



De-Stress Your Life in 6 Simple Steps



MELANIE REDD





De-Stress Your Life in 6 Simple Steps

By Melanie Redd

my gift to you

This little book actually came from an article I wrote several years ago. I shared this article on my first website (www.melanieredd.blogspot.com).

It was also turned into a lesson that I presented to a group of high school teachers at their mid year in-service program.

The purpose of this book is to offer you hope and encouragement as you seek to make wise decisions in life. Life is filled with choices, options, selections and alternatives.

Through the very practical suggestions offered in this book, you will be given a strategy to use when having to make decisions.

Six simple steps will be shared that will hopefully help you to de-stress your life. These are not necessarily EASY steps, but you can do them. I encourage you to at least try these steps a try!

You may notice the book is not “copyrighted.” Instead, it is written as a gift to you and to anyone with whom you’d like to share it. So, please enjoy it, use it, share it and pass along the things you learn with others.

I pray that you will be encouraged as you read~

Blessings,

Melanie

before you begin

There is really only one reason that I write or do anything else that I do, and it's very simply that I've found the most amazing love relationship a person can find. This relationship is with the person of Jesus Christ. He is real, and He is real in my life. And, He loves me like no other person has ever loved me or could ever love me.

Have you experienced this kind of love?

Do you know Jesus and the love that He offers?

You can!

To enter into a personal, love relationship with Him, you simply have to follow the A, B, C's:

A = Admit that you are a sinner in need of a Savior.

All of us have made mistakes, sinned against God and need a Savior. Romans 3:10 states, ‘As it is written, ‘There is no one righteous; not even one.’’ According to Romans 3:23, ‘For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.’ Even the most kind and considerate person on earth is a sinner in need of a Savior.

B = Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only way to obtain salvation - to get to heaven.

The Bible tells us in John 14:6, ‘Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’’ To enter into a relationship with God, we must trust in His Son, Jesus Christ, and believe that He alone can save us.

C = Confess your sins to the Lord Jesus.

This means that you will have to admit your sins and confess them to the Lord. 1 John 1:9 states, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and the cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Confession is agreeing with God that we are not perfect. Confession is calling out every known transgression, fault, issue, hurt and wrongdoing and giving them over to God. Confession is repenting of this sin and choosing to turn and go in a new direction. Confession is inviting God to cleanse us and wash us clean and new.

Confession is also the act of telling someone else what you have done. If you have invited Jesus into your heart and life today, let someone know.

Romans 10:9-10 says, *“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with the heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with the mouth that you confess and are saved.”*

You can contact me at helloredds@gmail.com. I’d love to hear about your decision.

It would be great also if you could find a Bible-believing church, and let the pastor know of your decision. He will be thrilled to hear what God has done in your life! What a great decision you have made today!

I pray that God will encourage you as you seek to know Him more and to enjoy this love relationship into which you have entered.

Let's De-Stress!

Have you ever heard of Eric Brenn?

He's been called, *“Quite possibly the most famous and skilled multi-tasker that ever graced The Ed Sullivan Show stage.”*

Eric's multitasking skill was that of spinning plates. He would enter the stage and cause five glass bowls to spin on four foot-long sticks. At the same time Eric would spin eight china plates on the tables that were holding the five glass bowls. Sometimes, he would even balance eggs and other others objects while the bowls and plates were spinning.

Eric Brenn's act was so entertaining that he was invited to perform on the Ed Sullivan Show a total of eight times.

If you'd like to see him in action, you can find a great video at <http://www.edsullivan.com/artists/erich-brenn-plate-spinner/>.

Most of us will likely not try spinning eight china plates and five glass bowls all at the same time.

However, all of us have felt like our lives were spinning out of control at times. Phones start ringing, deadlines start looming, kids start crying, bills start mounting, pressure starts building and we get stressed.

To Consider:

- 👉 So, how do we de-stress our lives?
- 👉 What steps can we take to breath a little easier?
- 👉 How can we more carefully balance everything that is spinning in our world?

I have SIX STEPS to suggest to you:

Step One - Realize there is a problem!

