

Learning English podcasts ... from the
Hellenic American Union©

Level: Lower Intermediate

Lesson: 9

Title: "Stress Checked"

Summary:

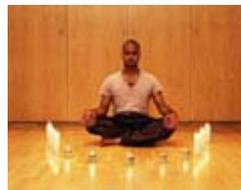
Vanessa and Michael discuss about different ways to deal with stress.

In this radio broadcast, Vanessa, Michael, Alexander & Denise are in the middle of a live show in a radio studio. Listen to their conversation and answer the question that follows about the main idea.

Vanessa: Hello and welcome to our program! Today we're talking about stress. **Are you too busy to take the weekend off?** Are you feeling **worn out**? What makes you feel stressed and what do you do about it? Personally, having to do things alone can be really stressful for me. I just **can't stand** being alone. What about you Michael?



Michael: Do you want to know what I do when I feel stressed? I have a long hot bath; listen to some soothing music, light candles, read poetry. I find all these very relaxing. But actually, I have to confess that for me feeling stressed can be pretty productive. It pushes me to do things! And I must say that I get annoyed by people who **go to pieces** when they're stressed; I tend to avoid working with these people.



Vanessa: Denise Crane, our resident psychologist is now in the studio with us. But let's first hear from our reporter Alexander. Alexander, what makes you stressed?

Alexander: Hi Vanessa. Well, routine or not having the time to do something creative can **drive me crazy**. And I have to say, if I'm really stressed I sort of pretend to be somebody else, in order to **get me through the moment**. You know someone tough. And afterwards, I like to

go for a long walk, just to get back in touch with myself. I've found that's really **therapeutic**.



Vanessa: Interesting answers Denise, don't you think?

Denise: Oh, absolutely!

Vanessa: You know . . . what really stresses ME out is when my mum asks me when I'm going to get married.



Denise: What do you do about it?

Vanessa: You mean apart from feeling hopeless, helpless or worthless for some time?

Denise: (Laughing) well yeah, if possible.



Vanessa: Erm, if I'm really stressed out I ride my bike for a couple of hours, or go kick boxing; physical exercise helps me **let off steam**. But let's hear from you Denise. . .



Now answer the following question...

What are Vanessa, Nick, Michael, & Lisa talking about?

They're talking about what makes them feel stressed and what they do about it.

Now listen again to the extract in parts. After each part there will be 3 to 4 questions on the details...

Part 1

Vanessa: Hello and welcome to our program! Today we're talking about stress. Are you **too busy to take the weekend off**? Are you feeling **worn out**? What makes you feel stressed and what do you do about it? Personally, having to do things alone can be really stressful for me. I just **can't stand** being alone. What about you Michael?

Michael: Do you want to know what I do when I feel stressed? I have a long hot bath; listen to some soothing music, light candles, read poetry. I find all these very relaxing. But actually, I have to confess that for me feeling stressed can be pretty productive. It pushes me to do things! And I must say that I get annoyed by people who **go to pieces** when they're stressed; I tend to avoid working with these people.

Vanessa: Denise Crane, our resident psychologist is now in the studio with us. But let's hear first from our reporter Alexander. Alexander, what makes you stressed?

Now answer some questions . . .

1. Vanessa says: "**Are you too busy to take the weekend off?**" What does this phrase mean?

When you are 'too busy' you have a lot of things to do so you don't have free time. When you 'take the weekend off' you take holiday from work for a weekend. So Vanessa asks the listeners: 'Do you have so much work to do that you cannot even take a break from work for a weekend?'

2. Vanessa says: "**Are you feeling worn out?**" What does 'worn out' mean?

When you feel 'worn out' you're 'too tired'. It is the past tense form of 'wear out'.

3. Vanessa says: "**I just can't stand** being alone". What does 'I can't stand' mean?

'I can't stand' means 'I hate' and is an expression that is always followed by an -ing verb form or a noun.

4. Michael says: "I get annoyed by people who **go to pieces** when they are stressed". What does 'go to pieces' mean?

'Go to pieces' means lose control.

