions, have no outside chemical influences and are distilled at the right time.

Before delving into ways to use essential oils, I would like to point out some cautions.

If you use the oil topically, it should be tested on a small area of the skin. After 30 minutes, if the skin turns red, starts to itch or burn, don't go any further. One reason could be that the oil is not 100% therapeutic grade. As an example, Lavender is known for treating burns. If the lavender used is actually lavandin, the burning will increase. This is because lavandin is 12-18% camphor, which can itself burn the skin.

Another problem could be that the oil is reacting to some other skin product you are using, especially if it's petroleum-based. These chemicals become trapped in the fatty layers of the skin. Essential oils have been known to digest toxic substances. Wait a few days and try again. A good idea would also be to change your personal care products and allow the essential oils to continue the detox process. Also drink plenty of water to flush out the toxins.

Now for the nitty-gritty on using these essential oils:

A great way to relax is to take a warm bath. You can add an essential oil to it. This needs a little finesse since oil and water do not mix. Add the oil to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of Epsom salts or an unscented gel base and run under running water.

1. If you like to take showers, you can add the essential oil to shower base gel and wash your skin with it. The trick is to leave it on the skin for several minutes to allow the oil to penetrate your body. There are showerheads that have an attached receptacle that will hold about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of bath salts. This should last for 3-4 showers. You get the added benefit of aroma into the air.
2. Using diffusers is another great way to create a calming atmosphere. The key here is to avoid heat. This lessens their therapeutic effect. Cold air diffusers are made to disperse a micro-fine mist that lingers in the air for several hours.
3. You can add several drops of essential oil to a spray bottle with 1 cup purified water and then shake and mist the air. Shake the bottle each time before using. Here's a great air freshener recipe: 20 drops lavender, 10 drops lemon, 6 drops bergamot, 5 drops lime, 5 drops grapefruit.
4. By putting the essential oil on a cotton ball, you can put the cotton ball in the air conditioning vent, car vents, or ceiling fans.
5. Massage the oils into your skin. For large areas of the body, add 1-2 drops of an essential oil into 1 tsp. of a carrier oil, such as olive, almond or jojoba. Make sure it is completely absorbed so as not to stain clothing. For small areas, use the ratio of 1 drop of essential oil to 1 drop of carrier oil.
6. Make your own body spray. Fill a small spray bottle with 10-15 drops of calming oil, along with distilled water. Shake well and spray your entire body after taking a shower or bath.

7. Last, but not least, is direct inhalation. Just open the bottle of your favorite oil or blend and inhale. You can also put a few drops in your hand and rub your hands together. Cup your hands and inhale.

For personal use, my favorite is direct application to the skin. The skin absorption takes about 5 seconds and in just 4-6 minutes it is through my entire body. A close second is using a diffuser. Another thing I love to do is to sprinkle a relaxing oil on my pillow case. I have the best night's sleep and wake up really refreshed in the morning.

Now for the specific essential oils:

1. Lavender: This is probably the most common oil everyone thinks of for relaxation. It is distilled from flowers. There are shampoos, creams, body lotions, body washes, and scented candles. You name it and it is on the market. Not everybody likes the scent. That could be because they never smelled essential oil that is pure. Always smell a product first! If it does not please you, don't buy it.
2. Citrus Oils: Lemon, Lime, Orange, Grapefruit, and Tangerine. These oils are cold pressed from the rind. The aroma coming from these oils is uplifting.
3. Idaho Balsam Fir: Like all evergreen oils, the oil is distilled from branches and needles. The aroma is relaxing to the body.
4. Spruce: Similar to Idaho Balsam Fir with an added benefit of providing a grounding sensation.
5. Frankincense: Only the carterii and sacra species have any therapeutic value. Read labels carefully. This is distilled from the resin of the tree. Its aromatic influence uplifts the mind.
6. Peppermint: Another familiar oil that is distilled from the leaves and stems. When stress leads to headaches and indigestion, this is the 'go to' oil. Inhale it to block headaches. If you are very

careful, you can put a tiny amount on the temples or directly on the stomach.

To summarize, the benefits of pure, therapeutic grade essential oils are:

1. Essential oils are small molecules that can quickly penetrate the skin.
2. Essential oils are fat-soluble and can penetrate the cell walls and affect your body within 20 minutes.
3. Essential oils contain oxygen molecules that transport nutrients to the cells, stimulating the immune system.
4. Essential oils are anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-fungal, anti-microbial, anti-tumoral, and antiseptic.
5. Essential oils containing sesquiterpenes can pass through the blood-brain barrier, enabling them to possibly have a positive effect on neurological illnesses.
6. Essential oils are aromatic. They destroy odors, removing toxins from the air, and increase oxygen in the air.
7. Essential oils help promote emotional, physical, and spiritual healing.

In conclusion, I have had fun and good health using these oils and I am sure that you will also. I wish you the best in using this information to help you cope with the stresses in your life.

Gift for You

For a brief report on how you can enjoy a healthier, more vibrant life, click here: <http://harmonizehealth.vibrantscents.com/>

GOOD HEALTH FROM GOOD HERBS – FROM THE EARTH TO YOU!

By **Therese Rose Hoffman**

What I love the most about growing herbs is that it's so simple to produce a soothing, powerful remedy. For the most part herbs have roots that are grounded and attached to the Earth. Herbs are living beings of light that love to grow in poor or rich soil. I think of the dandelion that finds any scratch of dirt to set its roots into the Earth so strongly that I've never known anyone who could eliminate a dandelion! I think of the plant kingdom as the Earth's make-up. It is the plants that decorate the Earth with color and help the Earth function without distress. When herbs are gathered, prepared, and consumed you too, feel better.

Herbs are mystic beings that feed you and provide healing as well. You do not always have to consume an herb to receive its stress-relieving power. We can smell a rose or sit under a tree and easily relax. Herbs are here to help us release stress and be happy in our lives.

As an herbalist I follow the tradition of many wise women who, for thousands of years, collected plants from meadows and woodlands and used them to create healing medicines. We gather herbs, create preparations, and develop formulas that have been tried, proven, and passed from mother to daughter, from woman to apprentice for countless generations. I've inherited this legacy from my ancestors and from the many women who taught me the secret language of plants. When working with students, the first remedy I teach is how to ease the stress out of their clients. Once a person is relaxed, you can get to the deeper root of their problem; the source behind the symptom.

Stress causes lethargy, brain fog and a feeling of overwhelm which holds us back from experiencing life to the fullest. Who wouldn't want a life filled with peace, joy and tranquility? To wake up each morning, look out the window with a sensation of warmth and happiness and spend

each day enjoying the perfect balance of personal time, work, and human connection is a blessing.

Successful herbal therapies for stress are as varied as the causes of stress. Herbs nudge your biochemistry in the right direction when they are combined in a knowledgeable way. There are four major ways of delivering herbs: teas, herbal pills, tinctures and flower essences.

Create a Tea Ritual

The ritual of making, holding and sipping a cup of tea you personally have brewed can help calm frayed nerves and give you a dose of positive “me” time most of us desperately need. My business, Teesagarden, hand selects and blends these herbs to help the nervous system deal with stress, one of the most frequently requested benefits our clients seek. Here is a sampling of herbs that you can use to enjoy the same result:

Feverfew: (*Chythmum Parthenium*) The American herbalist John Hill wrote “Chythmum exceeds in treating the worst tension filled headache.”

Chamomile: (*Matricaria chamomilla*) is one of my all time friends. It works on the entire nervous system, bringing relief to every nerve in the body.

Skullcap: (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) helps with stress-induced headaches, bruxism (teeth grinding) and muscle spasms such as eye twitches.

Passionflower (*Passiflora Incarata*) is specific in its goal; it helps a person who can't shut off her mind about the day. It helps relieve you when your head is filled with the “what if” worried thoughts.

Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) is an uplifting calming herb.

Rose (*Rosa app*) can help ease the feeling of despair. Try this: take petals from a newly opened rose and place the petals under your eyes to help take the strain from your eyes. This is especially great for computer eyestrain.

Lavender: (*Lavandula x intermedia*) I use it to excite and motivate other herbs to work together. It is such an economical herb as well because a pinch goes a long way.

Listen to your body, mind and intuition to choose what's best for you.

Sometimes herbs are not pleasant-tasting, or you may have sensitivity to alcohol and cannot ingest herbs this way (tinctures). For these reasons I place my herbs into a pill form to administer a formula. At Teesagarden we consider the unique needs of each person and then prepare the herbs for pills. Some types of herbs used in pill form are:

Rhodiola (*Rhodiola rosea*) helps balance stress hormones and is a great source of Vitamin D.

Eleuthero (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) helps stimulate the nervous system but not too much since there is no caffeine in eleuthero.

Amla (*Embllica officinalis*) The translation of Amla is “the sustainer”. Amla provides the nervous system with nourishment and calming. It is rich in antioxidants, and an extra bonus is it keeps the mind from aging.

Licorice☺ (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) From her medieval Classic Physica Hildegard who was a German mystic, wrote between 1151-1158 “no matter how it is eaten it gives a person a clear voice, makes her mind pleasant and causes clear eyesight.” Still true today.

Tinctures: Longevity and Stability

Once an herb has been tinctured, it will retain its medicinal qualities far longer than most other preparations. Tinctures are extracts of herbs in a mixture of alcohol and water; this combination will extract a wide range of constituents from the herb. The doses are much smaller than tea, and

tinctures are much more convenient to use. An additional benefit for tinctures is that some herbs that lose potency when dried (Echinacea) can be made into fresh tinctures. I appreciate making tinctures with only one herb. I prefer to make tinctures as a formula with the use of sunlight, moonlight and eclipses; doesn't it seem magical? When I was young, I was taught the power of ceremony when making medicine. And it is very, very good! I give thanks for the way I was taught with my deities and with my own plant ally (the dandelion). I teach tincture-making usually around the equinoxes so that my students can learn the rhythm of the Earth.

Movers and Shakers

Have you discovered Flower Essences?

These diluted drops target your emotional wellbeing more directly than perhaps any other type of remedy. “Flower essences are vibrational remedies that re-align patterns in our emotional, psychological and spiritual lives” explains Dr. Edward Bach who is a doctor who used flower essences to treat his patients. Small doses - just a few drops several times a day – work on the body system to create positive changes in behavior and emotional health. I've studied flower energetics and make customized formulas based on lessons learned from my Native American teachers. I use flower essences when a person is stuck in their own stress and cannot get out of it. The stress can show up as grief, co-dependency, passive aggressive syndrome or the burnt out feelings that turn inward and become depressive to a person or manifest as stress related health issues. I use a variety of herbs that may help you squarely face anything that is difficult or not nice yet necessary to change. Or, maybe you need help getting closer to your emotions, focusing on them, allowing yourself to feel and truly understand your emotions.

Conclusion

The way herbs benefit the nervous system to relieve stress is unlike conventional medicine. Conventional medicine deadens or nullifies the nerve response. Herbal remedies reconnect the nerve channels in the body, reawaken them and help them flow with life force. In essence, herbal therapy strengthens your ability to cope with and deal with the stress of life. Herbs are your friends and allies to improve the quality of your life. Just like the make-up you put on to feel better!

The Space We Live In

REDUCE CLUTTER TO REDUCE STRESS

by Lorraine Kimmey

When people learn I am a professional organizer, I usually get one of two comments:

“Can you move in with me?”

or

“Don’t come to my house, I’d be too embarrassed!”

These comments reflect the feelings people have when they learn an organizer is in their midst. Although in reality, most folks just grin, chuckle or walk away without saying much of anything. I am often left muttering to myself, *“Are they organized or afraid?”*

In my many years of experience as an organizer, I have found that while the traditional roles of men and women have changed, women are usually still the ones responsible for taking care of the home and keeping things in order. Add a career, spouse, children, grandchildren and/or parents to care for, and no wonder women are stressed; it’s a lot to organize!

Getting organized can mean a variety of things. For some it means papers need to be organized into brightly colored folders while, for others it is enough that those same papers are off the dining room table and out

of sight. To some, organizing means having the house presentable for holiday guests. Others want to come home to a neat house every night where items are easily found and they can have a sense of peace.

Like everything else, there are also extremes in organizing. On one side is the Hoarder, one who is so overcome with clutter from an inability to discard the unnecessary, that it precludes them from using their space for its intended purpose. On the other side of the pendulum are the Perfectionists, those who become paralyzed if everything is not in its appropriate place, in its ideal container, precisely labeled, and perfectly aligned. Fortunately, most people fall somewhere in the middle.

Almost everyone, myself included, has issues with organization. Some may have it to a greater degree than others but that doesn't make anyone's issues less important. As a professed "Information Hound" it's hard for me to resist hitting the print button when I find material worth saving however, that adds to the collection of paper to file, act-on or toss! Regardless of anyone's specific quirk, organization is a very important element to living a less stressful life.

Organization is Different for Everyone

What's right for your colleague, neighbor or friend, may or may not work for you. We all live different lives, have different schedules, personalities, talents and skills. While ideas from others can certainly help you, it is best to establish organizing systems that are right for you, your family and/or your office.

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES

As with any process, there are some guidelines to help navigate your way. The same holds true for organizing. Let's start with an understanding of what I've identified as 3 general types of disorganization.

3 Types of Disorganization

Situational – A temporary situation - due to a move, caused by a renovation project, or by a major disruption to your normal schedule.

Chronic – Hope is fading because repeated attempts at getting organized continue to fail.

Hoarding – Clutter is so excessive that your home or office has become non-functional and potentially hazardous.

The more serious the level of disorganization, the more important it becomes to enlist and create a support structure to help resolve the difficulties you'll encounter. Recent television shows have many people believing they are Hoarders. In truth, most disorganized people fall into the Situational/Chronic categories when it comes to certain aspects of their lives.

Whether at home or at the office, the concepts outlined here can be used universally. Below you'll find reference to our ***Core Organizing Principles***; they should be the foundation to all your projects. Our ***Getting Organized Process*** (also below) details what's needed and how to get yourself organized both "visually" and "behind the scenes" so you can reduce stress, save money and have more time to enjoy the 'things' that are important.

The following guidelines will dispel the myths that may have been hindering your progress in getting and staying organized once and for all!

If You're Disorganized Remember: You're Not Alone

Over the years, many times in an act of final desperation, calls for "help" came from those who just couldn't take the clutter anymore. After repeated unsuccessful attempts at trying to correct things themselves, they came to the final realization professional help was needed. They all knew that life could be more effective and far less stressful if they could somehow get organized but they just didn't know how. They needed someone to help them get focused, create systems and use their time productively.

First we need to put some **Key Concepts** into perspective.

- Your Clutter didn't happen overnight, so chances are it won't get fixed overnight.
- There is a difference between Visual Clutter and Hidden Clutter. 'Visual' is what you and everyone else can see.... 'Hidden' is behind doors, in drawers, boxes, desks, basements, attics, sheds and other storage areas.
- There are Public Spaces and Private Spaces. 'Public' is where company and office visitors can visit and easily see the space. 'Private Spaces' are everywhere else.
- 'Drop Spots' are agreed-upon designated places you put things where they do not really belong. Usually, it's a place of inconvenience for the owner of that 'thing'. As an example, if I

found your socks in the living room where they don't belong, I would remove them to your designated drop spot. In an office, if I find a stack of papers left on a table, they are returned to the person's desk/office.

- Someone has to be 'in charge' of keeping things organized. While areas may be divided up among staff or family, there has to be someone to steer the overall "Ship of Expectations". Sometimes this can be a partnership but that rarely works; a team needs a leader.
- The purpose of getting organized is to be more efficient so you have time to enjoy your life and family. It's not meant to be a burden where you become the "*Organization Police*".

Now let's review **The Core Organizing Principles** which are the basis for your decisions and actions during the organizing process.

1. *Everything Needs A Home*

Select a location to store items... like dishes in the cabinet over the dishwasher, towels in the linen closet, blank paper near the printer, etc... Any place will do as long as it is visually and functionally right. Just pick a place; you can always change it if it doesn't work!

2. *Store Like Things Together*

This means that all items of one type should be put together. At home, the most common 'all over' items are Papers, Junk Mail, Clothes, and Shoes. If you bulk shop it may be difficult to get all those rolls of toilet paper under one sink so keep a working supply handy and create a 'bulk storage area' for the excess.

3. *Make Things Easily Accessible*

This means being able to get to things without other things tumbling down, pulling everything out so you can get to the

one in the back or hurting yourself by pulling down a heavy box from the top shelf which caused you to fall off the step ladder! Instead, have regularly needed items in a practical location and readily accessible.

4. *Purging is Good*

You need to clear out the old (past) to make room for the new (future). Purging is by very hard for you. Here are some of the most commonly used excuses:

- *“If I file it, I’ll never be able to find it again.”*
- *“I’m sure I’ll find use for it someday.”*
- *“I’m sure I need it, even though I don’t know what it is or where it came from.”*
- *“I paid a lot of money for it. I can’t give it away, even though I’ll never use it.”*
- *“But (insert name here) gave it to me, I don’t like it, but I can’t let it go!”*

.... and the list of rationalizations goes on....

Unless you have sufficient storage space, you’ll need to purge some of the unused, unnecessary, unwanted, outdated, unread and broken stuff to eliminate clutter and make room for the new things continuously entering your life. For you, this may be easier said than done, so be empathetic *and* ruthless at the same time. Please, always be respectful of other peoples’ stuff by including them in purging decisions.

It’s time to decide... Keep, Toss, Donate, Sell, Give-Away or Return!

5. *Have a Maintenance Plan*

The key to keeping things organized is taking a few minutes every day to put things back in their designated areas. Pick a time that is best suited for you: the end of day, before you leave for work, after school, after dinner, etc. Once you begin doing it regularly, it will become routine and second nature. If you like to come into a visually organized home or office then establish your maintenance time to allow just that! You invested a lot in terms of time, emotion and decisions to get organized, make time to keep it that way!

6. *Remember -- Health & Safety are ALWAYS Top Priority!*

Don't block doorways, don't store heavy things overhead, make sure wires and rugs are secure to prevent a hazard, take out the garbage, don't leave food and dirty dishes around, etc.

Annoyances Will Help You Stay Organized!

When you can't find what you are looking for, your stress level rises and you get frustrated. When you try to close a drawer that is too full, you get annoyed. When you can't find that letter you kept aside because it was important, you get annoyed. When you slam a drawer on your hand because it was too full, you get annoyed AND hurt!

Once you get an area organized, remember those annoyances and use them to recognize the early warnings signs of disorganization. That 'frustrated & annoyed' feeling is the very first indicator that something needs fixing and most likely it will only take a few minutes to take care of it quickly. If not, clutter re-builds!

Finally, it's time to **Set a Plan and Gather Your Tools!**

Answer These Questions:

1. What Area Is Bothering Me the Most?

2. Is There a Deadline for completion? Why?

3. Is this a Visual or Hidden Organizing Project?

4. Do I Need Anyone's Permission to Continue? Whose?

5. Do I Need Anyone's Help To Continue? Whose?

6. How Much Time Can I Devote? How Often?

Gather These Supplies:

Trash Bags Donation Bags Storage Boxes Project Specific Supplies

(i.e.; Label-Maker, Markers, Containers or Trays for Storage, File Folders, Hangers, etc.)

Don't Bite Off More Than You Can Organize In The Time Allotted...