I think this is probably the first step in every “step” program and recovery program on the planet. Denial is such a popular way to live; most people happily go through life, pleasantly enjoying their denial.

However, to begin to de-stress and ease up the pressure in our lives, we must realize that we have a problem. We are heading down a road on a collision course with burn out because our calendars are too full and our lives are too chaotic.

The need for speed, the adrenaline rush of activity and the incredible pace of our lives is reaching a feverish pitch, and we can’t even hear how noisy it is.

An “*aholic*” is one who feels the need to compulsively do something. We are “*busyaholics*,” and we don’t even know it.

Most of us compulsively feel the need to do, to go, to drive, to hurry and to keep up the pace.

If the *busyaholics* had a club, I would be the president! I love to be going, doing, engaging, moving and completing tasks. Busy is fun for me. Busy is exciting. However, busy, for the sake of being busy, is not always best.

A few years ago, I came to face to face with my busyaholic-ness!

I had an epiphany of sorts.

I realized I had a problem.

As I would talk to friends and coworkers, they were quick to say something like, “*I know you are SO busy, but...*” Or, “*We could get together, but you are SO busy....*” And, they were right. I had more plates and bowls spinning that any one person should ever be allowed to have spinning at one time.

I really believe that if I had died suddenly during that season of my life, the engravers would have carved into my headstone these words, “*She was just SO busy!*”

During those days, through a series of challenging events, God got my attention. He changed my schedule for me, and I finally was forced to slow down.

As my world skidded to a halt, I finally had to admit to a trusted friend, “*I am a person who likes to live in the extremely high stress zone. And, I am doing this to the detriment of everyone around me, including myself.*”

My friend kindly responded, “*I know.*”

To Consider:

- 👉 How about you?
- 👉 Do you have a problem too?
- 👉 Are you a *busyaholic*?
- 👉 How do you know?
- 👉 What are the signs to look for?

I’ve designed a little nonscientific assessment for you to take. Answer each question with either “yes” or “no. Then tally up your answers.

Assessing for Stress

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1) My stress level is raised much of the time. | Yes | No |
| 2) My sleep is choppy and fleeting for me. | Yes | No |
| 3) A grouch has come to live inside my body. | Yes | No |
| 4) I’m so emotional – angry, weepy, or frustrated. | Yes | No |
| 5) I’m having many aches (head/stomach). | Yes | No |
| 6) I feel so weary; I can’t catch up on my sleep. | Yes | No |
| 7) Nothing is as fun as it once was. | Yes | No |

TOTALS

Assessing the Results:

~ If you didn't have any "yes" answers, you need to send this little book to your spouse or best friend. You are great, but you are likely in relationship with someone who is a mess.

~ If you only had 1-2 "yes" answers, then you can be alert to the possibility of potential busyaholism in your life.

~ If you have more "yes" answers than "no" answers, you probably need to reevaluate some things.

~ If you answered every question with a "yes," then you really need some de-stress therapy. (By the way, this was me)!

To begin to de-stress, we first must realize that we are too busy and suffering from the disease of "busyahoism." Then, and only then, can we move on to Step Two.

Step Two - Ask God to give you a new perspective.

Take some time to pray right now.

Invite God to give you a new outlook, a better way of looking at things. Invite Him to show you what needs to change.

As a recent seminary graduate, and I've enjoyed sitting under some wonderful teachers and professors over the past few years. One of these professors (Dr. John Mahony) taught an entire lesson about something he called, "Your Grid."

He told us that everyone looks at life through a certain grid. This grid is made up of our beliefs, perspectives, ideas, theology, preferences and life experiences. No person looks at life

through exactly the same grid. He encouraged us to ask God to show us ways in which our grids were skewed, inaccurate and just a bit off.

This is a great way to pray. You can even take the words of Scripture and turn them into a prayer. For example, you might use Psalm 139:23:

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;”*

You could pray the words of Jeremiah 17:9-10, and ask God to search your heart and mind.

