

# 8 TIPS FOR STRESS-FREE LIVING

PRACTICAL WAYS TO  
SAVOR THE MOMENTS  
AND LIVE LIFE FULLY



## **8 Tips for Stress-free Living: Practical Ways to Savor the Moment and Live Life Fully**

Have you ever felt stressed out and wondered, "Why can't I get everything done that I have to do?"

You are not alone.

Every woman I know wonders the same thing. We're all juggling too much, in need of a break, and wondering how everyone else manages to hold it all together.

I promise you; there's a better way to live.

This is the only life you're going to get. Live it like it could end tomorrow (because it could) and like it really matters (because it does). Live fully involved and mindful of whatever it is you choose to do. Whether the moment feels good or feels bad or is somewhere in the middle, feel whatever feeling comes along. Feel it in your

You experience your life and roll around in it and stay in each moment until it's finished.

What makes living fully hard is that you have to step outside of your comfort zone, outside of your routine and everyday expectations. You have to take risks, and you have to feel things you may have been avoiding.

You'll be better for it.

I promise.

### **#1 – Know your priorities.**

Have you ever heard the saying that admitting you have a problem is the first step in solving it?

If you're living a chronically stressed life, you have a problem that you need to admit. You've taken on too much. You're too busy. You feel stressed because the things you need to do are bigger than the time you have to spend.

The second step in destressing your life and living stress-free is to identify your priorities. If you know what your priorities are, you can eliminate all the things that distract you from them.

So, what are your priorities? What are the 5 things that are absolutely non-negotiable in your life?

To give you an example, my priorities are:

1. Improving my mental, physical, and spiritual health
2. Cultivating a strong, vibrant marriage
3. Raising bright, assertive, creative, motivated, independent, and empowered women who love Jesus
4. Growing a thriving business that supports my family
5. Giving back to my friends, church community, and the community at large

I'm not saying that yours should be the same as mine; they shouldn't. Yours might include having a company-ready home or traveling the world. Your priorities will be different than your best friend's priorities.

Now that you know *your* priorities, it will be easier to evaluate and eliminate the things that don't fit.

And you *have to* evaluate and eliminate all the things that don't fit if you're going to be stress-free.

## **#2 – Put down your device & focus on what you're doing.**

This is one of the most important of my tips, and I am well aware that it may turn you off.

If your phone is more important to you than your *life*, then by all means, please stop reading now. (I fully recognize that sometimes it *has to be* more important. When my mom was dying from pancreatic cancer, there were times when I needed to be available to her via text or phone call. There are always exceptions. What I'm talking about here is a matter of your habits.)

Trust me. In 10 years, you will not say, "I wish I had worked harder on that level of Candy Crush!" or "I wish I had Liked more Facebook updates!" or even "I wish I'd texted my girlfriends more often!"

Most of the time, our devices – smartphones, tablets, computers, even the TV – divert our attention from the things that really need it.

Your devices distract you, but so can a song on the radio, the newspaper, the conversation you need to have with your best friend, your financial stresses, the argument you had with your spouse, and about a thousand other things.

Keep your mind on that thing you're doing *right now*. When you catch it wandering off to something else (and it will), give yourself a gentle reminder to focus on *this thing right here*.

### **#3 – Be intentional.**

Everyone gets exactly the same amount of time in a week – 168 hours or 10,080 minutes. One third of them should probably be spent sleeping (more if you're me). If you go through the rest of your time reacting – dealing with the urgent – you probably won't have time for the really important and valuable, the things you say are your priorities.

Choose what you're going to spend your time on. Make time for the things and the people you love, and let the dusting go for a while.

Plan ahead whatever you can, or plan time to be completely spontaneous if that's your thing. Just don't let the things that appear to be urgent crowd out the things you really want to do. *You* get to choose.

### **#4 – Say yes if you want to, and say no if you want to.**

You are going to be asked a hundred favors a day. Your kids will want to go to the park. Your husband will ask you to keep the kids so he can have do something with his friends. Someone from church will ask you to make a meal for a new mom. You have a choice; you don't always have to say yes. If it's something you don't mind doing, something that will bring you joy, and something that you are comfortable adding to your plate, then please say yes. But only say yes because you want to, not out of obligation.

