



Paul Wilson's Little Book of Calm

A lovely little pocket book of advice and thoughts to inspire calm. Here are some of my personal favourites that you may find helpful too.

Select Your Company Well

As harsh as it may sound, mixing with highly stressed people will make you feel stressed. On the other hand, mixing with calm people – even for the briefest period – will leave you feeling calm.

Pause Between Changes

There's always a temptation to lump your life changes into one big masochistic event. Do your stress levels a favour and take on changes one at a time.

Disregard Small Issues

The most important skill in staying calm is not to lose sleep over small issues. The second most important skill is to be able to view all issues as small issues.

Worry When the Time Comes

Most worries are future-based. They revolve around things that, in most cases, will never happen. Concentrate on the present and the future will take care of itself.

Admit You Feel Calm

If you want to trick your subconscious into helping you feel calm, simply repeat: 'Every moment I feel calmer and calmer.'

Seek the Best in Everything

Make a practice of looking for the best in people and situations. You'll find that simple approach induces optimism and positivity – both of which lead to calm.

Pretend you're Human

Leave it to others to be perfect, to be wonderful. Be content with what you are – you'll be much more relaxed as a result.

Single Out Simple Pleasures

Approach something with your full attention and an open mind, and you'll find pleasure and complexity in it. A bunch of grapes. Or a glass of water. Or a sky of clouds. All of such things can lead to calm.

Take Junior Lessons

Take a lesson in calmness from children: watch how they live every moment for the pleasure of the moment. Pretend, and you could be like that, too.

Steal Thirty Seconds

When you're tense, go somewhere quiet – even the bathroom will do at a pinch – and take thirty seconds to gather your thoughts, and work out how you're going to become calm. They could be the most useful thirty seconds in your day.

Stimulate With Intent

Recognise that there is a time for stimulation and a time for calm. This means never trying to fool yourself that a stimulant can help you to relax.

Levitate

Stand straighter and taller than you believe feels natural, with an imaginary thread attached to the top of your skull lifting you a few millimetres above the ground. The higher above the ground you feel, the closer you will be to feeling calm.

Paint the Town Green

Plants pour oxygen into the environment while soaking up carbon dioxide and pollutants. Keep plants where you work, sleep and live, and you'll enjoy more oxygen. The more oxygen you can get, the calmer you will become.

Look For the Pleasure in Calm

Unlike muscle building, techniques for creating calm work better when there is no pain, no effort. In fact, being calm is in itself one of life's great pleasures.

Learn Two Tai Chi Exercises

It is almost impossible to feel tense when you're concentrating on a Tai Chi routine. Learn the basic Tai Chi exercises and you have a secret to becoming calm.

Listen For the Quiet

Quiet is the essence of calm. You cannot force quiet, you can only accept it when it comes. But if you listen for it, really listen, you will find it in the most unexpected places. All it takes is a little concentration.

Rub On a Rose

Massage is one of the most pleasurable ways to be soothed into a state of relaxation. By adding a little rose oil to your massage oil you can make the experience doubly effective.

Run For Your Life

Running is one of life's antidotes to stress. It's simple, requires no special training and it begins to take effect within the first 200 metres.

Snatch a Couple of Minutes

If you feel you need it, take brief cat naps throughout the day. You'll be surprised at how much peace can come from a couple of minutes.

Pamper Your Feet

Soak your feet, then massage them with moisturiser or a relaxing combination of essential oils. You'll be blissfully relaxed in no time.

Resort to Politeness

Practice politeness, not for the benefit of others, but for the ennoblement of yourself. It doesn't matter if the receivers reciprocate (which they usually will) or not – you will feel better for your niceness.

Recognise the difference between having and living

Plan Your Worries

Put aside a certain amount of time each day – at the same time each day – which you devote to sorting through your worries. When the time is up, stop worrying.

Be Positive About Being Positive

Work on having positive thoughts, pay particular attention to speaking positive words, then let the resultant positive feelings take care of everything else.

Take a Long Distance View

Your eyes are at their most relaxed when they focus on distant scenes – especially natural ones. And when your eyes are relaxed, your body starts to relax.

