

Are You in Love with Stress?



It's tough not to be overstressed these days. With all the roles we play every day – parent, employee, caregiver, interior decorator, organizational expert, chauffeur, medical consultant, CEO of everything – it's only logical that we'd feel overworked and overwhelmed most of the time.

Have you ever thought about the possibility that you might actually like being stressed out? That in fact, you might get the same kind of giddy high from having too much to do that you get when you fall IN LOVE? There's a bumper sticker that would be funnier if it weren't so true for so many of us: "Don't tell me to relax – stress is the glue that holds my life together." If you're measuring your value and purpose by a full calendar or the fact that your cell phone never stops ringing, you've formed an unhealthy love relationship with your stress. Take this quiz to see how in love you are with the stressors in your life.

1. When it comes to multitasking, do you:
 - a. Try to never do more than one or two things at a time.
 - b. Juggle as much as you need to in order to make it through your day.
 - c. Hope it becomes an Olympic event because you know you're a shoo-in for the gold medal.

2. When you open your calendar, which of the following would make you feel best?
 - a. Lots of blank space.
 - b. A good balance of scheduled and unscheduled time.
 - c. So many scheduled activities you need a magnifying glass to be able to read what's there.

3. Speaking of blank space on your organizer, if you had a full day open, what would be your first thought?
 - a. I wonder if I have time to go to the gym.
 - b. What have I forgotten?
 - c. I'd better scribble something down in case anyone peeks inside so they'll see how busy I really am.

4. When someone asks you to do something for them and you really are too busy, do

- you:
- a. Thank them for asking and turn them down nicely.
 - b. Agree to help out this once, but chide yourself for caving in.
 - c. Say “I’m really overbooked, but I’ll try to squeeze you in,” then make a point of showing them how crowded your calendar is.
5. As you go through your day which of the following phrases is most likely to run through your head?
 - a. Wow, this is fun!
 - b. Slow down, you move too fast!
 - c. I feel the need for speed!
 6. When a friend or co-worker tells you how busy she is lately, what would be your first response?
 - a. Helpfully suggesting she take some time off.
 - b. Saying you know how she feels.
 - c. One-upping her with anecdotes about your even-busier life.
 7. If you were stuck at the airport for an extra hour, would you be most likely to:
 - a. Enjoy a conversation with a stranger.
 - b. Call and check on the office, then if there’s time, your family.
 - c. Pull out your laptop and happily disappear into your own little world.
 8. When your kids see you at the end of the day, do they:
 - a. Excitedly tell you about their day.
 - b. Give you a few minutes to yourself.
 - c. Avoid you like you’re a low-fat snack food item.
 9. Which cartoon character best reflects your life?
 - a. Sleeping Beauty – I know the importance of rest and rejuvenation.
 - b. Snow White – I’d really like to delegate things to the dwarfs, but I usually end up doing everything myself.
 - c. The Tasmanian Devil – I’m more comfortable spinning around as fast as possible.
 10. When you lie in bed at night right before falling asleep, do you:
 - a. Give thanks for all the wonderful people and things in your life.
 - b. Plan out your next day.
 - c. Lie awake restlessly, looking forward to the next day so you can get back to being busy again. After all, sleep is for sissies!

SCORING: Give yourself one point for every “a” answer, two for every “b,” and three for every “c”.

1-10 You've got a healthy relationship with stress and busyness. You understand that there is more to life than increasing its speed and that your family doesn't come with a rewind button.

11-20 Although you think you've got a handle on things, when the chips are down, you tend to "Just say yes" to stress. Follow some of the tips below to make sure you keep things under control.

21-30 You're not just over-stressed, you're in love with the feeling it gives you. Being crazy busy gives you a sense of power and makes you feel better than your friends, neighbors, and co-workers. But your body and mind (not to mention your family and friends) are probably already suffering the consequences of your choices. You should pay attention to every tip listed below to try to end your relationship stress.