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**Realize Your  
FULL Potential**



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## **Part 6: Manage Your Stress & Triggers**

We live in a stressful world. In our post-recession economy, many of us are expected to work longer hours for less pay. When we get home from work, it's still not time to relax yet. We still have to cook dinner, clean up, take the dog for a walk, help the kids with their homework, and more.

When we're finally done with everything, it's time to go to bed just so we can wake up and do it all over again the next day.

***There are strategies you can use to help you minimize the stress in your life.***

Keep in mind that not all stress is bad. We experience stress because it is actually useful. A little bit of stress keeps you motivated to get things done. Stress can also help keep you alert, and being alert helps you avoid danger.

However, too much stress can have both emotional and physical consequences. So what can you do to help reduce the stress in your life?

### **Consider these ideas:**

1. **Get more sleep.** This is easier said than done, but getting more sleep helps a lot when it comes to reducing stress.
  - If you're only sleeping five hours a night, simply going to bed three hours earlier probably won't do the trick. Try going to bed 15 to 30 minutes earlier for a few nights. Once that adjustment works for your schedule, try that again until you are sleeping 7 to 8 hours per night.

2. **Find some other ways to relax.** Take a little "**me time**" whenever possible. Try these activities to help you relax:
  - Go for a walk
  - Meditate
  - Find a hobby
  - Listen to music
  - (Avoid TV – it usually adds tension rather than relaxation!)
3. **Get more exercise.** When you exercise vigorously, your body releases endorphins which are hormones that make you feel good.
  - Exercising also helps you release pent-up energy, and physical exertion makes you tired and will help you relax.
4. **Get organized.** If you start your day by making a plan and sticking to it, you'll eliminate a lot of stress. Being pulled in several different directions is very stressful. But when you stick to your plan, you can get things done by breaking them down into small, manageable pieces.
  - Read the book "**Getting Things Done**" by David Allen
5. **Set realistic goals.** If you set goals that are difficult or impossible to achieve, you'll be creating more stress for yourself. However, when you can achieve your goals and cross things off your to-do list, you'll have a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction.
6. **Find someone to talk to.** Simply getting something off your chest can give you a tremendous amount of relief and it's much better than keeping things bottled up inside.
7. **Talk to a professional.** If the stress in your life is too much for you to deal with on your own, seeking professional help from a certified life coach can be a great solution.
  - Talking to a coach can certainly help you get things off your chest. Unlike talking to a friend or family member, a coach can assist you in choosing the right relaxation techniques or other effective strategies specifically to support you in coping with stress.

If you're dealing with stress in your life, know that you are not alone. Using these tips will help you minimize your stress and live a more relaxed and enjoyable life.