

**Kay Frances:** It's vital now, more than ever that we try to at least go in our backyards, get some fresh air. You know, it's just so important to take care of ourselves now. It really is.

**Peter Margaritis:** Welcome to Change Your Mindset podcast, formerly known as Improv is No Joke, where it's all about believing that strong communication skills are the best way in delivering your technical accounting knowledge and growing your business. An effective way of building stronger communication skills is by embracing the principles of applied improvisation. Your host is Peter Margaritis, CPA a.k.a. The Accidental Accountant. And he will interview financial professionals and business leaders to find their secret in building stronger relationships with their clients, customers, associates, and peers, all the while growing their businesses. So, let's start the show.

**Peter Margaritis:** Welcome, everyone. I recorded this episode on March 25th, and waited until April 11th to write this introduction. The coronavirus appears to have peaked in New York. In Ohio, we're still under stay at home with the peak anticipated by the time this episode airs. We're all dealing with the stress of the unknown and being self-isolated for over a month. We're getting a little stir-crazy, I believe. Well, at least, I know that I am. And thinking about how I can provide an alternative method for dealing with the stress, I've decided to reach out to experts to help us all deal with this stress related to COVID-19.

**Peter Margaritis:** Now, my guest today is Kay Francis and she's a friend of this podcast. I interviewed her in season 1, episode 97, wow, back at April 9, 2018. Kay is a professional keynote speaker, humorous, and the author of the book, The Funny Thing About Stress: a Seriously Humorous Guide to a Happier Life. Now, we've all heard that laughter is one of the best coping mechanisms in dealing with stress. In an article published by the Mayo Clinic in April 2019 titled Stress Relief from Laughter, it's no joke. When it comes to relieving stress, more giggles are just what the doctor ordered.

**Peter Margaritis:** The article states that short-term benefits from laughter are it helps to stimulate many organs, activate and relieve your stress response, and soothe tension. Long-term benefits are, improve your immune system, relieve pain, increased personal

satisfaction, and improve your mood. This article describes what Kay believes is the benefit of humor during these times. We discussed COVID-19 has existed up to March 25th, and Kay provided sound advice on how to deal with the stress, and she will make you laugh. You just can't help it. I had a number of belly laughs during this interview. So, before we get to the interview, and the belly laughs, and the great advice, just a couple of housekeeping items.

**Announcer:** This podcast is part of the C-Suite Radio Network, turning the volume up on business.

**Sponsor:** This episode is sponsored by Peter A. Margaritis, LLC, also known as The Accidental Accountant. Are you looking for a speaker that can bring powerful content virtually, or in person, or on-site that is memorable and engaging in a way that motivates and inspires your audience? Instead of data dumping and numbing with numbers, imagine your people and teams delivering a financial story to your stakeholders, a story that creates engaging and relationship building business conversations.

**Sponsor:** Would you be interested in learning more about how that is accomplished? How would you feel if the value your facilitator provided your organization far exceeded the dollar amount on their invoice? Peter Margaritis, CPA and Certified Speaking Professional delivers all of the above and much, much more. All of Peter's programs can be done virtually in person and on-site at your location or at an offsite venue. Send Peter a note at [peter@petermargaritis.com](mailto:peter@petermargaritis.com) and/or visit his web site at [www.petermargaritis.com](http://www.petermargaritis.com) to learn more about what Peter can bring to your next conference, management retreat, or workshop.

**Peter Margaritis:** Now, let's get to the interview with Kay Frances. Hey, welcome back, everybody. Man, when we need a dose of humor, and we need a dose of humor now, we need a dose of some lighthearted, funny, how to deal with all the stress, so I've got a special guest for you. My guest today, and she is now a second-time return guest on my podcast, the very funny Kay Frances. And welcome, Kay.

**Kay Frances:** Hey, thank you, Peter. I'm so happy you're out here fighting the good fight. I think we should probably tell people the date in case they catch this later. Yeah. What we're dealing with and-

**Peter Margaritis:** Right. Today's March 25, 2020, and we're in the midst of the COVID-19, the coronavirus, and everything about that. I don't know. We're here in Ohio, where the shelter-at-home order.

**Kay Frances:** Yes, that's a nice way of saying quarantine, but, you know-

**Peter Margaritis:** Yes, exactly. That's a nice way to say quarantine.

**Kay Frances:** They just want to say, you're not allowed to leave your house. But oh, Peter, I got to tell you, I did have to go out, and I did have to go get medication, and also the grocery, and maybe the post office. Okay. I had a few things. Maybe they weren't 100% essential, and I probably shouldn't admit this, but I am practicing social distancing, wash my hands, all of that. But I pulled out of my driveway and there's a police officer.

