



# Reducing Stress

## Module 6

Stress either causes or exacerbates almost every illness or medical condition. It's pretty rare to find someone who is not stressed about some aspect of life. We can do many things to try and be healthier but reducing stress may be one of the most important. As you work through the Sugar Shift, I invite you to take some time to reflect on the levels of stress in your life and try some tactics to minimize the health impacts stress may inflict.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the worst, where would you rate stress in your life? \_\_\_\_\_

### 15 ways to reduce stress

*(Adapted from Dr Michael Arloski, 1 through 4 are from The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz)*

1. Be impeccable with your word - say what you mean, mean what you say. Speak with integrity. Speak the truth to others and to yourself. Speak your truth!
2. Don't take anything personally. It's not about you! What others say and do is really about them, not you. Very little in the world is personal even when it feels like it is.
3. Don't make assumptions. Repeat! Don't make assumptions, ever! Don't assume you know another person's intentions. Ask for clarification. Ask for what you need. Create agreements with others and operate only on agreements.
4. Always do your best. Realize that your best is not always the same. Put the best you out there, but realize it won't be the same if you are having a bad day or ill, etc. Be compassionate with yourself.
5. Own your choices. Own the fact you are choosing to work where you work, live where and with whom you choose to live, etc. Taking responsibility for your own choices helps let go of the feeling of being a victim and reminds you of your ability to make changes.
6. Hang out with people who are good for you. Choose to spend time with friends and colleagues who support you and your health. Connect with them, Give to them. Receive from them.
7. Get enough vitamin T. Touch. Good, healthy, appropriate touch is absolutely, physiologically essential. Heal from old wounds that keep you cut off from the vital vitamin supply. Give yourself permission.
8. Get enough sleep. Less than seven to eight hours dramatically increases our risks for heart disease and diabetes. Even six hours is not enough. We all sleep better with healthier food and more movement in our lives.
9. Move your body. Forget exercising. Just move. Think in terms of maximizing the movement in your life. Make it fun. Dance. Park further away from the door. Choose the stairs over the elevator. It all counts.
10. Eat like your life depended on it. Find a healthy clean way of eating that is reasonable, doable and realistic for the rest of your life. Ditch the diets. Be patient and persistent.
11. Get out on your own. Find some alone time. Decompress. Unwind. Relax. Spend time with yourself with no distractions.
12. Radically reduce what you tolerate. What physical, mental and interpersonal things are you tolerating? What do you put up with, bite your lip on, and minimize? Quit tolerating. Fix, repair, speak-up.
13. Do what gives you what you need. Do what meets your needs in a healthy way. Practice what centres you - prayer, movement, reading, nature, contact etc.
14. Go for number one. On your list of things to take care of, put you as number one. You can help others when you are healthy and happy.
15. Get an ally. If you could have done it by yourself, you probably would have done it already. Improving your lifestyle is not always easy because you are breaking old habits. Work with someone who knows how to help, can keep you accountable, and holds your agenda as the priority.