Now listen to the second part of the dialogue.

Part 2

Alexander: Hi Vanessa. Well, routine or not having the time to do something creative can **drive me crazy**. And I have to say, if I'm really stressed I sort of pretend to be somebody else, in order to **get me through the moment**. You know someone tough. And afterwards, I like to go for a long walk, just to get back in touch with myself. I've found that's really **therapeutic**.

Vanessa: Interesting answers Denise, don't you think?

Denise: Oh, absolutely!

Vanessa: You know . . . what really stresses ME out is when my mum asks me when I'm going to get married.

Denise: What do you do about it?

Vanessa: You mean apart from feeling hopeless, helpless or worthless for some time?

Denise: (Laughing) well yeah, if possible.

Vanessa: Erm, if I'm really stressed out I ride my bike for a couple of hours, or go kick boxing; physical exercise helps me **let off steam**. But let's hear from you Denise. . .

Now answer some questions....

1. Alexander says: "Routine or not having the time to do something creative **can drive me crazy**." What does 'drive me crazy' mean?

If something or someone 'can drive you crazy' they make you feel really upset.

2. Alexander says: ". . . if I'm really stressed I sort of pretend to be somebody else, in order to **get me through the moment**." What does 'get me through the moment' mean?

'Get me through the moment' means help me survive the experience. So Alexander means that pretending to be someone else helps him survive when he is under stress.

3. Alexander says: "I've found that's really **therapeutic!**" What does 'therapeutic' mean?

If something you do is 'therapeutic' it means that it is 'helpful'.

4. Vanessa says "physical exercise helps me **let off steam**" What does "let off steam" mean?

To "let off steam" means to let your anger or aggression out.

Please visit our site at www.hau.gr to find the transcripts, explanations and activities.



GLOSSARY

Busy (adjective): not free to do something else / having a lot to do
e.g. I am busy at the moment - can I call you back?

Productive (adjective): doing or achieving a lot / having good results
e.g. The meeting was productive; we solved almost all matters.

Soothe (verb): to make calm / to feel less pain
e.g. Put this cream on, it should soothe the pain.

Soothing (adjective): soothing music / lotion / voice

To get annoyed: to start feeling upset / to become angry
e.g. I get annoyed with people who talk loudly on their cell phone.

To get to do something: to start to do something
e.g. After a while he will get to realise that money is not the most important thing for women.

To get to know someone: to start to know someone
e.g. I'm sure you'll like your sister's boyfriend once you get to know him.

To socialise (verb): to like being with and meeting people
e.g. You will make friends if you start socialising more.

To take time off (phrasal verb): to have a break (from work)
e.g. I am going to take a week off for my sister's wedding.

To tend to do something: to do something in a specific way, as it usually happens
e.g. When I am nervous I tend to talk a lot.

To wear yourself / somebody out: to make yourself / somebody feel very tired
e.g. You will wear yourself out if you continue working until midnight every day.

Worn out (adjective): very tired
e.g. After staying with the kids all day, I am worn out.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