**Kay Frances:** I'm sure he just happened to be going my way, but I felt like I was 18, and I just had a half a quart of vodka. I was driving. And then, when I pulled into the pharmacy, he kind of veered off the other way, he goes, oh, okay, she's going to the pharmacy, she's okay. And I'm sure that he had other things to think about, whether I was out of my house, in my car, but I just got that feeling. But it's really a mandate for us in Ohio, and the US way.

**Peter Margaritis:** It is. My wife works in social services, and on Monday, she worked from home. But they said that we're still essential businesses, and by the way, we'd like you to come in for a few hours. And she did. And when she came, she goes, "I got a letter now, that if I get pulled over by the police, I just show them this letter."

**Kay Frances:** Wow. Yeah. It really makes me funny. As a funny motivational speaker, I always thought that my work is so important, but apparently, I'm nonessential. You know

what, our world doesn't need me, but I disagree. I think they need not me necessarily, but they need the message that we give probably now more than ever.

**Peter Margaritis:** Absolutely. And that's why I wanted to have you on this podcast. And you are the author, *The Funny Thing About Stress: a Seriously Humorous Guide to a Happier Life*. Well, this is a time we need some funny because we're all dealing with stress.

**Kay Frances:** Yes. And, Peter, I have had my own message tested for myself more since this broke. Where are we at, two weeks now?

**Peter Margaritis:** Yes.

**Kay Frances:** Then, you know, it's easy in good times to say that we need to do these things. But when you begin to get scared, you begin to face literal life and death situations for a lot of people. And what the one thing we're all dealing with is the unknown. And that can wear on you. That can cause so much stress because we simply do not know when we're going back to work. We don't know when we are going to be free to move about like we used to.

**Kay Frances:** We don't know what's going to happen with the economy. These are real life and death situations. This isn't just, oh, gee, I wonder if my 401(k) went down a few dollars. It isn't that. It's, people are scared and it's the unknown that makes it worse than anything. And listen, I'm susceptible to this, the same as everybody else. So, over the past, what is it, 10 days now, we've been quarantined?

**Peter Margaritis:** Maybe. Basically, stay at home this week, but then, we were reduced to maybe no more than 10 people in the gathering. We went from like, yeah, 50 to 100 to 10 to stay at home. Right.

**Kay Frances:** Yes. So, it's been a struggle. I mean, I'll just tell you, my rug was just pulled out from under me like we all are. All of my work for March and April was canceled. May, I don't even know. And this is our busy season as speakers. But I don't

want to talk about me and my woes. But, you know, the truth is, regardless of the nature of the stress, the ways to handle them are the same. And we're going to kind of focus on the humor. What we're going through is similar to going through the death of a family.

**Kay Frances:** I just read a really interesting article about grief. And I realized that I couldn't pinpoint what I was feeling, especially those first four or five days, but we're all feeling lost. Loss of life, as we understand it, loss of our freedom, loss of security, loss of knowing what's going to happen next. And that's what happens when like, say, a loved one suddenly dies. So, the principles of laughter and humor, it's that you don't laugh your way through something like this. You have to go through the steps. But I've always said, even in grief, that laughter should be in the toolbox.

**Kay Frances:** And when those gifts of laughter come up, because I do believe laughter and humor are a gift, take them and run with you. Now, I'm on social media. I try to post fun and funny whenever I can. And a lot of people are, have you seen more toilet paper jokes in your entire life? And that's how we cope. That's how we get through. You know, it's just no, we're not laughing every second. But my golly, we've got to continually work to keep our mindset on optimism and on keeping our sense of humour absolutely as much as possible.

**Kay Frances:** And people have been so creative. People everywhere are posting videos of things they're doing in quarantine, that I mean, just regular folks that maybe aren't funny for a living are much funnier than what I've been able to come up with. And, you know, it spurred people's creativity, but it's survival. That's how we get through this because if we let these negative emotions continue to pull us down, pull us down, first of all, we're going to get sick because that's what happens.

**Peter Margaritis:** Absolutely.

**Kay Frances:** And now, more than ever, we have to keep our immune system up. And studies have shown that even a spirit of optimism, humor, and all of that, that people that have that over people that don't have better heart health, a stronger immune system, and a decreased risk of stroke. So, this is science. This is science, baby.

**Peter Margaritis:** This is science. And by the way, the audience, when I asked Kay if she'd be on my podcast, she said, "Absolutely for two rolls of toilet paper." So, I hope they were delivered in time before the show.

**Kay Frances:** Well, you know, I think you insured it for like a thousand dollars.

**Peter Margaritis:** Well, absolutely. Yeah. People find all that stuff these days.

**Kay Frances:** And, you know, okay, tell the truth, I asked for four. And you negotiated down to two because, you know, I'm not famous, let's get real here.