It happens all the time.... It's natural to get excited about starting your organizing project. You begin bright and early in the morning, full of energy, and you start pulling everything out of drawers and closets, throwing a few things away and putting other items aside to donate or sell. You begin organizing things enthusiastically and then 'Something Happens':

The phone rings, the clock says you only have a half hour left, you run out of energy, you get overwhelmed by too many decisions and interruptions hinder the flow of getting the project done. Oh well, what choice do you have? Leave it where it is or throw it back from where it came from, quickly, before anyone sees! In other words, leave it in more of a mess than before you started! Remember: good use of Project Time includes allowing enough time to finish your organizing project. This includes time to take out the trash and moving the donate/sell/return items to your car or garage and finishing the filing.

Now that we have reviewed the basics, let's start **The Getting Organized Process** to eliminate that bothersome clutter!

Getting your Home, Office, or Home-Office organized usually means that you need to deal with both Stuff and Papers. If you Google "the definition of getting organized" you'll get thousands of results. My definition is simple:

Being Organized: The ability to find what you need, when you need it, and have others able find it without needing you.

Most people need to get Visually Organized before they can work on the Hidden “Behind the Scenes” spaces. This provides the motivation to continue and build confidence so you can get and stay organized. Start with something simple and gradually take on more challenging projects as time and energy permit.

All projects follow the same process....

- 1) Visually De-Clutter to provide motivation
- 2) Create Systems to stop the dropping/piling habits
- 3) Work on the Hidden Clutter to get solid organization

Follow these steps and you will get your home, office or home-office organized sooner rather than later.

Visual De-Cluttering

To create a space that is calm and peaceful, you need to reduce the amount of visual distractions that can lead to anxiety. ‘Reduce’ is the optimal word. The goal is to make the area Visually Appealing and Regain its Functionality.

First... Tackle the Flat Surfaces

One surface at a time ---- eliminate anything you don’t want seen by you and/or visitors. Flat surfaces include: Walls, Doors, Table Tops, Floors, Beds, Furniture, Shelves, etc. If it doesn’t serve your purpose, remove it.

Second ... Categorizing

As you remove the unnecessary items, place Trash in the Trash Bag, the Unwanted and In Good Condition items into Donate/Sell/Give-Away containers, and then categorize the rest into groups of like items. Category examples could be, “items to be put in someone’s Drop Spot”, “papers to look through”, “things

that need to be put back where they belong”, etc. The last pile is “I’m not sure what to do with this stuff”, which we’ll tackle next.

Third.... The “*I’m not sure what to do with this stuff*” Pile

Be *ruthless* with yourself. Do you really need/want it? If so, it needs a home, pick one! If not, Trash/Donate/Sell/Give-Away/Return is the alternative option.

Finish....

Place items in their Drop Spot locations, Put Away the things in their designated areas, Sort through the papers and put them where they belong and move onto the next flat surface. When you’re done... take out the Trash and move the Donate/Sell/Give-Away/Return items to your car or garage.

A special note about Papers: Sort the incoming mail right away everyday: Get rid of the junk into the trash or shredder and place the rest into the 5 designated Drop Spots: Actions to Take, Bills to Pay, Items to File, Things to Read, and Refer to Someone Else. Just sort and toss, don’t take action now. You need to set aside some special time at least weekly for that activity. Consistently put things away, clear your desk and you will be able to find what you need easily.

Stay Organized....

Take a mental or digital picture. This is how it is supposed to look when you do your Daily Maintenance Pickup. Starting today, even if you only cleared one flat surface, you will need to implement this principle! Your image of cleared Flat Surfaces will now easily let you know when something is out of place. It is called a Visual Distraction because something is out of place visually and it distracts you enough to annoy you to put it away! Congratulations!

Hidden De-Cluttering & Organizing

To have a space that is visually calm and peaceful is a marvelous accomplishment. However, you also need to have your hidden areas organized so you can find what you need easily. Being in control of your stuff, papers and time contributes to your overall sense of wellbeing. Purging & Organizing are the keys to Creating Functional Designated Areas & Easy Accessibility for Stored Items.

First.... Pick a hidden space

My suggestion is to start small and work your way up to the Garages, Basements, Attics and File Rooms. Start with a dresser drawer, the pantry, your desk drawers or a file drawer; something you can tackle in an hour or two, start to finish. Mid-range projects would be a closet, some kitchen cabinets, the linen closet, a bedroom or playroom. These may take about 3-6 hours. Your larger scale projects are usually full-day efforts. These would include filing systems and off-site storage areas. If an area is too big to tackle because you don't have the time, energy or patience, remember you can break the project into smaller sections and spread it out over a period of time to fit your schedule.

Second.... Empty & Purge

Go through items one at a time, removing them from hidden spaces and making quick decisions about what to keep and what to purge. Place the items you plan to keep in one place and the purged items in the appropriate bag, either Trash/Donate/Sell/Give-Away. Anything that belongs elsewhere needs to go to the appropriate Drop Spot. Papers once reviewed can be filed, referred, recycled or shredded.

Third.... Organizing

Remember to utilize the “Likes Together” and the “Easily Accessible” Guideline. You get to define what “Likes” are... so your category could be very broad or narrow. For example, you may say the broad category is Socks in the Sock Drawer but within the drawer, you will separate out the Whites from Blacks, Blues, Red, etc. You should be able to pull a single pair of socks without messing up the entire drawer; that’s the Easily Accessible Part!

When dealing with filing systems, be sure to label each file folder as to how you will think of its contents. The Plastic Tabs are to be used for Category Labels while the file folders are the details within that category.

Finish....

Now place items in their Drop Spot locations, Put Away the things that Belong Elsewhere, Take out the Trash and move the Donate/Sell/Give-Away/Return items to your car or garage.

Staying Organized....

Once again, take a mental picture. This is how it is supposed to look. Remember to put things away neatly, and when you get that niggling feeling of annoyance, that is a reminder it’s time to spruce things up again; a purge, a neatening or a few minutes to make a fix.

Congratulations You Did It!

Don’t waste all that effort.... Make the commitment to keep it that way by creating your own Daily Maintenance Routine!

Getting & Staying Organized is All In Your Mind!_

Albert Einstein said, *“Nothing Happens Until Something Moves”*

This is the best advice on how to get organized.

You will need to change your thinking process and set priorities to keep the peace. After all just because it's someone else's stuff, doesn't mean you shouldn't move it if having peace and less stress is your ultimate priority. It also doesn't mean that you should be the official picker-upper because that doesn't teach others the importance of being organized.

Re-Train your mind to think differently about Stuff & Papers and encourage others to get & stay organized too.

To get organized you will need to do things differently than you did before and devote some additional time to develop your new habits and routines. It may mean you have to part with some of your excess and give up a little free time but the rewards are great! You will be more productive, have more energy, you will find what you need when you need it, your stress level will be reduced and you'll feel really good about yourself. These are pretty powerful benefits! Lastly, be sure to keep up with your maintenance program so your former disorganization behaviors don't return.

Editor's Note:

In July 2018, Lorraine lost her life to cancer. The gifts she left are many and we're fortunate to have them in her words above.

HOW TO SPEND LESS TIME CLEANING YOUR HOME AND MORE TIME ENJOYING IT: AN INSIDER'S APPROACH TO A CLEAN & BEAUTIFUL HOME

by **Elissa Rand**

After a long day of work and family activities, you probably can't wait to come home and clean, right? The truth is, even after a leisurely day, housecleaning is not on most people's list of favorite things.

Thankfully, there are solutions you can easily implement to make housecleaning faster and less overwhelming. Just as your body benefits from a regular schedule of meals, sleep and activity, your home will benefit from regular upkeep, and so will you!

The approach most people take is to pick a random room and start a task. But as any home maintenance expert will tell you, this is not the best route to a consistently clean house. This approach forces you to focus on a myriad of tasks, from taking out the garbage to organizing, vacuuming, dusting, mopping, etc. Not only is it more time-consuming to clean this way, but it can lead to the dreaded "multi-tasking paralysis:" so much to do and so little desire to do it!

So what is the answer? As the founder of a successful cleaning business, my team and I have cleaned more than 15,000 homes and offices over the last ten years and the biggest key to a sparkling house is having a system. We use the Cleaned to Perfection System in every home we maintain and not only does it greatly improve overall cleanliness, but it makes upkeep easier and faster. In fact, it's a system that can actually improve the quality of your life—just imagine living every day in an atmosphere that is fresher, cleaner and more orderly.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to create this kind of atmosphere in your own home using the same system that's built my business. You'll also

gain a host of cleaning tips that really work; invaluable bits of knowledge gained from years of experience in residential and commercial cleaning.

Getting Started

The system I recommend is a rotation plan that provides you with a well-organized approach to cleaning. To get started, simply follow the steps outlined below, in order. Under each step, you'll find helpful information such as the tools you'll need, how often you should do each task and professional tips. Use the checklist at the end of this chapter to help you stay on target and ensure that nothing is missed—not to mention that it will give you a great sense of satisfaction each time you check off an item!

As you begin, keep in mind that cleaning and organizing are completely different tasks, so be sure to keep them separate. Why? Because when you break down your cleaning into smaller, more manageable tasks, it enables you to stay on track and avoid getting overwhelmed.

Finally, since we're all human and need help sometimes, there are two special sections at the end of this chapter: a 30-minute clean-up plan and a support section to provide you with resources and help with home maintenance.

STEP 1: Dusting

Frequency: once or twice monthly, depending on number of people and pets in home.

Tools: microfiber cloths (folded in half or quarters so you can rotate to a clean side), natural furniture polish, microfiber pole duster with extension, step stool

Don't be tempted to put this task at the bottom of the list (or avoid it all together) as this creates more work in the long run—dust tends to build up on baseboards, window sills, blinds, etc., making it more difficult to wipe down.

- Begin by putting away extraneous items on all surfaces.
- Always start in the higher areas of your home, as dust settles downward.
- Remember to lift or move items and dust underneath to avoid “dust rings.”
- Use a pole duster and step stool to reach areas such as ceiling fans and molding (this can be done monthly as dust accumulates in low lying areas).

Dusting Tips

- Window Ledges: Raise blinds and curtains to get the best access.
- Baseboards: Dirty baseboards stand out, so make them an essential part of your dusting routine.
- Furniture: Remember bed frames (including the side rail and headboard), sides of furniture and armoires, door panels, moldings and trim, stairwell ledges, banisters and spindles, table legs, chairs and bases, curtain rods, pictures, frames and decorative items.
- Forgotten Areas: Be sure to wipe down dirty light switches and outlet covers.

STEP 2: Glass Cleaning

Frequency: bi-weekly or monthly, depending on family size and usage.

Tools: microfiber cloth or rag, natural glass cleaner

- Spot check windows and doors for fingerprints and nose prints from pets.

Glass Cleaning Tip: It's important to clean glass doors that lead inside your home, as they are the first things to be seen upon entering and the last things guests see when leaving.

STEP 3: Bathrooms

Frequency: Weekly or bi-weekly, depending on usage

Tools: Microfiber cloth or rag, toilet brush, Dobie™ or scrubbing sponge, powder or cream cleanser, Greenworks™ natural all purpose cleaner, step stool

A fresh, clean bathroom is of great importance. First of all, it's much more sanitary and healthy for you and your family to use. Secondly, the bathroom is the one room in particular that guests use regularly and keeping it clean means less stress and embarrassment when people visit.

You probably get used to how your bathrooms look over time, so this is one room that you should look at as though you are seeing it anew. Clear busy counters and bathtub ledges, place body care products in baskets, and remove any unsightly personal items.

- **Mirrors:** Did you know that a thoroughly clean mirror will stay clean for a longer period of time? It's best to clean mirrors so that they are streak-free from all angles. Pros like to use vinegar to clean and newspaper to wipe—it really does work!
- **Toilets:** Clean inside the bowl first, using a toilet bowl brush. Then wipe down the lid, front, base, top, handle—and that often neglected spot where the seat fastens. Finally, clean behind the toilet, including baseboards and plumbing fixtures.

- Bathtub, Shower and Sinks: Scrub using the Dobie sponge and cleanser. Be sure to clean the underside and base of faucets.
- Bathroom Accessories: Wipe down light fixtures and bulbs (make sure they're cool to the touch!). Then clean the toilet paper and towel bars; the top of the shower curtain rod; shower doors; and the metal track and base, if any.

Bathroom Cleaning Tips:

- Fold towels in three for a more professional and crisper looking bathroom, reminiscent of a hotel or spa. Walls should be wiped down regularly as they do get splash marks from hand - washing etc.

STEP 4: Vacuuming

Frequency: Weekly or as needed.

Tools: HEPA filtration canister vacuum and/or Oreck upright

Even larger homes can be vacuumed efficiently and thoroughly on a regular basis. And remember that once this task is completed, it's mopping time, so be as thorough as possible while vacuuming since the cleaner your floors, the easier it will be to mop them afterwards.

- Move smaller furniture like chairs, side tables and couches before vacuuming (be sure to add felt pads on furniture feet to prevent floor scratches). Pick up small rugs to vacuum underneath them.
- Closets: Open closet doors and vacuum into them. Empty closets occasionally before vacuuming, especially entry closets in high traffic areas.

- Kitchens: Vacuum underneath cabinets and close to edges and moldings. Open any bread drawers, toaster storage or cutlery drawers to wipe out crumbs.
- Lamp Shades and Curtains: Vacuuming these items on a regular basis keeps them from getting a dusty buildup, which is much harder to clean. Shades and curtains can be vacuumed on a monthly or quarterly basis, depending on the level of dust you have in your home.
- Garages: If your home has an entrance to the garage, vacuum towards or into the garage to remove any sand or dirt, preventing it from entering the house.

Vacuuming Tips

- Give your rooms that freshly cleaned look by vacuuming yourself out of a room; by this I mean start at the innermost corner of the room and vacuum outwards, towards the room's door or exit.
- Vacuuming under beds is important, but can be done once a month to save time.
- Be sure to vacuum between doors and storm doors, as well as inside the tracks on sliding doors.
- When our crews clean a home, we use HEPA filtration vacuums instead of brooms, as brooms don't catch fine particles and they tend to stir up more dust and dirt.

STEP 5: The Kitchen

Frequency: Weekly

Tools: Greenworks™ all purpose cleaner, microfiber clothe or rag, cleanser, Dobie™ or other scrubbing sponge, natural glass cleaner, stainless steel cleaner (like Sheila Shine), and natural citrus degreaser

- When you begin to clean the kitchen, start with the stove.

- Then wipe down all countertops, canisters, cookie jars, and decorative items.
- Wipe all small appliances such as coffee makers, toasters, microwaves (wipe inside and out)
- Clean the top of the refrigerator and the handles, as these are hot spots for bacteria growth.

Kitchen Cleaning Tips

- Ovens: We get excellent results using green cleaners or natural degreasers such as citrus degreasers. Spray and allow the moisture to sit on your oven floor and racks to help dissolve grease and sugars (letting it sit will actually save time, as it becomes much easier to clean). Then use a scrubbing sponge to wipe away grease and grime. Be sure to place paper towels around oven doors to catch drips. NOTE: Check your oven's cleaning directions to ensure that you are using appropriate products. Dishwasher: Wipe outside and then inside the dishwasher. Pay attention to the gaskets around the door, as these collect dirt and mold that can cause unexpected leaks and unhealthy bacteria.
- Sinks: Scrub sinks and spaces between frame and counters. Wipe down faucets and sprayers. Finish by wiping under sinks.
- Refrigerator—the inside story: The best time to clean refrigerator shelves is before your next big shopping trip. You'll be able to remove less and wipe the shelves easily with a damp sponge or Magic Eraser (great for those sticky spots). Another trick is to wipe one shelf a week and continually rotate during your weekly cleanings.
- Want to enjoy stainless steel appliances that SHINE? We prefer Sheila Shine and a microfiber cloth; keep the cloth with your spray so it's handy at all times. Spray the Sheila Shine on the cloth, never directly on to the appliance, as this can create a greasy over-spray (and the droplets make it harder to clean your

floor). Always wipe with the grain of the stainless steel and buff lightly as it dries.

STEP 6: Mopping

Tools: Hardwood floor mop and microfiber bonnet (we recommend Sch-mop), Greenworks™ floor cleaner, vinegar & water (1:10 ratio)

Frequency: Weekly or as needed.

After vacuuming up all dirt, spray your wood, tile or porcelain floors with cleaner and mop thoroughly, especially in corners or under objects. Just as with vacuuming, it is best to mop your way out of a room, so as not to step on wet areas. When mopping hardwood floors, it's helpful to go with the grain as this creates less streaking and less friction, making it easier to mop. After the floor is dry, replace area rugs, chairs and any other items that were moved for cleaning.

BONUS SECTION: How to Fake a Clean Home in 30 Minutes

We've all been there—unexpected visitors are dropping in and you have very little time to whip your house into shape. No problem! Check out this quick and simple strategy for getting your home clean and visitor-ready in 30 minutes.

Clear & Declutter (4 minutes) Grab a laundry basket and move through key rooms, picking up the following:

- catalogs, bills and newspapers
- kid's toys and pet's toys
- handbags, shoes and clothing
- sports equipment
- stray DVDs and electronics

Wipe Down (15 minutes)

- **Kitchen:** Spray a Greenworks™ all-purpose cleaner on kitchen countertop and wipe away grime. Remove fingerprints from stainless steel surfaces.
- **Dining Area:** Wipe dining table.
- **Bathrooms:** Spray and wipe bathroom sink, vanity and counters with a Greenworks™ all-purpose cleaner. Wipe outer edge of tub (a highly visible area) and close shower curtain or door. Clean mirrors. Spritz outside surfaces of toilet. Lift toilet seat lid and spray cleaner on top and bottom, then squeeze bowl cleaner under the rim. Scrub under the rim and inside bowl. Flush. Wipe down outside surfaces of toilet.

Sch-mop™ swiff (5 minutes)

- Wipe coffee and end tables with an all-purpose cleaner.
- Wipe TV (including screen), entertainment center, frames and collectibles.
- Clean floors in kitchen, living areas, and bathroom with Sch-mop, Swiffer or other mop

Empty (2 minutes)

- **Sink** - Put dishes into the dishwasher.
- **Trash** - Empty trash and wastepaper baskets.

Restock (4 minutes)

- **Toiletries** - Put out fresh hand towels, tissues, extra toilet paper, air freshener, and soap.
- **Seating** - Do a chair count and haul out the extras.
- **Tables** - Refresh your tables with fresh placemats (if needed) and napkins.

Display (4 minutes)

- Take out serving dishes and wine glasses with a cloth in hand to wipe any smudges.
- Fluff and arrange throw pillows and couch cushions.
- Make an instant centerpiece by throwing fruit into a decorative bowl.
- Dim the lights—and light some candles. Nothing hides cleaning imperfections better!
- Now put on your game face. People are at the door!

BONUS SECTION: Help! I Need Some Extra Support...

There are many reasons why people need help cleaning their homes; don't be embarrassed! Just as the work you do, cleaning well can take a professional team and, since you already have a job or business, it's natural to feel that maintaining a clean home is more than you want to add to your already filled schedule. Whatever the reason, it's normal to feel overwhelmed and unable to keep up with house cleaning in a way you'd like.

