Reduce Stress by Journaling

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When life's challenges seem overwhelming, women often find that talking about their stress helps them put it in perspective. However, there's another great way to maintain control of your thoughts and decision making throughout each day: Journaling.

I don't mean writing long and detailed stories of your life experiences. Journaling is the simple act of regularly jotting down your life events and feelings on paper—or even at your lap top, desk top, or typewriter. Your journal can help you refine your daily living skills. It gives you the opportunity to reflect on the experiences/events you've recorded.

You can use journaling to help you deal with stressors you don't feel comfortable sharing with others. Stress psychologists have shown that journaling enhances immune function and can alter the course of chronic conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and asthma. Here are some tips to get you started:

• Subject? Focus on current stressors. Writing about stress helps you step back and consider your options more clearly.
• Technique? To improve health and decrease stress, journal entries should include two things: First, write what happened --the facts about the objective experience. Second, write your feelings about what happened, what you feel and why you feel it.
• Content? Don't hold back! Write continually for about fifteen minutes with no censoring, until you feel you get it all out.
• Tone? Don't worry. Just let it all hang out. Don't stress over the spelling and grammar. Let it flow and enjoy the process of communicating important feelings on paper.
• When? Write whenever you want or feel you need to. If you have been keeping food diaries to track your eating, perhaps you can combine this with journaling.

• How much? Try it for fifteen minutes a day, everyday.

• Should you share? It is wise to keep your journal to yourself. If you write thinking you may share it, you may be tempted to write for that person. A journal is about you and your self-care.

• Hate to write? Try talking into a tape recorder. It can be just as good, though perhaps less convenient.

• How will I feel? Some feel a sense of relief; others feel depressed for a time after writing. This will go away, though, as you gain a better understanding of yourself, and your life.

Remember: Writing thoughts and feelings is not a replacement for professional therapy. If you think you might be depressed (if you’re sad or overwhelmed feelings don't go away or they interfere with your daily functioning) or, if you are suffering from a trauma or other mental health problem, seek help from a licensed professional.

Journaling is a form of preventative maintenance. It's another tool in your stress resilience toolbox. So buy yourself a beautiful journal or create an electronic one, and get to writing!

Source: