

Stress Less SOS

Action Guide

Drowning in a sea of
stress, anxiety, and
emotional pain?

start here

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By Missy Rankin, CTNC, CHS
Certified Transformation Coach
Stress Management Specialist
Certified Hormone Specialist
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Stress Less- verb.

The ability to handle difficult situations calmly, appropriately, and effectively.

SOS- noun.

- *an international signal of extreme distress.*
- *an urgent appeal for help.*

Important Information & Disclaimer:

By using the tools found in this action guide, along with other lifestyle changes, I was able to move from extreme fatigue (and a long list of other symptoms) to being able to return to work and enjoy my life again.

I discovered it was my mood (my mindset) that had the greatest effect on my energy.

Our mindset- our outlook- is a powerful piece of our health puzzle. When applied, the tools in this action guide have the power to drastically improve your current situation.

The suggestions in this action guide are not intended to treat, diagnosis, cure, or replace medical advice. This book is for educational purposes only. It does not address specific health considerations such as PTSD, bi-polar or depression due to an imbalance of neurotransmitters, thyroid, hormone, adrenal or any other health issue. Please seek professional medical attention as needed.

It is my experience and opinion that using these tools in conjunction with any necessary prescribed medication(s) will provide valuable skills that can be used in your daily life to deal with stressors and promote a greater sense of health and wellbeing.

Ready to begin?

You can learn all day long and hope your situation will change but if you don't put action to what you are learning you won't experience the restored health your wanting.

Your actions must line up with your hope. If you don't do that, you're not going to get any improvement.



Be sure to print off the [Stress Less SOS Checklist](#) on page 12 and the [Restful Sleep Checklist](#) on page 23.

Hang them where you can see them so you can practice simple ways to relieve stress and get restful sleep— everyday.



About Me

Hello Valuable Soul.

I'm so delighted you are here. How are you? Maybe not so well, if you are reading this. Right?

It's not easy being in a difficult situation. I believe I can help you not only survive what is going on but to thrive during this time. Don't believe me?

Just try implementing the following lessons found in this action guide.



I became a Certified Transformation Coach to provide myself with education regarding *my* health concerns but also to help others on their journey to health and wholeness.

I wrote this guide to help me to **do** the things I was learning about, not only just regarding stress but also about my physical, mental, and emotional health.

A little bit about me: Let's just say I have had a very stressful life. Childhood abuse, an alcoholic parent, drug-addicted sibling, tension-filled constant-fighting first marriage. I was a single parent caring for a disabled parent, and on and on and on.

I didn't know how to handle all that stress. I was an emotional wreck. I went for counseling and listened to self-help teachings, but it took YEARS for what I was learning to move from my head to my heart. Why?

I'd love to be able to share that I applied the things I was learning right away, and everything was wonderful in a very short time. However, that wasn't the case. I was angry, frustrated, confused, and stuck in a continual state of ... "but", "why", "that's not fair", "why am I the only one", "what about him or her" (depending upon who hurt me), "this isn't going to work", "God if you would just ____". **I was addicted to negative thinking. I stayed stuck as a victim of my past and let it affect my present which impacted my future.**

My chronic negative thinking led to negative words which led to negative actions. I repelled friends and family. My health deteriorated fast. I didn't realize that the continual chronic negative thinking was keeping me frozen in an unhealthy state.

While I was listening to self-help messages I was either in the future dreaming up some scenario that might happen and what I would say if it did or I was in the past rehearsing what did happen and what I should have said or done differently.

Rarely, was I in the present moment - giving my full attention to what I was hearing that could have helped me. During counseling I was guarded and struggled to deal with my emotional pain from the past.

For years, I suffered the pain, frustration, and poor health of not forgiving, not letting go, and not stopping the negative thoughts. My health didn't improve until I *finally allowed* what I was learning to seep from my head into my heart and then into my thoughts, words, and actions.

I'm sharing with you the fundamental health-saving habits I learned and finally APPLIED.

I discovered it was many things, working together, that made the life-changing difference for me. Addressing just part of the body and/or mind isn't enough for restoring one's health, managing stress, and healing a wounded heart.

It is finding balance with all of it. Things like appropriately handling stress, eating high-quality nutrition, exercising, having a vision for a better future, etc.

I know it can be overwhelming. But don't worry, this action guide is short and simple. The basics of stress management. Baby steps.

For a deeper dive- I hope you'll continue to the Stress Less SOS ecourse. It contains advanced lessons like how to ... do EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique or Tapping), gain freedom from Soul Ties and Heritage Hindrances, release suppressed emotions, and more.

This Stress-Less SOS Action Guide and the Stress-Less SOS eCourse provide powerful tools that can be used to handle stressful situations and heal emotional pain. Use them alone or along with my other programs for a balanced approach to overall health and well-being.

For more support and guidance, especially for addressing emotional pain and/or optimizing stress related health issues (like diabetes, thyroid issues, fatigue, anxiety, etc.) please visit my website, www.StressLessSOS.com.

I pray that you will be enlightened in your spirit to receive, understand and live all that is in store for you. It may be an uphill climb for pursuing health and wholeness, but it will be worth your best efforts.

You'll get out of it what you put into it.

Here's to your health,

Missy



Stress Less SOS Action Guide

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I know it is tempting to skip to a lesson that might suit you more than another. Try to resist that impulse and read through the book, one lesson at a time—beginning with lesson one.



If you believe it, it will work.

If you don't believe it. It won't.

~ Kenneth Copeland

What is Stress?

Stress can be either good stress or bad stress. In this action guide, we will focus on bad or negative stress. Stress comes in many forms. A difficult co-worker, traffic jams, living in a challenging marriage, shortage of funds, not enough time in the day, kids, school, and more. Stuff happens. People can be mean, unfair, and cause conflict. Cars break down. Unexpected expenses can occur.

It is how we handle these negative situations that will determine how our health will be impacted – either positively or negatively. Long-term stress can adversely affect our mind, body, and soul if not handled properly.

Stress, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is “a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation.”

Chronic stress leads to health issues. Some things we can change and some things we must go through. You do not have to change everything all at once. Slow and steady wins the race. Try learning at least one of the following lessons and use that one over and over. Aim to be able to use them all, as needed.

I know that some of the the lessons in this guide are easier said or typed than done. Try each lesson. Practice them. They get easier to do over time. They are a part of the whole progress. Each one can stand-alone and will do some good- but together- their synergy is exponential.

These techniques are powerful approaches for handling stress when it comes.

Because it will come.

When we have 'tools' to use,
We can get through difficult times in our life.

"Slow down. Take a deep breath.
What's the hurry? Why wear yourself out?
Just what are you after anyway?"



-Jeremiah 2:25

Lesson 1

DEEP BREATHING TECHNIQUE

One of the easiest ways of diffusing a negative emotional response to a stressful situation is to take a deep breath and repeat, as necessary. Let me explain.

Deep breathing for a count of 5 or more allows one time to think. Time to think about what response should be given to the situation. Or time to talk oneself out of making a bad choice as in my story below.

Once when I was doing a whole plant-based food elimination eating plan, I felt an almost irresistible craving for chicken salad. It came out of nowhere. I was in my car, and Chicken Salad Chick was up ahead next to my destination of Earth Fare. Publix chicken salad (another favorite) was just down the road. Oh! I really wanted chicken salad. It was Thursday, and I normally ate chicken salad on Thursdays.

I took several deep breaths and thought, "No". In my mind, I went over how, in the past, after eating certain foods my stomach had hurt. Jimmy John's turkey "unwich" then started calling to me from across the street. (I'm gluten-free so the unwich is a great choice). However, I reminded myself I was focusing on whole plant foods- and wanted to stick to my plan.

It took a few minutes of reminding myself of the pain of my past poor choices and how my health suffered for days before the craving finally left. Deep breathing allowed me the time to focus and address the almost overwhelming desire for a food not a part of my current eating plan.

When a stressful event occurs, our bodies undergo numerous chemical and automatic responses. Our adrenals get us ready for 'fight or flight.' Our heart rate and blood pressure increase. Our muscles tense. Deep breathing activates our body's "Relaxation Response." The "Relaxation Response" works to 'turn off' the fight or flight mode. Our heart rate and blood pressure decrease. Our mind can focus clearer.

ACTION STEP: Take five deep breaths. Start by inhaling deeply. Hold each breath for 1, 2 or 3 seconds (whichever is comfortable for you). Exhale fully. Repeat. As you exhale, let go of any negative/ unhealthy/ unproductive/ unkind way to react.

Instead, set your attention in the "here and now" being fully present, and choose a positive, productive, stable, assertive, and/or kind response. Practice this whenever something stressful happens. Feel yourself calm down. You will be in a better frame of mind to deal with the situation. Calmer. Balanced. Reasonable. Healthy.

Lesson 2

PRAYER & MEDITATION

Prayer definition. “A solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or an object of worship.”

Meditate definition. “Think deeply or focus one’s mind for a period of time, in silence or with the aid of chanting, for religious or spiritual purposes or as a method of relaxation. To think deeply or carefully about (something).” ~ Merriam-Webster

Saying a prayer or meditating on something positive is an easy way to help activate the Relaxation Response and to help quieten the Flight or Fight stress response. Try a simple prayer like “*God, help me calm down*”. We can even meditate while listening to music. Any prayer or meditation will work.

“A kind answer turns away wrath (soothes angry feelings) but harsh words (angry words) make tempers flare.” – Proverbs 15:1

Prayer and meditation are lifelines. They help us to get calm and help to put our minds in a focused- ‘here and now’ peaceful state.

Short prayers and/or meditations (**along with deep breathing**) are quick ways to calm down when we’re stressed.