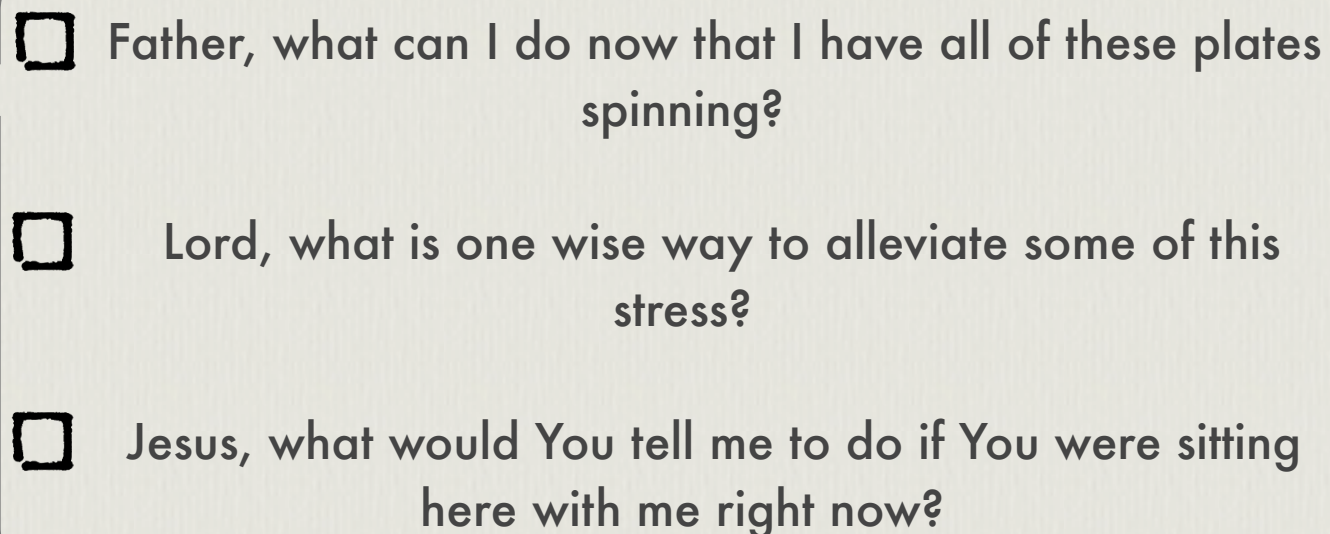
*“The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?
I, the Lord, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give every man according to his ways,
According to the fruit of his doings.”*

Why not take a minute right now and pray?

Ask God to give you a better perspective on your life, your schedule, your activity, your work, your church activities, and your priorities

Invite Him to give you a new grid on this crazy, busy, almost "insane" season in your life right now.

Here are a few questions you might talk over with the Lord:

- 
- ☐ Father, what can I do now that I have all of these plates spinning?
 - ☐ Lord, what is one wise way to alleviate some of this stress?
 - ☐ Jesus, what would You tell me to do if You were sitting here with me right now?

I'd encourage you to just be still for a little while.

I have never heard God speak audibly when I have tried this activity. However, I have had God bring things to my mind – Bible verses, wise counsel, activities I need to reconsider.

Give God the chance to impress upon you some changes you need to make. Jot down any ideas that He gives you or Bible verses that He brings to mind.

Then, move onto step three. (Steps two and three go very well together.)

Step Three - Get into the Bible.

Open up the Scriptures, read them, soak them in, pray over them and let God speak to you through His Word.

I suggest that you try to super soak yourself in the Bible for a while. Try to start and end each day with reading. Open your Bible app at work or at school, and read a few minutes on a break or at lunch.

If you aren't sure where to begin, try Proverbs. Read one chapter in Proverbs each day as it coincides with the day of the month. If today is March 3, read Proverbs 3. If today is April 13, read Proverbs 13.

During my forced “*slow down season*” that I mentioned earlier, God took me to a passage that I don't think I'd ever noticed before. It's found in the Old Testament book of Isaiah.

Isaiah wrote this wonderful passage around 714 B.C. to the Nation of Judah. Danger is approaching, and the Jewish people start freaking out. They are afraid and they are stressed out.

In Isaiah 30: 1, we can see that they have a problem. They are consulting without God. They are making plans without praying; they are making decisions without the direction of the Spirit.

***“God, the Master, The Holy of Israel, has this solemn counsel: ‘Your salvation requires you to turn back to me and stop your silly efforts to save yourselves.*”**

In verses 2-5, they start to look for solutions wherever they can find them. They hurry off to ask the Egyptians for help. They try to answer their own prayers and alleviate their own stress. They seek to solve their problems apart from God.

“Running off to Pharaoh for protection, expecting to hide out in Egypt.

Well, some protection Pharaoh will be! Some hideout, Egypt!

They look big and important, true, with officials strategically established in Zoan in the North and Hanes in the South, but there’s nothing to them.

Anyone stupid enough to trust them will end up looking stupid—All show, no substance, an embarrassing farce.”

Basically, the people of Judah calculated without God. Unfortunately, they will suffer the consequences of these errant calculations.

In verses 12-14 and 16-17, we find out how their choices would have an impact on them; we get to see the consequences of their actions.

“Therefore, The Holy of Israel says this: ‘Because you scorn this Message, preferring to live by injustice and shape your lives on lies, This perverse way of life will be like a towering, badly built wall that slowly, slowly tilts and shifts, and then one day, without warning, collapses—

Smashed to bits like a piece of pottery, smashed beyond recognition or repair, useless, a pile of debris to be swept up and thrown in the trash.

You’ve said, ‘Nothing doing! We’ll rush off on horseback!’ You’ll rush off, all right! Just not far enough! You’ve said, ‘We’ll ride off on fast horses!’ Do you think your pursuers ride old nags?

Think again: A thousand of you will scatter before one attacker. Before a mere five you'll all run off. There'll be nothing left of you –

- A flagpole on a hill with no flag,

A signpost on a roadside with the sign torn off."

Because these people would not listen to God or consult Him, they would have to endure this situation on their own. They would go it alone.

Going our own way always causes emptiness, defeat and exhaustion. Doing things on our own and apart from God usually leads to stress.

So, what is the cure? Isaiah shares the cure in Isaiah 30:15:

“God, the Master, The Holy One of Israel, has this solemn counsel: ‘Your salvation requires you to turn back to Me and stop your silly efforts to save yourselves.

Your strength will come from settling down in complete dependence on Me - the very thing you've been unwilling to do.

In returning and rest you shall be saved;

In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.””

The cure for stress relief, according to God's plan, is to return, rest, surrender and settle down in complete dependence upon God.

Rest for our souls comes from being quiet and still before the God of this universe.

What a great reminder from the Word. When I read this (during the height of my *busyaholism*), I knew God was speaking to me about getting still and surrendered before Him.

Further, I begin to consider some questions that came from reading this passage.

Here are a few that I pondered:

To Consider:

- 👉 Is God trying to give me some counsel?
- 👉 Am I using my silly efforts to save myself?
- 👉 Am I depending on God or am I unwilling to?
- 👉 Am I rushing off and just riding faster to get away?
- 👉 Am I so busy that there will eventually be nothing left of me?
- 👉 Am I about to become a “flagpole with no flag?”
- 👉 Will I soon be a signpost on the side of the road – minus the sign?

After considering and answering those questions, I continued reading in Isaiah.

The instruction didn't end there. As I gazed on down the page in this section of the scriptures, I came across some more applicable truth from the Word for those of us who travel at "Mach" speeds on a regular basis.

In Isaiah 30:18-21, more instruction is given:

"But God's not finished. He's waiting around to be gracious to you.

He's gathering strength to show mercy to you.

God takes the time to do everything right - everything.

Cry for help and you'll find it's grace and more grace.

The moment He hears, He'll answer.

Your teacher will be right there, local and on the job,

Urging you on whenever you wander left or right:

'This is the right road. Walk down this road.'"

What wonderful news!

God is not finished with us (just as He wasn't finished with the Jewish people).