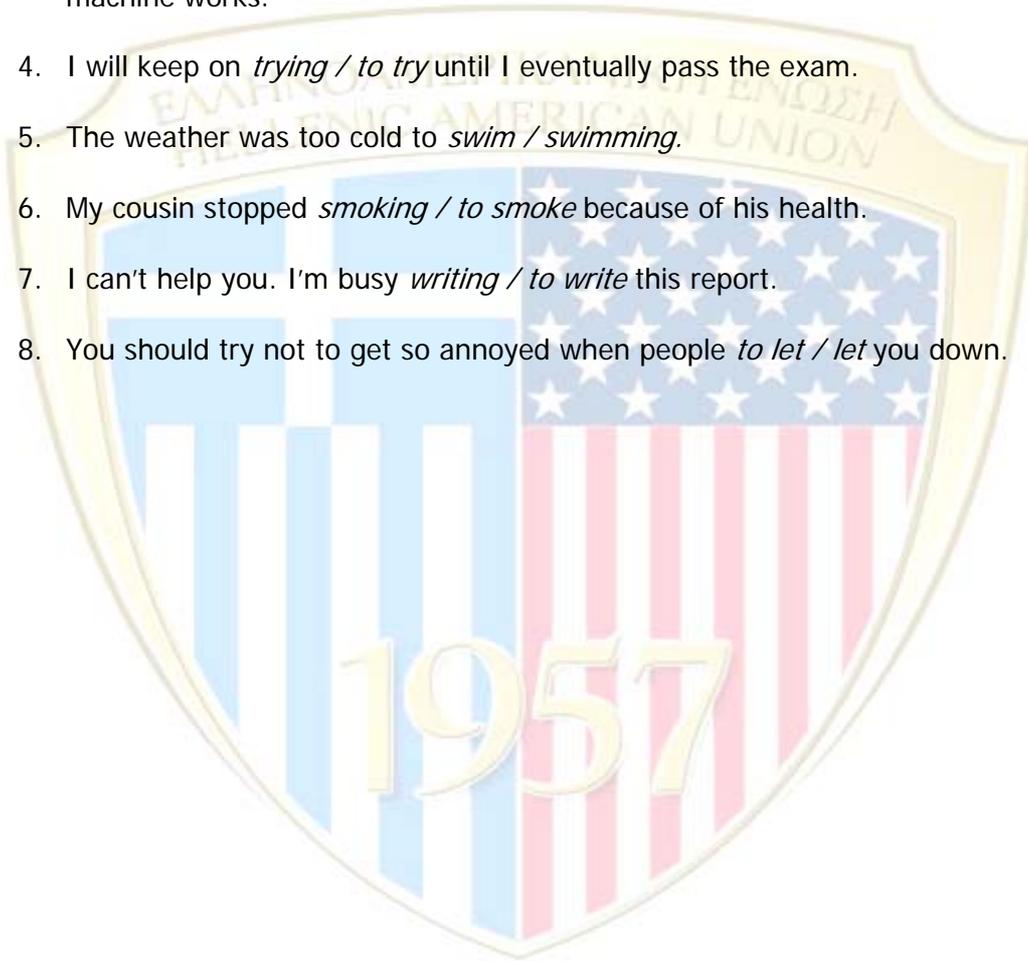
Practice using the words in the glossary. Choose the most appropriate word to fill in the blanks.

1. We've been walking for two hours; can we sit down for a while? I am _____	A. found
2. Why do you _____ interrupting me? I hate it!	B. get annoyed
3. Take a pill to _____ your head; it will make you feel better	C. get to know
4. Her family _____ her boyfriend to be very charming.	D. getting to
5. The time I spent studying in the morning was very _____. I passed the test with flying colours!	E. keep on
6. My friends _____ with me being late whenever we have an appointment.	F. productive
7. Once you _____ her better you will see that she is not as mean as she seems.	G. socialising
8. What I like about school is _____ with the other students.	H. soothe
9. People _____ work long hours without getting paid for it these days.	I. tend to
10. His drinking is _____ be a problem.	J. worn out

Activity 2

Choose the correct word(s) to complete the sentences.

1. I can't stand people *talk / talking* all the time.
2. I tend *to get / getting* bored in meetings.
3. It will not take you long *to understanding / to understand* the way this machine works.
4. I will keep on *trying / to try* until I eventually pass the exam.
5. The weather was too cold to *swim / swimming*.
6. My cousin stopped *smoking / to smoke* because of his health.
7. I can't help you. I'm busy *writing / to write* this report.
8. You should try not to get so annoyed when people *to let / let* you down.



KEY TO ACTIVITIES

Activity 1. 1. j. 2. e. 3. h. 4. a. 5. f. 6. b. 7. c. 8. g. 9. i. 10. d.

Activity 2. 1. talking 2. to get 3. to understand 4. trying 5. swim 6. smoking 7. writing 8. let