Coping Strategies

Listed below are some of the hundreds of Coping Strategies that Dr. Zeff teaches the Highly Sensitive Person:

Create a Daily Routine

1. Your morning routine will set the tone for your day while your evening routine will influence the quality of your sleep.
2. Wake up 15-20 minutes earlier than usual to begin your morning routine.
3. Begin with some gentle stretching, yoga postures or light calisthenics.
4. Spend at least 15 minutes centering yourself via meditation, progressive relaxation or listening to a meditation tape.
5. Eat a nourishing breakfast slowly.
6. Leave plenty of time to commute to work.
7. Your evening activities should consist of calming endeavours such as reading uplifting books, writing, meditating, taking a bath or having light discussions.
8. Try not to watch over-stimulating or violent television shows in the evening.
9. For 30 minutes prior to going to sleep, turn off the day and go inward by meditating, listening to a relaxation tape or whatever helps you make the transition to a restful sleep.

Using the senses to calm the HSP (Highly Sensitive Person)

Avoid jarring noises by listening to relaxing background music or wearing earplugs.

1. Give yourself or receive a massage on regular bases.
2. Reduce the time you are sitting in front of a television or computer screen and gaze at beautiful pictures or nature frequently.
3. Reduce your use of caffeine while drinking calming herbal teas and a lot of pure water.
4. Eat warm, nurturing food.
5. Try inhaling calming essential oils or incense.
6. Take a mini retreat twice a week and a longer retreat several times a year.

Important points in reducing time pressure

1. Listen to soothing music while driving slowly.
2. Try to avoid driving during peak traffic hours.
3. Utilize the opportunity of red lights and traffic jams as cues to spend time practicing relaxation techniques.
4. Regularly practice slow, walking meditations in nature to stay calm and focused in the present.
5. Try talking slower and being in silence sometimes.
6. Wait five seconds before responding during an intense conversation to reduce over-stimulating arguments.
7. Try mindful eating during at least one meal a week without engaging in any other stimuli, such as reading, watching television or talking.
8. Try writing and typing at a slower rate.
9. Transform the ring of the telephone into a relaxation cue by not answering the phone until the 3rd or 4th ring if possible, while using the precious moments to relax deeply.
10. Minimize your use of the computer, phones and television.

How to Create Enjoyable and Relaxing Work for the HSP

1. Try to develop a positive attitude toward your job by creating enjoyable social interactions, helping others and being enthusiastic about your work.
2. Listen to background music that is calming and maintain proper air circulation and temperature.
3. Gaze at pictures of natural settings; bring flowers and plants to work.
4. Have juice or herb tea and healthy snack foods available as well as uplifting magazines or articles for your clients or employees to read.
5. Have a comfortable chair to sit on. If you are sitting all day at work, periodically perform stretches and take short walks.
6. Throughout the day do some slow abdominal breathing exercises and take short meditation breaks.
7. If you are calm, your co-workers will be more relaxed creating interpersonal harmony. Don't forget to smile frequently.
8. Explore changes in your job schedule such as beginning work later, working from home or reducing your hours.
9. Create a daily work schedule each morning to plan a pressure-free day.
10. If you are working in a very stressful job that cannot be modified, examine your beliefs and values as to why you continue to work in a difficult situation.
11. Investigate new job possibilities that are well suited for your sensitivity.

About the author

Ted Zeff, Ph.D., received his doctorate in psychology in 1981 from the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, CA. Dr. Zeff has more than 25 years of experience counselling sensitive children and adults. He currently teaches workshops and consults internationally on coping strategies for highly sensitive children and adults. Dr. Zeff is considered one of the world’s experts on the trait of high sensitivity. He has given presentations and workshops in Denmark, The Netherlands and in many venues throughout the United States.

He is the author of The Highly Sensitive Person’s Survival Guide, The Highly Sensitive Person’s Companion and The Strong, Sensitive Boy. His books have been translated into five languages.

Dr. Zeff’s articles about how to detect and prevent bullying have appeared in many magazines including Texas and Ohio state PTA, Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy and the Connecticut School Psychologists Association He has been interviewed by Good Morning Bay Area on NBC TV, National Public Radio and Psychology Today, as well as by Dutch and Danish magazines.