**Peter Margaritis:** And I have a 19-year-old son, so that was not-

**Kay Frances:** Well, there you go.

**Peter Margaritis:** And the other thing about it, you know, we are now being asked to work from home.

**Kay Frances:** Yes.

**Peter Margaritis:** And when all this happened, you know, so today, I only have one FTE here, my son. And tomorrow, I'll have two. And by Friday, I'm going to put them both on warning. I won't have to write them up. I mean, they sleep too late. I delegate. They don't even do anything. They just sit around in bonbons and watching Ellen. I got to put them on, you know, performance warning, I believe.

**Kay Frances:** I love that. I love it. And for a lot of us, I mean, we're speakers. But when we're not speaking, we do work from home. So, this isn't terribly new except that we're in this strange time. The last thing people want to hear from us, "Hey, would you like me speak at your gig?" And they're like, "We don't even know there will be a conference. We don't know." And I let that freak me out for a while, but I have to walk my own talk.

**Kay Frances:** And really, I seek out whenever I feel my mood starts to dip because I can't live there. It's okay to visit there, but don't live there. When your mood starts to dip, you start to feel sad and depressed. Don't go eat up your two weeks of rations in one day. That's a short-term fix that makes you feel worse in the long run. Find some funny people. And it's so funny, well, you know, when I go on YouTube, and I'm sure it's true with everybody, they give suggested videos based on what you watch.

**Peter Margaritis:** Right.

**Kay Frances:** And I like to watch some news, but I've gotten to where I have really stepped away from it because there's too much we don't know. We still don't know. And so, they're not telling us much. And I have relatives that will text me when the governor does something new. So, how it affects me, I will find out. I don't have to watch it and get depressed. So, it's so funny. The YouTube will pop up and be like funny cat videos, the news. And I start weighing out, I go, no, I'm going for the funny cats, you know. That's a choice that we make you choose to find something that is going to uplift their mood as opposed to something that is going to bring us down. Frankly, it's probably going to bring you down. And you're not going to learn anything new, really.

**Peter Margaritis:** And you are a very funny person and what of this? An idea just came to me, what if a company contacted you or you knew of a company that we're doing, I don't know, they finally say, "Yeah, we can get people together on a conference call, and we just want to make it uplifting, and make them feel better. Can we include you in that, and at no cost, write down, and then maybe something will happen after the fact?" Would you jump all over that?

**Kay Frances:** Oh, well, I hate to put out into the entire world, hey, I'm here, I'm available, and I'm free. No. Listen, this is one way that I can serve. And, you know, when you take your mind off yourself and your troubles—and by the way, let me intervene, I realize I'm not hilariously funny on this thing. And I'm speaking more from how to use humor than being hilariously funny. So, I apologize to your listeners if they thought, you know, that Chris Rock was going to be on this. Yeah.

**Kay Frances:** So, I'm serving wherever I can. I had a call today at noon. I have a friend, a speaker friend that did a spoof Zoom call. And I played myself, which is Aunt Kay, exaggerated, and what it was, they're having a business Zoom call discussing using Zoom in business. I pop in with the wrong number. And I'm like, you know, I'm looking at the screen and the buttons. It's the first time on Zoom. I'm like, "Hey, how you doing, guys? Oh, my God, I can't see anybody. Where are you? Oh, well, listen, I'll talk for a few minutes and you guys come in."

**Kay Frances:** And I just went on and on, just stupid aunt stuff, you know, like, "Hey, I drop some three bean soup off on your porch like a half hour ago, I didn't knock because I don't know where your hand has been, I'm not touching your doorknob. But it's out there. Don't let it go bad because, you know, supplies are tough these days." I actually am an Aunt Kay, and I am kind of like that with my relatives and my little millennial nieces. And wait, wait. I had a ball with it. And so, it was really fun to kind of do an impostor into somebody else's Zoom call.

**Peter Margaritis:** So, will that be on YouTube soon.

**Kay Frances:** Yeah, she'll post it somewhere, I will probably post it on my feet as well. So-

**Peter Margaritis:** Okay. Good. And please, for the listeners, please follow Kay. I follow you on Facebook a lot. Where else are you-

**Kay Frances:** I do have a YouTube channel. So, if people want to see some truly funny videos. And listen, I say that because I've earned it. I started doing stand-up comedy 35 years ago. What I'm not so funny at, sitting here in front of my computer with just my friend here. I am funny on stage. So, if somebody wants to see, I've got some songs I do. And so, it's Kay Frances, and it's spelled with an E, F-R-A-N-C-E-S, [kayfrances.com](http://kayfrances.com). So, you can go to my website. Facebook, I'm very active on, not so much the others. And not because I'm old, it's just hard to keep up with them all. And I just have gotten the most response on Facebook. So, that's where I kind of go with. So-.



**Peter Margaritis:** You posted a really nice blog yesterday, which is kind of what we're talking about right now about how you struggled at first with this. And we had to walk the talk. And it's like, you know, we can't change anything, and we've just got to keep moving forward.