He's waiting around to be gracious, full of mercy, full of grace. He will show you which way to go and which road to

walk down. He hears and answers when we cry out for His help.

After I read these promises, I began to pray and ask God to show me, which roads were "right" and which roads were "wrong."

To Consider:

- 👉 **In what ways am I rushing ahead of God?**
- 👉 **Why am I trying to do so much?**
- 👉 **Do I think I'm helping God?**
- 👉 **What plates am I spinning that I need to put down?**
- 👉 **What do I need to let go of?**
- 👉 **Which activities do I need to let someone else do?**

Through my time in study that day, I feel like God gave me some insights and some wisdom. To sum it up in one word, I felt like He was leading me to, "SIMPLIFY" everything in my life.

God gave me a new "GRID" that I thought I might share with others. Maybe this will help you today. Maybe you can share it with someone else. It's Step Four, and you can read about it next.

Step Four – Make two essential lists.

After spending some time getting still before the Lord, I took out a notebook and a pen, and I came up with a new GRID for my life. I used this grid on that day, and I use it now before I make any decision.

My New Grid:

To pour my life into this activity, ministry, or event, it must go through these two essential lists. List one is what it **MUST** do. List two is what it **MUST NOT** do.

Essential List One - THIS THING I AM CONSIDERING - MUST:

1} Glorify God and add to His Kingdom in a positive way.

~ Does this activity, ministry, event, relationship or new plate glorify God?

2} Be in the area of my gifting – not just in an area I can do.

~ Does this activity, ministry, event, relationship or new plate fall into my sweet spot? Is it in my wheelhouse?

3} Be okay with my family. They must be absolutely ok with me doing this.

~ Is this activity, ministry, event, relationship or new plate okay for my family? Are they truly okay with me taking this

thing on? Have I talked to them about it and heard what they had to say?

4} Be prayed over for at least 24 hours before an answer is given.

~ Have I prayed over this activity, ministry, event, relationship or new plate for at least one full day, if not longer?

Essential List Two – THIS THING THAT I AM CONSIDERING - MUST NOT:

1} Take much time away from my family.

2} Be something I HATE after it is over.

3} Make me a grouch. (Will I be grumpy before, during, and after)?

4} Be a good, but not a great thing. (*Only do GREAT things*)!

5} Take away from the other great things I am doing.

6} Steal my joy and my peace.

Essential List One - Musts

1. Glorify God & Add to His Kingdom.
2. Be in the Area of My Giftedness.
3. Be Okay with My Family.
4. Be Prayed Over for 24 Hours Before Deciding.

Essential List Two - Must Not

1. Take time away from family.
2. Be something I hate when it's over.
3. Make me a grouch.
4. Be good, but not great.
5. Take away from other great things I am doing now.
6. Steal my joy or peace.

Let me share an example at this point to illustrate the essential lists. During my slow down season, we were serving at a church that was filled with young families and babies. There was always a HUGE need for nursery workers in the church.

The nursery director was a good friend of mine, and she would ask me to help in the nursery on occasion. Because I could, I would agree to work. I don't think I ever said, "No."

But, there was a night when my husband and I kept the two year old class during a revival service. We were in that nursery for THREE hours. I don't think I've ever been as exhausted and worn out as I was after keeping those 10 or 20 or 100 little children that we kept.

My husband and I both got into the car that night and said, *"Never again!"*

From that juncture on, I would politely decline requests for nursery help or offer to help find some other volunteers. However, I was not to be one of them. Why? Because I was now looking at life through a different grid.

Consider my essential list questions again:

Essential List One:

1} Glorify God & Add to His Kingdom. *(Of course)*

2} Be in the Area of My Giftedness. *(NO)*

3} Be Okay with My Family. *(NO)*

4} Be Prayed Over for 24 Hours Before Deciding. *(NO)*

Essential List One:

1} Does it take much time away from my family? *(YES)*

2} Will it be something I HATE after it is over? *(YES)*

3} Does it make me a grouch? *(YES)*

4} Will it be a good, but not a great thing? *(YES)*

5} Does it take away from the great things I could be doing?
(YES)

6} Will it steal my joy and my peace? *(YES)*

I love little children. I really do. I think working with them is fabulous - for someone else.

