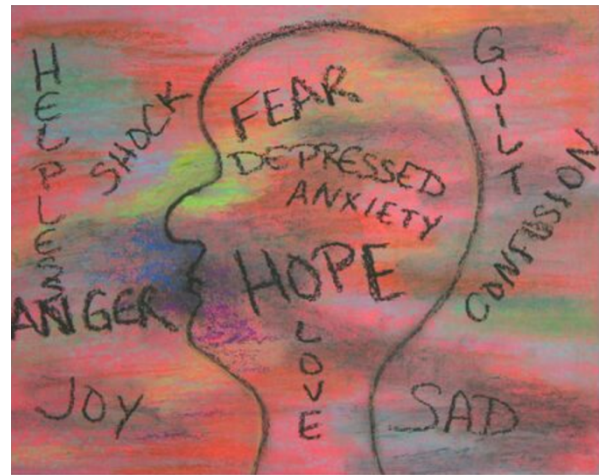


“Minding Your Emotions”

By Mary Dew, LCPC

Here are 25 tips that I recommend with helping to learn how to cope with your emotions in more positive healthy ways, as well as 25 tips I recommend to help reduce stress. In fact, these tips are good for anyone. Find the ones that fit for your personality/lifestyle and practice them often. Remember, this is a learning process, so give yourself time. If you're struggling, consider speaking to a professional counselor. This is YOUR life, and you are worth it.



“25 Ways to Minding Your Emotions”

1. Whenever you experience worry and fear (symptoms of the fight or flight response) breathing, and relaxation can be used to counteract it. Once you are calm, ask yourself how much of your worry and fear could be part of your own perception.
2. Count to ten and take ten deep breaths before responding to someone's anger. And, if you're angry, count to 100. Usually, beneath anger, is an underlying fear. Ask yourself what am I afraid of losing, and try expressing those thoughts to the person, instead of the anger.
3. Depression is very often anger turned inward. It is a reaction of fear that we are worthless. You are invaluable. There is no one else on this earth that is uniquely you. If you are suffering from depression, it is crucial that you seek help.
4. Try to eliminate the “What ifs” of worry. “What ifs” usually make a mountain out of a molehill. Notice we never say, “What if I have a great day tomorrow.” If you find yourself saying “What if” then force yourself to say a positive “What if” too.
5. Practice letting go. Ask your self, how great of an impact does this stress have on your life?
 - Will it last a few minutes? –Let it go.
 - Will it last a few hours? –Let it go.
 - Will it last a few days? –Process it and let it go.
 - Will it last a few months? –Examine your ability to cope and seek counseling when needed.
 - Will it last a few years? –Examine your ability to cope and seek counseling when needed.
6. Anxiety is ill-defined fear or a habit of worrying. Become mindful of your bodily sensations and thoughts. Practice regular healthy self-care. Stress reducing and relaxation techniques will help eliminate many cases of anxiety.
7. Try to eliminate black and white thinking. These types of thoughts can contribute to mental and physical illness. Positive and open minds that can look at the in between, can lead to healing.
8. Try to see change as an opportunity for new growth.

9. You deserve as much love as you give to others. You are worthy of love.
10. Read inspirational stories. We all need to be reminded that there is always HOPE.
11. Eliminate bad habits of criticizing and judging others. You have only walked in your shoes. Eliminate your negative self-talk. "I'm not good enough." "I'm too fat." "No one likes me." If you find yourself engaging in negative self-talk, work on reframing. Reframing and acceptance can lead to a paradigm shift!
12. Recite affirmations to yourself. Only YOU can truly affirm your self.
13. Ask for help when you needed, and don't tell yourself that you are weak because you need it. Everyone, and I mean everyone needs help from time to time. Besides, people like to feel useful and needed.
14. Learn to say "NO" to others. You are not required as a human being to take on other people's responsibilities or attend every social occasion you are ever invited to, especially when you don't have the time or energy. Say, "No Thank You", and then don't feel guilty! Guilt is fear that you do not live up to other's expectations. Great expectations often lead to great disappointments. Remember, the only expectations you need to live up to are YOURS!
15. During times of impatience, try to make a choice to shift your attitude to one of peace.
16. Practice mindfulness. Be aware of how your thoughts (remember thoughts are perceptions) are influencing your emotions, attitudes, problems, body, etc.
17. Occasionally perform random acts of kindness. Let the person behind you in line at the grocery store go first. Or pay the toll for the car behind you.
18. Count your blessings. I mean it. Literally, make a list of the blessings in your life and continue to add to it. For everyone thing wrong that goes wrong, there are usually dozens that have gone right.
19. Try and focus your attitude toward the positive the minute you wake up in the morning. For example, "Today is a blessing. I am grateful for everything that comes my way today. I have no complaints."
20. Create your own mental mantra to get yourself through difficult times. For example, "I am strong." "I CAN do this." "I CAN handle this." "God gives me strength." "Peace is within me."
21. Practice forgiveness. You would not want others to expect you to be perfect, so don't expect the same from everyone else. We are all human.
22. Become in tune with your spirituality. Our spirituality is usually closely tied to our view of the world. To help heal ourselves emotionally, we also need to heal ourselves spiritually. Our spirituality helps us understand our purpose and meaning in and of life. It was once said, "we are not human beings having a spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings having a human experience."