**Kay Frances:** That's it. And we all know what we need to do, those little things, it's social distancing, it's—you know, I've always washed my hands. I don't understand this whole, all of a sudden, this is something new for people.

**Peter Margaritis:** Apparently so.

**Kay Frances:** But we know it is. Yeah. You've got your Purell there. Yeah. I know. You know, in fact, if you've done any health care conferences, you're in there in the room, in the restroom with nurses, I mean, it takes forever because they're washing and like scrubbing in for surgery, you know. And, you know, you're supposed to do it to the Happy Birthday song twice. So, I got really tired of like, "Happy birthday, dear knuckles." I mean, who do you even sing to, you know? And with all this, now, I do the album, [indiscernible], and younger people don't know that, it's 17 minutes long. So, just make your your song a little longer.

**Peter Margaritis:** And she said she's not funny.

**Kay Frances:** Listen, if you want to do some new song, oh, I can do Billie Eilish. Okay. I'm a bad girl. So, se, you can do a newer song or you can do Lizzo, I do my hat toss, check my nails, baby, how you feeling? So, yeah, I mean-

**Peter Margaritis:** Once again.

**Kay Frances:** Hat toss, check my nails, baby, how you feeling?

**Peter Margaritis:** Oh, my gosh. And she thinks she's not funny on my podcast.

**Kay Frances:** And he will love you anymore. Just walk your fine self out that that door.

**Peter Margaritis:** And she can sing, who knew?

**Kay Frances:** Who knew?

**Peter Margaritis:** Who knew? So, what do you hear from some of your other folks, how they are dealing with what's happening today?

**Kay Frances:** You know, it's interesting. People will deal with stress in so many different ways. I have a couple of speaker friends that it was like, okay, this is awful, this is bad, bam. They put their heads down and went right to work. I mean, they already had things that they were working on, online courses and all this stuff. And like it was amazing, really, just went to work. Other people were frozen, you know, just shell-shocked, what do I do now? And for someone like me that's a live speaker, I'm not set up for all this Zoom—I mean, I do Zoom calls. I do podcasts, you know.

**Kay Frances:** It's not that. I know how to do it. I'm not that technology-challenged, but it's like when you're used to doing one thing, you've gone all in, it's hard to make a switch because you can't just switch that fast, but I'm being forced to. I actually have a virtual conference I'm doing. It was supposed to be May the 8th, and it's huge, 2,500 people. And it was going to be a closing keynote. Now they're doing the whole conference a four-day virtual conference. Can you imagine?

**Peter Margaritis:** A four-day virtual conference?

**Kay Frances:** A four-day virtual conference.

**Peter Margaritis:** Are you still the closing keynote?

**Kay Frances:** I guess so. Well, we have a call on Friday and I'll learn more about it. But at first, I freaked out a little, and then I thought, I'm going to embrace the challenge here. I will find a way to do this, to get my message across and make it fun and funny and engaging. I'm just going to have to learn, you know, what system they have. Obviously, I

don't have anything where I can host 2,500 people, so I'm sure they'll have all that in place. And you just make it work. Again, if you look at change as an adventure, that was my mindset, my tweak.

**Kay Frances:** I was like instead of dreading this and being, but I'm a keynote speaker, I'm this, I'm that, and I'm these ideas, we get stuck about ourselves. If we will just look at all these changes we're going through as an adventure, and what I'm noticing, and I'm sure you are too, Peter, as are your listeners, those are the people handling it the best, instead of just falling apart over it. Just falling apart. I don't know what to do. I can't work from home. I don't know what's happening.

**Kay Frances:** And there again, my goodness, my problems are small when I think of the health care workers that are literally going in there every day, would not have enough equipment in dealing with this. Really, minor, really, first-world problems at this. But they're my problems, so I think we have to acknowledge our own problems, and maybe be serious about them. But truthfully, I'm fine. I'm going to eat the same tomorrow either way, my lights come on, I'm fine for a while. You know, I'm really pretty fortunate. So, that's another thing. You know, stopping and counting our blessings and having gratitude about what we do have, that mindset.

**Peter Margaritis:** Having gratitude and serving others, I think, is important in this time. And we have a voice, we have a platform. We can help serve other people as well as you're right, count our blessings, and help those who might not have the same blessings that we have. And also, so I've self-quarantined myself since I got back from one conference because I had a horrible non-coronavirus, but I was sick for two weeks. I'm a type 1.

**Kay Frances:** Don't you love the way we had, and boy, it wasn't coronavirus, I was sick. Yeah.

**Peter Margaritis:** Because my mother's listening to this. It wasn't the coronavirus, but I was sick like a dog for two weeks. And I'm a type 1 diabetic. So, I started social distancing when I started feeling better, and I'd been out of this house twice.