ACTION STEP: Cultivate a practice of praying when something stressful happens. Ask for wisdom for what you need to do or not do. Ask for guidance and strength. Meditate on a positive phrase like an affirmation or favorite scripture.

Set aside time daily to mediate. Mediation, or thinking deeply about something, can be as simple as thinking about a favorite scripture or quote. Or visualizing a relaxing peaceful place or outcome. Just be sure what you’re mediating on is positive and productive.

“Don’t be pulled in different directions or worried about a thing. Be saturated in prayer throughout each day, offering your faith-filled requests before God with overflowing gratitude. Tell him every detail of your life, then God’s wonderful peace that transcends human understanding, will make the answers known to you through Jesus Christ.”

- Philippians 4:6-7

Positive thoughts create positive feelings and actions.
Negative thoughts create negative feelings and actions.

“Every thought we think is creating our future.”

~Louise L. Hay

Lesson 3

CONQUER NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

If you continually dwell on negative thoughts like...

“Well, I did that wrong again.” “Everyone is talking about me.” “She thinks I am ____.” “This traffic does this every day! I hate traffic.” “If my husband/ wife/ child/ parent/ friend/ boss says that to me one more time, I’m going to explode!”

... you'll remain in a constant state of stress and dis-ease.

When negative thoughts like the ones above surface in your mind, be proactive and choose not to think on the negative thought(s). How? Don't go over and over and over who did what. Stop the thoughts of "this" always happens. Positivity won't work.

Instead, replace the negative thought(s) with positive power proclamations like - "I am OK. I am enough. I am worthy. I can do this. It will be ok. Things will work out. I made mistakes that I can learn from and not repeat. I can plan for a better tomorrow."

Words counteract thoughts.

Before I learned what, I'm sharing now, negative thoughts were my constant companions. Imagines of past hurtful situations would continually pop into my mind. I continually rehearsed what had been done to me, dwelt on any current stressful situation, and even dreamed up negative scenarios that might happen and how I would respond to those hypothetical events (that usually never happened).

I got myself so worked up that I was angry by the time I got home (or to work or with family). Ruminating on negative events (past, present, or future- real or imagined) kept me in bad mood, hard to be around, and live with.

The good news is that it gets easier, over time, to catch negative thoughts that pop into our minds. But it will take diligence to **stop** negative thinking and **replace** those thoughts with positive power proclamations, affirmations, favorite scriptures.

Something else that helps reduce negative thoughts is by limiting high drama, stressful, and/or violent TV & movies. Those dark imagines play havoc with our 'fight or flight' response and even with our neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine levels.

People who are highly sensitive to the effects of stress, discover high drama, violent TV shows and movies can be especially triggering for the body's "Fight or Flight" stress response.

ACTION STEP: Create a list of 'positive power proclamations' or affirmations and be ready the next time self-defeating/ negative/ "should have or shouldn't have" thinking strikes.

“Positive thinking will let you do everything better than negative thinking will.”

~ Zig Ziglar

Lesson 4

CULTIVATE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Think something positive about the negative or stressful situation. If there is a traffic jam, it may be saving you from a wreck up ahead. If a co-worker is being mean, she may have her own hurtful situation that she's experiencing in her life, and it's not about you.

Focus on what possible good could come from the negative situation such as, personal growth, deeper empathy, new direction, something better, etc. If you can't think of a positive outcome, then try to settle into what's happening and make the best of it.

A positive attitude will not change your situation overnight. But it will change you from the inside out. I know this part may be hard if you aren't used to practicing positivity. Just try it. It gets easier over time.

Here's something else powerful. Stop "dreading." Don't dread housework, grocery shopping, work, exercise, or anything. Dread sets us up for negative emotions, feeling miserable, and being depressed. Don't give into dread. Instead, make a conscious decision to find something positive about what you need to do and just do it.

If you hate grocery shopping- be thankful that you have grocery stores, or curbside pick-up services like at Walmart, online shopping like Jet.com, [ThriveMarket.com](#), or Amazon Grocery.com. Find great deals at local grocery stores or support local farmers when possible.

Hate cleaning the house? Focus on the fact that at least you have a roof over your head and a place to clean.

I once had to live in the spare bedroom of a friend's house WITH my two children. (It's a long story involving an ex-husband and the police). I had no idea what the future held for us. I evidently found a cute townhouse to rent and later was able to buy a house. When I used to fuss about cleaning the house, I reminded myself of the months we had to live with someone. I focused on the fact that I now had my own place. I was humbled and evidently learned to enjoy it.

ACTION STEP: Make a mental list of 3 things that are good in your life right now. Or write it down on paper. Read it or meditate on it often. Focus on what's 'right' in your life. What IS working? Do you have a place to live? Food? Great!

Set your [attention on the good things](#). Even though we may experience tough/hard issues and negative situations- focusing on what is RIGHT- helps us to be in a frame of mind to change the things we can and accept the things we can't.

Metamorphosis means “a change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different one, by natural or supernatural means.”



Are you willing to embrace change?



