

Stress and IT: How to Deal with it

It's no secret that when working in IT, especially in a support role, one can become stressed. Long hours with little rest, after-hours work "emergencies", and other things come up that can interfere with a good work-life balance. For some, this stress can interfere with a love of the job, but does it have to be this way? I've been working IT in some capacity for 15 years, and I've learned the hard way, that work doesn't have to interfere with home life.

There's a popular quote from Editorial Cartoonist, Frank Tyger:

"Doing what you like is freedom.

Liking what you do is happiness."

- Frank Tyger

I would like to add to this by saying that:

"Doing what you dislike is growing up.

Disliking what you do is stress."

- Robert Wilkins III

What I've learned throughout my career in IT is that the first two are easy to accept and apply; the third is an unavoidable fact of life, and the fourth can be remedied (although most people simply endure it). Although stress is a fact of life, it all depends on your viewpoint of the stressful event, topic, place, etc. I believe that stress is the mind's way of "running away" from something that must be confronted. It is the flight part of the fight-or-flight response. The "fight" aspect involves changing how you respond to stress as opposed to enduring it "just because". In order to do this, you have to stop for a moment, stand up, and breathe. Ask yourself, "does this have to be done RIGHT NOW?", and if the answer is NO (which is the case more often than not), give yourself some time to relax. Go outside and look at the sky, remind yourself that this task won't last forever, play a short game, and start working on that task. Don't view it as something stressful but as a step towards relaxing.

Stressful things will become things that you dislike but are no longer stressful. From there, they are merely stepping stones towards happiness... or in my case, the last step before I hop on the PS4.