

Encouragement for Exhausted Christian Women - handout

2006 Escape Breakout Class taught by Judy Buchanan-Hewitt

SOURCES OF EXHAUSTION:

Recognizing Common Sources of Exhaustion
Learning to Recognize Hidden Sources of Exhaustion

KEY PRINCIPLES:

A Healthy Margin
The Way You Are
Passion – It's God Given
Honesty – No More Pretending

PRACTICAL ADVICE:

Spend Time in God's Presence
Saying No
Rest, It's Okay, Really
Sensing the Situation
Your Story

U.S. Department of Psychology and Behavioral Science

- At work women have increasingly more **responsibility** than ever, but less **job security**.
- Women juggle demands of **bosses, kids, and spouse**.
- Relationships are less **secure** than ever.
- Today's women are less likely to have **extended family** around to help.
- They are less likely to have **lifelong or meaningful friends** for support.

Let's do the math:

too much **responsibility**
+ too little **control**
+ too few **resources**
= too much **stress** which leads to **exhaustion**

Isaiah 50:4 it reads:

'that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

2Corinthians 1:4 it reads:

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Common Sources of Exhaustion:

or fill in your own below

- Babies and young children _____
- Practices, games, lessons _____
- Long work hours _____
- Unending cycle of home care tasks _____
- Errands _____

Hidden Sources of Exhaustion:

- Managing the **weakness** of another
 - You are just **enabling** them to continue.
 - You're NOT responsible for **the behavior of another adult**.
 - Children need to learn how to deal with **disappointment**
- **Significant people** in your life

QUOTES & NOTES

Getting the most out of life has NOTHING to do with doing more.

Many women are working at 120% of their capacity and feeling guilty because they are not doing more.



Wishing for more hours in the day is a sure sign that you've taken on more than God intended.



Interactions and Influence With:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Siblings | <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classmates | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Boyfriends | <input type="checkbox"/> Boss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Girlfriends | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbor | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Other family | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

How do you feel when you know you'll be spending time with them? How do you feel when it's over?

Can you do things to prepare? If the outcome is usually negative, can you be creative in avoiding it altogether?

Do all you can to **restore harmony in your relationships with significant people.**

Romans 12:18 - "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

"**Forgiveness** is like resting your head on a pillow filled with **rose petals** instead of a pillow filled with **thorns** Loren Fisher



I cannot give you a formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure... which is: try to please everyone.

H.B. Swope



Spend less time looking around and more time looking up. The view is much better.

Love, intimacy and friendship happen in the unhurried, unstructured margins of our lives.

- Striving to meet the **expectations of others.**

CAUTION: Beware of the **disease** to **please** Pleasing people can lead you astray – pleasing God never will.

Are you a people pleaser? Ask yourself:

- Do I work overtime to impress those around me?
- Do I often say yes when I really want to say no?
- Do I depend too much on compliments and affirmations to feel good?
- Do I let others schedule my priorities or activities?
- Do I try too hard to be nice?
- Do I take criticism too personally?
- Do I find it hard to be firm?
- Do I feel very bad when someone is upset at me?
- Do I apologize when I don't need to?
- Do I bend over backward for other people, even when part of me is protesting and resentful?

- **Comparing yourself** to others is dangerous.
 - Stress and exhaustion make you more **self-critical** than usual.
 - **Comparison** focuses on your **short-comings and weaknesses** rather than your **strengths.**
- There are times when exhaustion is unavoidable because of a particular **'season of life' that you are going through.**
 - toddlers
 - finishing your education
 - aging parents
 - job transition
 - sorrow, disappointment or loss
 - _____

Even Christ was sorrowful at times. It's OKAY! In fact, He gathers our tears in a bottle. They are precious to Him. Psm. 56:8

And in Isaiah 61:3 He promised to give you beauty for ashes, joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Key Principles:

- Keeping a **healthy margin** is essential.
 - **Full throttle** living is exciting, but it is not **sustainable.**
 - Our lives need a **healthy margin** so that we have room for **the unexpected** when it comes along.

Ask Yourself.....Then Ask Others Who Know You Well

Am I....

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhausted | <input type="checkbox"/> Missing joy | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident | <input type="checkbox"/> Burned out | <input type="checkbox"/> Joyful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vibrant | <input type="checkbox"/> Alive | <input type="checkbox"/> Purposeful | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring | <input type="checkbox"/> Discouraged |

CAUTION: Never minimize what overwhelms someone else! We are all different and we become overwhelmed for different reasons.



Your gifts and abilities (passions) are part of God's purpose for your life. Not using those leads to frustration, disappointment and fatigue.