**Kay Frances:** Wow.

**Peter Margaritis:** Yeah. But I'm used to, at times, working in this environment. I'm comfortable in a virtual world. And that's how I've tried to help serve. I've contacted some not-for-profits who have now been forced to do this. And I know they don't have the budget, but they still have to have these meetings and stuff. And I'm trying to help them navigate with Zoom, so they can have staff meetings, so they can communicate and still be able to connect with people versus being fearful of the technology.

**Kay Frances:** Yeah, absolutely. And by the way, to answer your question from earlier, I think I kind of went off unintentionally, but yes, I do want to serve. I do want to use my humor and the tips that I can offer. I'm on the path with everybody else. This isn't me at the top of the mountain saying, hey, I've got it all figured out, come join me. The only reason I'm a tiny bit reluctant is I'm just getting all this figured out and getting comfortable with Zoom and all these new tools that I kind of know because I've always had Zoom calls and that kind of thing.

**Kay Frances:** But I'm learning, I'm watching webinars, and that's another thing. Well, people have more time, learn new things. You know, I have been watching all sorts of demonstrations, again, on doing virtual presentations, and things I'm interested in. I found that for a minute there, I was feeling like, oh, I had to do this, oh, I had to do that, just watching my speaker friend's online course. That's that. Well, that isn't what I do.

**Kay Frances:** We have to stay within our sphere because it takes time to learn something new and to be good at it. And you'll get frustrated otherwise. And they'll go, I do a podcast. I'll do a Zoom. Well, unless you really dig in—now, you've dug into it, made a very good success of this. You are ready before this hits. Look at you, you're all up and running, got his microphone, his headphones. And, you know, you've already done tons, and, you know, you're all over the world. So, you're already ready for this.

**Kay Frances:** But I can't scramble around and try to throw something together because first of all, that's panic and fear-based, and I don't think I'd get a good result from that.

So, I kind of go from where I'm sitting. And actual presenting for virtually, I have to do it because I'm being challenged to do it, but it's fascinating to me. And I think I could use the medium. I just have to learn it. So, I've got all this stuff. I have a green screen on order, and lights. Unfortunately, everybody else is, so they're not going to get here until April 21st. So, you know-

**Peter Margaritis:** So, I will say this again, I said this in e-mail, if I can help you with any of this technology stuff about Zoom or anything, all you got to do is ask. I'd love to help.

**Kay Frances:** I appreciate that.

**Peter Margaritis:** And two, I love that aspect of learning something new because I'm a Greek-American and my Greek is limited to just the bad words, the cuss words my grandmother used to teach me. So, about a month ago, Rosetta Stone had a super offer for a lifetime subscription, and I bought it, and I've been teaching myself Greek.

**Kay Frances:** That's awesome.

**Peter Margaritis:** Well, it helps. I spend half-an-hour a day doing it. Like you say, it takes time. I know I'm not going to be fluent and speak at a thousand miles an hour, but I'm not telling anybody. I don't think my family listens to me anymore on this podcast, they don't know any secrets. But I started, what else could I do? What can I learn? And I ended up learning more about Zoom than I ever thought. It's just also a time to soak it all in. So, do things you've wanted to do, but never had the time because now, we have the time.

**Kay Frances:** That's right. And we're gripped with fear. And what I went through for those first few days after, which was, I guess, a form of shock, a form of grief. And we go through the grief stages and not necessarily in order. But you finally get to acceptance, where you're like, you know what, I can't control this. And this is not to say that I won't fall back. Again, two steps forward, one step back. I'll have my moments. I just know me.

**Kay Frances:** And it's just something you work on, you know, you have awareness of. But it can be an opportunity in adversity. And sometimes, it's so hard to see. And again, my problems are not like everybody else's. It doesn't matter. The principles are the same. I don't care how serious the problem is. I have gone through serious things. Not now. I was one of the mother's caregiver, you know, and going to absolute life and death situations. These principles held more then than ever.

**Kay Frances:** So, it's not like I'm, you know, flippant about this, like, oh, I don't have a big problem, so it works for me. It works for everyone. It doesn't matter. Ask anybody that works in hospice. Ask anybody who works in health care. Humor, it matters, and keeping your mood up and looking at adversity as an opportunity or finding those little nuggets. And, you know, in these kinds of times, people rise up too. We've all seen the unfortunate situations of people hoarding.

**Kay Frances:** And I just heard something about doctors that are writing out 400 pills of some drug that, you know—I mean, it brings out the best and the worst of human nature, unfortunately. But look for the best. There are people all around doing absolutely heroic things. And they're amazing and they're inspiring. You know, some people run out, healthcare people run in. They're our new heroes. I really am convinced of that.

**Peter Margaritis:** Right. They run toward the issue, not away from it.

**Kay Frances:** That's right.

**Peter Margaritis:** Well, you know, I rebranded this podcast a while ago to Change Your Mindset. That's really what this is. We know it's out there. We know we can't control it, change the attitude towards it.