Lesson 5

HOW TO WAIT WELL

While waiting for circumstances to change, wait well.

“Waiting well” is to wait with an expectancy of hope that says, “This may be the day that everything turns around. The job, promotion, husband, wife, friend, money, healing breakthrough, deliverance... that I’m waiting for may be just a few days away.” Talk and act like it will happen.

While we are believing for a new job, promotion, healing, new house, a husband or wife... We can prepare in the meantime and wait well.

- ✓ If you are believing for a spouse, are you studying about how to have a healthy marriage or be a caring spouse?
- ✓ If you are believing for a better job, are you improving your skills? Are you increasing your knowledge in the area you want to work?
- ✓ If you are believing for a new house, are you keeping your current home clean and free of clutter?
- ✓ If you are believing for better health, are you eating healthily, exercising within your limits, and cultivating a positive mindset?

Act as if what you are believing for will happen. Prepare for it now.

I know it may be hard to stay positive. However, attitude is so important. Keep practicing.

ACTION STEPS: Write down areas in which you need or want to see change. Next to each area write down something productive you can do about it.

What Do You Need/Want Changed?	What Can You Do About It?

Don't pray for fewer problems.
Pray for more skills to handle them.

~ Jim Rohn

Lesson 6

TIME MANAGEMENT

Do you find yourself continually frustrated with being late, forgetting something, or being ill prepared? Simple planning will often alleviate the pressure and frustration.

Here are some suggestions.

- Leave your house earlier for work or appointments.
- Pick out your clothes, make your lunch, or do as much as possible the night before.
- Schedule plenty of time to complete a project.
- Plan ahead. Make To-Do lists. Use checklists (see next page).
- Do you have your car insurance or Roadside Assistance information readily available? Where's your health insurance card? Your birth certificate? Marriage certificate? Debt card? Keep important papers in one place.

Making a few adjustments can help to prevent stressful situations.

Once I worked 45-minutes (one way) from where I lived. I had changed my eating to improve my health, so I brought my lunch almost every day. I discovered that if I made my lunch and picked out my outfit the night before, I saved a lot of time in the morning. I didn't have to rush. Also, I learned the sweet spot of when to leave my house (before 7:15 am) so that I wasn't in heavy traffic.

SIDE NOTE ON PERSONALITIES: I am a planner down to the smallest detail. I love it. I thrive on structure and order. I hate "winging it" or "flying by the seat of my pants". However, I have a dear friend who is the complete opposite of me. She gets stifled by planning. She thrives on the unknown.

Do what works for you so that you can get to work or an appointment on time, be ready for a presentation, get the children to school on time, budget finances, having downtime, etc.

ACTION STEPS: Try these tips to help *prevent* a stressful situation.

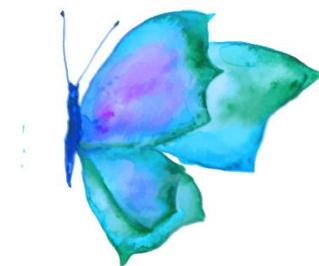
- Prepare the night before. Pack your lunch. Fix overnight oats for breakfast. Decide on what you'll wear, find your shoes and your keys- the night before.
- Use driving in traffic to listen to uplifting and encouraging podcasts or music.
- Use your phone to make To Do or grocery lists. Check out Trello!
- Have a certain place for everything. Return "it" back to where "it" goes- each and every time you use 'it' (keys, shoes, purse, debit card, etc.).

Stress Less SOS

Checklist

SIMPLE WAYS TO RELIEVE STRESS

- Take several deep breaths
- Say a simple prayer
- Do a quick meditation
- Say a Positive Power Proclamation
- List 3 'good' things in your life
- Get prepared while waiting
- Manage Time



www.StressLessSOS.com

Lesson 7

DON'T REHEARSE THE DRAMA

Dwelling on negative thoughts and talking about stressful situations (*past or present*) keeps harmful, damaging negative emotions stirred up.

Being in a constant state of negativity can cause many health dis-eases including problems with the adrenals, thyroid, hormones, and mental issues as well as heart attacks, strokes and more.

Telling your friends, family, and anyone else who will listen, the story of how he/she did _____ (*<fill in the blank with yours*) won't fix the problem. Even though temporarily it feels 'good' to 'get it out' or 'off your chest,' constantly going over and over and over the story will keep you a prisoner to the effects of stress.

There is a balance between venting that will release pent up frustrations versus falling into the trap of constantly complaining and dwelling on what's wrong.

Yes, this is like the others mentioned before. But it's that important to repeat it again.

Constantly focusing on negative situations harms our health, draws negativity to us, and manifests negative situations in our lives.

Instead... **journal your frustrations and list possible solutions.** Process your emotions in God's presence. Practice gratitude. Focus on what's "right" in your life. Create a list of positive power proclamations (affirmations) and speak them out loud daily. Serve in your community. Help someone in need. Focus on others.

Actively change the things you can and accept the things you can't.

