Too Blessed to be Stressed

Debora M. Coty

TIPS for Women’s Ministry LEADERS
Too Blessed to be Stressed—
Tips for Women’s
Ministry Leaders

Debora M. Coty
www.DeboraCoty.com

Humorist, Speaker and Award-Winning Author
of the bestselling

Too Blessed to be Stressed

line of women’s inspirational books
“If we are ‘out of our mind,’
as some say, it is for God.”
2 Corinthians 5:13 NIV
Introduction

In your role as a women’s ministry coordinator, are you sometimes as stressed as the proverbial one-armed wallpaper hanger? Do you ever feel torn in six different directions at once? Is the fine line separating family and church responsibilities often fuzzy?

As a crazy-busy woman, wife, mom, working grunt, and ministry associate, I completely get it. Welcome to the slightly frazzled sisterhood that share your distress about stress.

This little booklet is my gift to you, dear friend; my way of supporting you, and to say thanks for the sacrifices you make and the mega-energy you spend to point other women to Christ.

Besides a short piece (in my signature “humor-with-a-message” style) about the challenges of finding home/ministry balance, I’ve included some pertinent reflection questions, a killer comfort-food recipe straight from the Fire and Brimstone Bakery (actually it’s from my Too Blessed to be Stressed Cookbook), and a hilarious overview of the ministry of chocolate. Ah, yes, it’s true: Sugar shows and money talks, but chocolate sings!

Above all, I’d like to remind you how to laugh, girlfriend, despite the stress mess you may sometimes encounter in your work for Papa God. Because laughter is a catalyst that releases the joy of the Lord in your soul and colors tomorrow with hope.

Hugs,

Deb
Shoving the Envelope
Finding Balance Between Home and Ministry

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord…
COLOSSIANS 3:17, NASB

Enthusiasm is a good thing, right? We should be passionate about things we feel strongly about. But are there limits, even to passion? A fine line to avoid crossing when gusto begins to tangle our nerves instead of soothe them?

My health-food nut husband, Chuck, was absolutely thrilled with his new handy dandy juicer. This was not just your average, everyday juicer. This puppy could pretty much suck down the entire contents of our refrigerator in one gulp and spit out a vat of thick, gray, disgusting-looking, but oh, so healthy juice within seconds.

Chuck got his jollies in demonstrating his new toy to everyone who so much as planted a toe within 100 yards of our house. Like “Tim the Tool Man Taylor” in the old hit TV show, he took great pride in morphing into Chuck the Juice Man Coty, repeatedly constructing and dismantling the stainless steel monster, and revving the mega-horsepower motor that sounded like a rocket launcher.

After a while, he began experimenting with various juice concoctions. His goal was to create that ultimate lifetime accomplishment: the healthiest, power-packed liquid food known to man.
So instead of juicing five organic carrots with a few apples for breakfast, he added a whole pound of carrots. Instead of a smidge of carrot flavor with his mixed greens and beet lunch innovation, he crammed an entire grocery store carrot display into the machine and out gushed a river of orange sludge.

After three weeks of this ultra-healthy diet, one night at Bible Study, I noticed our friend Sharon, a registered nurse, staring at Chuck. She didn’t take her eyes off him, even through prayer time. After the last amen, she pulled me aside and whispered, “Has Chuck had a check-up lately? I think his liver may be malfunctioning.”

“What?” I nearly shouted in surprise. “Why would you think that?”

“Well, just look at him. He’s so jaundiced, he glows.”

We both turned to gawk. Sure enough, Chuck’s skin was the color of a shining jack-o-lantern. I don’t know how I hadn’t noticed before. Worried, I motioned for Chuck to join us in a secluded corner and Sharon shared her dire concerns.

To my astonishment, Chuck burst into laughter as Sharon and I looked helplessly at each other. “It’s the carrots,” he explained between guffaws. “Gotta be the carrots. Too much beta carotene. Must’ve spilled over into my system.”

Thankfully, as he trimmed his carrot intake during the following month, he looked less and less like a steroidal tangerine. Foiled in his first attempt, he decided to try, try again to create the world’s healthiest smoothie.

“I’ve been taking garlic tablets for years,” he thought (he tells me it’s a superb anti-fungal agent). What if I add fresh garlic to my juice?

