

O

THE OPRAH
MAGAZINE

S O U

Oprah & Ellen

Listen in on their honest, funny, **no-holds-barred** conversation of a lifetime!

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In less than 400 words
O's FLASH FICTION
By Futhi Ntshingila,
Margie Orford, Anne Landsman ...
and more great novelists

DECEMBER 2009



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DR. OZ
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O's Five-Point Plan to ... **FINDING THE CALM IN THE CHAOS**

FRANK LIPMAN, MD, author of *Spent? End Exhaustion & Feel Great Again*, suggests five ways to a stress-free, happier you.

1 **Reset your rhythms with an "electronic sundown."** Most of us move from high-speed vertical to bed in a matter of minutes, and then wonder why our brains and bodies are vibrating, and we can't fall asleep. An "electronic sundown" helps your body prepare for sleep: At around 10 P.M., turn off your computer, charge your cellphone in another room and switch off the TV. Scan your bedroom for blinking or glowing lights. Turn these off or cover them. Even a little bit of light can stop your melatonin levels from rising, which is necessary to induce sleep and to reach the deep restorative slumber your body requires.

2 **Exercise the right way.** The way many of us exercise – the intensive push, push, push approach – can actually contribute to exhaustion. Rigorous exercise stimulates your body's flight-or-fight response, causing your adrenal glands to pump out even more cortisol, further depleting them. When we're spent, our exercise should echo that of our ancestors, who used their bodies to hunt. For them, activity was about survival, with bursts of exertion and then rest. I suggest restorative exercise – short bursts of activity followed by recovery periods. Alternating action with rest triggers the parasympathetic nervous system to activate the relaxation response, so instead of stressing your body, you're using movement to relax it. The bonus? You burn more kilojoules in the same amount of time.

3 **Don't should on yourself.** In this day and age, it is hard not to fill up our lives with *shoulds*. I should be working harder. I should be exercising more. I should be making more money. I should be spending more time with my children, boyfriend, family, friends. But this is a form of negative thinking that loads our brains, bodies and lives with more to think about, more to do and more emotions to handle, which ultimately adds more stress. Instead of "shoulding" on yourself, rather do something you love doing.



4 **Reach out and touch someone.** Physical contact is a primal human need. Many of us yearn for it. An appropriate touch triggers the release of brain endorphins – an endogenous analgesic more powerful than heroin or morphine. Here are my suggestions for how to touch in a way that is clear and kind: Hug friends or kiss them on the cheek; walk arm in arm or hold hands with your partner, a friend, or your child; when talking to someone, gently touch his or her arm or hand during the conversation. Such small gestures can be comforting.

5 **Practice ubuntu.** What makes us human is the humanity we show each other. Ubuntu means kindness, understanding, compassion, tolerance, empathy, caring, sharing, sensitivity and respect. When you are giving of yourself and being compassionate, you stop seeing yourself as the centre of the universe. It's an important lesson in perspective, especially when you are spent, because it has been my experience that focusing on other people and trying to help them takes the spotlight off your symptoms, and can even lessen their severity. ■

Extracted from *Spent? End Exhaustion & Feel Great Again* by Frank Lipman, MD. Visit drfranklipman.com