It can be beneficial to journal about re-occurring thoughts, feelings, and situations. More information on overcoming painful past events is covered in the Stress Less SOS ecourse.

ACTION STEP: Here is a simple exercise that can help with chronic negative thinking.

- ✓ Write down everything swirling around in your head.
- ✓ What supportive advice would you give a friend for handling the same situation?
- ✓ What is something positive about your life/situation? Look for the "silver lining".
- ✓ Use your imagination to visualize your life as you'd like it.

**What you dwell on in your heart.
You become and draw to you.**

“Expect that something good will happen.”
~ Joyce Meyer

Lesson 8

ACCEPTANCE

First, acceptance is not approval. It is merely a way to survive a stressful situation.

This one is especially useful if there is an ongoing stressful and difficult situation such as a challenging marriage, job, health condition, or life as it is right now.

Accept things as they are. Maybe you have tried everything you know to do. Maybe you don't know what else to do. Things aren't changing. It can be hard to accept things as they are. But it can also be a health saver.

Accepting your reality or “making the best of your situation” isn’t the same as giving up. It’s about **making peace** with the current situation *while* doing whatever you need to do to bring about change.

Yet, don’t settle where you are. Keep seeking, learning, growing, and improving. One day things will be different. “It is what it is” (is not my favorite saying but it’s accurate). “This too shall pass” is more encouraging. It gives hope that the current state of things won’t be that way forever.

**There’s a balance between waiting and doing (action).
Only you will be able to find the right balance for you.**

I can look back at so many points in my life where I thought the situation would last forever. It didn’t. Great things have happened. Everything in my life has brought me to this moment. I wouldn’t trade it. However, I learned what I learned in the trenches. Now, I’m better prepared to handle stressful situations.

Acceptance is knowing the difference between pain and suffering (see below).

Pain is acknowledging something hurts, doing something about it when possible and getting on with one’s life.

Suffering is not adapting to the situation, remaining in a continual state of negative thoughts, words, and actions, and not letting go.

ACTION STEP: While, waiting for things to change, set boundaries as needed (covered in the next lesson), practice restorative self-care (covered in lesson 11), continue self-improvement (as needed), and plan/dream about a better future.

Lesson 9

SETTING BOUNDARIES

According to Z. Hereford in the article, "Healthy Boundaries and How to Establish Them" boundaries are "*the physical, emotional and mental limits we establish to protect ourselves from being manipulated, used, or violated by others.*"

NO. One of the most important boundaries is saying "no". Learning the appropriate way and time to say 'no' is valuable to one's mental and emotional health.

Saying "no" is a necessary part of maintaining our health. We have the 'right' to protect ourselves and our health from other's demands or actions that will drain us, cause us stress, or be detrimental to us and our health. Think working 50+ hours a week. Or having to do something so someone won't get upset. Or not having a voice or choice in a matter that concerns you. There is a balance with being a part of a team, or being helpful, and caring versus others expecting you to give into their way.

Set boundaries by saying "no" to the person who may always put themselves (their desires, wants, and needs) above your own. At first, it will be hard. But it will get easier as you practice it. If you need extra support and guidance with this, I'm here to help.

Here are some suggestions/action steps for ways to say "no" instead of automatically saying "yes".

- "Let me check my schedule. I'll get back to you". (This gives you time to think and pray about whether you'd like to or not).
- "That sounds incredible" or "That's a great idea" (or something positive if you like it). "However, I already have something scheduled for that day/time" etc.
- "I would love/like to but how about ____" (if you really want to do it but just not for that day and time. Try suggesting another day or time).

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR– We're all different. We may have different values from others. Yet, our individual needs matter. If someone is doing something, in our presence, that we do not like, enjoy, or find offensive, then we may choose to kindly ask for them to stop. They may or may not stop their offensive actions, which then gives us the choice to remove ourselves from the situation or to ignore their behavior. Choose to let go of any anger or frustration that may arise and move on.

LEARN YOUR CONVICTIONS– Know Thy Self and To Thy Self Be True. It's ok to have beliefs and values that are worth defending. If cursing bothers you, then it's ok to ask someone to stop cursing in your presence. However, you may have to walk away if they choose to continue. If someone is displaying inappropriate anger toward you, in most situations you can inform them that you will not be able to continue the discussion until they can calm down and communicate appropriately. However, always seek appropriate help for an abusive situation.

Forgiveness sets you free.



Lesson 10

HOW TO FORGIVE

Forgiving the person (or ourselves) for any action(s) that caused our stress (poor health, financial hardship, etc.) will release us to be able to have more peace and better health.

Forgiving is not excusing or overlooking the action, word, or event. It is freeing us to do what we need to do for ourselves.

You may have heard this before, but it's so true, "holding onto unforgiveness is like taking poison expecting the other person to be hurt." Unforgiveness keeps us in a state of disease.

Changing our thinking and what we say will improve our actions. We need to let go of past hurts to be able to grasp all the goodness that lies ahead. The Stress Less SOS ecourse contains a step-by-step lesson on how to "let it go" in addition to many other lessons. More about the ecourse is covered at the end of this action guide.