A fine notion, perhaps, but he forgot one thing. Processed garlic tablets are odorless. And very small. Can you see where we’re headed here?

So, following the Tim Taylor line of reasoning that if a little is good, a lot is better, one fine morning Chuck crammed two whole
cloves of garlic down the juicer chute along with his usual bushel of produce. He happily downed the concoction and naively returned to work at his computer.

Have you ever seen a picture of Hiroshima?
That’s what happened in his stomach about ten minutes later. And the gift kept on giving. Garlic exploded through every possible exit out of his body for the next two weeks. When he wasn’t groaning in the bathroom, his loving family reaped the consequences of his ill-fated health experiment. Besides eye-watering belches and, um, potent flatulence (is there a nice word for this?), garlic odor oozed out of every wretched pore and encompassed him in a toxic cloud like Charlie Brown’s filthy bud, Pigpen.

When I vowed, “For better or worse” at my wedding, I had no clue how diverse “worse” could be. Instead of just pushing the envelope, my husband was shoving it.

But food isn’t the only realm where extremes aren’t healthy. As a young mom, I thought “give your all to God” meant “hop till you drop.”

On Sundays, Papa God’s designated day of rest and worship, I’d awaken at dawn, nurse, bathe, dress the baby, rouse the rest of the fam, feed, clothe, and herd them to the car, run back inside to change the baby and myself after the diaper leaked all over my dress. Then at church, I’d drop everyone off in their proper locations, trot over to teach my third-grade Sunday school class, try to corral thirty choir kids to practice the spring musical, and dash over to the sanctuary in time to play piano for the 11:00 service.

Rest and worship were not on my agenda. By the time I arrived back home, I could only collapse on the couch in a stupor, useless to myself and my family on this day the Lord intended to rejuvenate the spirit and body. I was shoving my own envelope.

What about you? Are you overextending yourself? Spreading your time or energies too thin? Regardless of how well-intentioned
we are, we’re only human and the Master Designer, who created us and knows our limitations, wants us to set parameters, to pick and choose the way we expend our finite energies.

To shove the envelope not only robs our joy and ability to live in the moment, but it steals fulfillment and effectiveness from the priorities Papa God has appointed as our primary ministry focus for this particular season of our life.

“Do everything in moderation, including moderation.”

Ben Franklin

**LET’S DECOM-STRESS**

1. Name a time when you shoved the envelope by overextending yourself. How did it affect you? How did it affect your family?

2. Consider Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” Now contrast that verse with Psalm 62:5: “Find rest, O my Soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.” How do you strike a healthy balance between activity and rest? What are your ministry service parameters? Your home parameters? Here’s the hardest question yet: Do you actually adhere to these parameters?

3. Give it some thought and jot down three ways you can serve effectively without going overboard in your current ministry. For example: Set specific weekdays/times devoted to your ministry; delegate tasks not in your primary skill set; don’t answer phone calls, emails, or texts during your designated “family” time.

* Adapted from Debora’s bestselling book Too Blessed to be Stressed
Chocolate Brickle

(A sweet treat from Debora’s
Too Blessed to be Stressed Cookbook)

*Affectionately known as Chocolate Crack (because you can’t stop eating it), you’ll quickly become addicted to this amazing combination of sweet, salty, and buttery flavors. The biggest problem with this incredible stuff is making yourself share it.

1 stick (8 Tbsp) salted REAL butter
¼ cup sugar
1 tsp vanilla
1 sleeve saltine crackers
12 oz semi-sweet chocolate chips OR chocolate melting wafers (I prefer the wafers because they melt shinier and smoother; can be found in most Wal-Marts.)
½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)

Melt butter (approximately 1 minute on high) in small covered microwavable bowl (I use a 4-cup glass measuring cup covered with a paper towel to catch splatters); stir in sugar and vanilla. Microwave again for 1 minute on high until boiling.

Line 9x13-inch baking dish with aluminum foil and coat foil with cooking spray; cover with single layer of saltines, breaking as needed to cover entire bottom (don’t overlap). Pour butter mixture over crackers evenly. Bake for 8 minutes (this allows crackers to soak up butter and crisp up a bit).
Remove pan from oven; sprinkle chocolate chips or wafers over crackers and return to oven for 7 minutes or until chocolate is melted. Remove from oven; using the back side of a large spoon coated with cooking spray, spread chocolate evenly (flatten out bumps). Sprinkle on nuts if desired (gently press into chocolate so they won’t fall off).

