

3 Simple Strategies to Manage Stress

By Amy S. Grant

Stress can be caused by a number of situational factors, but if you find you have constant stress in your life on a regular basis, it could be due to your own personality traits. Fortunately, these traits can be changed with three simple strategies to [manage stress](#).

First, consider whether or not you are prone to perfectionism. Overly critical parents or teachers during your youth may have caused you to strive for complete perfectionism, which is not necessarily a good thing. Most perfectionists are frustrated and have high stress levels. Many are procrastinators because of the overwhelming effort it takes to do something perfectly. Of course, some professions demand perfectionism, such as surgeons and rocket scientists, but for most of us, perfectionism is misdirected energy.

Instead of demanding perfectionism from yourself and others, learn to focus your energy and leave well enough alone. Consider whether a task, job or action can be considered "good enough" without the need to be perfect. This strategy will remove a great deal of pressure off your shoulders and lower your overall stress level throughout your life.

Next, practice letting go. Learning to let go is more of an art than a science, and it's best practiced in small, manageable steps. Again, if you have a tendency towards perfectionism, don't expect yourself to change (or be perfect and being not-perfect) overnight. Give yourself some space, and start with baby steps, gradually working your way towards being more relaxed.

If you are a perfectionist in most areas of your life, take inventory of your life and see where you can afford not to be perfect. For example, maybe the laundry can be folded a little sloppier than usual, and maybe the garden doesn't have to be completely free of weeds at all times. Recognize that certain tasks require more attention to detail than others, and use good judgment in determining what areas of your life can handle your "[letting go](#)." The less you feel you need to control completely, the more stress you can remove from your life.

Finally, get yourself centered. This doesn't mean you have to take yoga five days per week or meditate for an hour a day, but it does mean you have take some time to unwind. Make a list of five ways you can relax on a weekly or daily basis and post the list somewhere you can see it regularly. Do whatever helps you unwind--grab a glass of wine after work with a few friends, read a book, take a bubble bath, go for a walk outside, etc.

If your life is supremely hectic, you may be able to unwind by simply getting five quiet minutes alone once a day. Whatever it takes for you to find a quiet place and unwind is

necessary to relieve stress and return to a normal state. These three strategies can help you manage stress, focus your energy and get back on the path to [success](#).

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