How do we forgive when we don't want to?

ACTION STEP: First, start by praying/meditating. Ask God to help you to forgive.

I've actually prayed, "Help me to be **willing to be willing** to _____ (forgive, make healthy food choices, etc.).

Next, acknowledge the pain and hurt that you are feeling. Write a letter to the person who hurt you (**but don't send it**). Journal about the event or whatever happened to bring about the hurt. Then rip it up and throw it away. As you physically put the shreds of paper in the trash, say, "I release this. I chose forgiveness. I may not feel like forgiving, but I choose to forgive."

Then repeat all the lessons covered above, deep breathing when the situation comes to mind, don't dwell on the negatives, accept reality, make adjustments, and practice restorative self-care (below). And repeat as needed.

Healing deep emotional wounds sometimes requires outside support. If you feel overwhelmed, please contact a counselor, pastor, or me for support and guidance.

New Feelings Will Follow New Actions.

“How you start each day will determine the rest of the day.”

~ Terri Savelle Foy

Lesson 11

INDULGE AND COMMIT TO RESTORATIVE SELF-CARE

Why is it called ‘restorative’ self-care? Because most of us do the basics of self-care (brush our teeth, eat something, put on clothes, try to sleep), but rarely do we do something extra for ourselves to ensure we are eating healthy, wearing something nice, sleeping soundly for 7-8 hours. We normally don’t nurture ourselves when we are going through something difficult.

You have probably heard, “If mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy.” Women set the atmosphere for their homes. If you are a man, your partner can sense when you are stressed. If you live alone, you may be stressed about being alone. Whichever is your case- you still need restorative self-care. We owe it to ourselves and those we love to take care of ourselves. In a plane, we’re instructed to see to our needs first then help others.

Carve out time for you, daily. It may be taking a candlelit bath with Epsom salt and essential oils. Going for a walk in a park. Enjoying a cup of tea. Listening to birds outside or watching squirrels play. Maybe enjoying a cup of coffee at a cafe. Playing a game. Enjoying a hobby. Making something with your hands. Planning a special meal. Growing a plant. Pursing a dream. Creating a vision/dream board. Reading a good book. Having fun. Crying as needed.

ACTION STEPS: Create a list of what you enjoy and do them. Do them every day- even if it’s for 5 minutes a day. You are worth it. You deserve it.

**Determine to stay diligent.
Don’t allow stress to ruin your life and health.**

List 3 Restorative Self-Cares you would like to start adding to your daily or weekly practice.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

"Let Thy Food Be Thy Medicine and Thy Medicine Be Thy Food."

~ Hippocrates

Lesson 12

HEALTHY EATING

There are many types of eating plans: The Blood Type Diet, Vegetarian, Paleo, Mediterranean, and more. Try a few and see what works for you. If you suspect you have a food sensitivity and/or intolerance, using an elimination diet is a great place to start. I can help with this too.

A great beginning for eating clean, healthy foods is to cut out (or greatly reduce)-

- Highly processed foods (junk foods, packaged foods, and fast food)
- Refined sugars (cakes, cookies, sodas) and unhealthy fats (chips, fried foods)
- Limit caffeine and alcohol

Providing our bodies with high-quality nutrition allows us to be able to handle stress more effectively. Without adequate and proper nutrients, we are taxing our bodies and causing even more stress that could lead to health problems if not corrected.

During times of long-term stress, our organs work harder and evidently can start to "wear out". For example, our adrenals can burn out from a continual chronic state of stress. This can then lead to hormone imbalances and thyroid issues from our thyroid having to compensate for the burned-out adrenals. This leads to weight gain, exhaustion, and more.

That's why working with a health coach is so valuable. Together, we will look for triggers that may be adding to any dis-ease. This allows me the opportunity to teach, support and hold you accountable for meeting your health goals.

ACTION STEPS: Sharpen your cooking skills and choose home-cooked meals as much as possible. Most of your diet should be vegetables. Enjoy organic or naturally grown fresh or frozen vegetables at every meal. Focus on eating fruits and veggies from the 'rainbow'. Color is key. Try having dark leafy greens like collard, turnip, kale, spinach, etc. at least once a day. Switch to having vegetables as your main dish. Protein as a side. A small amount of healthy fat (nuts, seeds, avocados, grass-fed butter, olive oil) and fruit as a dessert. Ideally, drink half your weight (in ounces) of filtered water every day.

Be sure to get a high-quality protein at every meal. If you eat meat, choose no hormones, no antibiotics, AND humanely raised meat, dairy and eggs whenever possible.

Conventionally raised animal food products contain high amounts of cortisol due to their stressful living conditions and handling before slaughter.

Small Changes Can Lead to Big Differences!

It takes 21 days to make or break a habit.

It takes longer for new actions to become second nature.

