

ANA CARAGEA

5 MOST IMPORTANT RULES FOR MINIMISING YOUR STRESS LEVELS

5 UNEXPECTED RULES

5 Most Important Rules for Minimising your Stress Levels

Oxford Dictionary defines **Stress** as “*a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.*”

Over the next few pages for our journey together, we will be focusing on this meaning.

There are so many e-books and information available on this topic. So why would you invest your precious time in reading another one? What makes this one different?

The answer to that is: **Perspective.**

In my research on this topic I've realised that a considerable amount of advice on stress is based on looking at the effects stress has and that they are providing quick or surface relief. Yeah, it might be OK for today and for tomorrow, but how about for 2-3 years from now, 10 years from now?

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I've always been fascinated by the bigger picture, by the long-term approaches. And a surface relief doesn't sit well with me. If that's the case for you too, then I invite you to continue reading.

We go deep, at the root causes. We get curious and explore. One step at a time.

If any of my suggestions feel good for you, sound real to you, I'm inviting you to give yourself permission to test them for yourself. I want you to discover what is a good fit for you. Not all the advice in the world would work for you. I want you to **Remember** that you are a **Unique human being** and that **YOU are the Expert on your Life!** You know best what's good for you, don't let anyone else try to convince you otherwise!

My rules are for your guidance and only YOU know if you want to integrate them in your life or not. Although, if I may, I would suggest you to continue reading and keep your mind open. You might want to consider some of the following rules.

5 Most Important Rules for Minimising your Stress Levels

Rule #1 – Self-Love

Why is this rule important and what does it do for you?

Going back to our wonderful dictionary, self-love is described as “regard for one's own well-being and happiness.” If we don't know how to love ourselves, then we won't be able to keep our stress in control.

Unfortunately, we don't really learn about self-love in school and sometimes, not even at home with our family. But if we don't learn it at an early age, it doesn't mean that we can't learn it now. We can and we must. We might survive without self-love, but we will not experience as much joy as we are meant to experience.

Life's about **fun, joy, peace, calmness, adventure, love**. It's hard to experience these at their fullest, without self-love.

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What's the difference between someone who feels it and someone who doesn't?

Someone who feels self-love is someone who accepts who they are, their good and their bad traits (physical and emotional) and holds themselves in high esteem. They value their time and energy and are adjusting their stress level accordingly.

From my point of view, the people who have less self-love are the ones that also speak badly about themselves. This is not an "universal rule", also known as a standard or a widespread general rule, but it is a fair observation.

I've been an observer of human behaviour all of my life, as most introverts are. And I've realised that when someone is speaking badly about themselves in a public setting, they are usually speaking worse about themselves when they're alone. **The inner critic** (the voices that we hear in our mind, our thoughts about ourselves) is a powerful factor when it comes to self-love.

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I sometimes ask my coaching clients if they would speak badly to their friends, if they were to be in the same situation. The answer is always No. “I would never speak like this to my friends, I would be more compassionate and gentle if they were in my situation” said Jenny once during our coaching call. So, if we can be nice to our friends, why wouldn’t we be nice to ourselves?

To sum it up: **be nice to yourself, you matter, there’s no one else like you!** When you’re nice to yourself, your stress level decreases as you will not allow it to take over and run your life.

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Rule #2 – Self-Care

We've covered Self-Love. It's now time for Self-Care. These first two rules are closely connected. When we love ourselves, we tend to do more self-caring and, the more self-caring we do, the more we love ourselves.

Again, why is it important to have more self-care and how does it relate with minimising stress?

When we take care of our needs – emotional, physical and spiritual – we are in tune with our body and mind. We become more aware of what level of stress we can manage to have. Stress is not all bad. We need a certain degree of it to function. The drama starts when we overload our sensors and we can't cope any more. **We are the only ones responsible for our well-being.**

It takes practice to learn what is an acceptable level of stress and what is unacceptable for our system.

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Some tips to help you with self-care:

- What are some of your **emotional needs** that you have to pay more attention to? (peace of mind, love, joy, excitement, adventure, etc.)
- How can you take better care of your **body**? (eating well, exercising, sleeping, etc.)
- What practices can you include in your day so that you feel **spiritually connected**? (yoga, meditation, journaling, praying, etc)

Mix and match what feels good to you and keep going until you've found your daily self-care practice. **You matter! You are important!** Your self-care is your responsibility.

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Rule #3 – Boundaries

I'm going back to my friend, the dictionary, because language has a generative force in our lives. When we understand correctly the meaning of a word, we have a better understanding of its power over our minds. So here it is: **boundary** is defined as "*a line which marks the limits of an area; a dividing line*".