I enjoy them in the halls, but I don't love taking care of a whole bunch of them while enclosed in a small room.

Besides, I'd rather be ministering to their parents than to them.

In addition, there are some people who really love to work in the nursery. When I fill the spot or take on the need, then I take away someone else's chance to serve.

- *Do you see how this works?*
- *Does my story help you to consider some activities in your own life that might not be best?*
- *Are there some ministries you need to hand off to someone else?*
- *Is there some work you can let someone else handle?*
- *Are you working in your area of greatest gifting?*

To Consider:

- 👉 Does my heart get excited at the thought of doing it?
- 👉 Do I want to tell others what I am doing?
- 👉 Have I done something like this before? What was the result?
- 👉 Will I be glad I did it when it is over?
- 👉 Am I refreshed or tired when it is over?
- 👉 Do I want to do it again soon? Or, am I hoping to never do it again?

After considering my two lists, there are a few other questions to ponder as you are seeking to make a good decision:

These are just the questions and lists that God gave me as I studied Isaiah 30 and prayed over some of my choices.

You may come up with additional questions that you'd like to add to your lists. You may wish to take a few out.

The main point in this step is to: uncover a new and better grid. To do this, we must take the time to contemplate, ponder, pray and ask God to show us what is best.

The goal of Step Four is prayerful, careful consideration!

Step Five - Talk to some wise people.

To get you started, hear the wisdom of a few wise people that you may not know:

“When in doubt, don’t!” (Anonymous)

“The art of leadership is saying no, not saying yes. It is very easy to say yes.” (Tony Blair)

“And it comes from saying no to 1,000 things to make sure we don't get on the wrong track or try to do too much. We're always thinking about new markets we could enter, but it's only by saying no that you can concentrate on the things that are really important.” (Steve Jobs)

“Half of the troubles of this life can be traced to saying yes too quickly and not saying no soon enough.” (Josh Billings)

When I am trying to make a wise decision, I will follow these four steps:

- 1} I'll admit I'm a *busyaholic*.
 - 2} I'll get very still and spend some time praying.
 - 3} I'll open the Bible to read and study.
 - 4} I'll use my “new grid” questions for careful, prayerful consideration.
- I employ my two essential lists.

After I have completed all four of these steps, I will seek out some wise counsel.

I will go to 3-4 people in this world that I greatly trust to get their advice. All of these people are people of prayer who love the Word. All of them speak the truth in love to me – no matter how difficult it might be to do so. Additionally, all of my wise counselors love me; they are FOR me.

Let me offer a personal illustration about seeking wise counsel.

A couple of years ago, I was praying over what seemed like an amazing job opportunity. The company was super, the people were great, the pay was excellent, the future was bright and I was getting excited about this job possibility.

I prayed over it, pondered it, spent time reading the Bible and employed my two lists of essential questions. This was a perfect job for me. I was ready to accept the position.

However, when I began to share this job opportunity with my trusted advisors, I was not met with similar enthusiasm.

Every one of my close friends and advisors discouraged me from taking this job. One by one, each of my trusted friends gently discouraged me from accepting the position.

I was blown away. I was hurt. I was so disappointed.


Was it a great job? Yes!


But was it really a great job for me? No.

Eventually, my advisors helped me to see the truth. They saw what I was either unable or unwilling to see – that job would ultimately be a horrible fit for me.

As discouraged as I was by their honesty, I knew God had used my trusted friends to protect me and to prevent me from making a huge mistake.

To Consider:

 **How about you?**

 **Do you have some trusted friends who will speak loving truth to you?**

 **Do you have some wise advisors in your life?**

If you do not have any wise advisors and friends in your life, pray and ask God to give you 3-4 people like this.

You might consider a pastor, a boss, a Bible study teacher, a parent, a sibling or someone else.