Lesson 13

MOVEMENT

Any movement will help to relieve stress. Walking, Cycling, Pilates, Yoga, Zumba, Step Aerobics, Dancing, PiYo, Stretching, etc. Find what works for you and do it- often.

You can even ‘move’ while watching TV. I do a thing I call ‘step touch’ while watching TV or especially during the commercials. It’s just stepping side to side.

Moving releases stored energy and can help us unwind from a stressful day. While moving, keep your mind focused on what you are doing- not the negative situation. Focus on your breath. Breathe deeply. Pay attention to your feet and legs. Make sure they are firmly under you.

A sedentary lifestyle can lead to many health issues like weight gain, heart disease, achy joints, muscle atrophy, and more.

ACTION STEPS: Try different forms of exercise and find the ones you like and enjoy best. Be considerate of your abilities. Don’t push yourself beyond what your body says you can do. Be gentle and supportive where you are and do what you can.

Also, please be kind to yourself if you think you don’t measure up to others around you. Don’t fall victim to comparing yourself to what the Yoga instructor can do, or how many miles your co-worker or sister can walk. Focus on you. This is for your benefit.

Get up. Get moving.

*“Life is like a pitching machine. Balls will continue to come at you.
Make a decision to give each ball your best shot.”*

~ Cynthia Garcia



“You can go to bed without fear;
You will lie down and sleep soundly”.

~ Proverbs 3:24

Lesson 14

RESTFUL (RESTORATIVE) SLEEP

I remember when I first noticed how great I felt after I had slept well for several weeks in a row. I knew something had changed, but I didn't figure it out at first. Then I realized- all the steps I was taking to have restful- restorative sleep were WORKING!!

There is a huge difference between restful-restorative sleep versus sleeping where dreams are turbulent, one has trouble going to sleep, staying asleep, and one wakes up numerous times throughout the night.

Before I give you the steps, I want to share a story about two types of people and how the choices we make (or don't) affect the quality of our sleep. One was a friend of mine who was a single mother of three and worked full time. She would come home, make dinner, tend to the children, etc. THEN when the children were in bed, she would clean the house, watch late-night TV and collapse in bed around midnight only to get up the next morning at 5 am and start the cycle all over again. She complained about being tired, she looked tired and had health issues.

The other person is me. I couldn't understand why she stayed up so late. My house was 'clean' but not tidy. I could go to bed with dishes in the sink, with clean laundry folded (or not) on the couch waiting for that elusive moment when I had time to put it away. I got to bed early, usually around 9 pm or 9:30 pm. I knew I would wake up numerous times in the night, so I allowed a long time in bed to try to balance it out.

HOWEVER! Even though I would go to bed early... as I've mentioned before, I was addicted to negative thinking. I brought whatever real or perceived terrible injustice that I was a "victim" of that day to bed. I rehearsed over and over who said what, how they said it, or how they didn't say anything to me and what THAT must mean. I'd scheme about what I'd say if they said 'this and that' to me. (None of the fictitious stuff I dwelt on ever came true).

Yet I simmered in my own juices. (See Huffington Post's "[How Your Thoughts Change Your Brain, Cells and Genes](#)" for an interesting article on the science behind the chemical compounds released from negative thoughts). Even though I wasn't physically staying up until midnight, I was lying awake stewing in a pool of negativity and gloom, usually of my own making.

Restorative sleep is so important to our health- both mentally and physically. While we're asleep, our bodies are busy cleaning and repairing, actively trying to regulate our hormones, storing memories and dealing with emotions.

Tips for a Restful Sleep

It's so very important to establish a bedtime routine. This allows our bodies to be able to perform the functions needed at regular times in a 24-hour cycle. Pick a bedtime that works for you. By the way, what you do before climbing into bed is also as important as the time you chose to go to bed. About an hour before lying down for sleep, start your routine.

Here are some suggestions.

- ❖ Going to bed and waking at the same times will get your body into a regular circadian rhythm (the 24-hour period for performing important bodily processes). Try going to bed about 8.5-9 hours before you need to get up. Most people need anywhere from 7-9 hours of sleep. You may need 9 hours if you are run-down and have health issues like Chronic Fatigue. Find what works for you and adjust the length, as you need.
- ❖ Make out your 'To Do' list for the next day. This is a great way to take the burden of the next day and address it by putting it on your schedule. By putting everything on your schedule, you won't have to dwell on it once you lie down.
- ❖ The ideal room temperature for sleep is 65 degrees. Most people tend to sleep better in a dark room. Cover any windows and make it as dark as possible. Hide any lights shining in the room from electronics.
- ❖ Take a relaxing bath with Epsom salt. (See 'Restorative Self-Care Section' above).
- ❖ Do light stretching, relaxing yoga, or Pilates.
- ❖ No drama before bed. Unplug from social media, the news, and high drama TV and movies. No stressful phone calls or conversations.
- ❖ Avoid alcohol. Stop drinking any fluids (except for medication) about 4 – 5 hours before bed. Your bladder will let you know what works for you. Stop all caffeine around noon. You'll be able to determine the ideal time for you, but noon is a good time to start.
- ❖ Read an uplifting book, devotional, or the Psalms. Getting the Word in right before bed helps to clear the junk from the day and gives you something to meditate on when you close your eyes.
- ❖ Bedtime Journaling. This is a great way to clear your mind of the day's events- good or bad. Don't dwell on the day's negative situation. Just write it down. Get it

on paper. You can address it during the next day. Journaling helps to clear your mind, so you can drift off to restful sleep.

