



This is our weekly talk about how you can succeed with a kidney diet, brought to you by [RenalDietHQ.com](http://RenalDietHQ.com), a website whose mission is to be the most valued resource on kidney disease that people can use to improve their health.

Hi, this is Mathea Ford with the Renal Diet Headquarters podcast. This week we are on podcast number 17, set to be released on April 16, 2014, the day after Tax day. I hope you had a good tax day, if you were doing it at

the last minute or if you did it ahead of time. Maybe you just watched everyone else scramble and thought, wow, I am glad I did that ahead of time. We got ours done in March, so I was kinda like, oh wow it is Tax day.

Thank you for listening this week and if you need to find out more information about this podcast, you can find all the links and information I talk about at [www.renaldiethq.com/017](http://www.renaldiethq.com/017) that is where you will find all the notes and links.

Today we are going to talk about three things. I will remind you about the Caregiver guide that we have coming out for chronic kidney disease and I am going to talk about the new Anemia book that I just released on Amazon, and then we are going to talk about improving yourself and improving your stress.

#1) The Caregiver Guide for Chronic Kidney Disease. It is almost completed. I know I said I would have it done on April 15<sup>th</sup>, but I am not quite done. But if you sign up for it, there will be parts of it in the members' area. You will be able to get in and get those. Still coming I am getting finished up with the reflexology book, and some of the worksheet. I actually thought of some really great worksheets today, so I am adding those at the last minute. One of those is going to be a sheet that you should take with you to the doctor that will be a good way to do your medical history and medications. It is kind of in the doctor's language, so it will be in the way that they expect to read something. Because isn't it just so frustrating when you go to the doctor and you talk to them or the nurse, then you have to go see a new doctor, and they need your medical history, or tell me all about this, have you had this or that, and most likely you have had

more than one of those things and it would be nice just to have that to give to them. So, I will be adding that in there along with the other worksheets I am doing.

This book will have information on chronic kidney disease, a guide on how to be a caregiver, a little about home health, just some information in general dealing with stress and depression and kidney disease. Then there is a story about Mrs. Murray, and then it has an aromatherapy section that is tailored to people with chronic kidney disease and it goes into great detail about how to use aromatherapy oils for chronic kidney disease treatment. There is a reflexology book we are finishing up. Then there is a book on craniosacral therapy, which is a little bit of a touch massage type therapy. All of these are alternative therapies that are made to make it so you can get the most from them without affecting the medical things your doctor is doing, but it aides in them.

What I have found is, I suffer from chronic migraines, and I can suffer 15 days of the month, and just be in bed asleep and not be able to operate. That is what makes it difficult sometimes, but what I have found is that, I started going to a chiropractor and physical therapy, which are not really alternative treatments, but the chiropractor really helped me find some good relief from the migraines, and then with physical therapy, we found I had some muscular imbalances in my neck and were causing the tightness in my neck, which contributed to my migraines. I have actually seen quite a bit of improvement, not from taking more medications. So that is what inspired me to create this caregiver guide with all the alternative stuff in it, because I went to see the physical therapist about a completely different issue and after about two weeks I realized I had only had a couple migraines. So it was an amazing improvement, so I think through some of these alternative therapies, you can help people be able to tolerate it. I am not able to get rid of my migraine medicine all the way, but it does help to not have to take so much.

So, that Caregiver guide should be out in the next couple weeks, I will send you an email, if you are on my email list. If you need to get on my email list it is [www.RenalDietHQ.com/go/email](http://www.RenalDietHQ.com/go/email). The Caregiver guide is [www.RenalDietHQ.com/go/caregiver](http://www.RenalDietHQ.com/go/caregiver) and right now you are going to get a physical book and it is going to be \$47 when it is released. Then it will slowly work its way up to \$97 and then \$147. Those books will be available soon. It will be a physical copy and there will also be an area online, to get the files if you need them, there will also be a CD with worksheets on it, but you can also go online.

#2) This week I finished up my book #11 for the [Renal Diet HQ IQ](#) series. It is on Anemia. I know that a lot of people, whether they are on dialysis or not, as you get into the later stages of chronic kidney disease you do suffer from anemia most of the time. You are getting your blood taken on a regular basis, your kidneys are not producing the proper hormones that help you to make more red blood cells and this book explains all

those things. It is a light read, it is 50 pages or so, but it talks about treating it, talks about some of the foods you can eat. It even goes into the detail about how much potassium and phosphorus is in some of the different foods. So if you are having difficulty with potassium or phosphorus and you need to find some high iron foods to eat, this book has them in there. It talks about treatments and E.S.A.'s, like erythropoiesis and all those drugs people can get to help them as well as whether blood transfusions are the right answer anymore.