If the favor is going to be a burden to you, THEN SAY NO. If it's going to bog you down, cause you dread, or ruin your day, SAY NO.

Practice with me: "I'm sorry, but I can't take that on right now." or even a simple, "No, I can't." will suffice. No need for explanation.

### **#5 – Get dirty.**

Living fully is a messy business. For me, it means playing on the playground and and in [paint](#), [sand](#), [mud](#), and [muddy puddles](#). It means planning lots of crafts with [paint](#) and [glue](#) and [glitter](#) and [oil](#) and generally making [a big mess](#). For you, it might mean something all together different, but you have to get down into it instead of standing on the sidelines.

Jump in the puddles, Momma.

## **#6 – Open your eyes to the beauty around you.**

There is so much pain in our world that it's easy to get caught up in ugly, but you can choose instead to see the wonderful and marvel at your little piece of the planet.

Your children, for example, are nothing less than miracles, created by God Himself to be molded into thoughtful, kind, independent people *specifically by you*. That alone strikes me with awe every single day.

Then there are the sunsets, the gardens full of brightly colored flowers, the blue sky and puffy clouds on a sunny day, the fat snowflakes, the glint of sunshine on a lake, the colors and shapes of the grains of sand on a beach, the fragility of a butterfly – obviously, I could go on and on and on.

Appreciate this amazing place and the amazing people you share it with.

## **#7 – Love.**

The next two are the hardest of them all. Try your best and accept that you will fail.

Often.

My mother was not particularly a religious person. She would come to church with us when there was a special event – when my daughter was in the Christmas play, for example, and she attended some Mothers Day dinners – but she was not a church-going woman, pray-er, or even a Bible reader that I know of.

But whenever my sisters or I would do something we thought should be rewarded – and then fail to receive said reward, our mother told us, “Great will be your reward in heaven.” She always said it with a hint of sarcasm, as if to say, “You had no right to expect that in the first place.”

Imagine my surprise to find her actual words in my actual Bible: (This is Jesus speaking, in the sixth chapter of the book of Luke.)

But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies!  
Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you.  
Pray for those who hurt you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. Do to others as you would like them to do to you.

If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even

sinner will lend to other sinners for a full return.

Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

*Luke 6:27-36 (NLT)*

So to you, my friend, I say this: *To live fully, you must love fully.* You must love your children when they misbehave, your spouse at his most annoying, your neighbor when she gossips about you, and whomever you're holding a grudge against right now at this minute for whatever they did three years ago. (Oh! I am so good at holding grudges.)

Did you catch verse 32? "Love your enemies! Do good to them." Loving fully isn't a *feeling*. It isn't about making yourself have the warm fuzzies when you think about those people by remembering their good qualities and being thankful for them in your life (though that helps). It's about *doing good to them*. If you're going to love fully, you have to get off your butt, get out of your comfort zone, and do something nice for somebody, expecting nothing at all in return.

And don't brag about it, either.

That's what love is about.

## **#8 – Let go.**

I wasn't kidding when I said these last two were the hardest. Now you see? This is by far the hardest of all.

To live a stress-free life, you have to let go.

- Let go of your expectations of what it means to be a good wife and a good mother.
- Let go of the person who's beeping on your call waiting during your phone call (are they really more important than the person you're already talking to?).
- Let go of what the room mom thinks you should be doing for the Valentine's Day party.
- Let go of whatever you did yesterday that hurt your son's feelings. (Repent, apologize, make it up to him, and then *let it go*.)
- Let go of whenever your toddler *should have been* potty trained and smile and congratulate him when he gets it right.
- Let go of whatever your mom thinks you should be doing right now.

- Let go of your grudges. (Sister, I am holding your hand on this one.)
- Let go of the perfection of Pinterest in favor of the reality of projects imbued with love.
- Let go of your spouse's ~~flaws~~ quirks (see aforementioned LOVE).
- Let go of your need to control every moment of your kids' and spouse's lives.
- Let go of your need to control your own life. (Do you really think you know better than God?)

Let it all go.

Letting go requires you to forgive – yourself, your spouse, your kids, the person from three years ago. Forgive them, pray for them, and then forget about it.

Move on with your real, true, stress-free life.



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