The good news is that help is readily available. If you do choose a professional cleaning service, look for one that offers a rotational cleaning plan like the Cleaned to Perfection System. Most important, choose a company that is known for outstanding support and high-trust relationships. After all, not only are you allowing the company complete access to your home (often when you're not there!), you're also entrusting cherished personal keepsakes and valued objects to the team. Our clients are considered extended family, and we go to great lengths to ensure that communication and satisfaction are constant. Make sure you receive similar support and value from your cleaning service.

Looking for free help? Try the web. There are a multitude of sites offering additional cleaning tips and support, including timely help on hot topics, like seasonal cleaning, most effective cleaning methods, cleaning for the holidays and much more.

The bottom line is, don't hesitate to call on a professional for support when it comes to one of your most valuable assets: your home. And, in addition to the benefits your home and possessions will enjoy, you'll gain the 'bonus' gifts of more time, comfort and peace of mind coming home to the 'palace' you've longed for after a tough day. As anyone who has ever used a cleaning service will tell you, there is nothing that compares to the feeling of coming home to a spotless, sparkling and freshly cleaned house. Whether you follow the Cleaned to Perfection System on your own or hire a professional to do it for you, remember that a home that is truly cleaned to perfection will enhance the lives of you and your family.

Gift for You

I am happy to give you a free assessment for your home cleaning needs. Please click on this link today!

<http://wecleantoperfection.com>

Inner Life

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO LIVING A LESS-STRESSED LIFE

by **Beth Johnston**

I have always been known for the practicality with which I assess any given situation; I am an in-the-moment thinker. In this very moment, I believe I can offer you a practical approach to reducing stress in your life. *I preface that by stating that I am referring to the day-to-day stress that creeps into your life, sometimes unnoticed, and takes on a life of its own, rendering us handcuffed by our own thoughts and unable to cope any longer. This is often how it begins. Stress can be a silent killer if left unnoticed, unmanaged or undermanaged.*

If you are currently under the care of a professional or taking medication, in no way am I suggesting you stop. I do recommend that you continue reading and implementing as many of these suggestions as seem relevant for you. My hope is that you are still able to embrace what is possible for you and enhance the benefits you may already be experiencing.

Here is how I see it: Stress is real. Stress is subjective. Stress, to a significant degree, is manageable; it is a state of mind, a perception, it is part choice.

Let's agree to agree on those three points – at least for the next few minutes, or at least open your mind to the possibility that this strategic and tactical approach to managing stress in your busy life is possible, plausible and yes,

practical. It seems virtually impossible to imagine – or even remember – stress-free living. ‘Less stress’ living is not only an option (choice), but an opportunity, as well. For today’s multi-tasking, 25/8 working woman, the option and the opportunity are certainly worthy of consideration.

When I think of stress, I’m reminded of a variation on the popular Pareto principle (such as 20% of folks make 80% of the bucks); here’s my take on this regarding stress: ‘...life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it...’ Boy, that resonates loud and clear!

Absent of illness or real trauma, stress is frequently, and sadly, a self-inflicted wound. (*subjective*) Many things in life are, of course, truly beyond your ability to control; you must accept them as they come and hopefully be in your best state of mind to deal with them. You should not blame yourself for these events and invite even a worse stress trigger to take root. What you can control, you must. (*choice. manageable.*)

Stress is real, stress is subjective, stress, to a significant degree is manageable. Stress has been given status among today’s working women, both in the workplace and in the home. Yet, I have been in earshot of conversations among very accomplished women, some who seem to think stress is a contest; she with the most stress wins! Trust me, that is not a contest worth entering and one you certainly do not want to win! (*Plus the winner is now adding stress to the runners-up; maybe they will win next year!*)

The subjectivity of stress must be acknowledged. A discussion centered on trying to convince, rebut, or refute another woman’s ‘her-spective’ on what she finds stressful is not a discussion worth beginning. Her stress is her stress; your stress is your stress. In fact, a discussion of that ilk is likely to do nothing other than raise the stress-o-meter of all participating parties. In a situation such as this, the best thing you can do for the other party is to allow her to express herself. Stay focused on her. Validate her. This is an instant diffuser and a wonderful gift for you to give. *Don’t start a ping pong match!*

As with most things, perception is, or eventually may become, reality. The overwhelm that takes on a life of its own and steals disproportionate time and energy is like a balloon. Once overinflated, it actually destroys itself. In the same way, stress can manifest itself – if you permit it (*choice!*) to the point of no longer being a part of your life, but in fact, becoming what *is* your life.

We all know the saying that less is more and in regard to a practical approach to dealing with day-to-day stress, I agree; not just that less stress is better, but that it doesn't necessitate overthinking, or approaching it from an all or nothing perspective... Little things can go a long, long way in getting through the day, the next and the next after that.

Decide and determine to minimize stress whenever and wherever you can; you just might be amazed at how big a step you take into 'the stress-free zone'. The good thing is that you don't need permission from anyone; the only blessing you need is your own.

Here is what has worked for me over many years of what most would think of as a rather stress-filled life: 12 simple points, suggestions, that permit you to choose what will work for you in creating a well-balanced, more harmonious environment for you as you journey toward your own goal of a healthier, wealthier life. You'll especially see the value in this plan if you often feel stress from having too much to do in too little time or need to handle a situation you'd prefer to avoid.

Let's do it...

As with most worthwhile goals, projects, assignments, it makes good sense to plan your work, then work your plan. Of course, I am not suggesting how to plan your stress! Instead, I'm suggesting that with a little extra planning, you are well on your way to minimizing stress and the negative backend it seems to fester.

THE 'TRIPLE A' WAY TO PLANNING: ACCEPTANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, ACTION.

ACCEPT IT! If you believe you are stressed, you are. Own it. Ignoring it or pretending it away won't work.

ASSUME ACCOUNTABILITY: OK, it's not your fault but you don't need to blame others. That is a useless, senseless waste of time and an approach that could easily lead to additional stress (*when the person on whom you are throwing blame gets involved!*)

TAKE ACTION: I propose what may appear to be an oversimplified approach... remember, less can be more.

- 1.) Make lists: Conscious and overwhelmingly powerful subconscious thoughts distract you as they keep playing over and over in your mind, seeming to multiply what you are stressed about in the first place; now, you're stressed about being stressed! When you put it to paper, you instantly feel a sense of release, a sense of relief. A calming effect follows, making real what you have been over-thinking. And, you can use this technique to separate many small tasks that collectively overwhelm you. A smaller perspective helps you see each task as more doable. So always....break it down! (*Before it breaks you!*)
- 2.) Read your lists aloud: When you hear yourself owning it and realize the earth didn't swallow you up and the sky didn't fall, it instantly doesn't seem so bad; it often isn't.
- 3.) Rewrite your lists in order of priority: *You are now taking control* and your focus sharpens. You easily identify what you are (un) intentionally trying to put off vs. what must get done within a defined period of time.

- 4.) Compartmentalize and schedule: Whether you realize it, or not, you live with patterns at home as well as a work; this is a good thing! You have Monday morning tasks, Wednesday evening meetings, Friday follow-up, etc. As soon as you stop thinking about the Friday follow-up on Monday morning, you clear your mind to stay focused on the “must do Monday” list. You are likely to complete those tasks more quickly and efficiently – because you are focused and your mind is clearer. By the time Friday rolls around, you’ll be in a better state of mind for Friday’s tasks that you probably started on Thursday...*this works!*

- 5.) Go public: When I found myself unable to return weekend calls on Monday morning because I was thinking about the Blog I had to get done for Wednesday, I bought a lovely *framed 5ft X 3ft* bulletin board and laid out my whole week compartmentalizing and scheduling it. This increased my accountability and also let others know what I was doing and when. I get everything done, on time and when it’s needed, gifting myself what feels like more time than ever for what can’t be scheduled and just happens. *It’s OK, no stress, I have time!* It also gets a lot of paperwork off my desk. What a great by-product! Reducing clutter seems to be an easy way to reduce stress; try it!

- 6.) Stop blaming yourself: We live in a very competitive world. I believe that is particularly true for women. You are encouraged to “want” to have it all when many don’t “need” to have it all – *or, worse yet, miss the fact they* are amazingly close to it. In the workplace, women are too often controlled by men and judged by women. That is not your fault and we must learn to cope with it, not let it interfere with our personal aspirations and keep *moving forward*. You get to choose what is right for you and when. Own that! Knowing you can be in control is half the battle in gaining control.

- 7.) Learn to say “NO”: As women, we are wired to nurture, to want *to help everywhere and all the time*. We are pleasers and the beauty of that should never be lost in resenting what we do for others. Being over-committed doesn't elevate you to greatness. It can reduce you, over-stress you, exhaust you as you permit yourself to be taken advantage of. It's OK to say, “NO”. *Try it!*
- 8.) See the positive side of stress: (*Yes, Virginia, there is - can be - a positive side to stress!*) Stress can be a motivator, the stimulus that gets adrenaline flowing and puts you into overdrive. It can challenge you to heights beyond your conscious capacity to imagine. Reserve this for short periods of time; the sprint vs. the marathon. Think of athletes before a *major event...they pace, they wring their hands and bob their heads...all signs of what is easily classified as “in stress”*. Performers of all types use it to manifest greatness; not to accept mediocrity. *By the way, there is nothing mediocre about being a woman in today's world; it's a tough, yet beautifully rewarding responsibility - if you don't stress over it!*
- 9.) Schedule “ME TIME”: This is often hard for women to do. There will always be work to be done, things to do, others who would have you do for them. The truth is that after you *take some time for yourself, all those things will still be there! The better truth is that you will deal with them, interact with them and feel better for it when you've taken time out for yourself*. What a notion! Here are simple things you get to choose to do - or not - that can fortify you, calm you, help you appreciate yourself (*yes, that is allowed!*) - as well as to help others appreciate you more, as well...*Ah, the thought...feel the stress leave your body...*

Take a bath: Remember the old Calgon Bath commercials (Calgon, take me away!)....the warm bath effect is real!

Create a temporary barrier – even for 10 minutes; dim the lights, close your eyes...even a low-level power nap creates exponential energy

Visit a park, go *to the beach*...choose a convenient place or space that evokes positivity with the *very thought of being there*. Can't go? Close your eyes...imagine you are there and you can be.

Play music that takes you back to peaceful times and places; very powerful as it fills a combination of senses and memories.

Read what gives you pleasure...20 pages, a couple of chapters – that's all it takes.

Take a walk and smile as you go. This beautiful facial gesture alone sets off a circuit of physiological reactions than are quick to drown you in a pool of positivity. If you are walking where others pass you and see you...good for them...*you are contagious!*

- 10.) Take your own advice: Women are givers. Become a taker, particularly of the good advice others come to you to gain. (*If others are not coming to you to learn from your amazing experience, please re-read #1- 9 above; a line will begin to form soon!*)
- 11.) Become a specialist: Recognize that you are not expected to be all things to all people all the time. That is hard for many women, especially mothers, to swallow. In trying to be Wonder Woman, you are not likely to become especially proficient in any particular area. Know what you know and know what you don't know. In celebrating your strengths and acknowledging your deficiencies, you take a tremendous amount of stress off your own shoulders and seek those who are specialists in the areas you are not.
- 12.) Build a support team: Whether in the office or at home, you need a support team. This doesn't mean you need approval;

you just need a sense of cooperation so you don't feel you're fighting a battle you cannot win! At home, get partners and children to create their own schedules (#4) and coordinate yours with theirs. This will reduce the overall sense of stress among household members as it creates a calmer, healthier atmosphere for everyone. You will soon begin to detect family members speaking more calmly among themselves, there will be more order in the house and you will actually begin to enjoy spending time together!! In the workplace, GO PUBLIC (#5). Don't be at all surprised when co-workers ask what you are doing to remain so clam, get your work done more efficiently, and enjoy career advancement more quickly.

Leave the matters of home at home and matters of the workplace in the workplace. Fusing them won't add, but multiply the negative effect it will have on you and those with whom you live and/or work.

Finally, celebrate who you are and credit yourself with all you have done and aspire to do. Positive sense of self is a right you have earned. It is not reasonable to think that it's alright for you to treat yourself badly while expecting others to raise you up. *They have themselves to work on!*

*By all means and at all times,
keep humor in your life!*

As Executive Director of The International Women's Leadership Association (The IWLA), I am blessed to speak with outstanding women from around the world. Each brings her unique set of circumstances, accomplishments and challenges. Each brings her willingness to help others as they themselves may ask for help. These amazing women humble and inspire me day by day. In so doing, my stress levels are kept in check knowing, despite daily interruptions of disturbing and heartbreaking realities, that, in

the end, we can all be better for having known and connected with each other – if we chose to see it that way.

So, there you have it, my 12-Step Outline to reduce stress, accomplish more, fortify yourself to be a more valuable contributor to family, the workplace and the community.

Sometimes less IS more...choose to allow less stress into your life and experience for yourself how much more you can give to others.

That, dear sisters, is what is at the heart of every woman.

TURBOCHARGE YOUR LIFE WHILE MINIMIZING YOUR STRESS: FIVE PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FROM A LIFE COACH

by Suzanne Muller

I am grateful and honored to be able to share with you these five strategies for expanding your life while reducing your stress. I truly hope they help you feel less stressed to lead a freer, fuller, more expansive expression of your life through their application. Use as needed.

Turning Obstacles into Stepping Stones

I recently heard a story from a friend about a man who lived a long time ago named James. He had traveled to the U.S. in search of a better future for himself and his family. He and his wife rented a small out-building on a farm outside of a large town. It was all they could afford. James did odd jobs and his wife took in laundry and cleaned. The problem was that James couldn't read or write.

One day a friend told him about a job opening for a janitor at a church in the town. He decided he would go into town to interview for the job. He figured he wouldn't have to read or write to be a janitor. So on the day of the interview, his wife packed a nice lunch with two apples and a sandwich. He went to the interview and did very well. The minister liked him and said he would like to hire James as his new janitor. He just needed to fill out some paperwork. James sighed and confessed that he could not read or write. The minister said that he was terribly sorry, but James would need to be able to read the notes left with instructions when he wasn't there. Therefore, he couldn't give James the job.

James was distraught. He knew he'd have to go home and tell his wife he didn't get the job. He sat down at a busy street corner and took out his lunch. He was hungry and couldn't face going home yet. He sat holding an apple in his hand. A man came over and asked how much he wanted for the apple. James told him 5 cents. (It was a long time ago). The man bought the apple. Soon James was holding the second apple and a second man came up and asked to buy it. James sold the second apple.

Then an idea occurred to him. He went home and asked the owner of the farm if he could take some of the fallen apples to sell in town and he'd give him some of the money. The owner said to take as many as he wanted, since he would only have to pay someone to clean them up off the ground, anyway. So James set up an apple stand in town. When apples were out of season, he sold pears or peaches or vegetables or whatever else was available from the farm. He did so well that he opened a second

stand, then a third, until after a few years he had eighteen fruit stands in town.

Well, because he couldn't read or write, he kept all the money in bushels in the basement. His wife began to get nervous with all that money in the house. She convinced him they had to put it in the bank. So, after repaying the farmer, they took all the money they had made over the years to the bank in bushels and burlap sacks. When they got to the bank, the astonished bank manager counted it and told them it was over \$580,000 (millions in today's money). He asked them why they hadn't come to the bank earlier. James responded that he couldn't read or write so he had been afraid to come before. The bank manager was again amazed and said, "Just think what you could have done if you knew how to read and write". James responded, "If I could read and write, I would have been the janitor at the church".

The lesson: Sometimes, the things we think are standing in our way are the things that propel us to greatness.

The strategy: Next time you feel stuck, look beyond what you consider your limitations. Maybe you think you don't have enough education, or don't have the money, or you're too old. Change your perspective. You could accomplish amazing things if you look at your life from a different point of view. You are so much more than the sum of your circumstances. Don't let them control you. Start controlling them. You'll be amazed at the results.

The Balloons of Forgiveness

There is nothing that will relieve internal stress more than forgiveness. All of us have things and people in our lives that have caused us pain and/or humiliation – from small stinging comments to huge betrayals. But holding on to the hurt, the anger, the resentment of something you perceive someone did to you, justified or not, will eat away at your health.

And the truth is, the only person who is still bothered by something done to you by another is you. And, worse than what others do to you, often times it's you who bears the brunt of your anger and regret. The most important person to forgive in your life is yourself. Holding anger, regret and frustration against yourself for things done or left undone, things said or left unsaid, is the quickest way to add stress and potential disease to your life.

The lesson: Learn to let things go or those negative emotions will eat away at you, sometimes quite literally.

The strategy: Here's a great exercise I've used successfully with many clients to release regrets and resentments. Buy a package of balloons. Yes, balloons. Take out four or five and prepare them for blowing up. Now, in your mind, gather all those little things and big things you think you did wrong or you are sorry for, things you are mentally reliving every day, and hold them in your mind for a moment. Allow yourself to think of those negative feelings in preparation for their release. Envision all that guilt, anger, resentment, disgust, rage, regret, etc, gathering at the edge of a precipice. Now, imagine standing behind them and blowing all those negative feelings over the edge and into that waiting balloon. Blow and blow until those negatives are inside that blown-up balloon. Hold it shut while you keep the vision in your mind. Now let it go. Watch the balloon fly around the room and laugh! Repeat as needed. Laugh some more.

Candle in the Chaos

As with the previous forgiveness exercise, controlling or releasing negative thoughts and images and envisioning something positive are critical to creating a great life for yourself. As early as the late 1800s, James Allen wrote a book called "As A Man Thinketh". Napoleon Hill wrote "Think and Grow Rich" in 1932. Norman Vincent Peale wrote "The Power of Positive Thinking" in the 1950s. In the 2000s, we have Wayne Dyer's "Change Your Thoughts, Change Your Life", Joyce Meyer's "Power Thoughts".

Eckhart Tolle, Joel Osteen, Shakti Gawain, among many others, promote messages about empowering your life through positive thoughts.

Most people, however, still don't know how to even quiet their thoughts or meditate for stress relief, let alone visualize what they want to create in their life. I was recently at a program that was introducing meditative practice to the audience. The leaders told the audience to quiet their minds, but didn't tell them how. "Clear your mind" is what they said. I realized that for many people, this is easier said than done.

The lesson: Controlling your thoughts requires practice. Nobody starts out able to successfully meditate for a half an hour every day. It's something you need to develop. Once you master the skill, you will be able to quiet your mind on demand – during a 15 minute break during work, for example, leaving you feeling refreshed and less stressed for the remainder of your work day. Just start out slowly; take your time.

The strategy: About a year ago, I was taught this trick and my results have been phenomenal. To begin, buy any kind of candle. Go into a private, darkened room where you will be free of distractions. It shouldn't be pitch black, just no glaring light. Turn your phone off. If you need music, use something quiet; nothing with lyrics or loud banging. Light the candle. Take a few deep breaths and sit comfortably. Now, stare at the candle for at least one minute. During that minute, NOTICE the thoughts coming into your mind. As soon as they enter your mind, push them away. Say "no". Say, "I'll deal with you later". Say whatever you have to in order to keep your mind clear.

Pay attention only to the candle and check the clock to make sure you have managed to keep your mind clear for a full minute. This may sound simple, but if you are new to the practice, it will take you some time to manage a full minute with a completely clear mind. Next, extend the time. Go for two minutes, then more. When you have reached a full five minutes of maintaining a completely clear mind, (which will take a while,

don't rush it), congratulations! Not only will you be extremely relaxed, you will be ready for the next step.

The next step is to begin a visualization process. Control your thoughts the way you have been doing in the “empty mind with candle” process. This time, give your mind an extremely positive statement about yourself and/or your life. Perhaps you wish to focus on something you want to do with your life, or a situation at work that you want to turn around to positive, or someone with whom you want to create a better relationship.

ALWAYS begin with gratitude. Be thankful for everything in your life as well as life itself. Once in a state of gratitude, begin to focus on the positive things you wish to create in your life. Understand there is no limit to thought. You can think anything you want. Be open to thoughts that come into your mind, as long as they are positive or offer solutions to challenging situations. At this point you should have enough control over your mind that attracting positive thoughts won't be a problem. Create affirmations for yourself. Repeat these often. Focus on your affirmations and positive goals.

Try to repeat the meditation practice at least daily, either morning or evening. Stay in gratitude and be consistent. And if you can take a quick break during your work-day, quiet your mind for a few minutes. It will refresh you for the rest of the day and reduce your stress significantly. It's amazing what positive thoughts your mind creates once you have mastered this process.

Celebrating Small Successes

Recently my high school daughter was assigned a huge project that was due in four days. After ranting and complaining a bit (as teenagers do) she sat down and we looked at the options for completing the project. She decided to break down the huge project into a series of smaller, more manageable projects. Once she had these written down, she began to

tackle the first one. When she was finished with that she crossed it off the list – a brief, important celebration of success – and began to tackle the second. Once the second was done, the process was repeated until the entire project was complete. It took a while, but it was finished on time and with a more positive attitude.

The lesson: Near impossible deadlines are a fact of life and something most people face every day at work.

The strategy: The key is not only in how you manage time, but in celebrating the smaller successes in proportion to their size. I'm not suggesting you throw a party because you accomplished a small portion of what you need to do. Obviously, you save the larger celebration for the end, but those small celebrations along the way do a number of things to reduce your stress level:

1. Small celebrations allow you a short break. Go get coffee; take a walk around the block, make a quick phone call to your child, walk and stretch out your legs, do a short meditation ... whatever refreshes you.
2. Small celebrations remind your brain of your ability to complete a task. When a task is so daunting that you feel like you can't complete it, that's what your brain begins to believe. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. When you remind yourself that you are capable of finishing, through the completion of smaller tasks, you give your brain a much more positive message.
3. Small celebrations enable you to reprogram your mind for success; instead of being overwhelmed and set up for failure, you can celebrate success along the way. By allowing yourself to celebrate smaller victories you establish a better frame of mind, keep your energy level up, and the larger goal is put into perspective.

This process isn't limited to just work. Projects at home can be managed the same way. Cleaning the attic. Cleaning the garage. Organizing chores.

If you have seven errands that need to be done on a Saturday, group them by direction. Drop off the dry cleaning on the way to the soccer game. Pick up groceries on the way to or from lacrosse. Your football player needs new cleats, put the coupon for the sporting goods store in the car. Make lists and remember to cross things off as you go. Accomplishing tasks along the way is a great way to relieve stress and keep focused on the end goal.

Believing In Impossible Things

When faced with a problem that seems insurmountable, what do you do? You lose sleep, it consumes your mind. You just can't seem to find a solution. The first thing to remember is: When Thomas Edison was trying to develop the light bulb, he tried and failed over 1,000 times before he was successful. Failure didn't stop him. He believed that he could invent the electric light bulb, seemingly impossible at the time. He wasn't going to stop until he was successful.

The lesson: As Henry Ford once said, "If you think you can or you think you can't, you're right."

The strategy: Start with a meditation session using the candle technique discussed earlier, but have a pad and pen at hand. Focus on: "What's one thing I can do today to move me in the direction of solving this problem (and describe the problem)?" Let your mind wander. Write down whatever comes to mind, no matter how crazy the ideas seem. Don't stop until you have at least 20 ideas on paper. When you are finished, look at your list. Look for the few ideas that seem the most viable. (But don't disregard the ones that seem impossible – they may come in handy).

Work with the two or three viable ideas and see where they lead. The next day, repeat the process, (taking into account where the previous ideas landed you). As you get really good at believing in impossible things, you will come to understand nothing is impossible. There is a solution to

every problem, even ones you haven't thought of yet. Just believe in the power of your mind and the messages that come to you. This practice is a heavy-duty stress buster. Not only does it give you the benefit of a meditation session, it relieves the stress created by the "insurmountable" problem.

Conclusion

I hope these five strategies will help you overcome stress and open your mind to new possibilities.

Gift for You

To find out about more strategies as well as life enhancement programs, contact me at Suzanne@joyfulmindcoaching.com and visit my site, www.joyfulmindcoaching.com

3 LIFE-CHANGING SOLUTIONS TO STOP SABOTAGING YOURSELF WITH NEGATIVE SELF-TALK AND CREATE A MORE BALANCED, FULFILLING LIFE

by Jennifer Nyx

OK, it's just the two of us; wouldn't you agree that we have negative statements we often say to ourselves? You know, that negative voice that tells you you're not good enough, smart enough. You compare yourself to your peers or to others who you think are either more successful or just have it all together.

You may even say: “I am so stupid, I am such an idiot, I am fat, I am ugly, I am completely out of shape, I am not smart enough, I am not good enough, I will never get this done in time.”

The ultimate result of these negative statements is that you will manifest what you most fear because it’s what you’re focused on. In other words, when you speak to yourself negatively, you will ultimately get negative results. So, how did this happen and why do you do it? Those negative statements may have come from someone(s) in your past or it could even be something you made up on your own.

Do you feel that this negative self-talk is affecting your life – personally and professionally??? What type of impact do you feel it has had on you overall?

What I want you to do is really think about this for a moment:

- Those people who may have lashed out negative comments about you or to you: is this really your belief about yourself?
- Those who have spoken to you negatively: is what they say a fact?
- What they say: is it of great value to you?
- Are they people you want to emulate?
- Do you really believe the negative self-talk, the negative things you say about yourself?

I am sure you may have answered ‘NO’ to these questions and I am sure you might be thinking; “Well then, how can I change my negative self talk? How can I learn not to self-sabotage with my negative self-talk?”

I would like you to do a self envisioning mental exercise. I want you to envision what your life would look like by asking “What would be the impact on my life”

- if I complimented myself?
- if I spoke positively to myself?

- if I embraced myself, embraced my perfect uniqueness?
- how could things change for me personally?
- how could things change in my relationships?
- how might I feel differently about myself, my body?
- how would things change for me professionally?
- would my business relationships change?
- would my bank account be different?

Could all of these things really change??

Now, please do ask yourself this: If I were to speak to myself positively, praise myself, have the will to embrace myself, my perfect uniqueness..... could my life change?? You know the answer; the answer is absolutely, positively YES! Well, you now may be wondering, “so Jennifer, how can I make changes to impact my life positively??”

The first thing is that you have to want to put the time and effort into making a change, and that effort begins with WILLPOWER. I have researched 3 definitions of willpower:

The first is: The strength of will to carry out one’s decisions, wishes, or plans.

The second is: Control of one’s impulses and actions; determination, self-control.

The third is: The ability to control oneself and determine one’s actions.

Here is the good news: we all have willpower and here is why I know you have willpower, too:

Do you know how to ride a bike?

Do you know how to swim?

Have you ever been successful with a diet?

Have you received good grades on a test?

Did you graduate high school or college?

Have you ever been involved on a team sport?

Did you ever quit smoking?

Have you ever saved a large sum of money to buy something; a car, a house, a wedding, a vacation?

These are all examples of a decision, a wish, a plan, self-control, determination – you have the willpower. I am sure by now, you definitely agree that you have willpower; we just need to revive and utilize it!!!!

So, what can you do now, what can you do to reverse this negative self-talk?

I have 3 solutions that will affect you in a profound, positive way to get you on track to be more confident, more successful, and live a more satisfying and gratifying life.

First, I have a warning for you: I warn you that this will not be a 24 hour quick fix. And I promise you that if you make an attempt in the next 24 hours to make changes, you will notice how these 3 new solutions could really make a positive impact on your life.

The first solution to reverse that negative self-talk is:

Evaluate those with whom you spend a lot of time. Are you hanging around with people who are negative? Who always have something unpleasant to say? People who have something negative to say when you tell them about a new project or something positive in your life? They make comments like “that will never work out, I have done that and it wasn’t good”, or they suggest a solution for you and you haven’t even asked their opinion or perhaps they laugh at your ideas.

My suggestion: Start surrounding yourself with people who lift you up, who make you feel good about yourself. During the course of a lifetime, we have relationships with parents, grandparents, children, husbands, wives, boyfriends, girlfriends, extended family, friends, teachers, co-workers – the list is endless. The quality of these relationships explains

a lot about the quality of a person's life and his or her health and mental health. Just as no one diet is right for everyone, no one way of relating works for everyone. What is important is to cultivate relationships that are healthy and support your individual needs, wants and desires. Once you view your relationships as a form of mental nourishment, it becomes natural to seek out ways to improve your relationships. Imagine if most of the people you were hanging out with and associating with were positive, uplifting people? Would that make a difference in your life? I am sure it would.

The second solution to reverse that negative self-talk is to:

Take a 'Time Out' from negative self-talk and create ME time. Treat yourself regularly to quality ME time. Find time for your own personal passions, to re-energize with some mood-boosting personal time. Taking dedicated "me" time when you have a family, work, home and life to maintain may seem like a selfish act. But guilt may be your greatest inhibitor to creating a more balanced, calm and happy existence for yourself and your family. Your ME time could be anything that makes you feel re-energized. You may want to meditate, take a nap, take a bubble bath, sit outside with your morning coffee and tea, go for a brisk walk, take some time to read, maybe just watch what you want on TV - you need to recharge yourself. When you remove yourself from the self-sabotaging, even for just a few minutes, you can rejuvenate your way of thinking. So make a promise; give yourself permission to treat yourself to regular, daily quiet time. You need to feed your mind, nourish your mind to think clearly. Some of us may even need more time; I know I do. Create extra ME time then. Spend time alone doing something you love to do a few times a week. Maybe it is yoga, running, going to the gym, dancing to music, doing something creative. While doing the thing you absolutely love, think about how it makes you feel. Does it make you feel secure, smart, accomplished, pretty, maybe even sexy or how about that you actually feel POSITIVE?

So, what are you going to do?? Create that desirable ME time, when you treat yourself well you will have the ability to create a more balanced, calm and happy existence for yourself and your family.

Now I'm going to introduce you to '*afformations*', not '*affirmations*', what they are and how to apply them. So, let's talk about the difference between the two. What is an affirmation? Simply put, an *affirmation* is a statement of something you'd like to be true in your life.

But an *afformation* is in the form of a question.

Let me explain: You may have tried using affirmations to change your life – but the question is: WHY? Because that's what a lot of very successful people have told you to do. For decades, many very successful people have built fortunes persuading you and me and millions of others about the importance of using "affirmations" to change your life.

The second question we should be asking when it comes to "affirmations" is: *do they really work?* The answer is: sometimes. So my suggestion to you, is: Rather than making a statement you may not believe, why not use affirmations and ask yourself a question that can transform your life!

So, here is the crazy part, and this may seem a little nutty, but the fact is that you probably are already using affirmations. Questions like: "Why am I so stupid?" or "Why can't I do anything right?" These are simply negative affirmations! These questions are really the negative reflection forming itself inside your mind, thereby forming your very life.

Here's the thing, the human mind operates by asking and answering questions. Therefore, when you ask yourself a question repeatedly, *your mind must search for an answer to your question.*

Imagine if you repeatedly asked yourself questions to prompt you to respond in a positive manner. *Your mind would automatically begin searching for an answer to your question.* Initially, these questions may seem unfamiliar to you, but imagine if YOU began to ask yourself new, better, empowering questions, and stopped asking yourself negative, disempowering questions. This is a fast, effective way to immediately change the quality of your communication with both your inside and outside worlds.

So, for example, let's tie this into the first two solutions that I told you about earlier.

Remember, when we spoke about the #1 solution, about evaluating who you are hanging out with? Now imagine if you started asking yourself questions about your current relationships.

Why do I choose to hang around positive people?

Why do I forbid people to speak negatively to me?

How come I have such great friends?

Why am I so respected by friends, family and colleagues?

Now, remember when we talked about the #2 solution, to take a 'Time Out' from negative self talk and create ME time? Imagine if you starting asking yourself questions in this category like:

How come I take the time to take care of myself?

Why am I so emotionally healthy?

Why is my life so balanced and harmonized?

Why do I need quality ME time?

You create your reality by the statements you say to yourself and others, and by the questions you ask yourself and others. So, I encourage you to evaluate the quality of your relationships, to give yourself permission to create more quality ME time and to increase the quality of communication with the world inside yourself instead of self-sabotaging with negative self-talk. By utilizing these 3 solutions you will encounter a new world of

positive possibilities to create a more balanced, calm and happy existence, personally and professionally!

Aren't you worth it???

I know this has worked for me. The concept for affirmations was created by Noah St. John and the name of his book is "Great Book Of Affirmations". You can download his book for free at <http://amazon.com> Enjoy!

Section 5

Business As Usual? We Can Do Better

SLEEP WELL AT NIGHT: HOW TO AVOID FINANCIAL TORNADOES AND ADDRESS FINANCIAL TERMITES

by Susan Ganz, M.B.A.

Why is focusing on your own financial health often so challenging? I find with my professional and business owner clients as well as in my own personal life, we have such full and busy lives that we often do not have or take the time to focus on our financial wellbeing. Let me share my day yesterday, which may be reflective of what you face. I acted as a:

- Chauffeur and chef to my daughters
- Shopper for groceries and birthday presents
- Scheduler for business and family appointments
- Consultant to my clients
- Caregiver for my elderly mother, helping her to get ready for bed at the end of the day
- Advisor and empathic listener to friends dealing with challenging personal situations
- Volunteer in giving back to the community

I could go on, but I think you get the picture.

Moreover, dealing with issues surrounding money tends to be emotional. Many people avoid talking openly about this topic with their families and business associates because they may be anxious and fearful about the future. Some feel these are “for later” conversations and others will deal with it when they get “around to it.”

What if you could re-frame the conversation and actually make it fun to deal with your finances now? Yes, I just used the word “fun” when referring to your finances. By creating a straight-forward financial navigation game plan, you can become empowered to have those conversations, worry less and have more time to focus on the other important things in your life.

The purpose of your plan is to build your financial house so that it is there for you in the good times as well as the bad times. The goal is to avoid what I call “financial tornadoes,” life-changing occurrences that come without warning and have significant impact. Becoming too sick or hurt to work, the premature death of a loved one, or a financial market meltdown are examples of “financial tornadoes.” There are also the “financial termites,” things that slowly eat away at your wealth, such as taxes and inflation; I’ll address these, too, in the following “6-Step Game Plan”.

Game plan step #1: Lay your financial foundation with proper protection

Would you build your house by putting the roof on first? Of course not! Yet, many people do so by first putting their money into more risky areas, such as investments, before they have addressed how they are covered in the case of lawsuits, a health care need, or a premature death. What should you be thinking about here? Let’s start with the protection of physical property, such as cars, homes, commercial property, and the impact on your overall net worth. Many people have car insurance and homeowners’ insurance or renter’s insurance, but don’t have enough personal liability coverage. Umbrella insurance can provide that extra layer of protection.

Umbrella insurance is personal liability protection typically coordinated with your car and home insurance. The purpose is to provide a higher amount of protection above the liability limits for your car and home. Why is this important? Suppose you were having a party in your home and one of your guests slipped and fell. This guest makes a \$150,000 per year and has another 20 years to work. Potentially, you could be sued for \$3 million. Where would this money come from? It could come from your investments, retirement accounts, savings, the sale of your home and/or business and/or umbrella insurance coverage. Consider obtaining umbrella insurance coverage that equals your net worth. Further, since we live in a society where lawsuits are common, make sure that you have the necessary professional insurance in place for your business. This may include malpractice insurance, errors and omissions insurance, directors and officers insurance, depending on your business.

One of your major assets is your ability to earn an income. Protecting this ongoing income stream during your working life is key. As a business owner or professional, what would happen if you were unable to work due to an illness or injury? What impact would this have on your business and your family? If you are a major driver of sales in your business, what effect would you see if you experienced a drop in sales? What other sources of income are available to you? One way to achieve income protection is through disability income insurance. Various aspects of this coverage are important to consider, such as the ability to cover future earnings increases, retirement contributions, inflation, and going back to work part-time to ease back into a full work schedule.

Since we are all now living longer, especially women, consider how you would address longer-term health care needs should they arise. What personal and financial “infrastructure” do you have in place? Sometimes such needs come about earlier than you may expect. I personally know people in their 50’s dealing with such issues and living in assisted living facilities. Some people think that government programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, can help fund such needs. Medicare is available to those aged 65 and older; this type of health care coverage is intended

for shorter-term health issues and has limited provisions for longer term needs. To qualify for Medicaid coverage, there is an income threshold as well as other asset level requirements; sometimes this requires people to “spend down” assets to qualify. There is a range of options for addressing long- term health care needs. These include “self-insuring” with your existing assets, long term care insurance, life insurance policies that have provisions for long term care needs, and annuities that allow for withdrawals for long term care needs.

Now, turning to another form of protection, no matter what life stage you are in, there are three legal documents that are important to have in place, especially if you like to be “in control.” These documents are a 1) will 2) health care proxy and 3) power of attorney.

A will states your wishes for distribution of your assets and possessions, including your business, after you leave this earth. If you have minor-aged children, you will want to name guardians and custodians as well as “back up” guardians and custodians to care for them and make financial decisions; sometimes the guardian and custodian will be different people. Consider special situations, such as whether you’ve been through a divorce, have children or other loved ones with disabilities, or have adult children for whom you want to make provisions. If you die without a will, your assets are subject to the succession laws of the state in which you lived. You may not like what your state has in place so a signed will is imperative. Since draft wills are generally not permissible in the legal system, be sure to get your documents signed.

In a health care proxy, you state your wishes regarding the person who will make health care decisions should you be unable to as well as indicate your wishes under certain health situations, such as being in a vegetative state. Finally, in a power of attorney document, you name who you would like to handle financial affairs should you be unable to. If you are a business owner, you may also want to consider putting in place a buy-sell agreement that states how the business will be handled if you and/or your partners become disabled, prematurely die, or want to exit

the business. Consult a trust and estates attorney for the details related to such documentation.

Rounding out your protection options is life insurance coverage. Such coverage enables your family and/or business partners to have capital replaced in the event of your untimely death. Consider the impact if you, your spouse or business partner were to prematurely pass away. Life insurance can provide tax-favored liquidity to cover situations such as the loss of income, buying out a partner, and estate taxes. How much life insurance coverage should you have? Three “rules of thumb” are:

- coverage equal to your earnings capability
- coverage for expenses and family milestones (e.g., college, weddings)
- coverage equal to the value of your business interest.