**Kay Frances:** That's it. That's all. We can't control most of the time.

**Peter Margaritis:** Yeah. The space between our ears.

**Kay Frances:** Yes.

**Peter Margaritis:** But our bodies are wired that when bad things happen, we tend to have those negative thoughts.

**Kay Frances:** Yes.

**Peter Margaritis:** Yes.

**Kay Frances:** Well, and not only that, I read an excellent study that they did that we are actually wired for pessimism because back in our early stages, you know, say the caveman days, optimists didn't make it. It was the pessimists going, what are we going to eat tomorrow? Optimists were like, you know, a barrel will come along. I'm not going to worry about it. Really, I mean, if you had a rosy, optimistic view of the world. So, we are wired for survival, which makes us look for the, you know—like in voting, they say where the rocks are.

**Kay Frances:** So, it's the same kind of thing. It's a survival technique. But the problem is we're not fighting bears. A lot of that, we just invent because it's in our wiring. So, we have to fight it. We have to say, that's not something I need to worry about. Keep the focus on things a little legitimate. And they're, again, unnecessary worry, just weighs us down, find solutions, but make a plan, and then let go of things that don't matter, for heaven's sakes.

**Peter Margaritis:** Right. Even if you take an hour out of your day to watch funny YouTube videos, or do something humorous, or do something to take you away from the stress that's out there. And I know that we have at least three members in our NSA chapter that I think to help deal with stress and have some time to think, they build jigsaw puzzles.

**Kay Frances:** Yes, I've seen a lot of people doing that.

**Peter Margaritis:** I see a lot of people building that. And I'm going, jigsaw puzzles, but then someone said, I was on a virtual happy hour last night, and they go, "I love jigsaw

puzzles because it takes me away from everything." I can focus on, you know, these thousand pieces and trying to solve this puzzle." And I went, "That's nice. I can only do six." Doesn't help. But yeah, it's just finding different things to take your mind off it. And you said it, turn the news off.

**Kay Frances:** Yeah. And, you know, managing our stress or whatever we do to keep ourselves sane, that's a very individual thing. A jigsaw puzzle, my stress level would never be higher. I'm with you, brother. I'm like, really? I mean, I'll give you an example, I've tried gardening one time. Some people, I mean, they're just at Zen when they garden. They're in the dirt, they grow beautiful flowers, and fruits, and vegetables. I'm very envious. I tried it one time, and I'm going to tell you something, I'd rather be beat to death.

**Kay Frances:** Let me tell you, I got in a community gardening program through the Ag Department at our little college here. So, everybody had a four-by-12 raised bed plot. And my stuff just wasn't growing. Well, I was the newbie, so they stuck me down by the cemetery, and like the animals were like ravaging my stuff. I remember when I had a tomato, it was on the ground, and a deer had taken a bite out of it, and left it. You know, like those family members that take a bite out of the chocolate in the box, and then put it back.

**Kay Frances:** And I was so desperate for a homegrown tomato. I thought, how dirty could a deer's lips really be? So, I mean, I thought like that because you see these people, when the tomatoes first come out, they're on Facebook with a picture, look, my first tomato, like their new grandchild, you know, they go, oh, here I am with my first BLT. Eat your hearts out. You don't have tomatoes. I have fresh tomatoes. But you could not wrench a tomato out their hands, but you wait three weeks, there'll be anonymous bags showing up on your porch.

**Kay Frances:** So, anyway, one person's stress enhancer can be another person's stress reducer. We're very individual in that way. So, you know, like quilting, huh? I feel like I have one quilt in me before I die, but I'll never start it because of the tedium of it. But other people, I mean, their stress just melts away. Same with golf. Oh, just kill me,



you know. Awful. I mean, I'm throwing stuff. I mean, I become a person I don't even recognize. And other people, they're all out there with nature and the green.

**Kay Frances:** So, just an individual thing. So, it's what works for us. So, we have to nourish our soul. And for heaven's sakes, during these times, avoid those energy vampires, people that suck you dry. Luckily, with a lot of us doing social distancing and quarantining, we can. But, you know, they're still going to call, they're going to text. You know, avoid them at all costs. Our time and energy are limited right now, even though we have tons of it. But still, quality time and energy are limited.

**Peter Margaritis:** I'm definitely going to put this video on YouTube, and people can go and see-

**Kay Frances:** I hope I did hair and makeup.

**Peter Margaritis:** I know. And I'm sitting and laughing so hard, I'm crying. I do know something, how you manage your stress and you get very creative in doing that because you like to work out.

**Kay Frances:** I do. I do. And, you know, I do. I become one of these people I used to hate, a health nut. And, you know, I mean, I've been through it all. I'm 28 years clean and sober from drug and alcohol abuse. I smoked cigarettes 25 years. This is why I don't judge anybody where they are on the path. We're all working on something. But I mean, for me, addiction is like a game of whack-a-mole, you know, like, oh, I drank too much, I'm going to do drugs. If this be a drug, I'm going to drink more, I'm going to smoke cigarettes 25 years.

