

Effective Exam Preparation

Class of 2017

Extract from Chapter 3: Stress Busting the Leaving Cert

Ok students! Have a scone at these fourteen Stress busting tips that I promise will help during your Exams. Try them!!

1. Have Belief in yourself

You are well capable of getting what you want from each exam. You have studied each subject for many years and you have the ability to express this knowledge on the exam paper. After all those classes, without even realising it, you have learned so much from your teachers. I am pretty sure, at this stage, you have faced difficulties in your life and you got through them didn't you? The most glorious sunrise comes after the deepest times of darkness. Millions have gone before you and succeeded. Now it is your turn to deliver and you need to believe that you will. Never doubt yourself. Take each day of the exams as they come. Focus on the present to succeed.

2. Taking Action will reduce the worry

If there is course material you are having difficulty with, getting stressed out won't help. Instead, I would encourage you to take action by seeing your teacher after class or by even asking class mates to help you to understand the problem. Setting priorities and acting on them is a great way of taking pressure off. Ticking off the most important items on a list and working your way downwards can work wonders. Always note down what you have done at the end of the day, not what you didn't reach upon. When taking action, make sure your goals are realistic and can be achieved. Actions can be daily, weekly or monthly. You need to write a shopping list of desirables for each subject and get ticking.

3. Keep in touch with friends

Confiding in someone you trust, that listens and will be supportive is a great way of reducing stress and worry. Talking to a friend, relative or parent about study worries can somewhat lighten the load. Often what


seems like an overwhelming problem can be manageable when you talk it through with someone else. Your class mates are in the same boat as you and know how you are feeling; so you can help each other to get through any little issues. Support your friends and the sentiment is sure to be returned. Meeting up with friends who are not doing exams can also help to take your mind off things too. Look after your mental health around exam time. Stay positive, talk, express yourself and keep in touch with friends 😊

4. Don't be too hard on yourself

It is important to understand that in any situation you can only do your best. The reality is that other students will perform better than you, but many will achieve lower results than you also. Not getting a top grade does not mean failure and your parents and friends are there to support you due to your efforts rather than your results. Try not to be too hard on yourself or compare yourself to your classmates. Ask yourself some questions... Why do I need this grade? Do I need this minimum grade to get into a course? Am I just putting unnecessary pressure on

myself or am I doing this for my Parents? Answering these questions will bring clarity to your motivation. Be kind to yourself during this stressful time remembering that the Leaving Cert exam will not determine the rest of your life. There are so many different roads you can follow now. Unlike years ago, if you have your heart set on one course, there are always side roads you can follow to get back onto the main one. Most adults have changed career path two or three times on average.

5. *Play is as important as study.*

It is vital that you build in time to have fun and relax between study sessions. You might get your parents to help you develop that “lifestyle timetable” that I spoke about in chapter two. This will help you to plan, track and monitor progress and will allow you to enjoy regular activities of relaxation and ‘play’ also. Listening to music is a good way to take your mind off things, especially if you combine it with a walk . Many forms of exercise lend themselves to using

headphones. Someone to run or go for a cycle with will always make a journey easier and more enjoyable.

6. Take a break.

Breaks are to be viewed as a positive not the big bad wolf around exam time. Academics with high concentration levels know the importance of breaks. Air traffic controllers are forced to take regular breaks to ensure they stay fresh. If you find that you are losing concentration, take a short break – go for a walk, talk to a friend or just do something totally different. When you resume study, you will feel refreshed and be better able to concentrate on your revision again.

7. Another cuppa? Don't think so.

I would discourage you from drinking too much coffee, tea or fizzy drinks around this time. Caffeine will make you feel 'keyed-up' and cluster your thinking. Naturally you will feel a sugar rush from the fizzies, but remember that “what comes up must come down!” From this point of you, the bubbles won't benefit you in the long term. Try

some herbal teas like camomile or peppermint tea. I find peppermint tea is a great stomach settler. ☺.

Book to be released in September 2017

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