

Overcoming the Stress of Life

by Mike Hawkins
mike@alpinelink.com



Have you noticed that people seem to be more stressed than usual? Does it seem that people are quicker to anger than usual? Or that people are more divided and vocal on their opinions? Of course you have and studies confirm what most all of us are noticing. Two-thirds of the US adult population are experiencing stress to a level that their physical and mental health are being negatively impacted by it. Half of the adult population are having trouble sleeping because of stress. If you're thinking it's

just adults, think again. The top health concern for high-school students is you guessed it—stress.

There are many causes for our contemporary stress including coronavirus health concerns, coronavirus-related public restrictions, and politics to name the most obvious ones. But close behind these causes are how much we try to stuff into our personal lives, excessive workloads in our professional lives, and how difficult it can be to get things done. So, the question many of us are asking is “will these instigators of stress ever diminish or go away?” Can we go back to a less stressful lifestyle? Or is this the new normal that we need to learn to live with?

As weeks have turned into months and months into years without any reduction in stress, many people are coming to the conclusion they need to take matters into their own hands. The drivers of stress are not subsiding anytime soon. So, some are retiring early which has dramatically reduced the available workforce. Some are moving which has caused significant home sales and sale price changes. Some are changing jobs which has created a tsunami of resignations as well as hiring. Some are home schooling their children. Some have turned to exercise while others have turned to drugs, alcohol, food, or whatever helps them cope with their frustrations.

How about you and those in your circle of influence? What might you do to lower stress? In particular, what might you do to ease up and relax in a sustainable and positive way? Here are a few ideas to consider:

- **Release.** Let go of your frustrations toward others. Everyone has a right to their own opinion (even if they are wrong!). Consider other's perspectives without letting them control your disposition.
- **Accept.** Take care of what you do control – yourself. Do what's needed to accept and feel good about yourself. Rest, exercise, eat well, maintain self-control, be honest, have integrity, and help others.
- **Fill.** Infuse your mind with inspiration, not desperation. Be discerning about what you listen to, watch, and believe. Spend time with people who are positive, uplifting, and encouraging.



Overcoming the Stress of Life

- **Examine.** Get the facts. Don't merely view one perspective. Don't be a validator or messenger of misinformation. Be careful with second-hand information. Get to the source and their motives.
- **Hope.** Confront reality, but have optimism. Look for what is right as much as what is wrong. Learn from what has happened and appreciate the good from it, but don't ruminate on it. Look forward to a better future.
- **Believe.** Have faith. Trust that truth will prevail. Know that despite your current struggles, including other's actions and intentions that might be negatively impacting you, that good will ultimately overcome bad.
- **Reset.** There is a new normal. You can't control it so don't worry over it. Keep your core values and exercise your influence where it makes a difference, but don't expect what can't be achieved.
- **Simplify.** You can't do, maintain, protect, clean, and fix everything. You can't visit, call, text, and help everyone. Prioritize. Slow down. Consider what you might delegate, outsource, sell, do without, or do less of.
- **Play.** Have more fun. Do things that you and your family enjoy. Watch movies, play games, read books, cook, and enjoy your favorite hobbies. If circumstances allow, travel and hang out with friends.
- **Pursue.** Consider your purpose. Follow your dreams. If you are doing things that don't give you joy, make a change. Give more attention to that which gives meaning to your life.

Which of these might help you? Which ones are worth giving more thought to? Make a plan to apply the ones that make sense for you and your circumstances.

MIKE HAWKINS is award-winning author of *Activating Your Ambition: A Guide to Coaching the Best Out of Yourself and Others*, author of the *SCOPE of Leadership* six-book series on coaching leaders to lead as coaches, and president of Alpine Link Corporation (www.alpinelink.com). Mike is a seasoned executive coach, management consultant, author, speaker, and college lecturer. He is considered an industry thought leader on leadership, consultative selling, self-improvement, and business management.

For other articles on reaching your peak potential, visit <https://alpinelink.com/blog/>.