**Kay Frances:** Stop that. Discover the joy of sugar and carbs. Gain 40 pounds, lose muscle then, start buying shoes online. It never freaking ends. So, I do, I work out. And I tell you, I am one of these people I used to hate. It is air and water for me. So, when my gym clothes, because in our state, it was mandatory, our gym owner opened the gym for one hour, and we were allowed to check out equipment to take home with us.

**Peter Margaritis:** Oh, wow.

**Kay Frances:** And I mean, I have a few things around, you know, but I got like three sets of weights, a band, I got a step bench, which I can do step aerobics on. And yes, by all means, get outside. I live right by a bike path, I'm very fortunate. So, on nice days, I get out and walk. And I do my exercises. And so, it's vital now more than ever that we try to at least go in our backyards, get some fresh air. You know, it's just so important to take care of ourselves now. It really is.

**Peter Margaritis:** Yes, it is. And exercise, you know, I love riding my bike. And I haven't really been, so I brought it in the house. I got a little trainer and I got it sitting up on side of my desk and got on it last night for about half-an-hour, oh, God, I've missed my bike. But then, this morning, I got up like, oh, God, I forgot I had those muscles.

**Kay Frances:** I know, right?

**Peter Margaritis:** Yeah.

**Kay Frances:** I know.

**Peter Margaritis:** But, you know, that's how I've always managed my stress, is to exercise and stuff. And to be-

**Kay Frances:** Yeah. And also, just slow down and meditate. You kind of touched on this. You know, it's interesting. I follow Jerry Seinfeld personally, probably more than professionally. And I know that sounds weird, but he's always been fascinating to me. And people ask him, you know, about your success, this and that and the other. He has a work ethic like you wouldn't believe. He gets up and goes to work. He takes his kids to school and goes to the office.

**Kay Frances:** He says, "I'm a comedian. That's what I do. It's my job." He's worth \$800 million. It's not about money with him. But he will tell you things he does. And he says, you know, "People ask me about the secret to success, is that I do this one thing that no

one-", they're like, "Oh, yeah. Okay. But what else do you do? He said, "I really believe it's the secret to my success." For 30 years, he meditates every day.

**Peter Margaritis:** Really? I didn't know that.

**Kay Frances:** Every day, yes. Twenty minutes. And you can get meditation like songs, you know, where it's just a song, and it is hard. You close your eyes, your mind's darting all over the place. And I admit, I fall in and out of it. Actually, I went through a period where I meditated like an hour a day. Well, actually, I nap, but meditate sounds much less lazy, but I fall in and out of it. And I wish I was that [indiscernible].

**Peter Margaritis:** I'll leap right into that one. You do an hour?

**Kay Frances:** Yeah, I know. Well, I nap, but it just sounds less lazy because it's just that I meditate.

**Peter Margaritis:** So, my question about meditation, and since you meditate, maybe you can help me with this, is my mind, as in *Blazing Saddles*, my mind's a raging torn, flooded with three minutes of thought, cascaded into a waterfall of creative alternatives. Otherwise, it's always going. An to stop it, I don't-

**Kay Frances:** I don't know that you're supposed to stop it, you're supposed to let them go by. You let the thoughts go by. I mean, read up on it. It's fascinating. And it's hard, I mean, at first. The times I've been able to sink into that state, I'm going to tell you, it puts you in sort of a state of calm and perspective for the rest of the day. It really can set the tone. So, why do I fall out of it? I have no idea. Why do we not do the things we know work? Why? We get out of habits. You know, I'm very disciplined in some areas and other areas like that. In fact, that's going to be my new, my golly, I'm going to commit right now, I'm going to go back, I'm going to get the meditation CD out and start doing it again.

**Peter Margaritis:** Okay. You should post on your Facebook page, day one of meditation, I've committed back it. I've got an audience of people out there.

**Kay Frances:** I fell asleep again, you know.

**Peter Margaritis:** Exactly. And actually, I will read up on meditation.

**Kay Frances:** It's interesting.

**Peter Margaritis:** I'll use this analogy. When Dan Thurmon came to our chapter and he started juggling, I hadn't juggled in years. So, after that, I was motivated to juggle, and I juggled every single day. First time, I think my first day, I was able to keep 26 balls in the air consecutively. At one point, I was up to about 350 rotations.

**Kay Frances:** Wait, 350 balls?

**Peter Margaritis:** No, no, no. Rotations. Three balls, rotation. Oh, God. No.

**Kay Frances:** Peter, you're in the wrong profession, 350 balls in the air at once.

**Peter Margaritis:** Yeah. No, that's my day job.

**Kay Frances:** Yeah, right? Yeah. That's what we're talking about.

**Peter Margaritis:** And I was doing it every single day, every single day, every single day, then day 92 came and I forgot to do it. And I haven't been able to get back into the habit again.

