

LifeWorks Group
1850 Lee Rd. Suite 250
Winter Park, FL 32789
407-647-7005
www.lifeworksgroup.org



Exhausted?

Excerpts taken from www.christinehammondcounseling.com

Why are You Instantly Angry Over Little Stuff?

Anger happens. You are driving down the left side of highway slightly faster than normal because you are already late and suddenly someone cuts right in front of you causing you to slam on your breaks and almost hit their vehicle. Instantly, you are angry. Or your spouse promises he will be home by a certain time and you have made dinner on that time frame but he doesn't show up, answer the phone or even call. By the time your spouse arrives home, dinner is cold and so are you. Better yet, you ask your child to do the simplest of tasks only to be met with defiance, back talk, and ungratefulness. The result is instant anger.

You have several bad ways of handling anger, all of which you most likely have mastered by now including the silent treatment, intense aggression and smile now but pay later. While these methods felt good in the moment, they resulted in poor long-term results. So you are open to trying a new method. Here are two. One is to think about it overnight while remaining silent in the moment of anger and the second is to address it immediately without aggression. Either method works depending on your personality or the situation but first some common misunderstandings about anger need to be cleared up.

Defining Anger. Most likely, you have experienced a time when everything seems to be going just fine and then all of a sudden something happens and you feel this rush of intense emotion causing your heart to race, your voice to get louder, or your fists to clench. And then it happens, you say or do something that you normally would not do if the intense emotion had not occurred. That is anger. And while anger in and of itself is a God given emotion, it becomes wrong when it controls your behavior. This emotion is quite useful in life and death situations as it propels you into action motivating you beyond what you would normally do. But it can be destructive in personal relationships as it leaves a path of disaster much like the path of a tornado.

Blaming Anger. Just because you are feeling angry, and this emotion in some cases may be justified, it does not give you license to harm anyone in your path. How many times have you heard someone say, "You make me so angry"? The reality is that they are responsible for getting angry just as you are responsible for your own anger. Anger as an emotion and left to run rampant over your life can control you if you let it. However, no one can "make" you angry unless you choose to be angry. Sometimes that choice is not a conscious one but an

unconscious choice based on experiences and decisions made in the past. Nonetheless, it is your choice to allow anger to control you.

Managing Anger. The two methods mentioned above have two different ways of dealing with your anger. One is to not speak and think about your anger overnight. The other is to confront your anger. However, neither method even slightly hints that your spouse must be involved in either. If you are responsible for your own anger and letting your anger get out of control is wrong then it is not the responsibility of your spouse to resolve your anger rather it is yours. "Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry" is about your behavior and desire to hold onto things that should be let go or dealt with accordingly.

Reconciling Anger. Once you have defined your anger, accepted responsibility for it and managed properly managed it, then you can begin the process of reconciliation. Since anger destroys relationships, it is likely that there is a trail of failed relationships in the wake of your anger. Even if the relationship may seem to be fine, unreconciled anger limits intimacy. Your present anger may have less to do with present circumstances and more to do with your past. Take the time to reconcile old relationships and you will

How to Eliminate Stress from Your Life in 10 Steps (without Taking a Yoga Class or Changing Your Schedule)

Have you ever Googled “eliminate stress” only to find a long list of impossible tasks from people who obviously don’t have a job and aren’t married with kids? My personal favorite ideas were to quit work (really... because last time I checked you work to earn money to care for your family and quitting work would add considerable stress to your life), have an open schedule (this is laughable as my schedule is almost entirely dictated by my kid’s activities), and avoid difficult people (yes, that is really possible when you work with difficult people all day long). You already know that you need to reduce the stress in your life but having ridiculous suggestions about how to go about it only increases stress and gives you the impression that reducing stress in your very busy life is impossible. It’s not.

Here are a few suggestions that been tested and proven to be effective by very busy people like you.

1. **Know where you are going.** As silly as it sounds, having goals for each area of your life actually reduces stress. For instance, if your goal with your teenage son is to help him be a self-sufficient adult who is not stuck playing video games on your sofa at age 25 then you have a goal. With that goal in mind he should be making his own meals, taking care of his own laundry, and working at a part-time job. Doing this process for each area of your life makes decisions easier and less stressful.
2. **Stick to your plan.** Using the teenage son example you will undoubtedly be met with stiff resistance on his part as you enforce the new direction. This is good. As a parent your responsibility is to teach your child to become a functional adult it is not to be their friend (hopefully that will come much later). By remembering your goal and sticking with it and serving out consequences for not following the plan, you will reduce more stress in the long run but not the short run.
3. **Set realistic expectations.** Just because you spent all day cleaning the floors of your house does not mean that anyone will even notice. If you clean the floors expecting gratitude or praise then you are likely to be disappointed. Instead, recognize that you like the floors clean and you are really cleaning them for yourself.
4. **Monitor your thoughts.** This is a biggie for most women as thoughts tend to run ramped and one strange phone call can leave you replaying it for hours if not days. Give yourself the two times rule. You are allowed to replay a conversation two times but any more than that you need to distract yourself and move on. Think about it for a second, when was it ever productive to waste a bunch of time obsessing over something that you can’t change.
5. **Be your own best friend.** Your inner dialogue should be as kind to yourself as you are to your best friend. Would you ever look at your best friend and call her “stupid” for making a mistake at work or call her “fat” for eating a piece of chocolate cake or call her “loser” for missing an appointment? Of course not! So stop doing this to yourself.
6. **It’s ok to say “no”.** Mommy guilt runs strong and powerful especially when you are working and you know that your kids don’t have your undivided attention. This means that some activities will conflict with work forcing you to say the dreaded “no” word. It’s ok, you are not in this alone and it is good to teach your kids that they can’t get everything they want when they want it. Remember the bigger picture.
7. **Don’t lie.** It is very tempting to play God and believe that you know what someone else is thinking and can make someone feel better by telling a little lie. But lies have a strange way of catching up to you and creating much bigger problems and stress in the end. So make a habit of being truthful even if it might hurt someone’s feelings.
8. **Set boundaries in your life.** Boundaries are like walls which are very useful after all who wants to watch you in the bathroom at work (ok, I admit that visualization was a bit over the top but highly effective). Here are some practical stress reducing boundaries: don’t answer your phone when it rings, check email only three times a day, non-emergency communication gets an automatic 24 hour wait before responding, and limit social media stuff to once a day.
9. **Choose OCD behaviors wisely.** Some OCD tendencies are rather useful such as always putting your keys or purse in the exact same place every day. This eliminates the mad dash to find things. But some OCD behaviors are not useful such as needing to wash your hands 50 times a day or cleaning obsessively with bleach. Get help for the behaviors that you need to change and embrace new habits that are time savers.
10. **Work on you, not everyone else.** In the end, you are only responsible for yourself. (Yes, there are those kids of yours but they are already responsible for some of their behaviors and most likely need more not less responsibility.) When you take time to work on your own issues instead of pretending they don’t exist, you will find more energy. After all, you can’t give what you don’t already have.

Reducing stress in your life does not have to be about taking a yoga class, changing you schedule, exercising more and eating healthy. These are all external things, not internal things. And while these things certainly have their place, the best place to start is in your mind.