To see if the person is a good fit to advise you, start out by asking them for advice on something small. Notice how they respond. If you find them to be kind and wise, invite them to speak into your life on a bigger matter.

Proverbs shares many verses about the wisdom of getting counsel from others. One verse that often comes to is Proverbs 24:6b, *“In multitude of counselors there is safety.”*

Let's review the first 5 steps:

Step One - Realize there is a problem!

Step Two - Ask God to give you a new perspective.

Step Three - Get into the Bible.

Step Four – Make two essential lists.

Step Five - Talk to some wise people.

After practicing steps 1-5, it's time to move onto the final step. You are going to put this into action in your own life.

Ready to try it for yourself?

Step Six – Put it into action for yourself.

The final step in de-stressing your life is to take some action yourself.

To take action, you will need:

- *About 20 Minutes*
- *A Pen*
- *A Notebook or paper*

You are going to need to make two lists to get you started on cutting back and putting down some of the unneeded, stress-causing plates in you life.

ACTION ONE –

First, list the things you have on your plate that are “killing” you right now that you can cut out. (No, you probably can’t quit your job or your family today!)

~ These "cut outs" are things that you don’t have to do, don’t need to do, and could walk away from.

~ Trim back on the nonessentials.

~ Cut back on what is not really necessary.

~ Try to come up with at least 3 things you can quit doing this week!

For example, you could stop volunteering to make all the class cookies, to work in the nursery or to take every meal. You could get off of a committee, step back from singing in the choir for a while or get off some other team or rotation. You can turn off the TV, get off of Facebook or quit trying to “like” everyone’s posts.

Your list might look like this:

Things I will cut out:

- 1} Step back from the choir for now.*
- 2} Get off of that extra committee at work or church.*
- 3} Watch one less program and go to bed earlier at night.*

ACTION TWO –

Next, list those things that you wish to NEVER do again.

Write them out and keep them in front of you. (You will get asked to do them again sometime).

~ Think of those things that give you the worst taste in your mouth.

~ What are those activities you wish you never had to do again? What are the responsibilities you have hated most?

If you honestly cannot come up with 2-3 things for this list, ask your spouse or a close friend to assist you!

For example, your list might look like this:

Things I will NEVER do again:

1} Work in the nursery.

2} Go to a jewelry or other party for a friend who is starting a business. I hate the pressure of having to buy something I cannot afford.

3} Work all weekend for my pushy boss.

Now, take ACTION ONE, and start getting out of things that you can get out of. *(Most of these things you hate anyway!)*

~ Send the email, make the call, or write the letter.

~ Do it NOW!

~ Be kind. Be gracious. Be decisive. Be free!

Then put ACTION TWO in a place where you can't miss it!

**You will want to be able to refer to it when someone calls!
(And, they will!)**

This is not going to be easy – especially if your busy habit is engrained in your very DNA (like mine is)!

However, you can do this! Even it doesn't feel good and even if you don't do it well.

Let me share one of my wimpy but effective efforts in this area:

Not long ago, a sweet woman in our church pulled me aside and put the “*full court press*” on me.

She wanted me to help her with some kids in a Sunday night Bible memory program. For about ten minutes, I heard how much they really needed me in this ministry. There was such a void, and I really should consider filling it.

She asked me to pray about it and get back to her.

I felt compelled to help, but I didn't really feel called. I agonized over it for several days. I hated to “*let her down.*” Saying “No” is never fun for me. Maybe you can relate?

After a couple of weeks of praying and pondering while using my new grid, I rather begrudgingly sent her an email to her know that I would not be able to help.

At church that night I ran into her. She knew I'd sent her an email, but she hadn't had the chance to read it. So, I had to go through the efforts of saying of “No” again.

I told her that I would not be able to help her.

I thought she might be sad or hurt. Instead, she motioned her hand like she was blowing it off, and she said, “*Oh, it's no*

big deal. This other woman is coming back to help, and we really don't need you after all."

I was a bit shocked, but this event proves my point.

We are not meant to take every job, to meet every need or to fill every void. Each of us is only a part of the Body of Christ. None of us were meant to do all the parts!