Face it. We are all 'great' in some areas, 'competent' in others, and 'challenged' in others. So why not do what you are great at?

People will love you more for your honesty than when they think you have it all together.



- **God** made you the way you are.
 - You didn't choose your **personality traits**, God did.
 - Understanding yourself is key to identifying what **discourages** you and what **encourages** you; what **energizes** you and what **fatigues** you; what **frightens** you and what **delights** you.
 - Are you typically:

Quiet	or	Bubbly
Introvert	or	Extrovert
Ambler	or	Scrambler
Upbeat	or	Melancholy
Follower	or	Director
Planner	or	Spontaneous
Delicate	or	Robust
- Passion
 - Passions are **God given**.
 - Longings of your heart are not **incidental** they are critical messages, not to be **ignored** but to be **consulted**.
 - God will use your passions to **turn your life**.
 - What is it that you are so **passionate** about you can hardly **keep still**?
 1. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
 2. In what areas do you get the most compliments?
 3. In what areas do you feel the most comfortable?
 4. What do you feel most comfortable and confident doing?
 5. What do your friends think you're best at?
 6. What pursuits come naturally to you?
 7. What do you have fun doing?
 8. What activity keeps calling to you strongly, even if you aren't sure you're good at it?
 9. What have you done in the past that brought you fulfillment and great joy?
 10. What do you daydream about?
 11. If you could wave a magic wand to remove all barriers and put yourself in any ministry in the world, what would it be? Where would it be? What would you be doing?

CAUTION: When you are not doing what you're passionate about, your schedule is full, but your heart is empty.

- Honesty
 - No More Pretending - by Scott Krippayne

I can look good when I want to, I know the right things to say
I cover up what I don't want You to see, But You see it anyway
Maybe I think I can fool You, Maybe I'm fooling myself
I want to change but I don't know how, And I need Your help.

No more pretending. No more pretending.
Lord, I know I need to tell You the truth tonight
But everything is not alright in my life
And I need You like never before, I don't want to pretend anymore.

I'm tired of hiding my weakness, I'm tired of trying to look strong
I don't want to say that everything's fine, When there's so much that's wrong
Tell me again that you love me, Though it's more than my heart understands
And I will lay down my disguises, And show You who I am.

No more pretending. No more pretending.
Lord, I know I need to tell You the truth tonight
But everything is not alright in my life.
And I need You like never before, I don't want to pretend anymore.

- Have the **humility** to stop pretending like you have it all together.

Isaiah 53 – "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities..... He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Advice:



A quick card, note, email, or phone call to let someone know you're thinking of them and praying for them will encourage them. But it will also encourage you and lift your spirits.



Remember, wherever you are in your story, God is the author and He loves a wonderful ending.

- **Spend time** with God.
 - Start your day with God. In the first one to two minutes that you are awake:
 1. Take two **deep breaths**.
 2. Thank God for the **health to rise** and the ability to **think** and the privilege to **be His child** and praise Him as your Father.
 3. Then quickly **thank Him** for three new things
 4. Now think of at least one thing – preferably two – that you are **looking forward to** that day
 5. Finally, ask God to **show you His will** that day.
 - A few practical tips for prayer and Bible study:
 - prayer is not **between** you and **anyone else**.
 - **Lift others** up in prayer
 - use great devotional aids
 - assemble a **quiet time kit** or **corner**.
 - Learn to **say 'no'** or at least delay **saying 'yes'**.
 - Determine your goals for:
 - Spiritual activities
 - Health and fitness
 - Family time
 - Intellectual pursuits
 - Social time
 - Profession or career
 - Here are two great ways to say NO. Find ways to practice these.
 - You know, I've done it in the past, and I'll probably do it again in the future, but I really can't do it this time.
 - It was kind of you to ask me ...or consider me... or think me capable... or choose me... but I really must say no.
- CAUTION:** You need to learn to say no so that when GOD asks you to do something you will be able to say yes!
- Rest! It's Okay, Really
 - Researchers estimate that **two thirds of Americans** don't get **enough rest**.
 - Fact: **sleep deprived** people are more prone to **depression** and **health problems**.
 - Rest provides essential **fuel** for dealing with daily events.
 - Pay attention to your **senses**.
 - Changing the way you **sense** a stressful or tiring experience may be able to make it a little less **exhausting or stressful**.
 - **Beauty** has the power to lift your spirits and encourage you.
 - Find a few minutes to go outside and **blow some bubbles**.
 - Write **your story**.
 - Begin to understand where you are and **how you got there**.