



12 Tips for Extremely Stressful Times

by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Following a catastrophe of any kind, we each need some distance from the event, to process what has happened as we heal. While "Tincture of Time" is doing its work, there is a wide variety of relaxation techniques that can be beneficial. Each of us experiences any event from our own unique perspective, through the filter of our personal histories. Similarly, we need to collect stress-reduction tools that work within our own lifestyle and belief system.

A Few "One-Size-Fits-Most" Stress-Relief Tools:

- Healthy nutrition, pleasurable exercise, massage and restful sleep
- Music & creative expression, journaling
- Connecting with others & laughter
- Meditation and Guided Imagery

12 Tips for Extremely Stressful Times:

1. Cry when you need to, laugh whenever you can. Smiling sends an "all's well" message to the body/mind.
2. Find and give comfort. Gentle touch helps us to feel grounded and connected.
3. Take control of areas where you can. Avoid excesses, drink plenty of water and limit sugar, caffeine and alcohol. Rest.
4. Remember that feeling "normal" will be different for each person.
5. Know when to turn off TV/Radio/Internet. In troubling times, some feel safer by being very well-informed, but obsession and "information overload" can become a problem. Plan activities near bedtime that are soothing. Perhaps a warm bath, foot-rub, light snack, light reading, or quiet time with someone you care for.
6. Be alone when you need to, then balance with social support. Find ways to create meaning and to help in some way, volunteer, donate time, skills, resources or finances.

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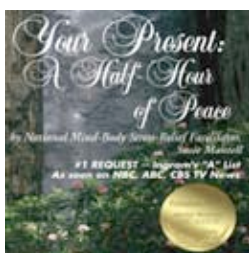


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7. Write a "Comfort Letter." This is one of my personal favorites for coping with feelings that seem to overwhelm or pre-occupy.
 - a. Set a timer for 5 minutes.
 - b. Write a letter to someone real or imagined, living or not. This may be a historical figure, spiritual guide, faraway friend, or a loved one who has passed on.
(Important: Do Not Send this Letter. This is an exercise just for you.)
 - c. Scribble every worry out, along with all of your anger or fear. Ask this person for insight and comfort.
 - d. Stop when the timer rings. Close your eyes. Take three slow, cleansing breaths.
 - e. Reset the timer. Now write a reply from the recipient. You will be amazed! Writing meditation helps us reconnect with our higher consciousness and to re-balance in stressful times.
8. Your concentration may be a bit off, so pay extra attention to safety and proofread work, but cut yourself some slack if you make mistakes.
9. If you care for others, allow yourself time and space to experience your own feelings and to heal, ensuring strength, stability and stamina to help others.
10. If you sense that you or another could benefit from talking with a compassionate healthcare professional, local hospitals, physicians or clergy are good starting places.
11. Try, as much as possible, to release the past and the future. Be Here Now. Mindfulness is the first principle of meditation for healing relaxation.
12. Listen to your intuition, and go about normal routine and activities as best you can. Routine is a great comfort. It has been said "success is getting up one more time."

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