10 Habits to Create Less Stress in Your Daily Life (Part I)

Do you crave stress-free days? And I want to take it a step further and ask -- do you crave having a *good* day? Or does doing more than "surviving" feel like a far-fetched dream?

I remember having similar thoughts when I was pregnant with my first child, it was in the middle of my residency. I was sleep-deprived, overwhelmed and stressed from trying to balance all the different roles (mom-to-be, wife, doctor, just to name a few).

Simply put: I was stressed, letting my life pass me by.

I know I'm not the only one who has struggled with the stress of trying to do it all - and it's understandable! With money, work, family responsibilities and personal health being some of the things we spend most of our days navigating, it is no shock that they're some of the top sources of stress in our lives.

Almost one third of adults in the US will experience anxiety over the course of their lifetime (NIMH).

That's over 80 million people struggling with stress and negative thoughts every day.

And it's not just a statistic, through the years I have worked with my patients to treat their chronic illness, manage symptoms, or create (and maintain) a healthy lifestyle, stress is almost always present in their lives.

Stress is just a part of our lives.

So the question becomes: if stress isn't going away, how can we deal with it and use it as an opportunity to grow instead of letting it tear us down?

I believe we can do this by letting our inner light guide us - that calm voice inside of our bodies that we faintly hear yet ignore most times.

This week I'll be sharing 10 habits (only 5 today) to help you let that inner light guide you into taking that survival mindset into thriving.

1. **Be authentic.**
   Although we all share a blanket of common life events, diseases and challenges, your journey is utterly intimate and personal. It has made you who you are and feel the way you feel.

Be honest to yourself about your feelings and preferences, don't be the first to judge them wrong or feel ashamed. Look for honesty, compassion and kindness within yourself.

2. **Journal.**
Release your mind clutter through writing - holding onto our thoughts and emotions can be overwhelming.

Reflect on daily life events and how your body or emotions reacted to them. Success and failures as life experiences always carry out some learning, and journaling is an optimal technique to learn, celebrate or debrief with yourself about your day.

3. **Do one nice thing for yourself daily.**
This can be a short 10 minute commitment or an hour or two a day that you give yourself.

Walking in nature, shutting down all your devices an hour before bed, a small treat (a handful of dark chocolate covered almonds, healthy cookie, a decaf cappuccino, a tea with honey), yoga, or dancing are all examples of ways you can give to yourself all valid ways to dedicate yourself sometime and continue to explore.

4. **Gratitude.**
You know those moments where you lose your iPhone, and you think, "Oh no, my entire life is in that thing? What if I can't find it?" A stream of panicked thoughts filters through your mind as you search for it frantically, and   This is a very good topic to journal about as well. Don't wait for things to go awry to try to cling on to the good stuff in your life. Cultivate day-to-day appreciation for everyone and everything making your life better. Your favorite blanket/towel/seat of the house, your family, fresh produce, your favorite tv show, there's lots to be grateful for and recognizing those will get you the mood to create more good.

5. **Sleep.**
Giving our brains proper rest is (literally) vital for our survival. Science has [proven](#) there is a bidirectional relationship between depression and insomnia, our ability to remember information and our [levels of anxiety](#). Plus, sleep feels awesome.

Try to sleep 8 hours a day and keep your wake-up and rest times consistent to help regulate your sleep cycle.

Closing in on these first five habits, I would love to leave you with one last thought.

I know how easy it is to fall back into our busy habits. For example, so often time is an issue for us, and that's why we don't incorporate self-care into our routine. In this case, try to hit two birds with one stone and add sleep into your schedule as a self-care activity (since it is something you do every day any way).

If you've got a commute on your way to work, practice your gratitude on your drive home after your long day.

I would love to hear from you on the one thing you're going to do every day this week and how you are going to make sure it happens, no matter what.