Game plan step #2: Build up your savings “parking lot”

A savings parking lot consists of safe, liquid money – cash or cash equivalents, including regular savings accounts, checking accounts, money market accounts, savings bonds, and CDs. For individuals, it is recommended that you place 15% to 20% of your gross income on an annual basis into this parking lot. Are you a business owner? Aim to save 25% to 30% of your gross income. Ideally, you want to build this savings to 50% of your gross income or to cover about 6 months of your expenses. Having this savings in place prepares you for potential price increases, emergencies, unexpected repairs (e.g., recently I had to replace our washing machine; it was easier with my “parking lot” funds in place), planned obsolescence (e.g., upgrades for your smart phone or computer), job loss, market volatility, and the like. I find that when people do not have such a savings routine, they tend to find themselves borrowing money or taking away from their retirement monies to fund their day-to-day living.

Game plan step #3: Save for retirement without overfunding

Some people put the maximum amounts possible into their 401K plans or SEP plans. This strategy may not be optimal for everyone. A key factor to consider is your need to access current savings and the need to save for retirement. Some rules of thumb are:

- to include funds up to your employer's match
- not to have your contributions exceed 7% of your salary

Other important considerations related to retirement savings are market risk, interest rate risk, age limitations for accessing the funds, and tax implications upon withdrawal.

Game plan step #4: Invest with a focus on overall asset allocation and diversification

Let me first define some terms. “Diversification” means investing your money in two or more different investments in order to reduce risk, while trying to maximize return potential. Considerations include geographic, industry, and “style” diversification (e.g., small, mid and large cap stocks; growth vs. income stocks). By diversifying your investments, you create a mix of different investment options. This is commonly known as asset allocation. Asset allocation is your distribution of investment dollars among various asset classes, such as stocks, bonds, and cash. It is important to note that asset allocation and diversification neither guarantee a profit or ensure against a loss in a declining market.

Sometimes I find that people make various financial decisions over time and do not always know how these decisions coordinate with one another. For example, you may be working with an advisor who provides guidance on the proper asset allocation for a particular investment account. At the same time, you may have other accounts that are not managed, such as the retirement accounts you may have through your current or former employers, for which you are not receiving advice on asset allocation.

When there is a lack of overall balance, you may be exposing yourself to excess risk or excess safety.

When selecting investments, consider your comfort level with risk or risk tolerance in addition to your time horizon. Generally, there are 3 types of investment risk:

- Risk that your investment may lose value
- Risk that your investment will not gain as much value as it could. For example, if you do not stay invested over time, you may miss out on the market gains
- Risk that your savings and investments will not beat inflation, meaning that your investments do not gain at least as much as the general price increases of goods and services

Remember to keep short-term financial news in perspective and try to maintain realistic expectations about market performance and returns over a longer period of time. Do not try to time the market. Instead, take a long-term view based on your goals and risk tolerance.

Game plan step #5: Avoid or limit “bad” debt and consider paying off “good” debt more slowly

First, let’s understand the difference between the two types. “Bad” debt is used to pay for things like vacations, food, clothes, gasoline or other “consumable” purchases – anything that will be consumed quickly or potentially lose value over time. When you carry a balance on a credit card, it makes whatever you charge more expensive, due to the interest you pay until your balance is paid off. “Good” debt is used to purchase an asset that will potentially go up in value or a good or service that will help you earn more in the long run. “Good” debt helps you build up your net worth over time or enables you to purchase an asset, such as a house, that would otherwise take years of savings to acquire. It is generally debt that is tax deductible and has a low interest rate, such as a mortgage and home equity loans. When people take a 15-year mortgage or prepay their

mortgage, they may reduce the tax benefits they got, lock themselves into high cash-flow commitments and give the bank the benefit of inflation. When reviewing mortgage terms for my clients, I tend to suggest consideration of a 30-year fixed mortgage. If possible and if they would like, they can pay more quickly if they choose to. This gives them the flexibility to reduce payments when life's circumstances may get in the way.

Game plan step #6: Avoid building a “financial junk drawer”

Many people I come across in my practice tend to make various financial decisions one at a time with different advisors. This decision-making process often results in a sophisticated “financial junk drawer” - a collection of insurance policies, legal documents, savings, investment vehicles and real estate that are not necessarily coordinated around a strategic plan. As a result, there may be various risks, tax impacts, liquidity considerations, and fees that they are exposed to that may cost them money. That's why my 6-step financial game plan has been arranged around avoiding the “financial tornadoes” and managing the “financial termites”. As a summary:

- Follow the game plan steps 1 through 5
- Take inventory of the protection, savings, investments and debt areas of your world
- Look at your whole picture and see if you have any gaps or areas that you want to enhance
- Consider what progress means to you and what potentially can get in the way of your progress
- Examine how your bigger financial picture is positioned for this progress and what may get in the way
- Consider working with a financial professional who can help guide you through the process and help you to establish a solid financial foundation with all the relevant considerations discussed here

By taking control of your financial future now, you can build your financial house on a solid foundation that can withstand the “tornadoes” and “termites” that are an inevitable part of life. Here’s to having choices in life and sleeping well at night! CRN201510-177006

Gift for You

Would you like a 15-minute complimentary financial check up? Please contact me through my LinkedIn contact information and we’ll set that up for you. LinkedIn profile: <http://linkedin.com/pub/susan-ganz/0/59/946/>

REDUCE STRESS AND HAVE YOUR DREAM BUSINESS: ALIGN WITH AMAZING YOU!

by Alyse Parise

Are you having fun in your business, loving what you’re doing and working with lots of clients or customers? If you are the type of person who realizes that your business is really an extension of you, then ask yourself ...

- Is your body telling you that burnout is around the corner?
- Do you have too few clients or not those with whom you really resonate?
- Are you so frustrated and overwhelmed that you feel like sleeping all day to escape?
- Are you staying extremely busy doing loads of unproductive stuff?
- Are you tossing and turning at night wondering how you can get some sleep?

- Are you trying to disguise how miserable you really feel, thinking nobody knows?
- Are you hiding out behind your computer instead of speaking to real people in the flesh?
- Do you find yourself procrastinating and not doing the really important items on your list?
- Are you getting lost in the details because your plan (if you have one) is not working?

If you find yourself saying “yes” to more than two of these questions, you are definitely showing signs that the “stress monster” has already invaded your territory. The greater number of yes’s, the more stressed you are. How do I know? I have been there.

I know what it feels like to have real passion and yet feel so frustrated because the “amazing you” is not fully reflected in your business. It’s like being on a merry-go-round that’s operating in a painfully slow motion. In fact, at one time, I had checked off all the questions above!

You could say I hit bottom. Past successes, of which I have had many, didn’t seem important anymore. And yet, something important was missing. For me, it was definitely not enough simply to earn a paycheck! I could no longer blame other people, the economy, relationships or lack of good help. I had invested with mentors from whom I learned lots of tips, tricks, and tactics. The information they offered was great. Yet, time for personalized attention, which I so wanted, was lacking.

It wasn’t until I took the time to really accept and honor who I am, that I could feel at peace. That meant honoring the multi-faceted parts of me and deciding that I would no longer allow myself to be put in a box: this part for the professional me and this part for my friends, family, etc. I had to dive inside my body, trust my intuition and stop listening to the voices of others, experts who had their own agenda and a way that worked for them yet not for me.

Over time I found a path for personal growth and a path my business; one that's steeped in being true to myself and serving others. And, as a huge gift, the right supportive mentor and community turned up. When you're ready and willing, life has a strange way of offering you just what you need, even though it may be scary.

If you're also yearning to make a difference through meaningful work, then you may relate. That's my wish for you: to be the "Amazing You" where who you are, what you do, who you serve, and why you do it, are all aligned in a phenomenal business that you love.

Join me in exploring the conflict that results when there's a mismatch between you and your business, and what to do about it so you can lower your stress levels. I guarantee that in raising your awareness, you'll have a choice. You can choose to stay put, or make changes that will give you long-term relief and satisfaction.

Here are 5 steps that will spark some ideas to help you embody "Amazing You".

1. Get Clear! What business are you in?

To release the "stress monster" and ensuing symptoms, I have found that the place to begin is with clarity. Get clear about who you are, what you do and why you do it. Then you can stop wasting time, energy and money on things that don't work and opportunities that aren't right for you.

Clarity will ensure the right opportunities show up for you in a business you love. You'll work from your strengths and delegate the things that are not. Often it means stretching into bigger boots to be the amazing version of you. Bring her out, and not only will you be abundantly remunerated and reduce your stress, we will all benefit Why? Because with clarity you become magnetic and people want to be around you.

Clarity comes from identifying and **accepting all of you** including your core values, beliefs, strengths, background, motivations, gifts and talents, purpose and expertise. When you clearly see the intersections, it's like standing at the crossroads and knowing exactly which road to take.

When you base your business on such a clear foundation, prospective clients often seek you out and find you really attractive. This is invaluable if you're in a service-based business; it feels like you have struck gold! If you're in a product-based business, such clarity will create clearer, more consistent marketing messages and policies; even more gold!

If you realize that you need to make changes, there's a key ingredient needed to help you transition. It's courage! Courage takes you through the unsettling and scary times.

You could stay put and complain through your misery or keep it all bottled up inside. I call this being married to misery. Even if it's familiar, it's not a pretty place to live. I am sure you know many people with that address. And I know that you want so much more from your business, even if you don't know how right now.

It takes tons of courage to go for what you really want and admit that what you're doing is not working. At the root of the word courage is the French word "coeur" which means heart. Courage is not about simply fixing the situation. Courage includes *committing from your heart*. That involves:

- Dealing with failure
- Letting others down
- Taking risk
- Standing up to others
- Starting again
- Working through guilt or shameful feelings to make necessary changes

2. Be Your Message

Your message flows directly from getting clear. You know when your message hits the mark. Not only are you concise and comfortable within yourself, your prospects will find you really attractive.

Your message has two important components, your inner talk and your outer talk. There's always a flow between them yet there's not always alignment. If your inner chatter is saying, "I don't believe what I'm saying, this doesn't feel right or this person won't be interested," and you are operating on the "fake it 'til I make it" approach, how do you think your message will land when you speak to your prospect?

When you know in your core that your message is on target, it doesn't matter if you are brand new in your business or not, the listener will pick up on your enthusiastic energy rather than get hung up on your words. If your message is misaligned, then no amount of faking it will work.

- **Tweak what you are doing**

Sometimes you'll discover through this process that you need to tweak what you are doing so the message you deliver really fits with who you are. Here's an example. Let's consider my client, Pat, the attorney. She was extremely frustrated and often exhausted. She did a ton of litigation work, though deep down she actually detested being a litigator because she really disliked conflict. She didn't know what to do. Pat had chosen her career in law, based on her brilliance, analytical mind and love of debate.

As we worked together, Pat realized that other aspects of herself are also important. She rediscovered that she's highly motivated as a consensus builder and is internally wired as a peacemaker, rather than enjoying the conflict of litigation. Pat is naturally empathetic, has a huge heart and really enjoys connecting with her clients to find win-win solutions. No wonder she was at odds with herself and hates the high conflict inherent in practicing litigation!

Pat was able to find the perfect solution so she could tailor her message and help clients peacefully resolve their differences. Pat was able to transition into offering alternative types of law through mediation and collaborative practice, which rules out litigation. She's utilizing her natural tendency for empathy, supporting her clients and enjoying relationships with other professionals who are filled with a collaborative spirit. She has gone from being a despondent litigator to a happy practitioner once again.

I adore seeing business owners light up when they discover how to create a potent, heartfelt and unique voice for all of types communication – whether speaking, having sales conversations or writing copy for marketing materials on and off-line.

3. Tailor Your Message to Your Client

The next step is to take your message and get really clear about your ideal clients: who are they? Who are the people who really resonate with your message and are hungry for you as the right solution to their problem or issue? Your solution derives from your expertise, service or product. Often you may end up tweaking your message to seamlessly match your clients' needs. This is often known as your niche. You know that you are rockin' and rollin' when your message is loud and clear for the people you are most meant to serve and they respond accordingly. You can deliver the greatest value with the least effort to the people who will benefit from you the most. You have hit the sweet spot where both you and your client can prosper.

- **Change your target audience**

On the other hand, you may find out that you need to be more focused about your target audience. If you have been attempting to serve “everyone,” that's a major reason for not attracting the clients and money you so desire. Take a breath – there are many ways to get really clear about who you are meant to serve.

There are many ways to segment a potential target audience; among the most common are:

- Demographics, which is a subset of the population. An example is women, or more specifically moms with young children.
- Condition/issue. As an example, you might specialize in health issues; this is rather broad. Ask yourself: what kind of issue and for whom? Segment it further such as asthma in athletes or teenage chronic illness in the workplace.
- Psychographics, which describe the type of person including their traits, desires, attitudes etc. Examples include motivated women in the workplace or spiritual seekers.

Often an “aha!” occurs when you realize that the perfect audience is right in front of you. All the clues can be found in your history, your educational background, what you enjoy reading, your interests, and the people with whom you naturally resonate.

Let’s take my client, Mark, who was struggling to attract clients as a business coach, and as a PhD psychologist. He was targeting all business owners. As we dove into his background and expertise, he realized that what he enjoys and what could be his focused audience was right in front of him. As an introvert, he understood the challenges introverts experience in business. He decided to create programs for other introverts in business. His work has taken off.

4. Take Inspired Action

I’ve found that taking any old action doesn’t work. The basis for taking inspired action is living your purpose each day with fun and commitment. Taking inspired action is required as a way to stop the “fear gremlins” from undermining your progress and determining what specific supports you need in your business to be most productive, motivated and successful as you define success.

Taking inspired action is the antidote to burnout and slogging through each day. When you are rooted in your purpose, you can create an “inspired plan” that you stick to even when you don’t feel up to it, or when you’re fearful about the next steps. You stay committed.

Staying committed occurs when you know in your heart, mind and body that what you are doing feels so right for you, that it’s almost divinely inspired. Yes, there are lots of moving parts in your business that need to happen. Yet, adding inspiration to your actions will help you enormously and keep overwhelm at arm’s length. You can find your own way to get things done that resonates! Be creative!

- Use color
- Go for a walk and record a memo into your phone, instead of feeling beholden to your computer
- Use sticky notes on your wall
- Take 2 minute dance breaks
- Run an idea by a colleague instead of thinking you have to do it alone
- Ask yourself, what’s my next step... then what’s next... then what’s next after that?
- Track your progress by writing one thing under each category at the end of the day. Keep it simple: Financial (number), Feeling (word), Clients or Sales (number)

5. Live Your Dream Business

With one step at a time you’ll get you and your business moving with respect and impact, in the business you love. Momentum occurs as you put systems and resources in place, perhaps even adding forms of passive revenue so that you earn while you sleep soundly. Living your dream business means that you have an amazing team and support so you can do what you do really well with a consistent flow of cash and clients.

You may be fortunate to know what you want to do when you're young and pursue your path on a straight trajectory with gusto and satisfaction. Or, you may be searching and change careers numerous times. At any stage, support in the form of coaching, mentoring or therapy, can be beneficial to streamline the process.

The seeds for a rewarding life are inside you. How are you going to find the most fertile field so that what emerges is a sturdy crop that's productive, satisfying and leads you to serve the world in the best way that you can? The ideas you've read here will help you do it!

My wish is for you to live a congruent life, personally and professionally as the AMAZING YOU - so that every part of your being exudes satisfaction. Plus you'll find your cortisol levels are way down and that results in much less stress! *In my own words:*

When I ask you about what you do,
I hear excitement and delight in your voice,
As you lean in to me and your words flow,
I sense that you love what you do and,
I'm interested in hearing more.
There is a natural fit in what you're offering,
How you express it,
Who you are,
And why you do what you do.
Now, that's a beautiful world!

Gift for You

Want to learn more? Find me here: <https://alyseparise.com>

3 REASONS YOUR SMALL BUSINESS GIVES YOU HEADACHES AND 3 WAYS (AND 1 KICK-ASS MIND SHIFT) TO DELIVER MORE VALUE, MAKE MORE MONEY & HAVE A HAPPIER LIFE INSTEAD

by **Andrea Feinberg, MBA, CPBA, CEQM, CSBLC**

Did you go into business to be a business owner or because you believed it's the path to a better life for you and your family? I thought so. Yet, there's a danger here: as the business grows you can get trapped in its daily details; sucked into believing the business needs your constant attention to grow and stay healthy. You may start to forget why you made the risky leap from employment to ownership: to build a better life for you and your family. Your dreams for freedom, financial security and personal growth recede into the background. Stress? Grey hairs? Fewer hairs? Yes, you're a business owner.

When you believe 'the business comes first, my life can wait, my family can wait', you lose sight of the reason you formed your enterprise in the first place. You become stressed, exhausted, and less capable of handling each responsibility. Ultimately, you resent your business for doing this to you (which leads to more stress) yet it happened because you forgot your priorities and took on the business priorities as your own. Business ownership *can* be a path to a better life. Or it can lead straight to mental and emotional slavery. And, that will happen even if you have a quality solution to offer to a receptive audience.

Like you, I wanted a freedom-centered life when I jumped from employee to owner. Instead, while having a hard time with a decision to take just a brief vacation, I realized I'd bought into the idea that, as boss, I carry the biggest load, invest the most energy, worry more than anyone. In fact, I often felt I *WAS* the business. It was only when I struggled to take that vacation that I learned something that changed everything about business ownership for me: *my overwhelming concern about control meant I'd completely lost freedom.*

I'd become a slave to a business because I was compelled to control so much of it. I realized then my business could grow faster if I wasn't the only one focused on it. And if I wasn't the only one focused on the daily routine, I could shift my attention to *opportunities that would build my business of tomorrow instead of handling tasks that respond to business already acquired*. See the difference? Most importantly, there was so much more life I wouldn't have to miss!

I let go of control & became far more productive for my business and happier in my life. Does this make sense to you?

Yet, it's common that a business owner feels compelled to hold on tightly to control, to oversee what employees may be doing or be involved with every detail before they're released to the rest of the world. Why does that happen?

Here's what I think: When you're new in business you look for short cuts. You think: 'millions have done this before; I don't have to spend years learning.' And with access to so much free 'knowledge' online, information is easier to find. While you'll gain some real value, you also hear a lot of 'old sayings' about business that may sound like some great collective wisdom. Things like:

"This place would fall apart without me"

"You've got to do everything yourself if you want it done right"

"Only working 30 hours a week? You'll never get ahead"

"Working more than 20 hours a week? You must be a jerk!"

"Gotta put out those fires; the other stuff can wait"

"I'm the only one who reaches into their wallet to pay; who else will care what goes on here?"

"It takes less time for me to do it myself than train someone else; why bother?"

Heard these before? Well, after 25 years in business, half of them coaching hundreds of small biz owners, I can tell you the truth: they're garbage, or

to be kind, I'll call them myths. So, let's explore these myths a bit further because I'd rather see you heading to the bank than to a cardiologist!



Myth #1: Control = No Mistakes = Success!

This sense that your business is a fragile house of cards that will collapse without you - that it can only exist if you're there to handle everything - is a mistake leading to tremendous stress, diminished value of your business and less time to focus on what's truly important: preparing for the future. When this is your mindset, you don't have the time or mental bandwidth to see the big changes coming that are going to have an impact next month or next year. As a result, you'll either miss the opportunity or have an emergency, either of which will stunt your business' growth and increase your stress level.

