

5 Ways to Keep Cool With Your Family Stress

One of the most mythical figures in Super Bowl history is Joe Montana. According to , he possessed a mystic calmness in the midst of chaos, especially with the game on the line. While others saw turmoil and danger after the snap, Montana saw order and opportunity. He was Joe Cool, the unflappable king of the comeback.

Montana was neither exceptionally fast nor tall, nor did he have a bazooka for an arm, but *Sports Illustrated* headlined a story on Montana as, “The Ultimate Winner.” Montana won four Super Bowls in four appearances and became the only player to earn MVP three times.

While you may not ever be called to march your team down the field to score the winning Super Bowl touchdown, you can possess the same calmness of Joe Coolness in the everyday craziness of your household. Here are 5 ways to keep cool with your family stress:

Pray. It’s not all about you. Simply acknowledging God can take the edge off of debilitating anxiety.

Exercise. Research indicates that blood pressure can be reduced by regular exercise. At the same time, clarity of thought is increased due to a better flow of oxygen to the brain. Additionally, exercise shifts our focus away from tension. Exercise also helps us to feel better, and when we feel better, we tend to be less overwhelmed when we have to deal with stress. Think of exercise as basic “equipment maintenance.” When we’re in better shape, we’re better equipped to stay calm and make a positive impact.

Humor (seriously). The simple act of smiling makes a positive impact, and laughter is proven to be downright medicinal. You

don't have to crack jokes all the time, but we are recommending a smile. Humor not only cracks the tension, it takes the focus away from our tendency to react negatively. It's a natural coolant in times of chaos.

Find a quiet space. Sometimes we have to find a way to turn off the soothing music in place of angry talk radio on your way to work. Experiment with a "No TV hour" before dinner when the house is just too crazy. Maybe you can step away for a quiet 15-minute walk. In the middle of chaos you can't escape, try a simple breathing exercise. Just two-minutes of absolute silence can take the heat off a troubled spirit. The point here is to be deliberate and take some measure of control.

Keep things in perspective. The big picture is never as overwhelming as the moment. When you're upset with your children, be thankful they're healthy. If you're mad at your wife, remember why you married. When you're running late for work, spare a thought for the unemployed. When your home seems to be one continuous soap opera, give yourself a time out and offer a prayer of gratitude for your wife and kids.

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