



Reducing Stress- Relationships

Dr. Jacqueline Fields | May 2015

Some of the greatest pleasures in life and some of the worst experiences involve relationships. Few things can lift your spirits like being with someone you love. Few things are more damaging to your spirit than relationships that bring constant tension and strife.

Below are some simple things you might want to consider to help reduce the stress, or increase the blessing, of relationships:

Make a List/Make a Call Write down a list of the people that you enjoy being with. When was the last time you spoke with them? Even if it has been a long time, make a call or schedule a visit. You can find joy in a rekindled friendship.

Thank Someone Being thankful and expressing your appreciation to others is therapeutic. Failing to express genuine thanks to those around you creates a mental “debt of gratitude” that weighs on your mind until it is paid. Sometimes it is more difficult to show appreciation to those we see every day; our coworkers, our spouses, our children, our parents. Try focusing on having a spirit of gratefulness and you will be surprised how rejuvenating it can be.

Resolve your Disputes Relationships will eventually produce conflict—some minor—some major. Conflict in a relationship can be extremely stressful. Often the issue seems to get worse the longer it is left unresolved, turning a minor misunderstanding into a major dispute. If the thought, “so-and-so is going to be at the party,” causes you stress, consider seeking reconciliation.

Make a list of individuals with whom you need to resolve disputes and then order the list from easiest to most difficult to resolve. Try resolving the easiest one first. Once you get the first one out of the way, move to the next one on the list. Not everyone will want to resolve the conflict, but even in those situations you will have much less stress knowing that you attempted to find a restoration.

Forgiveness This is related to resolution but deserves its own heading. Often, there are persons who genuinely hurt us; physically, mentally, emotionally. Regardless of the offense, the unwillingness to forgive them causes bitterness, resentment and anger that can lead to further stress, which can affect your health. If the list you made above includes someone you are unwilling to forgive, you may want to consider seeking out a spiritual leader or counselor to help you work through the issues involved. Conversely, if you have wronged someone and have not sought forgiveness, consider going to that person and asking for forgiveness and reconciliation. The release of guilt and the sense of restoration will do wonders for your wellbeing and health.

Do you find yourself frequently snapping at those around you?
Do you have someone you can confide in?
Have you lost your libido or are you too tired?
Do you spend time with people who drain your energy?
Do you feel like you can't say “no” to others?
Are there people you try to avoid?
Does the thought of someone bring up bitterness and anger?

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