

## **Stress Management: Reducing and coping with stress part 4**

By now, I am sure that you are already seeing and feeling the benefits of being less stressed. As we have seen already stress management is about taking charge of your thoughts, emotions and your diary! So to continue with this, we will get straight into part 4 of our series.

### **Change your attitude**

Quite often our stress levels are determined by how we perceive or think about a situation. In order to gain control, change your expectations or attitude.

**Think positively** – what positive meaning can you get out of this situation? What is it teaching you? What will you learn as a result of having experienced this? Think about all the things that you are grateful for in life, this strategy will quite often help you put the situation into perspective.

**Review your expectations** – how we choose or would like to perform a certain task is driven by our personal expectations. For example if you are completing a task for a client and want to put 100% into doing a good job, the chances are you will be disappointed by anything you perceive as being less than 100%, even though you have worked long hours and had no sleep for the last week. Your client on the other hand, may expect 75% effort, and when receives your work, which you are highly disappointed in, is thrilled at its quality. The key is to quantify what is required and match your expectations of the situation accordingly. Learn to know what is good enough.

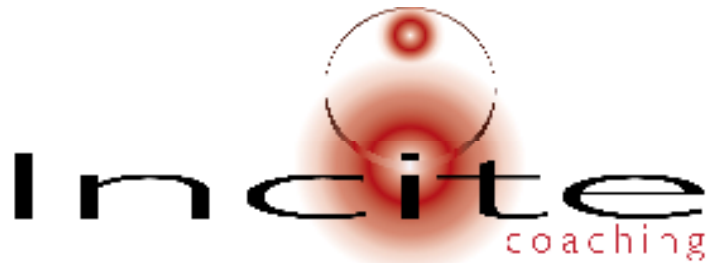
**Reframe the situation** – Instead of seeing the situation as stressful, how else can it be interpreted? Instead of being stressed by the delay of the train, maybe you could see this as a great opportunity to have some quiet time after a busy day or to listen to some music on your I-pod or MP3 Player.

### **Live Healthily**

I don't know about you, but when I am exercising and eating well, I feel fabulous and like I can conquer the world. Adopting a healthy lifestyle has also shown to help with stress resistance.

**Exercise regularly** – exercise is key to maintaining and coping with stress. It acts as a catharsis to stress build up and also helps reduce tension. The endorphins that are released as a result will help motivate you to take action towards your goals. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise at least 4 times a week.

**Eat well** – during times of stress your body is preparing for fight or flight and it will store energy and fat in case of flight. Quite often people reach for high fat, sugary foods such as chocolate, during stressful times. This can result in weight gain (which could lead to more stress) and means that your body is missing out on vital nutrients. Aim for



a balanced diet and your body will receive all the nutrients it needs to work efficiently. Get at least 5 serves of vegetables and 2 fruit each day, include protein and some good fats.

**Rest** – My Mum used to always try and get me to bed early when I was younger, saying I needed at least 8 hours sleep a night, knowing that I would often be cranky without it. As we become adults we often reduce our nightly sleep. Sleep is vital for a healthy mind, and to help us think clearly. Irrational thinking can lead to increased stress. Get plenty of good quality sleep by ensuring your room is not too hot or cold, is dark and does not have too many disturbances.

Stay tuned for our final part of the Stress Management Series. For more information on reducing your stress levels email [Jennifer@incitecoaching.com.au](mailto:Jennifer@incitecoaching.com.au)