Refrigerate and, when hard, remove from pan and peel foil away; break into small pieces. Brickle freezes wonderfully; in fact, I actually prefer to nibble it frozen. And nibble. And nibble. And nibble.
Chocolate Makes My Jeans Shrink

“Avoid any diet that discourages the use of hot fudge.”

Don Kardong

My mantra is “God, Godiva and girlfriends—what more do we need?” I never cease to be amazed at the multitude of women with whom that simple theme resonates. Apparently we’re a society of secret choco-sisters.

Did you know that the average American consumes 11.7 lbs. of chocolate each year? That’s roughly the weight of a lawn chair! Why, if not for chocolate, there would be little need for stretch denim. Or control panels. Or female subterfuge.

I mean, really, which of us hasn’t stashed Tootsie Rolls amongst the potted plants? Or hidden M & M’s in her ibuprofen bottle? Or buried telltale Snickers wrappers inside balled up paper towels in the trash can?

A friend with a secret choco-addiction once confided that her bamboozled husband, after taking out the garbage, couldn’t fathom why there were empty chocolate icing cans at the bottom of every trash can in the house. He couldn’t remember eating even one cake!

I saw a wonderful definition of feminine might on a plaque: True strength is breaking a chocolate bar into four pieces barehanded … and then eating only one.

Of course there are the health issues of chocolate consumption to consider. I certainly don’t plan to condemn myself to an early
grave because I selfishly refuse to sacrificially down my daily Dove bar. Why, look at Peggy Griffith of Abbotsham, U.K. This feisty 100-year-old claims she’s eaten 30 chocolate bars per week (that’s four each day) for over 90 years, which translates to around 9,000 pounds of chocolate.

That granny’s got game!

Ironically, while recently driving to my local candy shop, I heard on the radio that scientists had discovered a natural extract in chocolate that cleans teeth better than toothpaste. Hey, I’ll bite!

Now if you think about it statistically (as you know, I’m the queen of near-facts of science), it makes zero sense to say no-no to cocoa when you consider that a chocolate bar contains about 500 calories. At just one per day, that’s 3,500 calories per week, which roughly equals one pound of body weight – an intake of 156 lbs. over a three year period. For the average 140-lb. woman, that means that without chocolate, she would have disappeared six months ago.

See, girlfriend – our very lives depend upon chocolate!

We can indulge in that delightful, creamy, delicious stuff, but we must strike a balance. A balance in our nutrition, our diets and our greed for more.

This theory was reinforced as I recently checked out of the grocery store. The elderly woman in front of me purchasing a jug of milk and loaf of bread sized up my stack of Lean Cuisine’s topped with three jumbo Cadbury bars. Her wrinkled face suddenly lit up with a coy grin. As she reached for a Hershey Bar on the candy rack, she confided with a knowing wink, “Life’s all about balance, isn’t it, dear?”

“When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God ...”

Deuteronomy 8:10 niv

* Adapted from Debora’s bestselling book Too Blessed to be Stressed
Books featuring the offbeat blend of humor and hope of Debora M. Coty

Too Blessed to be Stressed

More Beauty, Less Beast

Fear, Faith, and a Fistful of Chocolate

Too Loved to be Lost

Mom NEEDS Chocolate

Too Blessed to be Stressed Cookbook

Too Blessed to be Stressed: 3-Minute Devotions for Women

Too Blessed to be Stressed Journal

Too Blessed to be Stressed Coloring Book for Women

Too Blessed to be Stressed 5-Year Keepsake Journal

Too Blessed to be Stressed: Inspiration for Every Day (365-day Devotional)
Debora would love to connect with you through Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and her website, www.DeboraCoty.com. While you’re there, be sure to subscribe to her Too Blessed to be Stressed blog and free e-newsletter!

To invite Debora to share her unique brand of biblical truth gift-wrapped in humor with your women’s group, visit Deb’s speaker’s page at www.DeboraCoty.com or call her directly at 813-681-7516. She would be delighted to come love on your ladies!

Discover more at

DeboraCoty.com