This is very important to note: a line which marks the limits of an area. When we set personal boundaries, we let others know how they can be around us. This simple act of stating our boundaries conveys the message that we are important, that our energy has a great value to us.

Yet again, this is not something that we learn in school. I go back to this issue of not learning things in school because our younger years have a tremendous influence on our adult life. We develop certain beliefs about life and about what's possible for us at that young age. And most of these beliefs are unconscious, we are not aware of them.

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The bad news is that these beliefs can keep us from living a healthy and joyful life, not fulfilling our potential. The good news is that we can come back later on and heal the beliefs that are not serving us. We can do that with the help of a coach or a therapist.

Coming back to boundaries, when you love yourself, care for yourself, you learn to decide what these limits are for you. Then, you start to communicate them clearly to your peers, to your family and to your friends. And life transforms. You are in charge of what is acceptable – how one can speak to you and behave around you.

A starting point for you could be to ask your coach to help you with finding out more about your **values** (“the principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgement of what is important in life” - Oxford Dictionary). What are your **core values**? How do you integrate them at your work place? At home? With your friends? Get curious, play, explore.

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When we become aware of our behavioural triggers, we transform them into nuggets of healing and learning opportunities.

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The more awareness you have around your values, the easier it becomes for you to set up your boundaries. When you become aware of your boundaries, you will start to learn how to manage your stress levels.

I want to clarify something about your boundaries. These aren't meant to keep your heart closed, they are meant to give you some space to breathe, so that you can really see what's important to you. Newsflash: **we have just one life** and finding what's important for us helps with the path that we want to step on. You have unique skills and abilities, **you are one of a kind**. **Find your path and make it your own!**

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Rule # 4 - Permission to make mistakes

This is a fun rule! But not easy for everyone. It is possible that for some of you, making mistakes is extremely hard. And it all goes back to your childhood. Were you rewarded with love, affection, gifts, attention when you made no mistakes, when you had it all figured out with the least steps possible? If your answer is yes, then it's no wonder that it's so hard for you to take risks and make mistakes. It all makes sense now. And of course, the level of stress that you might feel around this could be really high.

And that's OK. Now you have a new perspective. It might be an insight for you. Go deeper, get curious without judging yourself or your family. We all do our best with what we know at the time being.

So, give yourself permission to not know everything correctly from the first try. Play with it. Invite more fun into your life. Invite more love for yourself and for your family. This again, is not learnt in schools.

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Hire a coach to help you become gentler towards yourself, to help you with becoming less severe with your own judging (remember the Inner Critic from Rule #1?).

If you have high standards for your work and for your life you might think that this rule can actually stress you more. It's great to have high standards for yourself, but remember, you are still a human being, and by definition we are meant to make mistakes. You too will make some mistakes. Give yourself permission to let your perfectionism take a break. You are now an adult and you get to decide if that is really that important to you or you are still running on old conditioning from your childhood. **Your life, your rules!**

