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Experts suggest smart ways to escape the passion trap and finally love what you do without stress

For modern women, passion can feel like a double-edged sword – inspiring yet exhausting. Experts reveal how to reframe stress, set boundaries, and find joy in achievement, transforming pressure into purpose

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Stress isn't always harmful. Learn how reframing it, setting boundaries, and prioritising self-care can help women avoid burnout and thrive. (Image: Pexels)

Stress has become the hum of modern life, a constant companion for women juggling careers, family, and personal goals. But not all stress is the enemy. Experts now say that how we perceive stress can transform it from a drain into a driver of growth and creativity.

Stress is feedback, says Navyug Mohnot, Stanford Designing Your Life (DYL) educator and coach. "It tells you when your life's design isn't aligned with your values. It's not about avoiding stress; it's about listening and responding wisely." For many women, passion begins as a spark, a rush of excitement and purpose. Yet that spark can turn heavy.

Throwing oneself into work, projects, and personal ambitions with relentless energy may lead to exhaustion, anxiety, and the sense of being stretched too thin. Dr Malini Saba, psychologist, human and social rights activist, and founder of the Saba Family Foundation, calls this the passion pressure trap. "The solution isn't giving up on ambition. It's learning to harness it. By reframing stress as data rather than a threat, you regain agency," she explains. "Instead of saying 'I'm overwhelmed,' try 'I'm being stretched to grow.' The change is subtle, but it transforms behaviour and even your biology," adds Mohnot.

[Also Read: Burnout and the myth of 'success': What happens when ambition becomes exhaustion](#)

The duo share 7 smart strategies to escape the passion pressure trap:

1. Define success on your terms: Stop measuring yourself against colleagues, friends, or social media. True success is peaceful and personal, it's the satisfaction of a day well lived, not applause from others.**2. Make self-care non-negotiable:**

Short walks, meditation, reading, dancing, or even skincare, these aren't indulgences. "Self-care fuels passion," Saba says. "Without it, inspiration becomes exhaustion."

3. Harness the power of saying no: Boundaries protect focus and energy. "Saying no to what doesn't serve your purpose is not rejection, it's smart investment in what truly matters," she opines.**4. Celebrate wins big and small:** Every achievement counts, completing a tricky task, mastering a tiny skill, surviving a hectic week. Pausing to acknowledge progress [builds confidence](#) and motivation.**5. Reframe stress as a guide:** Instead of fearing stress, treat it as a GPS for life. "Notice what drains you versus what energises you, and restructure your activities accordingly," Mohnot suggests.**6. Prioritise energy over hours:** Feeling overworked may have less to do with time spent and more with alignment. "Focus on activities that give energy rather than deplete it," he says.

7. Design your life actively: Passion works best when life reflects your values. Ask yourself: are my actions aligned with who I want to become? Restructure if necessary – passion should lift you forward, not weigh you down.

Passion should be a source of inspiration, not pressure. By defining success personally, prioritising self-care, setting boundaries, and reframing stress, women can turn the spark that excites into fuel that sustains.**Disclaimer: This article, including health and fitness advice, only provides generic information. Don't treat it as a substitute for qualified medical opinion. Always consult a specialist for specific health diagnosis.**