

**SOUND CHANGES™**  
**HOW TO REMAIN SANE**  
**EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE KIDS**  
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The most fulfilling thing on earth is to be a parent, but it is also the hardest, most stressful and button pushing work ever. We've all heard the phrase "do as I say not as I do", but honestly Moms and Dads, what we **do** will teach our children more than what we could ever say. So if you are worried that your child is having symptoms of stress, then it's important that you also learn to manage the stress that is part of life. The good news is that there are many tried and true strategies to help us manage stress.

First, let's have a look at some mental habits that actually increase stress,

The first is negative attention, or focusing on what you don't want/like, rather than what you could see as challenging, interesting, or growth producing.

The second common habit to induce stress is an insistence and needing that things be a certain way, rather than preferring the same. Insistence on things being a certain way implies an attachment to a particular outcome, and thus sets you up for disappointment. If instead you *prefer* an outcome, you still identify your wishes and desires, yet this attitude contains energy of letting go. Preferring carries an element of trust in the unfolding of life and the confidence that whatever happens, you have the resources and ability to handle life.

*It's better to have what you need than to need what you want.*

**The 6 strategies to stress less and enjoy life more follow:**

1. Think healthy - focus on what you do want rather than what you don't want, let go of insisting or clinging to a particular outcome. Where are your thoughts? Are you focusing on what is wrong? Or is your awareness on the solution? Are you turning your wants into needs? When you NEED what you WANT then you create unnecessary stress. Try shifting your needs into preferences, relaxing, breathing and remembering the big picture.
2. Breathe - breathe in fully and completely let go of your breath. Breathing is a metaphor for life. Take it in fully and let go of what you do not need. When your children see you breathe mindfully and notice how relaxed you are, they will model in kind. Breathing is the most powerful way to interrupt the stress response and activate the relaxation response!

3. Move – exercise daily if possible even if you only stretch your body, you will keep it flexible and resilient and this will in turn strengthen the resiliency of your emotions and the flexibility of your mind.
4. Awareness – maintain a consciousness of your habitual patterns. We cannot expect our children to do something that we ourselves are not willing to do. If something is not working, cease the pattern and make another conscious choice.
5. Communicate – be assertive, you are allowed to have feelings too! State your truth with harmless intention and allow your child to have a truth that may differ from yours. Respect your needs and at the same time celebrate diversity in your loved ones. Catch your child being good and notice and comment on her unique qualities, even if she doesn't believe you today, one day she will hear your words echo in her mind.
6. Sound Sleep – sleep is crucial to managing stress and feelings of well-being. If needed, create a routine for yourself that includes a soothing and calming ritual before bed. If there is something on your mind, talk to a friend or journal - get those feelings out of your body and onto some paper or into a friend's ear! Meditation prior to bedtime can create a nice transition to sleep. A spray of lavender or nutritional supplements may be considered to support a healthy sleep.

Keep in mind these six strategies as you remember that you are setting an example for your child to learn how to deal with life. Remember one of the few things you can choose is how you respond to life!!

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Ellen Simon is a mother of five, with children who range in age from 10 to 25 years old. She specializes in mind body health, utilizing biofeedback, neurofeedback, imagery and medical hypnosis. Ellen has created a unique brand of guided imagery audio CD's, and is the author of over 25 titles in use in hospitals and health care facilities across the country.

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