- ❖ Take relaxing supplements as needed. Magnesium is a wonderful relaxing supplement to take at night to help promote restful sleep. Chamomile, Valerian Root, and Passionflower are all calming herbs. Check for a supplement containing a blend of these herbs at your local vitamin store or contact me, I can suggest my favorite sleepy time supplement. By the way, don't take a supplement containing Valerian Root more than two weeks in a row. Click [this link](#) for the supplement I have used.

Once you lie down, if your mind is like mine used to be, it may continue to be active with racing thoughts trying to process the day's events or thinking about how *this 'routine' stuff won't work for you*.

Because you wanted to see who won Dancing with the Stars, The Voice, what horrific trauma happened on Grey's Anatomy, the series finale of Game of Thrones, or what happened on The Walking Dead.

I get it. I really do. It's hard to balance what we want with what is 'good' for us.

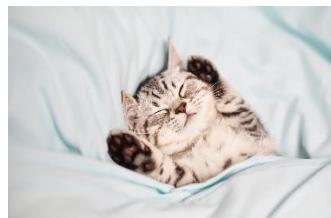
I admit I sometimes get frustrated with being careful with what I eat, think, and do. But oh, the wonderful rewards I've reaped when I am careful. The improved health, digestion, ability to work again, reduced pain, clarity of thoughts, decreased anxiety and despair, increased hope and joy---- those are the rewards I have experienced from making right choices.

So back to the racing mind... meditate on something positive, encouraging, uplifting and add deep breathing. Yep, it's back. See how it is all connected?

ACTION STEP: Here's a deep breathing exercise to help calm a racing mind.

Inhale for a count of 5. Exhale for 5. AND while doing that, point your toes out toward the wall then up toward the ceiling. Relax. Next, roll your ankles. Relax. Then move to tighten your thighs. Relax. Proceed to move up your body. Contracting a muscle group then relaxing it. Keep your mind quiet by meditating on a scripture or positive word. Or by tuning into your body and focusing on the deep breathing and relaxing and contracting different areas of your body.

Sweet dreams.

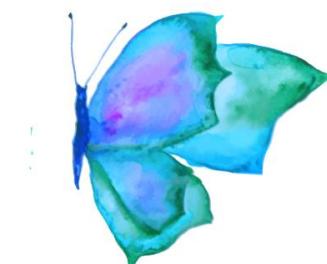


Stress Less SOS

Restful Sleep Checklist

- Go to bed at the same time
- Make a tomorrow's 'to-do' list
- Sleep in a cool room
- Take an Epsom bath prior to bedtime
- No drama before bed
- Read something uplifting and positive before bed
- Relaxing Supplements as needed
- Stretch or meditate

X X X X X



www.StressLessSOS.com

Our bodies continually strive for homeostasis- a fancy word that means balance.

It's unfortunate how our bodies strive for balance, yet by our own detrimental actions and poor choices, we make it difficult for our bodies to reach and maintain balance.

I know many people will apply these actions steps right away and benefit from them.

Others may find forgiving, reducing sugar, or accepting-- something they can't do on their own. And that's ok too.

If you want my help, reach out.



- *If you are ready to take back your life from stress ...*
- *If anxiety is a constant companion...*
- *If you want support with setting and maintain boundaries ...*
- *If you are overwhelmed by even knowing where to start ...*

Come work with me. My clients get up every day feeling ...

- ✓ *Calmer and less anxious*
- ✓ *Happy and excited about being able to do the things they love*
- ✓ *Confident with new health-promoting skills, habits, and attitudes*
- ✓ *Empowered to continue making healthy choices so they can live their best life now.*



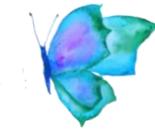
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*To learn more about my products and services click here or go here
<https://www.stresslesssos.com/work-with-me>*

*And as always, I'm here to help guide and support you. Please, free feel to contact me at
hello@stresslesssos.com.*

Bonus section on the next page.

Consider the following ...



Be grateful for what is going right.

Go 24 hours without complaining~ then repeat.

Do your due diligence to be healthier by managing your reactions to stress.

What you fail to master will evidently master you.

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change. Courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.” ~ Serenity Prayer

Create and say (out loud) your own Positive Power Proclamations.

[Click here for a template to get you started!](#)

TIP: Say them even if you don't feel them. Your feelings will evidently catch up with your actions.

Example: I am valuable, qualified, and loved. I am confident and courageous. I am enough.