23. Schedule quiet time for relaxation, if even just to breathe. Breathing connects the body and mind. Other ways to relax: Pray, mindful walking, recite the rosary, visualizations, stretching, and so many more. Find a few that work for you.
24. Remember the saying, “Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, **today** is a **gift**. That’s why we call it the **present**.” The future is often not in our hands, so like they serenity prayer says: “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.” When situations are not within our control, let go and let God.
25. We all need to be listened to, and everyone wants to be understood. Seek support from people who you feel are really good listeners, whether it is a friend, partner, support group or counselor. And when you are able to, be a good listener for someone else in need.

“25 Tips for Reducing Stress”

1. Practice self-care. This is the only body and mind you get, so it is YOUR responsibility to take care of it. This means get 8 hours of sleep, eat a healthy diet, exercise, be mindful of your emotions and stress, and get routine medical check-ups.
2. The past is done, and the future is for another day. Keep your mind focused in the here-and-now and you will be more productive.
3. Plan ahead. Plan and prepare your day the night before. Make your lists of things to do, and prep clothing and food. Be prepared. Fill up the gas tank before it gets to “E”, and keep emergency resources stocked, so that you don’t start the day stressed by the everyday tasks.
4. Allow for the unexpected. Leave 15 minutes early for appointments. Wake up 15 minutes earlier than you think you need.
5. In our society, our memories are so overloaded. Write down important dates, appointments, and things to do in one place.
6. Procrastination leads to stress. Prioritize you list of things to do, starting with the one you dread the most. Get it out of they way so you won’t be anxious and worried about it the rest of the day.
7. Ask questions immediately when you don’t understand, write down and repeat back answers and directions. This can save time and a great deal of anxiety.
8. Get organized. If you spend one hour getting everything organized, you won’t have to waste several hours needlessly searching.
9. De-clutter your life. Any piece of information that you receive, only touch it once. If it is not applicable to you or does not interest you, throw it away immediately. If it has important dates, write it down in your calendar. If it has important information, file it away immediately.

10. Rather than always multi-tasking, try and give your complete attention to the person you are with or the task you are trying to complete. This will give you focus and help you feel accomplished. If you are having difficulty staying focused, divert your attention for 15 minutes and come back with a clear mind.
11. Turn off technology. If only for a half hour, get relaxation time in without any interruptions.
12. Avoid people who demand too much of your time and energy and want to bring you on their emotional rollercoaster ride. If you go along with them, you can't be of any help to anyone.
13. Choose activities and social engagements that are most meaningful to you and make those the priority.
14. Be flexible and relax your standards. It is okay if the dirty dishes sit for one night or the laundry doesn't get put up right away.
15. When you begin to feel stressed, practice the triangle breathing technique.
16. Keep a journal to process your thoughts and emotions. This can help give you clarity and change your perceptions.
17. Practice relaxation techniques weekly, whether it is breathing, yoga, guided imagery, art therapy, progressive muscle relaxation, stretching, etc. The more you practice, the more it will become a part of your anti-stressful life.
18. Create a sacred space in your home and at your workplace. Find things that have meaning for you and that give you a calm feeling. During stressful times, use this healing corner to bring you peacefulness.
19. At the end of the day, allow for a few minutes of time to decompress and reflect on the day. This may help you sleep more peacefully.
20. Do something once a week that will help you look good and feel better.
21. Make time at least twice a month, but better yet twice a week for participation in complementary therapies, support groups, educational/spiritual/physical programs.
22. Put forth passion and love in everything you do.
23. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
24. Be optimistic about yourself, others, and the world.
25. Everyday do at least one thing that gives you pleasure and reflect on it for a minute at the end of the day.

List some of the ways that you have found help reduce your stress and manage your emotions: