

# The AAABC's of Managing Stress

The AAABC's of managing stress is a simple and yet effective way to proactively deal with the stressors that will inevitably come your way. The steps include.....

**A** **Accept** the things you cannot change

**A** **Assess** your stress regularly

**A** **Avoid** the stressors you can

**B** **Build resilience** into your life

**C** **Choose wisely** in the areas within your control

---

## **A** **Accept** the things you cannot change

- **Stress is a fact of life** – but it doesn't have to be a way of life or define you.
- **You have no control over some stressors.** There are some stressful things that simply cannot be avoided - bad weather, cancelled flights, traffic jams, long waits at the doctor's office and aging parents. How much time and emotional energy do you waste complaining or worrying about them?
- **You have personal limitations.** You are not superman or superwoman. There is only so much that can be done in an hour, a day, a week, a month or a year. Extend some grace to yourself. Make sure your self-expectations are realistic. And, don't allow others to impose their "superhuman" expectations on you either.

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)*

## **A** **Assess** your stress regularly

- Have a good idea of the level of stress in your life so that you can adjust your life in ways that will allow you to deal more effectively with it.
- Anticipate times of increased stress because of schedules or life situations and be proactive in building stress relieving strategies into your life.
- Repeat the "How Full is Your Plate" exercise on a regular basis so you can make adjustments as needed.
- Recognize the early warning signs (see Symptoms of Burnout)



## Avoid the stressors you can

- Many stressors can be avoided.
- Is it really necessary for you to attend *all* of those meetings?
- Are there relationships in your life where you need to create some healthy boundaries in order to decrease the frequency of contact with that person?
- Can someone else take on a responsibility that you now have?
- Exodus 18, Moses takes the advice of his father-in-law Jethro and appoints others to carry out some of his responsibilities. As a result, his “load was lightened” and he was able to “stand the strain.”

## Build resistance to the stressors in your life

- Physical
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Relational

Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you..... select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." (Exodus 18: 17-23)

## Choose wisely

- In life we always have choices. Even ‘not choosing’ is a choice!

**Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is going to be a choice.”** *Leading on Empty* – Wayne Cordeiro

- The choices you make need to be congruent with your **personal core values** or they will increase instead of decrease your stress level.

Here are some choices that you make on a daily basis. As you read this list are any of these areas a source of stress for you?

- What you do (activities)
- Who you spend time with (relationships)
- When you do things (scheduling your time)
- Why you do things (motivation)
- How you perceive things (attitude)

**Life is all about choices.  
When you cut away all  
the junk, every situation  
is going to be a choice.”**

– *Leading on Empty*

**‘God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.’**