That book is out, it is on Amazon, you can find it at [www.renaldietHQ.com/go/anemia](http://www.renaldietHQ.com/go/anemia) that will link directly to the page. It is \$7.99 for the paperback and \$3.99 or so for the Kindle version. I also have this one set up that if you buy the paperback version you can get the kindle version for like \$.99. If you want to get both it is very convenient. That is something I worked on and got released this week. So one more book on Kindle and Amazon.

As you may remember, this month is all about stress and dealing with stress.

#3) So this week I wanted to talk about improving yourself and improving yourself and your stress level. I think things that contribute to our stress level sometimes we can adjust personally and that can help to deal with our overall stress level. Somewhere on your way to the rest of your life, you realize things, like I am sure no one planned on getting chronic kidney disease, you suffer from chronic kidney disease, money woes, maybe your marriage is having problems, or whatever is causing you stress. Everything about a chronic disease can cause stress in your life.

It is the kind of thing that makes you sit up and take notice and to seek help before it gets the best of you. Some things you can work on making better. If you need to stop spending money, you can develop a savings plan. Some stress is derived from the inside out, and it is the kind of anxiety you have about who you are as a person compared to who you always hoped you would be. It might be stress from feeling like you are a burden to people, it might be stress from feeling like you have to deal with this disease and you didn't want it, maybe you are still angry or mad or frustrated, all those things bring stress on.

As time passes, you will be facing your fair share of obstacles, you may have to repair relationships, change or adjust your career, learn some new coping skills to help you learn to deal with being a chronic kidney disease patient. But if you take this step first, the step to becoming the kind of person you want to be, it will make facing those stress factors a whole lot easier. In fact, when you devote time to making your own self better, many of the things you are stressed about now will just disappear.

You don't need an expensive therapist, or rock climbing with a group, you aren't in denial about what is bothering you; you kind of know what is bothering you. You just need a little help analyzing yourself and taking action to become a little better at handling the stress. So, becoming your best self.

Be all you can be, of course you don't have to go to boot camp like the Army says to make that happen, that is the Army's slogan, be all you can be, or Army of One, or whatever it is now. You can create a self-care boot camp at home, which is a little bit gentler than a soldier's version. One aspect of boot camp, by the way, I have to tell you, if you are sending someone to boot camp there is this really good book on Amazon, that I know the author, and she wrote a really good book about being a mom with a kid in boot camp and it is called. [Basic Combat Training: Army Mom, Army Strong, by Mollie Allen](#). I will put a link to it in the show notes, just a little side note.

One aspect of boot camp that you want to copy is the intense personal training regimen, which focuses on building the better you. Let's start.

1. Daydream on paper. Take a page of lined notebook paper and fold it in half, using the right side only write a description of your ideal-self. Don't stop to be critical or analyze anything you write. Write down specific things, instead of saying I would like to weigh less, you can say, I weigh 30lbs less. Instead of saying I have a better job, you can say, I received a promotion to manage the inside sales department. Or you might say, my hemoglobin is where it needs to be and I have lost 30lbs, I exercise 30 minutes a day, something like that, it will help you to be very specific.

Now, when you have listed everything on the ideal-self side turn to the other side and title it real-self. Again without being personally critical, you are just looking at yourself in a rational way. Describe who you are today, what is your career, where do you live, what motivates you and keeps you going every day, describe yourself physically and emotionally. So, you may say, I weigh this amount, I eat unhealthy, or I eat too much sugar, or maybe I don't exercise, I am not happy in my job, if you are happy in your job but chronic kidney disease is affecting you, you can say something like I have too many sick days and I want to improve that.

But open both sides and compare it. With a bold pen or highlighter draw lines between the items that are similar as if you were playing a matching game. Then look seriously at how far your "real-self" is from your ideal-self. In some instances, the distance between real-self and ideal-self is not very far, in others it is a pretty big distance. So choose three of the ideal comparisons as your self-help priorities. Save that list for later because you will be using the rest of it too. Just be honest with yourself, no one has to read this, it is all just for you.

