

# From Frazzled to Focused

## *10 Keys to Slowing Down and Simplifying Your Life*

**F**ill your own cup first, and then give away what flows over to the saucer. This is often the hardest thing for people to do, especially women, because we are naturally givers and want to make sure everyone else is happy and well cared for. We become physically, emotionally and spiritually depleted as we live in service to others and eventually we collapse, drained and depressed. You **must** learn to look out for **you** first by engaging in self-care daily. A healthy body will give you the energy you need to accomplish your goals, a healthy mind will keep you sharp and focused and a healthy spiritual life will provide wisdom and direction. Proper nourishment in each of these areas will provide abundant energy to share in your personal and professional life. You cannot give away what you don't have, so make sure you are filled to overflowing.

**O**vercome Perfectionism. Perfectionism hampers success and leads to anxiety, stress and depression. If you suffer from perfectionism in the workplace or at home, consider these points to help you overcome.

- **Perfect is the enemy of great.** In your “superwoman” role, trying to do *everything* perfectly will almost ensure that you get few things done well. Your personal and professional reputation depends on how well you perform, not on how few mistakes you make. So quit polishing and let your brilliance shine!
- **Embrace do-overs.** If you make a mistake, don't beat yourself up! Use a temporary obstacle to strategize going forward. Self-correct, find a better way, and keep moving forward. Don't dwell on the missteps, and don't take on the identity of your setback.
- **Don't compare yourself to others.** You were born with a unique set of gifts and skills that make you *you*. There is *no one like you!* Likewise, you are not like anyone else, so quit wishing you could be like them! That only leads to feeling inferior and small. Appreciate yourself and focus on what you have accomplished rather than what everyone else is doing. You have unique gifts and skills, so share them proudly!
- **Set your expectations on human standards.** You are human, and you are expected to perform at human levels, not super-human. Setting the bar at unrealistic levels will certainly set you up for failure, so set your sights on goals that motivate you, not frustrate you. Don't try to be Wonder Woman—she doesn't exist!

**C**ontrol your calendar. If you remain focused on your Life Purpose, priorities and goals as you set your schedule, your days will be more productive and satisfying. If you get off-track and let others distract you, you will reach the end of each day frustrated and unproductive. See how much white space you can leave on your daily planner, not how much you can cover up. Manage your calendar, don't let it manage you.

**U**nleash the power of saying “No!” Remember that you have choices, not obligations. There is great freedom in saying “No,” so do it often! Simplify your life by choosing the things that give you energy, support your goals and are the best use of your time. Say NO to the things that you should delegate because they drain your energy and distract you from income-producing activities. Remember, when you say no to one thing, your time will be freed up to say yes to something else. It also allows someone else who really *wants* to do it to say yes.

**S**eparate your work life and personal life with clear boundaries. Set a clear schedule for your day, work diligently, and then *quit* when the time is up. Few projects require you to spend your nights and weekends away from your personal life. Answer this question: If you knew you only had six months to live, what would you do more of? Chances are you didn't say work! Spend more time doing the things you love and know that your work is a means to achieving a great life, not the other way around. When you arrive home from your work day, breathe deeply and be "present" with everyone who is there. Unwind and enjoy visiting about your day instead of continuing it in your home office or at the kitchen table.

**D**e-clutter your surroundings. A cluttered home or office can cause stress and anxiety and can totally drain your energy. You either worry about how to conquer the disarray, you stress over where to even begin, or you lose valuable time just sorting through the piles. Your desk should be a place to work efficiently, not wasting valuable time every day looking for documents or notes. Your home should be a haven of peace, not a cavern of chaos. Strive for simplicity, establish systems for organization, and enlist the help of a professional organizer who can put you on a path to recovery in no time.

**A**sk for help. Life is a team sport—you can't do it alone. Your never-ending role as "manager of the universe" will only lead to exhaustion, frustration and resentment. Remember the things you said you don't want to do and ask someone else to do them. Ask others to share responsibilities at home, ask your friends for a little extra love and support, and ask your family for some "me time," to renew and refresh your mind, body and spirit. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness! It is a sign that you are committed to becoming stronger, more confident and *authentic*.

**I**nhale Deeply. There really is a science behind breathing deeply and completely as one of the most effective stress reducers. If you are like most people, you breathe shallowly and irregularly, using only 20% of your lung capacity. But breathing in deeply through your nose, holding it for seven seconds, then exhaling through your mouth actually increases oxygen saturation, clearing the mind, purifying the blood, providing more energy, and calming the body. On the other hand, lack of oxygen will lead to mental sluggishness, lack of focus, depression and anxiety. Practice this breathing exercise several times a day, inhaling and exhaling three times slowly, concentrating on taking in energy-giving oxygen while exhaling your stress.

**L**isten for God in the quiet times. Turn off the noise, the electronics, and the phone. Take a break from email, Facebook, Twitter, and the radio in your car. Engage in meditative prayer, pondering God's faithfulness and how His truths impact your life. Look upward and outward to your Creator so that your mind may be filled with godly wisdom and insight. You may be surprised at how much clarity you have after spending time in quiet reflection, slowing your mind down and allowing it to simply rest. God would love to speak to you if you just create the quiet space and listen!

**Y**ippee! Celebrate something every day. Look for the positive things and don't dwell on the negative ones, being more focused on your joys and less conscious of your pain. Share your success with others so they can celebrate with you—be proud of yourself! Give yourself a special treat when you accomplish a goal. You might keep a Joy Journal where you record at least one thing every day that you are grateful for, recording notes about the people who have supported you faithfully and the little things you take for granted. Find at least one thing every day to say "Yippee!" about, and let those things feed your spirit, releasing the worry as you embrace the delights of your life.

## INSPIRATION

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. ~1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (ESV)

Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him;  
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,  
Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.  
Cease from anger and forsake wrath;  
Do not fret; *it leads* only to evildoing.  
~Psalm 37:7-8 (NASB)

Quiet down before GOD,  
be prayerful before him.  
Don't bother with those who climb the ladder,  
who elbow their way to the top.  
Bridle your anger, trash your wrath,  
cool your pipes—it only makes things worse.  
Before long the crooks will be bankrupt;  
GOD-investors will soon own the store.  
~Psalm 37:7-9 *The Message*

I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.  
~Psalm 119:15-16

A cheerful disposition is good for your health;  
gloom and doom leave you bone-tired.  
~Proverbs 17:22 *The Message*

GOD, the Master, The Holy of Israel,  
has this solemn counsel:  
“Your salvation requires you to turn back to me  
and stop your silly efforts to save yourselves.  
Your strength will come from settling down  
in complete dependence on me—  
The very thing you've been unwilling to do.”  
~Isaiah 30:15 *The Message*

Yet those who wait for the LORD  
Will gain new strength;  
They will mount up *with* wings like eagles,  
They will run and not get tired,  
They will walk and not become weary.  
~*Isaiah 40:31 (NASB)*

Let the peace of Christ [the inner calm of one who walks daily with Him] be the controlling factor in your hearts [deciding and settling questions that arise]. To this *peace* indeed you were called as members in one body [of believers]. And be thankful [to God always]. ~*Colossians 3:15 AMP*

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*Then give away to others what flows over to the saucer.*



Imagine you have one week to do anything you want to, with no responsibilities. What would you do? Would you travel, spend time with family, hike, swim, read, paint, sleep? In your cup, write the things that refresh you and bring a sense of calm to your life.

It is important for you to do at least one of those things EVERY WEEK! Have a WOW commitment beginning today: what is one thing you will do **Within One Week** to refresh your mind, body and spirit?