Go On, Smile

A smile relaxes all the major facial muscles. It also sets off an emotional chain reaction that invariably helps you feel good.

Reaffirm Your Friendships

If you tend to get overly serious about your work or your responsibilities, remind yourself that the most common deathbed regrets relate to neglected relationships, not unfinished business.

Dictate The Pace

Just as a group attitude or mood can influence the individual, a determined individual can influence the group. By moving slowly, speaking calmly, you can spread a feeling of calm within a group.

Practise Saying No

There is only so much you can achieve before affecting your efficiency and state of mind. Only take on what you can do – then politely, but firmly, turn down all other requests.

Stockpile Beautiful Moments

Write them down, keep a photo, keep a record in your computer. Then recall these moments often, reflecting on them, taking pleasure in them, integrating them into your day-to-day routine and outlook.

Grow Your Own

Gardeners are among the most calm and relaxed people (while they're gardening) you'll find.

Prune Pressure Phrases

Pressure phrases like 'I have to', 'I must', 'I should', 'I don't have the time', exacerbate feelings of stress. Listen for such words in your thoughts and speech, then replace them with more relaxed phrases – 'I may', 'I choose to', 'I will make the time'.

Have Little Successes

There's nothing like a degree of success to help you become relaxed. Even if it's only with the most trivial activities, make room for yourself to succeed from time to time.

Appreciate the Routine

Any task you can do on remote control has potential as a way of helping you feel good. Treat it as a meditation, concentrating wholly on the moment, and you will be fulfilled.

Make Your Work Important

The difference between abject drudgery and noble, uplifting work is often no more than perspective. Treat your work as important, and the satisfaction that flows will work towards helping you unwind.

Love the Moment

When you concentrate your attention on absorbing every detail of every moment – savouring every taste, hearing every sound, noting every colour – you will be calm before you know it.

Know When to Stop

For most activities in life, there are no prizes for perseverance. When you know your stress levels are rising, stop what you're doing – either take a break or do something else.

Spread Beauty

Wherever you go in life, whatever you do, make a conscious effort to add a little beauty, or to contribute to the beauty that's already there.

Take All the Time in the World

Contrary to what you may tell yourself, you have all the time in the world to do whatever you choose. What cannot be fitted into your day, cannot be done – forget about it.

Learn To Love Change

If you appreciate that as much good comes from change as bad, you will avoid the concerns that many people seem to have about it. Relax and be open to change when it visits.

Break the Pattern

When you find yourself under pressure, do something different. Stand where you wouldn't normally stand, sit where you wouldn't normally sit, think the way you wouldn't normally think.

Take To the Waves

Sea air, salt water and the sound of waves – all contribute to a growing sense of calm.

Get It off Your Chest

Articulating your problems often takes you half the way to solving them. Share your feelings and problems with someone else and you will feel more peaceful.

Be Conscious of Choices

Whether you recognise them or not, you usually have choices. The art is to recognise them. Because when you can see your choices, you will feel free.

Sweat

Physical exertion counters the negative effects of stress and helps you to feel good about yourself. Exercise until there is a light film of sweat on your brow, then continue for twenty more minutes.

Watch Your Head

Most stress and anxiety is the result of what happens inside your head, rather than what happens to your body. Take comfort in the fact that most things which take place in your thoughts never eventuate.

Leave Town

It is more relaxing to walk down a country road than a suburban street. It is more comforting to gaze on rolling hills than on rolling stock. It is more relaxing to sail in the wide open sea than it is on a busy harbour.

Anything for A Laugh

Remain on the lookout for things that make you laugh – and, if you see nothing worth laughing at, pretend you see it. Then laugh.

Meditate

Concentrate on a movement, a sound, an image, a thought – without strain and without concern if your attention wanders. Before you know it, you will be meditating.

Give Yourself Permission

Find a quiet place, regularly, and say out loud: 'For five minutes in every hour, I give myself permission to relax and to be calm.' Keep repeating it to yourself.

Change

There are only two ways to handle tense situations: you can change them, or you can change the way you look at them. There is enlightenment to be had in changing the way you look at things.

Use a Soft Voice

Have you ever noticed a calm person with a loud voice?