Then start to make that transformation. After you complete one transformation you will choose another goal. So these priorities become self-improvement goals. You might be able to learn a new computer skill in a few weeks by attending a class, or even go online, there is a wonderful website to learn computer stuff called [Code.org](http://Code.org) and it is awesome, it has great information about learning computer stuff. If you want to lose weight, you need to set an exercise goal, like I am going to try exercise 30 minutes a day. You need to know what is important and where you want to start. Just start on one thing and that will help you get less stress in your life.

Losing weight for example is going to take you more time. You know you could learn to code on the computer in one week, you would probably lose a pound in one week if you exercised every day and watched what you eat. So what is important if that you have that goal and you can plot a direction. What I also think is important is breaking it down into daily actions that become more like habits. When you think of the big, I need to lose 30lbs or 50lbs or even I need to lose 5lbs, you need to think of it in smaller chunks. Like I am going to exercise 30 minutes a day and then just try to get in that habit and get that going. And then, I am not going to eat snacks at work or I am not going buy candy at work. That is my big thing; I always go to the vending machine and buy candy, even when I am trying to be good.

What is really important is that you do have a goal and you can plot a direction. Your real-self will merge into your ideal-self; this is knowing where you are going. Some of the stress we have in our life is because we have this mismatch between where we want to be and what we are and we never identify the differences and how we are going to get there. So this is one of the big things you are going to do. You are going to identify how you are going to get there, to be the person you want to be, because you can be what you want to be, as long as it is realistic. Obviously, if you didn't start playing golf at the age of three you are not going to be Tiger Woods now, but you could have a goal of playing 9 holes walking or whatever, because that is a healthy goal, or I am going to practice golf 30 minutes a day. You won't have the stress of always being dissatisfied of how your life is unfolding, instead of feeling like a victim, you are going to take control over that.

2. Make a future timeline. Timelines are a great way to look back over your life and your career. So start by making a timeline of your personal life or career, whichever is most important to you and causes most stress. One way to really see where you came from is to make the timeline on a poster board and add

photos or other graphic images that reflex the events. You might be surprised as you recall strengths and abilities that you forgot you had from past experiences. So maybe in the past you were really good and you volunteered and you did certain things, or maybe when you were younger you liked to paint or to draw. Remembering some of that, you might be like; I would really enjoy doing that again more often. That is something you can think about looking at putting into your ideal-self. So you are going to do the past and kind of look at where you came from.

Then you are going to get another poster board and create your future timeline. Here is where you plan the life you want. You already listed out your ideal-self, so you just do your future timeline. That life is obviously going to be one that provides you satisfaction instead of stress. So if you are on dialysis, and one of your goals is to do home dialysis, so you have more freedom and you are able to travel. If you really want to travel, you can do that you just may have to do home dialysis. Mark increments on the timeline in one to five years and then in five year increments. So if you know you are going to take computer classes or lose weight or something, mark that down, let yourself know how long it is going to take. Then go ahead and dream. If money was not an obstacle what kind of career would you have in five years? If the funds were magically available for you to return to collage or graduate school, what would you want to study? It is never too late, you can always go back and study, it does not matter; you can help somebody in some way by doing what you want to do and by being happy with what you are doing. What degree would you have? What job would you have after earning that degree? Do some online research into that degree or training program to discover the average time involved to complete that program.

Once you have finished, set up the past timeline on the left and the future timeline on the right. Prop them up against a wall in your home where you can just look at them for a week. This is honestly one of those subconscious things, like actually lining it out on paper, it makes a huge amount of difference and then your brain starts to work on how it can get there. As you look over those ideas you will find yourself focusing on an area over and over. I think that is your subconscious mind sending you a message letting you know what you really want to do. So if you want to be a singer in a year, then you need to get some singing lessons or whatever, but, don't try to figure out how just yet. Right now you need to figure out what you what you want to do and be.

Save your future timeline and mark off the changes you choose to make in your life. In five years you will be where you projected or even beyond that point if you

keep your eye on that goal and focus on being your best self and reaching your goals, not the goals someone else set for you. You will progress in your future timeline.

So those are the two steps in the first thing about become your best self. Daydream on paper and then make a future timeline. So now we are going to talk about improving your body.

When you are trying to lessen the stress you feel it is important for your body to be able to help your body relax. Our modern lifestyles are so busy that fitness often takes a back seat on our daily to do list. If nothing else will help you to exercise, think of it as the best all natural stress reliever, which IT IS. You may be used to working 40 hours plus overtime, then rushing home to cook dinner, then if you have kids rushing them to sports and activities, or grandchildren that you help with. A ten minute uninterrupted shower may be the only relaxation time you get in a day before bedtime. But that is a choice.