Your need to control means you're not a leader, you're a bottleneck through which everything must pass. The result: it all slows down, rendering your business less competitive and less able to respond to changing conditions. This is especially pervasive among women business owners for two reasons:

- You're brought up to believe you're a nurturer; your role is to encourage and support others.
- You believe you're superwoman and must appear infallible. This often shows up as a refusal to ask for or hire help.

So, while you're taking off that big red super hero cape, let go of the myth and think about this: Is your need to prevent mistakes making you a slave instead of leading you to freedom? The truth is:

Sure, everything needs to get done; it just doesn't all need to get done by you!



Myth #2: If it's Not Urgent, It Can Wait

You know those big goals you commit to every January? Think you've got 'til November to get them done? Big, important goals don't get done by pulling an all-nighter sometime during holiday season; they need just a little bit of attention every day. However, because they haven't been assigned a specific deadline or because they seem so overwhelming, big, important goals tend to get lost.

I'm talking about the goals that include keeping up with technology, industry innovations, shifts in the economy, your market's changing needs, competitive actions; and your personal needs, such as more time with family, hobbies or personal development. These need your attention every day. Your business depends on you to prepare it for its best possible future and to keep it safe from changes that may cause problems in the future. You can't do that effectively with a last minute push. Big, important goals get done by scheduling time – maybe just 15 minutes - every day.

If you can't give your consistent attention to big impact situations, eventually something painful is going to bite you on the behind because you just weren't prepared. Here comes another business truth:

Every day, your business needs to get the best FROM you, not the best OF you!

And, while you may be thinking you don't have time to plan or focus on something that isn't happening for 6 months, I offer this rule to free up time from other, less important work:

- Dump if it has no relevance for your priorities
- Delay if it can have positive impact later or will distract you from meaningful actions now

- Delegate if it can be done less expensively than by the CEO (that's you)
- Do if it will drive your priorities forward and only you can give it the skill it deserves

And if you still believe you can't find the time, every day, to devote just 10 – 15 minutes to a distant and critical change, I defy you to stay out of bathrooms. How many times a day are you in the bathroom? It's the ultimate in non-interruptible privacy! So, next time you've gotta go, go with your planner, ipad, a notepad and you're guaranteed a quiet, focused opportunity to advance your goal behind a door no one will open. 'Stress relief' comes in so many forms!



Myth #3: More Sales = Success!

This may be hard to accept. Of course, sales are a key measure of business development. Yet, if you believe sales is job #1 and you're also suffering from the other myths I've mentioned, you're on a collision path to disaster. Here's how things go: If you're good at selling then your daily routine will grow as a result – more sales to process, more product to buy and inventory or more service to deliver, more customer confusion, problems and follow up. And if you're also insisting on controlling everything, your ability to maintain consistent quality and customer experience will decline, guaranteed.

Because your business can't possibly grow beyond your own ability to maintain quality.

What happens? Responsiveness slows down, quality declines, unhappy clients walk out the back door while you're greeting new customers through the front door. Want stress? There it is, delivered right to your desk!

You **must** have a foundation of documented and consistently applied procedures and policies in place to serve you and all your customers, past, present and new. Without this, the sale you make today can result in tomorrow's miserable customer and a bad rap on Facebook and I wish that curse on no one. The result? There's no way your business will ever be the freedom ride and money machine you thought it would be.

So, even though it's not nearly as sexy as sales and doesn't appear to improve your top line, 'infrastructure' is a key tool to decrease stress *and* build your bottom line (profit) and that's the one that counts. And the amazing side benefit is you'll enjoy more free time, pina colodas on the beach and more hugs. Isn't that part of the better life dream that led you to business ownership? These myths - sales, control, and ignoring what's important - will keep you enslaved to a business that has taken control of your life. And that's the worst source of stress for a business owner, isn't it? *Business ownership isn't your goal, a better life is your goal and launching your business is the means you're using to achieve your better life, no matter how you define that.*

Business ownership can lead to a great life. Yet, so often, I see these beliefs working their black magic, like an evil Jiminy Cricket sitting on your shoulder; he needs to be replaced with common sense beliefs and practices that will guide your business to real success, leading to a great life for you and your family.

Here, then, are 3 'baby step' suggestions - and one whopper of a mind shift - to rid you of these myths and the stressful problems they cause:

First, if you want to discover the real cost of believing control will keep you safe, do the math: your rate of pay multiplied by the number of hours you devote to 'administrivia'. Compare that to the cost of a person whose sole responsibility is those tasks at anywhere from \$5 – \$25/hr. Do you see what your need to control really costs? *You're literally stealing from your own bottom line and enduring more stress at the same time.* And, if you're hung up on the idea that there's no way to find trained, capable employees

at \$5/hour, just let it go. There are many resources to find qualified talent; I'm happy to share if you'll get in touch.

The 2nd tip: If you have a team or plan to build one, on site or virtual, consider which tasks to delegate. Give tasks to the person already handling a related one; it will be a smooth transfer. Consider the natural behavioral style of the person you're considering – are they right for this kind of task? For example, if you're giving a task that includes customer contact, how well will they represent your business? A very shy person might not be the right choice for this. Tasks should match the person who'll do it accurately and help you let go without worry.

The 3rd tip is this: set aside a consistent block of time for business development. Turn off your email & Facebook and don't answer the phone. If you have a door, close it. When you're in your 'think tank', you're not available for interruption. Put messages on your voice mail and auto-responders on email to manage the expectations of folks trying to reach you; let them know when they can expect your reply and they'll stop wondering if you got their message.

If possible, let someone else filter your messages. Not only will this protect your mindset while you're doing the 'heavy lifting' of strategic planning, envisioning, and dreaming, it will teach others to find solutions themselves. You'll elevate your team to handle more, gain the benefit of their unique perspective, *and* increase the value of your business with that great team. Because one day, you may want to sell your business and believe me, this is a strong asset evaluated by a potential buyer.

If you can implement these suggestions, not only will you enjoy less stress, you'll also develop a stronger, more productive and profitable business, resulting in even more stress reduction!

OK, here comes that 'whopper' mindset shift. It's the kick in the pants reason to use the changes I've advocated and enjoy a 'quick start' improvement in your business with immediate, strong impact.

Do you remember the movie ‘Wall Street’? There’s a scene in which the Gordon Gecko character declares ‘greed is good’. It’s a bold argument; I’m making one just as bold. In business, Selfish is Good. OK, I know you have some reaction to that so I’ll explain. In my model of business ownership, this is how selfishness improves everything:

- When you realize your dream life is in the hands of customers who buy from or recommend you, you’ll always sell products of the highest quality because that’s how you get to your dream life.
- When you realize your suppliers’ reliability is critical to keeping your customers happy, you’ll treat those suppliers as good partners because having them is an important part of getting to your dream life.
- When you get a referral from a colleague, you’ll nurture mutually rewarding relationships with them because their referrals get you closer to your dream life.
- When you understand that your reputation depends on your team, you’ll provide the best training and rewards to keep them highly motivated and enthused because they’re part of what will get you to your dream life.

Stop sacrificing family time, social events, personal happiness. *Keep your selfish dreams front and center and you’ll always do the right thing for your business, team, customers, vendors – everyone! – because that’s **how** you get to have the dream life you sought when you went into business.*

If, instead, you choose to hold on to myths of business ownership – control, lack of trust, devotion to sales and little infrastructure - you’ll slowly fail, reach a hard ceiling and become more discouraged every day. The result? You’ll end up with slower product development and delivery, ill-trained employees, lack of consistency, customers who become disappointed. You will eventually resent the business that gives so little back after you gave it your all. And resentment never leads to success in business.

So, want to build a great business that contributes to your great life? Be selfish. Doing so will improve the quality of your services/products, your reputation as a provider, the retention of employees, alliances and customers. Take good care of yourself; have fun, laugh, enjoy hugs and the people you love. It's a great reminder of all you can do to keep that great life coming from your business - documented and consistently applied processes and policies, an empowered team, targeted marketing, fair relations with your vendors and time to focus on big picture needs. This is the fundamental secret to success in business that too few business owners are willing to believe. Say it now: 'Selfish is Good!' Here comes your new start to less stress and more success!



Want to enjoy a better run business that delivers profit, value to your customers and a better quality of life to you?
Find 9 breakthrough ideas here: www.bossonthebeach.com

Section 6

Relationships

DANCE YOUR WAY BACK TO LOVE – A MIND-BODY-IN-MOTION EXPERIENCE

by **Catherine G. Braun, MA**

As we moved connection was restored. Where attempts at words failed us. The dance of leading, following, blending, letting go, and reuniting soothed my anxious heart.

Cynthia Winton Henry

In *Dance, The Sacred Art: The Joy of Movement as a Spiritual Practice* (p.149)

It isn't easy to describe the power of dance in words; dance is an experience beyond words. Its power lives in the body and the body's mind, yearning for self-expression and bonding. Although dance has been an integral part of many cultures, and it still is, its benefits have been poorly recorded. Dance therapy has been in existence for about 30 years, but not until recently have we tapped into its power. We have neuroscience to thank for that since technologies, such as the MRI, have discovered the brain's ability to reinvent and heal itself. We used to think that the brain stopped evolving in our twenties and it was all down hill from there. We now know better; the brain responds to change and healing, and dance in particular is most effective because it stimulates *E-Motion*, or Energy in Motion.

When embodied energies are *stuck*, you experience acute or chronic stress. As part of your brain's command center, your nervous system goes into *shock*. Stress shows up in many disguises: pain, conflict, fear, anxiety, depression, illness, loneliness, confusion, and discontent are just a few of the ways stress can ruin your life and relationships. Neuroscience identifies the holistic benefits of movement and dance that transcend verbal abilities for more effective self-expression and attachment, both essential in relationships and love. Dance taps into the wisdom of the body and *it knows* sooner than your IQ whether your EQ or Emotional Intelligence is in balance. Dance cultivates energy. Just try it when you're tired and you will be pleasantly surprised on how energizing it is to move to your favorite music. Cultivated energy keeps going long after you stop moving. That's because *energy in motion stays in motion*.

There are many things in life and relationships you experience as stressful. One of them is verbal dialogue, or *talking*. Humans have a tendency to think too much and talk too much; it's stressful and stress-provoking. Talking can also have a desensitizing impact, easily turning into an *out-of-mind-and-body* experience. That's when you aren't fully present in conversation, when your thoughts are all over the place, and you're not in touch with your feelings. Traditional *talk therapy* could even add to this disconnect, when the body and mind aren't fully engaged in the work. As a psychotherapist and life coach, I have always been aware of the pitfalls of *talk therapy*, and began adding mindfulness techniques to my work. As a trained dancer, I discovered the benefits of movement and dance from a very early age, and have been engaged in some form of dance my entire life. At the very least, dance has cultivated my own presence in my interactions with clients, and it added authentic support for venturing outside of *talk therapy* into *movement modalities*, such as yoga and dance. Always a *scientist*, I was happy to retrain in the most cutting-edge methodologies supporting brain health, especially for their stress-reducing qualities and for cultivating joy and love. Moving away from *treatment to healing*, these methodologies are more effective in meeting the complex needs of clients in a fast-paced life. Because *healing methodologies* are growing fast, I am continually training to learn more.

This keeps my work current, never running out of helpful tools to reduce stress and heal life and relationships. At the heart of it all, we are in practice together for connection to ourselves, others, and our world, which can be a wonderful place when we fill it with love.

In Dance – The Sacred Art: The Joy of Movement as Spiritual Practice (p.93, 149), Cynthia Wynton- Henry suggests that resisting e-motion is to resist healing itself. She says that dancing helps us practice and believe in the sacred dance of partnering. When in conflict, reunion is more likely to occur with a handshake; when we reach out to touch another, we reinvigorate relationship.

Think about it, can you really be happy and healthy when you're experiencing troubled relationships? No one wants to be hijacked by emotional reactions, not by those of others, nor by your own inner struggles, right? Distressed relationships impact on your overall health and happiness. Why would biology and psychology program you to love if the quality of relationships didn't matter?! You definitely need love to thrive, but it's even more serious than that! In fact your very survival depends on love. In his book, *Love and Survival: The Scientific Basis For The Healing Power Of Intimacy* (p.3), Dr. Ornish, says that *love and intimacy are a root of what makes us sick and what makes us well, what causes sadness and what brings happiness, what makes us suffer, and what leads to healing.*

So, why are relationships and love so difficult when you are programmed to experience both? You guessed it, too much talking, not enough listening, and lacking skills to dance *in* relationships. *Thank goodness, you know how to dance!* Yes, everyone knows how; it's a human need and ability. That's why dance has healing powers, because it is within you. Remember, you are tapping into the wisdom of your *amazing* body. This is possible because your body absorbs your life-long experiences of being in the world. You may not remember events and circumstances, but your body will always remember how you felt. Your mind creates your life's story based on your feelings that color your thoughts. Feelings and thoughts

dictate behavior, so awareness of them is crucial in your decision-making and problem-solving. Makes sense, right? So, talking becomes difficult without this awareness and you can get easily overwhelmed. Dance cuts through overwhelm and confusion, and helps you express feelings about inner experiences outward. You learn to connect with yourself and another through your own movement expressions of felt experiences, *not* via personal memories of facts. You see where I'm going, right? You can argue the facts, but no one can argue with felt experiences: they are as personal as fingerprints.

Conflict in communication arises when the verbal and non-verbal *vibes* don't match. In other words you are saying one thing, and your body is communicating a whole lot of other stuff, some may not even be related to anything that is part of your conversation. OMG! That happens more often than you think. Here's why. The non-verbal communication is the stuff of the mind you are unaware of most of the time, whereas language, even in its most eloquent form, perhaps especially in its most eloquent form, is devoid of emotionality. It can feel cold or detached. We are often encouraged to speak in a neutral fashion (*never let anyone see you sweat*), especially in business. In personal relationships, emotionality is often perceived as a weakness. For example, when your partner says you seem sad, and you deny it, it creates a confusing dynamic; it's overwhelming and frustrating for both. When stressed, angry, frustrated, or disappointed, couples often assault each other's vulnerabilities, cracking the emotional foundation of trust necessary for any relationship to work. You can easily create a vicious cycle in which the bonding or the attachment I mentioned earlier as one of the principles for healthy *interaction* is compromised. As a result, you can feel abandoned, rejected, or devalued. Now that's stressful!

Whether in business or life, every relationship is guided by emotions; either you are aware of them and know how to manage them, or they will manage you. All decisions are emotional, **period**. Rational thinking is only rational when it's based on awareness of its emotional foundation. I can't make this stuff up; just look at the evidence on *emotional intelligence*

and how the brain works. OK, that's *my* job; yours is to *join me to make things better*.

And, there *is* a better way! Relationships are opportunities to heal past hurt, resolve unfinished business, change behaviors and experiences that have been passed down for generations, and create a life of health, happiness and love. Isn't love grand? Love helps to minimize stress and minimizing stress heals your love life. At mind-body-in-motion, I apply a holistic approach to healing and relationships, based on this new science of brain health. The embodied mind is given the opportunity to *express* experiences on physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual levels. Insight and verbal dialogue are part of the process, but take a back seat to non-verbal and pre-verbal communication. Brain-wise techniques through creative arts, meditations, imagery, breath-work, visualization, active listening, imagery-in-motion, movement, and dance will bring you closer to free expression and assertion. Focusing on the *here-and-now*, you'll discover the impact of past and present experiences held in the body and integrate them to *make sense* of your life's story. Perceived good *and* bad experiences are integrated. We bring compassion to the process, increasing self-esteem and self-worth. The embodied mind finds the rhythm, the flow, its natural state of being, in which balance is achieved in mind *and* body.

The nervous system responds well to brain-wise healing. Got brain? Got health! Let's dance! And have fun! Now, you got to admit, *fun* isn't usually associated with psychotherapy or relationship counseling, is it?! But, based on personal and professional experience, I believe that fun, play, and humor are integral in letting go of stress and encouraging healing. Wow! Don't you just love that?! Now, *you* can actually look forward to seeing a therapist! What is this world coming to?! You are *even* going to tell others of your therapeutic experience. But of course, you must explain the benefits to them from *experience*. 😊

Communication seems to be the most challenging and stressful thing in relationships. Of course it's stressful, it requires talking! And men, more

than women, don't want to talk that much, especially when the concerns are relational. But we gotta! Seriously, the better you communicate, the healthier your brain, and the healthier your relationships. In *The Mindful Brain* (p.317-19), Daniel Siegel, MD, an expert in the neurobiology of relationships says that *relationships are keys to how a brain functions and relationships are an essential aspect of brain health*. He views the mind as an embodied and relational process, in which you can use your interactions to heal your brain, your life, and your relationships. I'm convinced. Let's dance! That always seems to be the answer, no matter the question. Let me explain further.

Now, what are the odds that you and your significant other will break into dance to resolve differences? Not good. (Not unless you come to experience it with me first. You will never stop dancing following our sessions, because you will experience the secrets to loving and the joy of being stress free. So cool!) In *Making a Good Brain Great* (p.8, Shake Your Soul® Training Manual), Dr. Amen, a psychiatrist who applies brain imaging results in resolving marital conflict, says that *exercise and specifically dance makes us smarter*. That can't hurt! And there's more: dance also touches your *spirit*. In *Dance – A Sacred Art, The Joy of Movement as Spiritual Practice* (p52-53), Cynthia Wynton-Henry, who teaches dance as a spiritual practice, says that dance takes us into *wholeness, quenching restless hearts* and helping us to acknowledge, integrate, and celebrate that we live in a world of constant motion. We let down the barriers that seem to keep us safe, and substitute healthy boundaries to facilitate self-expression. She further says that *dance can transform us from conversing, sitting, and thinking things*, which I believe can be exhausting and stressful, and move you past what is holding you back, to start anew.

Your dancing body can *energize* you into wholeness. Instead of trying so hard to create balance between the business of life and rest, your body's wisdom can guide you toward the energy that is within you. Dance can begin a deeper dialogue of hearts and souls. It is pure magic of the human-brain-kind when this happens! You tend to let your guard down and listen more, rather than prepare for rebuttal. You show up more *real*, unafraid to lose yourself in conversation. You can rely more on your

senses and trust that you can communicate your experiences and accept those of another without judgment.

Got judgment? Welcome to *empathy*. In his book, *Buddha's Brain – Happiness, Love, & Wisdom* (p138), Rick Hanson says that *empathy is the foundation of any relationship. When someone empathizes with you, it gives you the sense that your inner being truly exists for that person.* In *The Mindful Brain* (p.10), Daniel Siegel says that *with mindful awareness, the mind enters a state of being in which one's here-and-now experiences are sensed directly, accepted for what they are, and acknowledged with kindness and respect.* Fortunately, dance has an amazing way to keep us mindful and connected, raising our awareness of ourselves and of others in our company.

Communication/interaction experts, such as Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson (in *Family Therapy, An Overview*, p 185) concur that *you cannot not communicate*. It stands to reason that it is utmost important that you learn to express and assert your needs and wants in ways that show personal responsibility. We all need to resolve problems, but you are directly responsible for your own solutions. Self-esteem has a lot to do with taking responsibility. Dance and movement tap into the non-verbal and pre-verbal development of the brain and reveal limiting beliefs, trauma, and unresolved stresses that impact on self-esteem. Dance taps into the wisdom of the body, which is much more than its collective parts of *body language*: tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, and, most recently discovered, body postures and body movement. The *embodied mind in motion reveals and heals concurrently* internal struggles, the impact of past experiences, and present *obstacles*; always a work-in-progress, dance facilitates a *show-and-tell* of magnificent proportions.

