



Don't Stress about Being Stressed: Embrace Your Busy Life



Some people handle stress better than others. Some brag about their stress levels as a badge of honor. We've all seen or heard that person who constantly complains about being "stressed." They are vocal about feeling overwhelmed and may even use it as an excuse. If every small thing is a source of anxiety, not only will it directly affect your own productivity and health, but quite likely the happiness and productivity of those around you. At the same time, I bet you know of someone who causes you think, "How does he or she do it all?" Well, chances are good that they have embraced some of the benefits of stress.

We all have stressors in our life. Some are true catastrophes, such as a serious illness or a death of a family member or close friend, natural disasters that destroy our home or livelihood, or events such as the 9/11 attacks. These are true problems, and responding to those incidents requires focus and attention and the help of those closest to us.

Increasingly, everyday tasks seem to cause more people to experience significant stress. Consider the to-do lists we keep on paper, in our phones, and in our heads. These are those little items that wake us up at night as we wonder whether we got them finished – and cause stress. Ultimately, how we perceive our to-do list (or our "busy-ness factor") is personal. How we choose to view our time and perceive our stress is up to us. Do you manage your stress or does it manage you?

The ability to handle stress may come naturally with age, experience, training, or perhaps simply embracing our own individual triggers by finding coping mechanisms that work best for each of us.

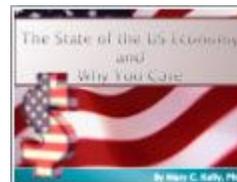
4. Being busy is good for your health! Yes, a well-managed, busy schedule filled with mental activity fights memory loss commonly associated with becoming more mature. A busy brain is constantly working to build new connections and link the synapses. An active brain is a healthy brain. Just like exercise is good for your heart, mental exercise keeps your brain young and active.

So, the next time that you're feeling a bit pinched for time with all those projects or to-do list items weighing on your shoulders, remember that you have control over your choices. Will you choose to become frazzled and overwhelmed with the "busy" or will you choose to embrace the fun and excitement of being happily active? Completely YOUR choice.

Please make comments on [my website!](#)

Mary's Updates

The State of the US Economy and Why You Care



Many of you know that I'm an economist, and I get a lot of questions regarding what's going on in the US economy on a daily basis. "What going to happen to our taxes?" "Should I be worried about my job?" "What's going to happen to my retirement income?" And of course, "What do you recommend that I do to protect myself?"

What's happening with our US economy seems extremely complicated, making it difficult for people to understand. Without knowing what can be done to protect themselves, many people feel are left in the dark, which contributes to their anxiety.

I recently conducted a talk to demystify the current US Economy, listing various factors involved. It's available as a **free download** at:

<http://productiveleaders.com/articles/>

We all know that long-term stress can be hard on our bodies – high blood pressure, insomnia, increased cortisol production, and depression as just some of the medical responses to sustained high stress levels.

Short-term and well-managed stress can be beneficial. Many people, including several of those closest to me, think my profession is stressful. (And I think there are many people whose jobs are far more taxing than mine.)

Many people find public speaking extremely stressful and they dread the event. However, I enjoy it in much the same way skiers enjoy a new ski run. It is exciting, stimulating, and you get the thrill of a new experience. I get an adrenaline rush just preparing for a conference. Doing a great show is emotionally and mentally taxing (and stressful), but it is also fabulous when it goes well.

Many aspects of stress (which a lot of people associate with being "busy") are a matter of perspective, but they can also be beneficial. Here are four ways that stress, managed well, can be advantageous:

1. Better work-management. When truly focused and busy, individuals tend to prioritize and use their own time more judiciously and work more efficiently. When you are busy, the value you place on your own time is higher. You prioritize what truly needs to be done on that to-do list. When you are truly busy, you ask, "what meetings are truly important and what meetings are just for the sake of having a meeting?" You delegate, "Can someone else go in my place or do I need to speak on my behalf?" You scrub the work load, "Are projects that you're doing, or that your employees are doing, busy work or truly necessary to the organization's mission?"
2. Ignore the small stuff that needs to be ignored. When you are working hard, you do not have time for the inconsequential. The small stuff suddenly gets put into perspective. When you are focused on important events, the little things won't bother you. (Note: This isn't just for the micro-managers.) For many of us, the small things may occupy a large part of the day. Perhaps every time an e-mail comes in, you feel the need to immediately address it, or the idea of a project or task not being done quite the way you might do it drives you crazy. Realize that many of those so-called "urgent"

Mary's Book of the Month



[The Thank You Economy](#)

by Gary Vaynerchuk

The Thank You Economy by Gary Vaynerchuk is a misnamed book. It is more about how to develop and keep relationships in a business climate marked by rapidly changing products and lightening fast technology. Vaynerchuk gives readers, particularly marketers, ways to use technology to actively promote sincere good will between suppliers and buyers. The Thank You Economy is particularly helpful for stagnant promoters looking to initiate contacts and keep customers.

Twitter and Social Media

Have you heard of Pinterest? Have you started using it? Can you afford not to? According to CNN, it is the third most visited site in the US. Last month, Facebook had more than 7 billion total visitors; Twitter had 182 million; and Pinterest had 104 million. Pinterest launched in March 2010, but only really started to gain momentum in the past six months.

Pinterest has virtual "boards" where people "pin" photos of products they like and other interesting places on the Internet. There are thousands of categories of topics from recipes to workout programs to books to fashion trends. You can comment on what you like and what you recommend.

An iPad app and new pinboards are coming soon. Check it out at www.pinterest.com.

Pet Tip:

We are what we eat and so are our pets. Alarming, 46% of cats and dogs in America reportedly die of cancer each year. There is evidence to suggest that diet plays a large factor in cancer rates. A helpful site on this topic is <http://www.dogcancer.net/diet.html> and it has several free downloads, including full diet plans, explaining how better nutrition can be part of a healthy therapy for our pets.

e-mails may resolve themselves without an immediate response. Realize that success is more important than perfection.

3. When you are busy, others value your time as well. The most valuable gift we can give to others is our time, but many people allow others to squander their time, leading to frustration. I keep a schedule every day (including weekends) and I assume everyone else does too. I even schedule 5-minute phone calls. If I do need to make an unscheduled phone call, I ask if they have two or five minutes to discuss a particular topic. If they say they don't – I sum up in 15 seconds and promise to provide details in an email. If it is a five minute appointment, end it at 4 and a half minutes. Busy people appreciate knowing that their time is respected. One of the worst infractions with a busy person is wasting their time. The reason the adage, "If you want something done, give it to a busy person" is true is because they manage their time and work load.



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Mary C. Kelly

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