



Family Caregivers of British Columbia

The 11 Commandments of Stress Management

1. Whatever you focus your mind on (give your full attention to) becomes more and more real. Therefore **changing your mind** from guilt and blame over to “peace of mind” and “gentleness of thought about yourself and others” becomes the avenue to being a very well person, even with a severe disability.
2. Only 5 activities a day (...count' em...). This means any activity in which you have to put your mind or body to work; making a meal, shopping, attending meetings, any phone calls or trips-around-town for business or homemaking. This includes your exercise programme. Going to work counts for 2 or 3. Then all activities over 5 count as “bonus points”, to be used in the future...so you can putter around doing very little, the next day, if you feel like it.
3. Use effective time-management techniques. i.e. make lists, keep a list by the phone, keep a day calendar, keep bankbooks and accounts neat and balanced, have a filing system, or file folders for papers.
4. Keep **one** focus, not 4 or 5. Do one activity at a time, and love it thoroughly while you are doing it. That's what lists are for...so you can empty your mind, and not try to juggle 4 or 5 activities at a time.
5. Make sure of good sleep habits.
6. FORGIVE yourself daily.
7. If unfinished activities pile up, it is NOT that you are slow, lazy, or stupid. It is that you are expecting too much of yourself. You are taking on too much, so that every time you “stop to smell the roses” you will feel guilty. Just stick to the first 2 or 3 priorities, and shelve the rest.
8. **NOW** is the ONLY time there is. Don't carry the past into the present, except as lovely memories. Don't worry about the future.
9. Plan the future pleasantly, with love and pleasure as a motive, not worry and fear.
10. STOP once a day and ask yourself: What do I really NEED right now? What can I do for myself today to make me happy?
11. Don't be a “victim”. Do things for yourself to feel effective or “powerful”. Do one thing each day, as early as possible, to feel in charge of your life, or useful, or happy and pleased. There is always some way you can be in charge of events, even if it's walking away – or taking a long bath – or not listening to someone who doesn't listen to you. Or LISTENING and congratulating yourself for your wonderfulness and patience....