I know that I have emphasized the pitfalls of talking, only to explain that, as a form of communication, it is limited in its ability, albeit necessary. Without awareness and emotional content, *talk can be cheap and fall onto deaf ears*, leaving you frustrated and stressed. When your dialogue is fully loaded with appropriate emotionality, it is poetry in motion! It *touches* everyone's heart in conversation. This is where empathy really matters.

You can only *feel safe* to share emotions when empathy, *the ability to sense the inner state of another*, is experienced. You cannot *feel close* to another person without it. *Love cannot exist without empathy*. Fortunately, empathy can be cultivated. And, by now you know the drill; *dance can cultivate empathy*, too. Rick Hanson in *Buddha's Brain, Happiness, Love, & Wisdom* (p.140), says that *empathy is respectful and soothing*. How is that for stress management?! Since dance brings your nervous system into balance, your ability to *actively listen* to what makes another *tick* without having to *fix* it, is mind-blowing! Are you listening? Now, don't go telling *the guys* that *you need to talk*! Invite them to dance with you first. Remember, *dance speaks louder than words*.

'There are short cuts to happiness, and dancing is one of them.' – Vicki Baum

Gift for You

Want to know what Catherine's doing now? She's guiding group classes in dance and moving meditations; [take a look](#)

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YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

by Yolanda Allwood

Effective communication is an important coping mechanism for healthy, thriving families. Without it, the whole household is under stress which creates a decaying, unpleasant situation. In today's modern world, strong communication skills are more important than ever. With technology beckoning at every turn, being able to communicate with your family effectively is an art we cannot afford to lose. Effective communication means being able to express and exchange thoughts, ideas and concerns in a manner that resonates with all parties involved. Additionally, it is equally important to remain present in the moment a family member is communicating with you. Listening is just as important a part of the communication process as is speaking. Everyone deserves the opportunity to speak, share *and* listen. When your family is able to connect in this fashion, an intimacy is fostered that will strengthen bonds to last a lifetime. Even in moments of disagreement or challenge, being able to really “get” what each family member needs from one another can thwart many a misunderstanding and assumption. With effective communication, everyone understands their role within the family unit. Expectations are easier to understand and that will go a long way to decreased stress in the home.

Ironically enough, working my communication skills became crucial for my life when it was discovered that my youngest son, Jalen, had developed a speech delay. Before I knew what hit me, Jalen was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), an autism spectrum disorder. Jalen's father and I had to sit down and design a new way of life for our family in the midst of grief and broken dreams. We allowed and respected each other's need to grieve, taking time to be patient with that process. Once our heads were a bit clearer, we sat down together and designed a family work plan that would best fit Jalen's life. How would we now approach his physical, emotional and educational needs? What type of medical interventions and resources did we want to utilize? There was so much to sort out. How would we handle our extended family? We had to learn to effectively communicate our son's unique differences to family, friends, teachers and, at times, even each other. Through many conversations and a few yelling matches (yes, even an argument can be effective communication) our family relationships are closer and more equipped to handle the day to day challenges of raising a child diagnosed on the autism spectrum.

Of course, even after all of that effective communication life just wouldn't be real without a bump or two along the way to further challenge what we thought we had mastered. Several months after Jalen's diagnosis, my oldest son, Trevor, finally chocked up the nerve to tell me that he did not want to go to college. I had known that something had been troubling him for some time, but I never took the time to *ask* him what was going on. He and I had always been close and I foolishly *assumed* that he would just tell me what was on his mind. Teenagers can be such funny creatures. An entire storm was brewing in his mind but when I casually asked, "How was your day?" All I got was, "Fine" and a shrug. This is where it helped to pay attention to nonverbal communication. That shrug carried the weight of the world and I knew I needed to find out what was going on with my boy. I made time and a space available for just the two of us to connect. After a few questions and a few laps around the mulberry bush, Trevor finally confessed that he didn't want to go to

college and was afraid to tell me because he had *assumed* I would be disappointed in him. “Is that all?!” I exclaimed. We then had a long talk and a good laugh about how I also hadn’t wanted to go to college right after graduation. I shared with my son that had I had the courage he possessed, I would have saved my parents a year’s worth of tuition costs. I would have also saved myself the embarrassment of flunking out in the first semester. I assured him that everyone blooms in his or her own time. We also discussed the many options available to him. Lastly, I shared with him that I eventually went back to college and attained my degree...on my own terms and dime. Having that conversation gave us the opportunity to redefine our relationship. Through communication, my son understands that my role in his life now is more of a guidance counselor than principal. I also impressed upon him the importance of communication and he is appreciating the value of open, honest dialogue even more.

Take a moment and think of a time when your family experienced a stress-causing challenge. How did you and your family grow through that experience? What did you learn about your family? What did you learn about yourself? Was each family member given the opportunity to express their point of view clearly and directly to the appropriate party (and were they able to do so)? Investing time to ponder each of these questions will give you valuable insight on how to apply and implement the communication tips we will be discussing in this chapter.

In the business world, improvements can be seen when systems are put into place to streamline daily operations, minimize error and decrease stress in the workplace. In the family unit, a simple and fair communication system can provide the same effect. For mompreneurs, good communication within the family structure is crucial. Face it: you are bustling around juggling spouse, kids, and business. The last thing you need is to spend any extra time on a task or idea no one is interested in because you *assumed* everyone would benefit. Or, completely miss the mark on an issue because you didn’t invest the time to discuss each other’s needs. As moms, we are pretty darn

good at reading minds but we expend that energy assuming we know what's best for everyone. Why not encourage all family members to communicate their thoughts? In turn, you get the opportunity to participate and *realistically* express your needs as well. Get everyone involved; even that little cute one with peanut butter all over her face has something special to contribute to the conversation. It is crucial that you communicate well with family. They are your most important clients/customers and offer the highest return on your investment. With everyone at home taken care of (that includes YOU), you have more time available to go about building your business and dreams. More time to go about creating a life full of passion, fulfillment and FUN!

My goal is to help you foster deep, enriching bonds with your family while growing your business and pursuing your entrepreneurial dreams. Here are my top 7 Parent Power Tips for Effective Communication:

1. Pay Attention

- It can often feel like so many things are pulling at you. People, work, and technology are all vying for your attention and yes, they're all important. But, you've got to make a conscious effort to "check in" and be present with your family EVERY day. **Make** time to be still, think about and review how your family is doing on a daily basis. Lots of breakdowns can be solved quickly or avoided if you make even small efforts to be consciously aware of your loved ones.

2. Ask once, listen twice...rinse & repeat

- When communicating with your spouse and/or children, ASK them if your perceptions of their ideas/concerns/thoughts are correct and then LISTEN to their responses. This is a reciprocal, ongoing practice. You often get so good at taking care of your family that you begin to

listen less and assume more, putting communication on auto-pilot, so to speak. Remember, this strategy requires reciprocity. Usually, your loved ones are very good at asking Mom a million questions to fulfill their needs. Make sure your family is listening to YOUR ideas/concerns/thoughts as well.

3. Listen with your ears, not your ego

- Defense mechanisms can kick into high gear when you listen more with your ego than your ears. It can be a challenge and even hurtful at times to have conflicts with your loved ones. Be confident, put your ego aside and stand firm in knowing that you are doing the absolute best that you can and **so are your loved ones**. Be open to the communication process even when it is difficult, that is often when the most powerful breakthroughs happen.

4. Tell the truth, even if it hurts a little

- Suppressing your emotions is not effective communication. If you are angry with your spouse for forgetting to put the trash out again...own that emotion and express how you feel. Keep in mind though; this is not the time for **projecting** how you feel. YOU are responsible for your emotional state at all times. "You made me angry when you forgot to take out the trash!" is a far less truthful statement than, "I FEEL angry when you forget to take out the trash!" Expressing how you chose to feel in that moment gives you the opportunity to further discuss with your spouse WHY you chose that emotion. Your spouse is far more likely to be open to dialogue if he understands that you feel anger when he forgets to take out the trash because in his forgetting you feel that he does not care about the upkeep of the home you both share. Now, that may not be how he feels at all. Perhaps,

he had a big work project on his mind or was in a rush to catch a game. Who knows? Take the time and talk it out to put any assumptions you may have had to rest. It's much easier to sort it all out if suppression and the blame game are left out of the communication process.

5. Lighten up a little

- You want the best for yourself and family but you are also still human. Frankly, some days you just don't have the patience or the fortitude to rationally discuss family matters or concerns. These are the moments when you call on grace and humor. Laughter can carry you through a challenge until grace arrives. If you've reached a stalemate in your communication process with your family on a particular issue, make light of the situation to ease the tension. If you don't see the humor in the experience at the moment, let it rest for a minute/hour/day. You'll soon find something to laugh about. Humans are some of the funniest beings on earth. I remember once when my partner and I took our family out to the movies. After the show we were on either side of our youngest son, holding his hands as we walked across the busy theater. As we approached the exit, my son stopped walking. We both looked down and saw (to my horror) that my son's pants had fallen and lay crumpled around his ankles because he had no belt on. There we were in the middle of the crowded theater, my son standing there with his Jake and the Neverland Pirate underwear in full view for everyone to see. Immediately, I was annoyed because I had asked my partner to put a belt on Jalen before we left the house. I went to shoot my partner a look of wrath, but first caught a glimpse of Jalen. He had the biggest grin on his face, which then promptly broke out into a full-fledged giggle fest. I looked at Trevor (who was already stifling a laugh) and my partner. We all

began to laugh. My partner scooped Jalen up and carried him out to the car. To this day, whenever we all go out together we make a big joke about checking everyone's pants to make sure we've all got belts if we need them. Sometimes, I tell Jalen to check if Daddy has a belt before *his* pants fall down. Jalen thinks that is the funniest thought ever.

6. Know when to fold 'em

- Ok, here's the thing. You can implement all of these great tips but sometimes you are just not going to agree with your spouse and/or children on every issue you experience as a family. Respect the ideas/concerns/thoughts of all parties involved, develop a solution for the best possible outcome for the situation and...let it go. As long as it doesn't put anyone in danger or cause harm, try a solution someone else suggested, even if you don't agree with it. You may be pleasantly surprised. If the initial solution doesn't work, talk it out and try something else. Don't waste time with "I told you so". Your goal is to communicate effectively with your loved ones, not pursue being right at all costs.

7. Shh...

- Often, the best communication can be nonverbal. Body language and facial expressions are all forms of communication that offer insight to how your family members may be feeling. Paying attention to what's not said is just as important as paying attention to what is said, perhaps more so. Jalen is constantly helping me hone my nonverbal communication skills. Sometimes, our best conversations are hugs.

Investing the time to work with these strategies will add great benefit to your communication skills with your loved ones. These tips will

also boost your confidence level in effective communication that not only fosters success with your family, but with your business as well. Begin to look for opportunities to implement these strategies. Start small, use one or two tips during leisure or non-crisis situations and build from there. Taking some time to practice when you're calm and centered will give you the resolve to use these strategies when family challenges or disagreements arise.

Feel free and courageous to experiment as well. How can you tweak the tips offered so they work best within your family dynamic? What other strategies can you develop that are specific to your family's communication style and need? Use the tips I've offered as a starting point and build your roadmap to effective communication from there. Your family will appreciate the effort you've taken. You may also be pleasantly surprised at how quickly you and your family begin communicating more effectively. Have fun, love long and laugh as often as you can! Now that's a solution any family can live with!

PRE-WEDDING STRESS

by **Dr. Maripat Quinn**

"I do." That's what most people expect to hear when someone gets married. They may hear "I do" on the day of the wedding, but for at least 365 days before the wedding, the language of those involved with a wedding often

takes on a distinctly negative sound. Some people say, “I’ve dreamed of this since I was a youngster” as though this means nothing can be changed. Sometimes the bride, groom, their parents or in-laws are all making decisions based on their own dreams. Remember, this wedding ceremony and reception is about the relationship between the engaged couple, period. It should not matter who is paying. Helping to pay for wedding expenses is often a gift, but shouldn’t be used as a bargaining chip.

Weddings are probably the number one stress-causing event in the lives of most people. Granted that later in life, there will be plenty more stressful events to come, but for a person between the ages of 20-35, when most weddings occur in the U.S., it’s definitely Numero Uno!



One of the earliest stories about wedding stress comes from the Bible. Remember the Wedding Feast at Cana? Mary, the mother of Jesus, notices that the reception is running low on wine. This is most likely a big stressor and a source of embarrassment to those throwing the celebration. Jesus is asked by Mary if there’s anything that can be done. According to the story, Jesus takes care of the situation, turning water to wine, and wine is flowing once again.



For the engaged couple: I'd like to get you used to your upcoming change in title. No, I'm not talking about the 'Mr. & Mrs.' title, but rather that of 'CEO's. Normally seen as Chief Executive Officer, I'd like you and your beloved to start thinking of yourselves as **Co-Executive Officers**. You are soon to be part of a 2-party unit, making 2-party decisions, which will affect both of you and possibly many other people, as well. Your wedding plan is a great place to develop this important, healthy habit and will help keep wedding stress to a minimum.

The very best way to avoid stress is through thorough, detailed, organized, advanced planning. All you really need is paper, pencil (with eraser) and lots of time to write down the tasks. Write down each week's needs as the wedding gets closer. For instance:

At 18 months before the wedding date, you should book the venue

At 12 months before, you should hire caterers, interview photographers, look for gown

At 9 months before, send out 'Save the Date' cards, determine what bridesmaids will wear



Here are a few additional sensible suggestions for combating wedding stress:

1. Organization becomes your new BFF
2. Think about your true comfort zone. Don't try anything so new that it will stress you just thinking about it. Do what makes you

- comfortable. If you've never sung in public before, don't make your debut at your wedding day.
3. Keep the rehearsal dinner very low key, casual and fun. Don't make it into another EVENT. Be sure to get home at an early hour so that you can get to bed early. Eight hours of sleep will deliver far more benefits than simply beauty sleep. You'll re-oxygenate your blood, settle your mind, relax your muscles and it will help stabilize your weight.
 4. Learn to Delegate. This is so very important. You are the bride, not the chief, cook and bottle washer. Get good references for your vendors then step back and let them do their jobs. Assign someone else to check up on them.
 5. Designate a 'Day-of-Wedding, Go-to' Contact Person. You don't need to become involved in every little mishap on your wedding day. If the photographer didn't bring color film, it's not for you to make it right. Designate an experienced person who is not part of the wedding party for this one-day assignment.
 6. Eat. You are going to need your wits about you and considerable strength, both emotionally and physically, to see your way successfully and happily through your wedding day. Eat a low fat, nutritious breakfast. Have a healthy, light lunch with protein and fruit included. Be sure to sit down when you eat.
 7. It's your wedding day! Talking about whatever is making you nervous is a great way to diffuse the anxiety and strategize for some solutions and suggestions.
 8. Express yourself! Let the stress out of your mind and body by writing about it, illustrate a situation with colored pencils, vent out loud, having a good cry, or a giggle fit. Whatever works!
 9. Pamper yourself. Give yourself the gift of time and contemplation. Take a relaxing bubble bath or ask for a foot massage. Remember your title of 'CEO'? Make sure to check in with your beloved and ask if he or she could use a pick-up game of basketball or a run on the beach to release stress too.

10. Be happy! Smile. Sing. Dance. Swoon. Whistle a happy tune. Your interior moods will quickly pick up the signals from your outward happy acts. You'll end up happier than when you started because the endorphins will get released and give you another boost towards a real happy face.

Here's a little test to see how you handle stress. Give yourself points for these attributes, with 10 being highest, for answers unless stated otherwise:

1. Supportive family
2. Belong to a social group that meets at least once a month
3. Engage in an enjoyable hobby
4. Practice deep relaxation at least once a week (yoga, meditation)
5. Are within 10 pounds of your ideal weight
6. Give yourself 5 points for each nutritionally balanced meal you eat in one day
7. Give yourself 5 points for each time you exercise in a week
8. You have a quiet, relaxing place in your home to retreat to
9. You successfully practice time management
10. Take off 10 points for each pack of cigarettes you smoke in a week
11. Take off 10 points each time you take alcohol or drugs to calm down in a week
12. Take off 5 points each time you bring home your work during the week
13. Take off 5 points each time you take something that's not a natural substance to help you sleep
14. Add 5 points if you do something enjoyable just for you, each week

15. Add 5 points each time you have sex in a week, either alone or with a partner

If your score is:

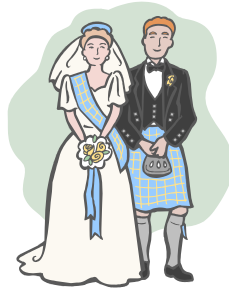
0-30 Train wreck ahead. You may want to think through and discuss how to improve the trouble spots.

30-50 You need help. Ask for it right away.

50-70 You have adequate coping skills. Talk things over with a trust friend.

70-90 You are doing quite well. Keep up the good work.

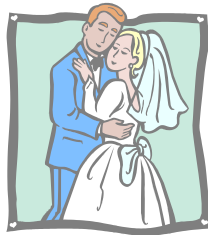
90+ You are doing great! Superstar!



Getting back to your 'CEO': weddings are usually a two-family event. Whether your parents are paying for all, some or none of the wedding, be sure that they are involved in the planning. This may be the wedding of you and your beloved but it is NOT all about you. It is all about love, commitment, relationships and the blending of families and friends. It's worth repeating that wedding are NOT all about the bride or all about the groom. It's about the couple and their vision of their future, with respectful input from families and friends.

One the day of your engagement, you will be in a fairyland of romantic notions. Certainly talk about your wishes, dreams, ideas and hopes. Start writing down the names of people you wish could be at your wedding. This is not an actual guest list, just a planning tool. Start with your family, the family of your beloved and both sets of friends. Keep the lists in

categories. Include a grouping for people from work you may want to attend. Discuss whether anyone in either family is in an allied business where they may “expect” to do your flowers, or make the dress etc. This starts to give you a rough strategy route for who will have to be headed off at the pass, or quietly taken aside by a parent and lovingly told about your plans in their area of expertise and how you already have it all worked out.



Be very frank and forthright about where you each stand financially and discuss the financial situation of each of your families. If you have debts, get it all out in the open. Write it all down and see what funds you have to work with. It is a serious stressor to know you won't have the money that you've committed by hiring vendors that you cannot afford. This financial accounting is one of the first tasks as Co-Executive Officers of your own wedding. Both sets of parents will greatly appreciate your responsible, mature behavior. It really doesn't matter that you've always wanted a yellow wedding, for example. If there was only one person involved in a wedding, fine, you can have yellow. If your beloved really dislikes yellow, don't even think of insisting on it. This is joint project. Find a color you can both agree upon. If one partner really doesn't care about the color, fine again. Just remember that there is sure to be another decision where the disinterested party in the issue of color may suddenly become extremely interested in the choice of music. Compromise is the name of the game and the key to a successful marriage.

When you're feeling stressed over the planning or cost, put on some relaxing music. Light a softly scented candle; drink soothing jasmine or chamomile tea. Take 'dream discussion' dates, where you go for a long walk, perhaps on a beach, across a meadow or in a forest or even just

down the block, sharing your dreams with each other. What makes you tick? Review with each other your wish lists for the distant future. Are children a part of your dream? Does one partner want to stay home and raise children or keep working until the kids are out of college? Do you see your kids in college? Does your beloved see you as moving anywhere their career may take them? Name some concrete ideas that will make each of you happy. This is a great time to visit the library or purchase a book that asks dozens of questions to see how well you know the other person.

During times of stress it is so helpful to know that you are loved and that you love your beloved. Make that thought your mantra to repeat quietly in your head: I am loved. Feel the love. Sense the love. Remember specific actions that showed love. Your anxiety level will go way down after a few deep breaths and a moment or two of quiet remembrance.



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Especially stressful weddings will understandably bring out many negative stress reactions. The more you have in common, generally the less stress there will be. With careful advance planning, you can become well-armed for some of those situations involving your differences. No need to score your answers. Just think about the implications.

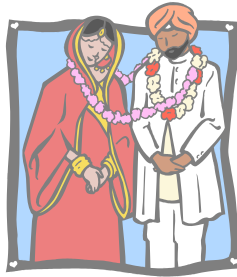


- Do you and your beloved share the same religion and spiritual beliefs?
- Are you both of the same cultural background?
- Do you each have the same level of education?
- Are your families of similar economic status?
- Is society generally supportive of your marriage?
- Do your families have similar number of siblings?
- Do you each have both sister and brothers? Mother and father?
- Are both your parents still alive and married to each other? Divorced? Widowed?
- Are you both the first born, babies of the family, middle children?
- Have you both grown up in the same or similar towns?
- Is this a second or third marriage for one of you?
- Did you go to the same or similar schools? Public, private?
- Have you each traveled much or not? To where? Why there?
- Are you your Mother or Father's favorite child? Are they?
- Are both families enjoying similar blessings of good health?

Sometimes there is a strong attraction to someone who is different from your own family; the so-called 'Grass is Greener' syndrome. Perhaps there is an exotic attraction to someone who is different in some way. Whether it's the other side of the tracks or the other side of the world, differences don't spell the death knell to a happy marriage but rather add homework to the preparation for it.

Who will perform the marriage ceremony if you each come from different religious traditions? One person may be stronger in their commitment to a certain religion or have a longer association with a local place of worship. Perhaps one person is not at all religious. In cases of mixed religious marriages, a couple can opt to let one person take the lead in religious matters. Or, you can find two celebrants, each representing your religions, or you might choose a non-denominational minister or officiant to perform the marriage ceremony. Some ministers have special

training in cross-cultural training and/or mixed marriages. They can be very helpful in creating a customized ceremony taking account of the beliefs and customs of both parties. Rabbis, priests, ministers, imans and other social counselors have experience in bringing divergent parties together. Make use of their knowledge and skills to smooth out as many wrinkles beforehand. Learn about possible potholes before you get stuck in one. Anticipate possible areas of tension. Don't assume what your CEO would want. Study up on the background, religion, history and culture of the other family you are about to enter. Don't expect it to be 'your way or the highway'. You are planning this wedded partnership for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, 'til death do you part.



Meet Our Authors



Yolanda Allwood, Speaker and Parent Mentor has eleven years of communication, policy and advocacy experience in the nonprofit sector. Upon her son's Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis, Yolanda has focused her experience and knowledge towards her son's unique needs and quality of care. In December 2012, Yolanda created AUtonomous Solutions, whose movement is to inspire parents to empower themselves with education, organization, communication and support. With these tools, Yolanda believes parents can create thriving families regardless of any developmental or neurological differences their children may experience. Yolanda resides in Long Island, NY with her two sons, Trevor and Jalen.



Catherine G. Braun, MA, a creative movement and dance [psychotherapist](#) helps heal the damages of STRESS with Motion of Mind and Body. Since all of life is in motion seeking expression and balance, Catherine's healing practices targets the impact of past and present life experiences that are 'stuck' in the embodied mind. [Going boldly beyond](#) traditional psychotherapeutic dialogue limited in solutions, she skillfully blends therapies rooted in the creative arts, mindfulness techniques, and dance to maximize healing potential on physical, emotional, mental,

social, and spiritual levels of existence. Catherine's unique approach is based on the most recent [cutting-edge neuroscience](#) that explains the brain's ability to change and heal throughout the lifetime. Grounded in solid professional and personal experience, Catherine holds a Masters in [Marriage & Family Counseling](#) board certification in psychotherapy, certifications in [somatic expressive therapy, movement & dance therapy](#) and [emotional intelligence](#) Catherine works with families, couples, [entrepreneurial and professional women](#) who are particularly vulnerable to stress, and who are also most responsive to practices that tap into the 'wisdom' of the body. When life is coming hard, Catherine is there with 'less talk and more action', offering solutions that give control back to clients for the quality of life they deserve: Healthy, Happy, and In Love with Life. Catherine's passion for movement and dance began in childhood, when she first experienced life-saving benefits - gifts that keep giving to this day. She feels privileged to be able to share the healing benefits with others. She keeps even her husband on his toes enjoying weekly dance experiences in the city that never sleeps.

Catherine can be reached at: <http://www.mind-body-in-motion.com> or email: Catherine@mind-body-in-motion.com



Andrea Feinberg is President of Coaching Insight, LLC. She nudges ambitious, impassioned women business owners from the daily grind and towards the big rewards of ownership including more money, a happier life and the time to enjoy it all. Over the last 25 years, she's helped clients articulate, achieve and exceed their goals

for improved personal lives through a better-run business.

Andrea is a graduate of New York University's Stern School of Business, Coach University's advanced coach training program and a founding

member of Coachville. She has achieved advanced designations of Certified Strategic Business Leadership Coach, Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst and Certified Emotional Intelligence Mentor.

She has been profiled and quoted in hundreds of print and online blogs. In 2004, she collaborated on an award-winning book: "The Essential Coaching Book." Her last collaborative book, "Journey to the Stage, Volume 4" became an Amazon best seller.

In Feb. 2011 she was included among 50 Top Influential Women by Long Island Business News. In 2012, she won 'Top 5 Coaching Blogs' and was included in '100 Women in E-Commerce'. Timedoctor.com included her among 'Top 5 Productivity Gurus, 2012'. She's proud to have brought together 15 amazing women to co-author "Less Stress = More Success". Along with Jennifer Nyx, Andrea co-launched the Long Island, NY chapter of the national Women's Prosperity Network and, most recently, was acknowledged by Long Island Business News as a top business service provider, 2019. [Learn more here.](#)



Susan Ganz is a Registered Representative of and offers securities, investment advisory and financial planning services.



Therese Rose Hoffman has been an organic gardener since her childhood - learning from her mother who believed in the natural way of life. Using herbs as tea and food goes back to ancient times. The process of natural whole food has always been prevalent throughout all cultures and is now being recognized as an adjunct to your daily routine.

Therese has and continues to study with many great herbalists, traveling to special conferences and study groups in Colorado, California, Vermont and New York. She also leads meditation and well being classes through various wellness centers on Long Island, NY She believes in developing close relationships with her herbs and with people. She volunteers once a month at a wellness center in Farmingdale. She provides advice on herbs, energy work and is a great listener as well.

For Therese, her motivating reason to be an **herbalist** and crafter of recipes comes from her many years of experience while watching older people live longer because of natural therapies. That's why she creates recipes to bring together balanced natural ingredients with flavor and possible healing action of herbs. She comes from a long line of good cooks and enjoys being in the kitchen with family and friends. Her herbs are tasty because of the attention her farming partners give to growing plants. Therese has a gift to become one with her plants, channeling messages and producing products and recipes that have potential.

Therese won second place while being trained by Rosemary Gladstar. Her Seasons tea formula (Allergy Tea) won the prize. Rosemary Gladstar called her tea magical and tasty.



Beth Johnston is a graduate of St. John's University in New York with post-graduate work at Adelphi University. Despite the fact that Beth studied Pre-law and Criminal Justice, the urban legend grew that she had a PhD in Psychology!

Beth attributes this to her active listening skills, the result of being a member of a large family. "Everyone had a turn to speak, which meant most of the time I was listening!"

As the oldest daughter in a family of eight, Beth said she was "born into management", where she has spent most of her career years troubleshooting, problem-solving and paving inroads to new and creative approaches for personal and professional development.

Beth is a true entrepreneur who defines her own success as having contributed to someone else's. She has done years of corporate sales training and been an invited guest speaker to high school students, graduate students, budding entrepreneurs and to those who have forgotten just how much they know! Beth is Co-Founder and Executive Director of The International Women's Leadership Association (TheIWLA) with a passion for empowering women to recognize their potential to change the world.



Organizing Expert **Lorraine Kimmey** founded Simply Organized Solutions in 2004 and was committed to helping individuals change their lives through better organizational habits and routines. Lorraine was known for her positive energy and ability to see past clutter to help bring practical solutions to each project.

Lorraine died in 2018 from cancer; her core belief was that organization is different for everyone and that getting organized can be life transforming.



JoAnn Layford, Ed D, AADP, CHC, is a certified Health Coach and Yoga Instructor helping people with chronic conditions and “women of a certain age” clear their minds, change their bodies and claim their lives through easy to implement natural living solutions for greater health, happiness, and vitality. She received her training as a Health Coach from the [Institute for Integrative Nutrition](#)’s cutting-edge Health Coach Training Program, studying over 100 dietary theories,

practical lifestyle management techniques, and innovative coaching methods with some of the world’s top health and wellness experts. Her teachers there included Dr. Andrew Weil, Director of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine; Dr. Deepak Chopra, leader in the field of mind-body medicine; Dr. David Katz, Director of Yale University’s Prevention Research Center; Dr. Walter Willett, Chair of Nutrition at Harvard University; Geneen Roth, bestselling author and expert on emotional eating; and many other leading researchers and nutrition authorities. She then deepened her knowledge of the body’s systems’ biology, physiology,

and functions by completing a Full Body Intensive Home Study Course for Health Coaches with Andrea Nakayama, Functional Nutritionist.

JoAnn has been practicing yoga for 30 years. To date, she has completed 300 hours of Yoga Teacher Training and has had the honor of studying with outstanding Yoga teachers and practitioners including Jeff Migdow, MD; Priti Robyn Ross, and Biff Mithoefer, at Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health, The New York Open Center and Omega Institute. She teaches individual and group classes in both Kripalu Yoga and Yin Yoga.

JoAnn loves learning and teaching. In addition to her health coach and yoga credentials, she's earned a BS in Education, a BA, an MS and an Ed. D. From her yoga mat, offices, and classrooms in schools, universities, and cyberspace, JoAnn has taught learners of all ages, from pre k to university doctoral students. Learners always teach the teacher, and JoAnn's work with students and colleagues has given her an invaluable experience base and taught her many rich lessons about people and life.

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Suzanne Muller is a Certified Transformational Life Coach with an M.B.A. and 20 years business experience. She specializes in the fulfillment of clients' visions in four areas of life: career/talent, health and wellness, relationships, time and money freedom. As a transformational speaker and coach, she empowers people to create the life they have always dreamed of living. She guides them through a specific, proven, repeatable process that allows them to step into a greater version of themselves, creating a more rewarding, productive and satisfying life experience!



Jennifer Nyx is a Holistic Health Coach and Personal Trainer dedicated to supporting her clients with their health goals and empowering them to make lasting changes in their behavior and lifestyle. Jennifer leads workshops on nutrition and offers individual, group health and nutritional coaching. She received her training at The Institute Of Integrative Nutrition in New York City

and is certified by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners. During her training she studied over 100 dietary theories, practical lifestyle management techniques, and innovative coaching methods with some of the world's top health and wellness experts. Her teachers included Dr. Andrew Weil, Director of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine; Dr. Deepak Chopra, leader in the field of mind-body medicine; Dr. David Katz, Director of Yale University's Prevention Research Center; Dr. Walter Willett; Chair of Nutrition at Harvard University; Geneen Roth, bestselling author and expert on emotional eating and many other leading researchers and nutrition authorities. Her education has equipped her with extensive knowledge in holistic nutrition, health coaching and preventive health. She works on Long Island and has a private practice, coaching clients on how to reach their goals for their overall health, weight loss and stress reduction.



Alyse Parise, LCSW, is a powerfully innovative, creative and intuitive Therapreneur (Therapist-Entrepreneur). Alyse holds a Masters Degree in Social Work, as well as a Gestalt Therapy Certification, and is a Certified Corporate Business Coach.

Previously, Alyse was the managing director of an award winning publicly-traded interior design/architectural corporation where she ran award-winning multi-million dollar projects.

Her passion rallies smart, motivated, caring entrepreneurs to fully own their expertise, confront their inner gremlins while building more lucrative businesses in practical ways. Called a “wiz” by some of her clients, Alyse brings 30 years of corporate expertise, psychotherapy and business coaching to her diverse clients.

Alyse currently volunteers as Program Director of the Suffolk County Women’s Business Enterprise Coalition, with over 1000 members. She facilitates monthly Walk Talk Connect™ Gatherings.

Her articles and perspectives are featured in the publication of GEM Magazine, a lifestyle magazine for the Long Island woman. She is also coauthor of the content-rich self-study guide, “Become a Therapreneur: How to Create Passionate Products from Your Private Practice for Passive Income”.



Born in Manhattan in the early 1950's to a Scottish immigrant mother and a 6th generation New Yorker father, **Maripat Quinn** was raised in upper middle class comfort on Long Island, New York. Her parents were intent on exposing her to all the social, educational and cultural experiences they could envision. She was reared on tales of ethnic, class, religious and cultural discrimination. As the only girl in the family with three brothers, she experienced firsthand the stereotyping

of female roles and expectations. This included years of self-conscious social training as a debutante, culminating in her presentation to society. During the first half of her life, Dr. Quinn lived, worked or studied in over a dozen different countries, five states and over two dozen cities. These experiences, along with her marriage at the United Nations, were to color her later research and form the crux of her professional career.

She attended many different colleges and universities around the world getting degrees in Art, Education, Media, Comparative Religions, Cross-Cultural Communications and dozens of certificates that encompassed her many and varied interests including several languages, writing, international protocol, graphic arts, photography, publishing, marketing, history and politics to name but a few.

Her career in Public Relations spanned over thirty years and ranged from corporate communications, academia, international conferences and events, to nonprofits, embassies, small business advisory and consulting for multinational conglomerates. She was awarded many honors and certificates by professional associations and businesses but the one she holds most dear is from a New York State University President, naming her a Diversity Fellow. Besides her loving family which includes her husband, and four adult children, Dr. Quinn is most passionate about three things: the need for equality, the gifts of diversity and access to education.

Upon early retirement from Public Relations, and at the exact time of the passage of the Equal Marriage Act in New York State, Dr. Quinn knew the time was right for her to become an ordained minister so that she could perform marriage ceremonies for whoever wished to marry, without regard to their beliefs, sexual preferences, cultural background, customs or creative ideas. She organized several like-minded ministers who agreed to mirror the beliefs of those for whom they created ceremonies. This led to an easy choice of name for her business, *Everyone's Minister*. She creatively customizes each ceremony, enhancing it with either poetry, readings, music, symbols, rituals, colors, scents, flowers, and significant venues that speak to the couples own relationship. It is indeed a once in a lifetime event and the joy she brings to those in attendance is legendary. This is an act of love in itself!



Elissa Rand, marketing professional and owner of Cleaned To Perfection since 2002. This company was started with the realization that not all cleaning services were equal and there was a need for professional, consistently reliable and high quality home care. Elissa enjoys sharing cleaning tips & tricks in her monthly blogs and social media posts. Elissa opened another specialty business in 2011 with the same premise that customer service and support is a top priority. She currently lives in Setauket, NY with her husband, Joe, their daughter, Kyla; dog Shelby and her prized Brugmansias.



Debi Silber MS, RD, WHC, FDN The Mojo coach, President of Lifestyle Fitness, Inc. is a recognized health, weight loss, fitness, wellness, lifestyle and self improvement expert. Specifically, she's a Registered Dietitian with a Master's degree in Nutrition, a certified Personal Trainer, Whole Health Coach (a health expert trained to teach how your lifestyle creates health/wellness or illness/disease), has two certifications in pre- and post-natal fitness with specialty recognition in weight loss and weight maintenance and is a Functional Diagnostic Nutrition Practitioner.

She's a sought-after speaker and author of "***A Pocket Full of Mojo: 365 Proven Strategies To Create Your Ultimate Body, Mind, Image and Lifestyle***" (recommended by best-selling authors Brian Tracy and Marshall Goldsmith, Kristi Frank of Donald Trump's "***The Apprentice***", James Malinchak, Featured on ABC's Hit TV Show "***Secret Millionaire***" among others) and "***The Lifestyle Fitness Program: A Six Part Plan So Every Mom Can Look, Feel and Live Her Best***" (recommended by Parenting Magazine and Jack Canfield, Co-Author of the best-selling "***Chicken Soup for the Soul***" series and "***The Success Principles***"). She's also the creator of **The Mojo Fuel Bar**, her own private label nutrition bar available in 3 flavors.

Debi's branded The Mojo Coach® because she's led thousands of clients to achieve their ultimate body, mind, image and lifestyle; inspiring them to "get their mojo back" and helping them transform into their personal and professional best. She's a master at showing others how to create a lean, fit body, radiant health, soaring confidence, endless energy, rewarding relationships, financial abundance, a dynamic image, charismatic style, and an optimistic outlook. Debi's also helped many companies to boost morale, productivity, loyalty...as well as their bottom line, by inspiring employees towards making small yet dramatic lifestyle changes.

In addition to being a highly credentialed and awarded health expert with honors such as being a Cambridge Who's Who, Madison Who's Who, Notable American Woman and Outstanding Young Woman of America, Debi's a featured expert on over 15 websites, a popular radio guest, is quoted regularly online and in print, has been featured as a self improvement expert in 4 books, and was recently profiled to be included in a textbook on global health and sustainability, aiming to inspire students to pursue similar careers. Debi has also contributed articles and insight to some of the most highly regarded and widely respected health and wellness websites online and in print today.

Debi offers speaking, high level one-on-one coaching, small group coaching, consulting, corporate wellness solutions, VIP Transformation Day packages, membership programs, books and products all designed to have you as well as your company achieve maximum success in the areas of life most important to you.



Bonnie Taub is a Licensed Massage Therapist who graduated from The New York College of Health Professions, where she went on to the graduate program to become an AMMA Therapist. Subsequently, she joined the faculty of massage school where she taught various Amma Therapy courses was a therapist in the professional clinic. Bonnie enjoyed many years as a Clinic Supervisor in the student clinic. She was awarded a Bachelors Degree in Occupational Studies upon completing her studies.

During her time in massage school, Bonnie studied Lymph Drainage Therapy with The Upledger Institute. Lymph Drainage Therapy, developed by Bruno Chikly, is under the auspices of The Chikly Health Institute where Bonnie is now a certified teaching assistant.

While maintaining a private massage practice, Bonnie studied at The School for Integrative Nutrition and became a Certified Nutrition Counselor.

Bonnie has been using therapeutic grade essential oils to enhance her massage practice for more than 5 years, has learned directly from Gary Young, and uses the Raindrop Technique regularly. Many courses on essential oils were taught by Bonnie in The Continuing Education Department at The New York College of Health Professions.