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Rule # 5 - Slowing down

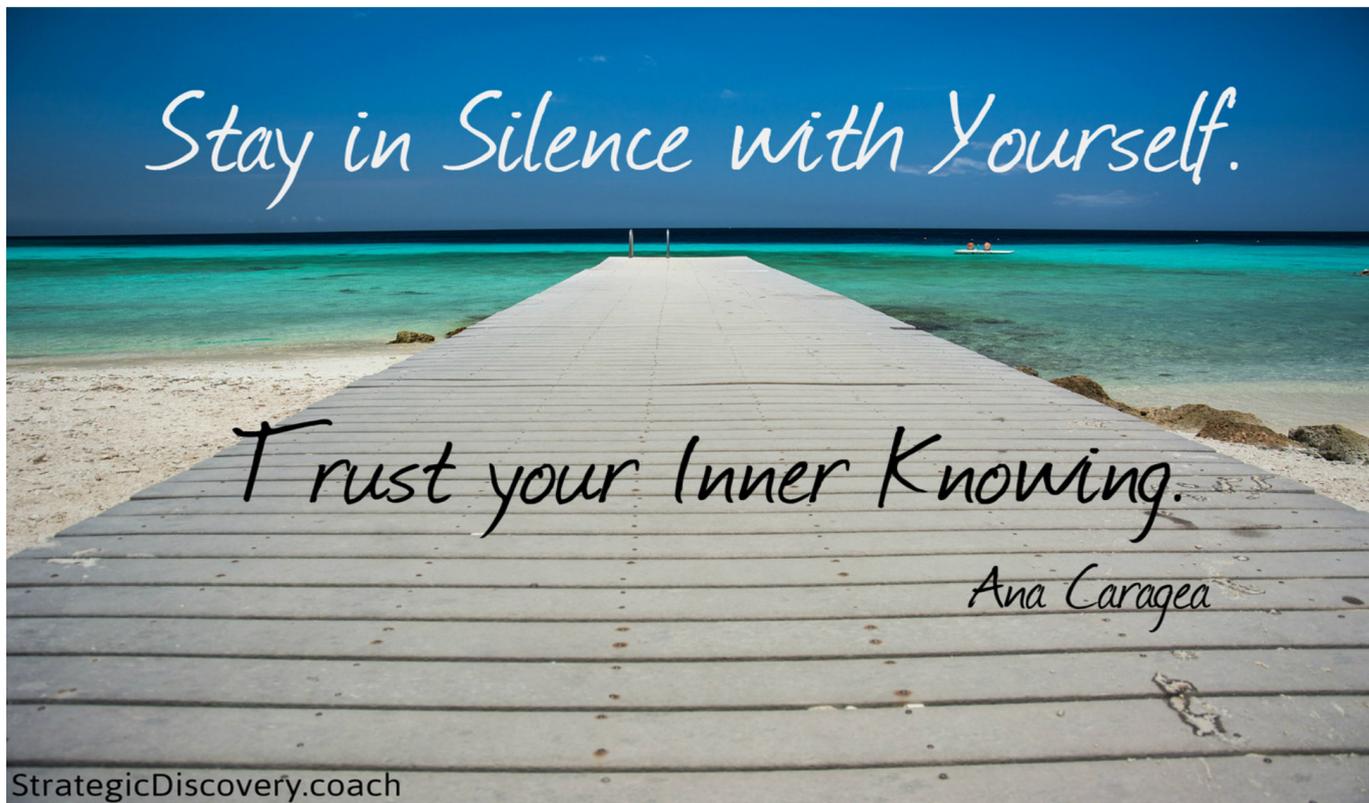
The last rule might sound counter-intuitive for high performers. Slowing down doesn't get things done. Or does it?

One of my clients realised that she was feeling a great amount of stress due to her business and due to an upcoming relocation of her family. We worked together to find better ways for her to minimise that stress.

When I first introduced her to this rule, she didn't really agree with my view. The image that I shared with her is funny, but illustrative: do you remember old cartoons where either a dog or a cat, was trying to run really fast, but because it was on some slippery tiles, it wasn't making any progress, was stuck in the same place? That's us, when our mind is in ten different directions and we want to move forward. We can't focus, we feel more stress and we're still in the same spot.

She later realised that slowing down was really hard for her. We continued our work together and now she mastered this practice.

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Slow down! Breathe! Create some space to really take things easy. You create your life and you get to choose to slow things down. If you continue rushing and running you will only **burn out**. I'm assuming that you don't want that.

For someone who is used to a high pace, slowing down is not comfortable. Invest in a coach to help you with that, to give you some great tools and accountability. By investing in your life, some of your ROI (return on investment) will be your peace of mind, health, joy, focus, productivity, stamina and so much more. **You are worth it and your life and happiness matter!**

5 Most Important Rules for Minimising your Stress Levels

These are the 5 Rules (“one of a set of explicit or understood regulations or principles governing conduct or procedure within a particular area of activity.” – Oxford Dictionary) that I consider the most important when it comes to minimising our stress levels. They are my recommendations to you, as I trust that you’ll take what sounds good and true for you. **Create your own mix and match set of rules** and give yourself permission to play with them and experiment. But **do commit** to start decreasing your stress levels, for your health and well-being.

Remember: *you are a unique, beautiful soul meant for greatness, joy and love!*

Thank you for reading my e-book! I hope it offered you a new perspective on Stress and on how you can minimise it!

Talk to you soon!

Ana

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A brief description :)



My name is Ana Caragea, I am a Leadership Coach and I help overworked and overstressed young managers boost their work productivity while having fun.

For a long time, I didn't give myself enough credit for my patience and for my ability to instil a calm state for the people with whom I was spending time. Over the past years, I became aware of that and now I help my coaching clients with their challenges around self-awareness, self-care and stress management.

To learn more about my personal journey and my professional development, please visit my website:



Want to work with me? Let's talk! I work only with a few clients per month, but I would love to set up an appointment to see if I can support you with challenges and with your future projects.

Let's talk