As we close, let me remind you of the six steps to de-stressing your life:

Step One - Realize there is a problem!

Step Two - Ask God to give you a new perspective.

Step Three - Get into the Bible.

Step Four – Make two essential lists.

Step Five - Talk to some wise people.

Step Six – Put it into action for yourself.

That's it!

It's certainly not rocket science, but I pray it will be a helpful exercise for you to do in your own life when you are feeling the stress of making decisions.

By completing these six steps, I feel better and so much less stressed. I have a new GRID to look through, and I pray you will as well.

I'd love to hear from you and know how God uses these book to help you. I'd love to know if you were able to de-stress a bit.

You can reach me by email at helloredds@gmail.com.

Blessings to you as you really seek to de-stress.

I leave you with one of the best de-stress passages in all of scripture:

“Are you tired?

Worn out?

Burned out on religion?

Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life.

I’ll show you how to take a real rest.

Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it.

Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.

I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you.

Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Matthew 11:28-30, MSG

about the author

A lifelong Memphian, Randy and I have been in ministry now for almost 20 years. We've been married for 24 years and, we are greatly enjoy our two college-age children, Riley and Emily. We make our home in Memphis, Tennessee.

My undergraduate work was completed at Baylor University, where I majored in Education and English. After college, I returned to the Memphis area to teach at Presbyterian Day School and then Evangelical Christian School. During this time, I also began writing curriculum, Bible lessons and Sunday school lessons for LifeWay Christian Resources.

As God brought Riley and Emily into our lives, we sensed the call of God upon our lives and surrendered to full time Christian ministry. Randy has served on several church staffs and I've been at his side teaching, ministering to women and raising our kids.

A move to Rocky Mount, NC created an opportunity for me to serve as the Women's Ministry Director at Englewood Baptist Church. This job gave me the chance to oversee, organize, lead, and manage adult women within the church through Bible studies, large events, community outreach, and building up the ministries of sister churches. This job further involved public relations, personal meetings, raising support, counseling, resolving conflicts and enlisting volunteers.

While in North Carolina, I also published my first book, *Stepping Closer to the Savior*. (The book is available at Amazon.com).

When we moved back to the Memphis area a few years ago, I was hired as the Women's Ministry Director at Faith Baptist Church in

Bartlett, TN. I served there for almost four years organizing events, discipling women, teaching Bible study, reaching out in the community and speaking at retreats, conferences, nursing homes, prisons and many other places.

Just a few years ago, I went back to school full-time to finish my Masters in Christian Education at Mid America Baptist Theological Seminary. I graduated in December of 2014, walking the stage to receive my degree.

I've been working part-time at Mid America Seminary as an Adjunct Teacher primarily teaching young women who are in seminary or married to a seminary student. Additionally, I have had the chance to teach many Bible studies, lead retreats and speak at events throughout the Mid south area.

At present, my heart is to focus on my ministry of hope and on my family. As I write, blog, speak to groups, teach Bible studies, serve in my church and reach out in the community, it is my prayer that I will be, *‘An encouragement to all the people that God brings my way.’*

other resources by the author

I've written (or been part of) three books that you can find on Amazon.com. If you go to the site and type in my name, you will be taken to one of these books. The titles include:

- ~ *Stepping Closer to the Savior*
- ~ *A Women's Daily Devotional*
- ~ *Looking for Amazing Women in Baptist History*

My "Amazon.com Author Page" will give you more details about these titles. You can use this link:

<http://www.amazon.com/Melanie-M.-Redd/e/B00L8JWALY>.

Also, you can enjoy my blog and website at www.melanieredd.com. I add several posts per week that are positive articles written to inspire and encourage you. I invite you to stop by the website, look around and leave your comments.

I'm active on other forms of social media. Here's how to find me:

- *On Facebook - "Ministry of Hope with Melanie Redd"*
- *On Twitter - @Melanie Redd*
- *On Instagram - @melredd82*
- *On Pinterest - Melanie Redd*
- *On Linked In - Melanie Redd*
- *On Google Plus - Melanie Redd*