1. Take an honest look at your fitness. Honestly fitness, just doing some activity, is a wonderful way to reduce stress. Most gyms are glad to give you free visit or even a free week or month. We have this gym around here, it is called 10 Gym, it is like \$10 a month without a contract. That is very cheap. And usually they have a trial period, during that time ask for a fitness evaluation. Are you winded after 10 minutes on the treadmill? Even if you are, and you can get someone to help you make a fitness plan, or even make a simple one yourself of just walking for 30 minutes, or I will get to where I can walk for 30 minutes. Don't worry about where are today, just know where you want to be. When you get this fitness evaluation, did you measure a little more body fat then you realized? Are you stretched to the limit with work but unable to do muscle relaxing stretches? Another fast track approach to fitness is to hire a personal trainer, for a series of personal workout if you can afford it. Once you learn which exercises are right for your fitness goals, and practice the right way to do those exercises, you can work out on your own, so a fitness trainer is a short term thing, like Renal Diet Headquarters program, you learn what you need to get with that program and then you can do it yourself after that. So be honest with yourself with your fitness. Look at your day, how much time are you wasting, what are you doing, are there better ways to do things? Can you make sandwiches the night before, and then you are not rushing home and making sandwiches for everyone when you get home? There are lots of things you can do to squeeze that fitness in.
2. Curb harmful habits. If you think going outside to smoke, or chugging cans of highly caffeinated drinks are ways to deal with stress. You are fooling yourself. These are likely to create more health problems and more stress. And absolutely

if you have chronic kidney disease you should not be drink anything that is a dark soda, you want to move toward the lighter colored soda and you want to limit that. Drink more water. And if you smoke, I encourage you strongly to do the best you can to quit, it is just not healthy. Take an honest look at the way you cope with stress. Think about what you are doing when someone stresses you out. I can tell you today, I personally got really stressed out at work, and I just said, you know what, I am going to get chocolate, I need chocolate. I knew at that moment I was giving into that stress and that is how I was trying to cope with it, but that is what I did. Smoking, drinking, drugs, caffeine, food binges those are all reckless choices with long-term health consequences. Even for someone with chronic kidney disease just short term, it can affect you right away.

You are setting out to reach new goals and dreams and you need to be in health to enjoy those positive life changes, doing what you can. Start with learning all you can about your harmful coping method. Knowledge is power!!! While researching, look for local support groups. If you can't find one, join an online support group. I am going to, in the near future, come up with some online support groups, we have a chronic kidney diseases caregiver [Facebook group](#) that will help you if you want. You can join if you want. I will put the link in the show notes so you can sign up.

Let's talk about some more things you can do. For some more complex issues, self-help begins when admit that you need help and seek others that can support your changes. An important way to avoid negative coping methods is to nourish and train your body for optimal health. You will almost not enjoy those things in the same way, once you are working on being healthier. Getting enough sleep each night is very important. You need at least 8 hours of sleep each night, particularly if you have a physically or mentally demanding job that weighs you down with stress. Turn off the television. Stop instant messaging or playing the online games to relax. Your body needs a period of calm before bedtime to prepare for sleep. Falling asleep with the T.V. running in the background is not the preparation for the right quality of sleep. I use to do that all the time, I have actually worked really hard at it, but now I can shut off the T.V. and go to sleep. It is just a wonderful thing because it really does help me go to sleep quicker. I am not stimulated by that television.

Be careful not to overcommit and stretch yourself thin. This will only add more stress if you fail to meet your goals. Learn to say NO. The most capable people are at risk for this because you think 'Sure, I can bake 5 dozen cupcakes for the preschool party tomorrow' and then run out to an all-night grocery store for

supplies. Learn just to say NO. Say no before you even want to say yes, and then if you can later, tell them you would be willing to help with that. Don't feel like it should be on your shoulders, especially if you have a lot of stress and have health problems. Consider this your declaration of independence. You have a right to have quiet time, you have a right to relax at home; you have the right to socialize with friends and not answer those text messages. If you want your life back, take it back, your health depends on it. So, stop doing everything for everyone else, you are not doing anyone any favors by getting sicker and sicker, the best thing you can do is take a moment and say 'NO, I can't do that, I have to take care of myself'.

