

# THE ORANGE COUNTY BETA REGISTER

## Might as well face it, we're addicted to stress

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Ladies, are you stressed to the point of addiction?

Sound like a silly question? Maybe, but we women tend to take on the heavy-duty job of being "everything to everyone."

Stress-management expert Debbie Mandel, author of "Addicted to Stress: A Woman's 7-Step Program to Reclaim Joy and Spontaneity in Life," believes she can help women break the habit and eliminate it from daily routine.

The first chapter includes a 10-question quiz to help you determine if you are in the stress-addicted crowd.

Mandel explains what it means to be a stress addict and offers her insight on how we can still live our busy lives without letting stress overwhelm Happiness.

### **Q. How does a woman know when the stress she's feeling has crossed over to addiction?**

**A.** The key is that women tend to live for the future – what's next on their "to do" list, rather than in the moment. Ask yourself, do I feel guilty about taking free time to do nothing? Do I hear myself saying "I'm crazy busy?" Do you feel that you're dancing as fast as you can? If you are, you need to have a reality check and take stock about all you're doing.

Are you going to sleep unhappy all the time? Are you avoiding the inner truth about your unhappiness?

### **Q. You're the host of a weekly health and fitness radio program in New York City, you do relationship and stress management workshops, you're a college professor and you're married with kids. How do you keep from becoming a stress addict?**

**A.** When my mom was diagnosed with Alzheimer's it taught me a lot about letting go of past issues and the importance of living in the moment. It was my "aha" moment. I did have to take stock of my life and my identity. I frequently use personal introspection to work on my own inner peace. Adversity is a wonderful teacher – it truly helped me rewire my own circuitry. It was how I came up with the seven steps to regain the inner girl. I wasn't really in charge of everyone else's happiness – just my own.

### **Q. Do you think women will truly be open to let others in to help?**

**A.** If you're tired enough, hurt enough and admit you need the help, yes. Especially in this recession – women are getting to the point where they're recognizing that they need to value themselves and not deplete their entire being.

I am a terrible cook, so out of necessity I realized that I needed to get the family involved in getting dinner on the table. We all would come home hungry – why should it fall on my shoulders alone? I decided it was better to teach my family to fish than just serve it. Now one will set the table, one will make the salad, one will clean up. If I'm having people over I ask them to bring the signature dish to share. It makes things so much easier. My daughter makes a much better salad than I do!

**Q. Why write about stress?**

**A.** I realized that I wasn't listening to people; I was thinking about what was coming next. Callers brought it up on my radio show. It was always on the top of the board during my relationship workshops. I was hearing constantly "I'm so busy I don't know which way is up," and the women were saying it in a bragging tone of voice!

**Q. Is there an age group that you think will get the most out of your book?**

**A.** Honestly, I think every decade has its own stress. Getting careers and lives started. Not all women have children, but those who do have the stress of working and raising children. Then you've got the decades when your parents are getting older and may need caretakers. In between, you have the sandwich generation trying to take care of their kids, their relationships and their parents.

I'm hoping that the fact that women take that first step in realizing that life as they know it is out of balance it will lead them to change.

Women need to see the global picture: correlate the back ache, the stomachache, exhaustion and such and try the seven steps in succession.

**Q. What do you think is the first step a woman should take in letting go of her need for stress?**

**A.** Find what truth resonates within you. You don't need to have medical statistics from any university that will later be retracted! One day eggs are a great source of protein, the next they're bad for you. Same with red wine and dark chocolate. We need to know what our own needs are.

We women tend to take ourselves way too seriously. We need to take some time and tap into our version of fun, use our sense of humor and remember how it felt to be a spontaneous girl! We have to allow ourselves to cut loose – it truly is our gift to ourselves to find out what makes our hearts sing and makes us happy. That finding is what will let us get rid of stress in our lives.

*For more information, go to [addictedtostress.com](http://addictedtostress.com).*

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