3. Improving your mental outlook. The most physically fit body goes nowhere if your mental outlook is bleak. You have to believe in yourself to turn your goals into realities. Even positive people are hit with difficulties that are hard to manage. That is when you need self-help stress busting approaches to bolster your mood. What time of year is it?
  - 1) Some people notice a real change in overall outlook during the winter months. Why? There is just not as much sunlight. If you leave early for work while it is still dark outside, spend the day inside a windowless office and return home after the sunsets, which in the winter, to be completely honest is not that hard to do. You are truly light deprived, and it can make you depressed, it can make you sad. That problem is known as seasonal affective disorder, and it can be helped by replacing the light bulbs in your home with full spectrum light bulbs, these light bulbs are designed to give off healthy light rays, similar to the sun. If possible get a small desk lamp for your work office and also use a full spectrum light bulb. Go outside the office or home for lunch. Even if the weather is cool, put on jacket because the sun and fresh air are good for lifting your mood and helping release that stress. On the weekends, plan a little outdoor activity, take the children to the park, start tennis lessons, if it is cold enough take outdoor skating lessons, just get outside. Do what you can to get outside.
  - 2) Face your fears, so this is mental. Do your hands get clammy, your throat dry and your mind take you back to your worst day in 6<sup>th</sup> grade every time you have to speak in front of a group? I know my hands do. You might suffer from stress surrounding certain events. People at work or in the civic group want to hear what you have to say. Sign up for a local Toast Masters group, possible and take the first step to conquer your fear of public speaking. I am going to do that because I really want to get to speak to more groups and

doing this podcast is really helping me with that, but I think I am going to try to sign up for Toast Masters and do some speaking as well.

Did you turn down a great job because the office was on the 25th floor and you are scared to ride elevators in tall buildings? Climbing the stairs might be good for your legs but it takes time and just isn't practical. You can work with at therapist to face this fear and get over irrational stress, or you can do your own version of systematic desensitization. That is a therapy technique in which you gradually face a fear a little at a time, until you finally overcome it. Ask a trusted friend to go with you as you work on this, think about what the real fear is; is it that you will get stuck? Or it will plummet to the ground floor when the cables suddenly snap? Write a detailed description of the phobia that is causing you undo stress. How does it begin, progress, and what does it feel like at its worst? Recognize that these are feeling that repeat. So when you get into an elevator and your heart starts beating faster, you are not having a heart attack, it is a fear and a stress reaction. You are feeling what you expected to feel based on past experiences. Once you have your fear feeling pattern worked out, you know what to expect. Ask your friend to ride with you in an elevator to the second floor, then back down again. Repeat that trip, and then go up to the fourth floor. If you are seriously in a stress filled panic, take the stairs back down. Or if riding down is easier then riding up, start by walking to the fourth floor and riding down. Overcoming those fears can reduce a lot of stress. Little by little increase your ability to handle the stress by pushing yourself a little further each time. You can conquer your fears when you name them, examine them, research them and set a plan to meet them. Over time, you will notice your stress level does not reach as high when you are faced with that particular obstacle. Maybe you find it is very stressful to go to the dialysis clinic or maybe you are very stressed to go to the doctor's office, just think through what is so stressful. If it is just that you don't know what they are going to say, or you are scared they are going to give you bad news, yes you may not like it, but it is probably something you need to hear, and then you can deal with it.

All the change comes from the inside. Whether you pay the most attention and most expensive celebrity therapist to work with you, attend support group or make your own plan to overcome your problem in life, you are the keys to your own success. If you don't want to do it, it is not going to work. Another thing about self-help is that it is a confidence booster. The most irritable client, difficult project or toughest exam is small potatoes compared to taking actions that make a difference in the direction of your life.

Since living your life really is all about you, take charge of that direction by finding and practicing the right self-help approaches that will help boost your endorphins. We talked about endorphins last week. Never settle for a life filled with stress when there is something better waiting for you. When you can really do these things, think about who you want to be, who you want to grow into, taking care of your mental and physical self, those things all contribute to making your life less stressful. It is also less stressful when you know where you want to go and realize it is important. Putting yourself first, putting your partner with you, getting on the same page. All those things are important.

So, I wanted to talk about improving your stress level today because I think that is a significant thing that you can do to help you become less stressed, is to know where you are going and to take care of some of those things.

That is all on that subject. Today we talked about the Caregiver Guide that is coming out soon. We talked about the Anemia book I just released, and I just talked about improving your stress. I want you to have a great week. I hope you enjoyed this podcast. If you enjoyed it, I would appreciate it if you shared it with a friend or someone you know that it can help, or you can post it on Facebook. Join the email list if you haven't already. I look forward to talking to you again next week. Thank you so much.

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