**Kay Frances:** Interesting.

**Peter Margaritis:** Yeah. I mean, I took my juggling balls on the road with me, traveled with them everywhere, doing 4:30 in the morning, and I was committed to it. And then, well, I think complacency hits.

**Kay Frances:** It's so easy to break patterns. That's why, really, once you get serious about something, I think it should be in your calendar just like going to a doctor's appointment. That's one thing I do at the beginning of the month. I schedule all of my workouts because I do classes at 5:30. This is when I'm in town. On the roads, little more of a challenge. And I'm getting better at that, too. And I will schedule those and I'll take the clothes. I'll say, you scheduled a workout. So, a lot of times, what I do, like say I get to a hotel at 4:00, when I go in there, I do not sit down.

**Kay Frances:** I might unpack a little bit, I don't sit down. If I sit down, it's over. I go straight to those workout clothes, put them on, go down to the gym. I can't if I'm down, I just know if I sit now, I'm done. I'm not going to feel like it, I'm going to put it off, and it's over. So, you have to be strong enough to know your weakness. With some people, like when we are working in offices and so forth, they can't go home first. They got to go straight to the gym. Don't think about, just go.

**Kay Frances:** So, you have to find something you don't hate. You might not love it, but at least you don't hate it. You have to find something you, you know, can live with. Hopefully, if you do it long enough, you'll grow to love it. And then, again, it will become like air and water. That's my philosophy on exercise. But it takes a long time. Most people don't have the patience because you go through—it's horrible. Those first few months, you gain weight. I mean, to go through all that, because you're gaining muscle, probably, you know, and it's demoralizing. It's terrible.

**Peter Margaritis:** Your appetite increases.

**Kay Frances:** All that time. And you're not seeing results. And it's torture to go through and you feel terrible after, but to hang in, just hang in long enough. And usually, for most people, it's six months, then it'll turn—it will begin to turn around. You won't hate it. You'll tolerate it. Then, you'll like it. Then, you'll love it. Then, you won't be able live without it.

**Peter Margaritis:** Then, you're addicted, but that's a good addiction.

**Kay Frances:** Yeah. You become one of those people that you used to hate.

**Peter Margaritis:** Oh, yeah. I'm a reformed smoker. I think I quit 15, 20 years ago. And I actually can't stand the smell of cigarettes. Absolutely cannot stand to smell of cigarettes.

**Kay Frances:** Oh, yeah, I know, right?

**Peter Margaritis:** One of the worst. Well, yeah.

**Kay Frances:** Oh, the worst. I know.

**Peter Margaritis:** Right. Right. But it took a while, but dealt with cold turkey. But it's got to be something that through this time that we focus our mind on that's good for us, that's good for our families. You know, we try to have at least one or two nights a week here to have gin rummy night unless my son wins too much, then we can't put up with his ego, his confidence, then we go, okay, we have to find something else to do. We'll have a movie night, but just something to take our mind off of everything else that's going on, and just give it a rest.

**Kay Frances:** Distraction is a wonderful tool. It can be overdone if we're using distraction too much to where we're not getting things done that we want or need to do. But as a coping tool, yes, distraction is wonderful. And it sounds like you're doing it beautifully. And that's great advice.

**Peter Margaritis:** Well, here's the other piece of advice. We will fail. You said, you know, we will fail. And yesterday was a failure day. I just kind of walked around here, lost a little bit. And I had my to-do list and stuff, and I found about everything else in the world to do except what I was supposed to do. And then, I woke up this morning, I called BS, and I got everything done from yesterday, got everything done from today. Okay. I'm going to have those days.

**Kay Frances:** Yeah. Yeah. It's a new day, just start over. It's a new day. That's all. I mean, same with exercise. You fall often, you get back up, you know. Maybe you fall off for a month, life gets in the way. Just get back up. Just keep getting back up on that horse. That's what it is. And I think, too, people have to be gentle with themselves and be patient. No, new skill comes overnight, you know. If you want to learn to play the piano, you think you're going to sit down and play Bach the first time? Nope. You're going to learn scales. Oh, here's a better one. Guitar. You play guitar. Your fingers are going to bleed. You're going to get blisters.

**Kay Frances:** I mean, I don't know that people who don't play the guitar realize that it's going to hurt. It's going to really hurt. Takes a long time to build those calluses. And then, if you don't play for a long time, you'll lose them, and you're kind of going to start over with that, but it's day-by-day, step-by-step, moment-by-moment, and you just have to ride through. When you hit a wall, maybe take a few steps back, but then, just go around or over that wall, you know, and proceed. That's really what it's about. It's easier said than done, for sure, as are all these principles.

**Peter Margaritis:** Right. And the part that I want everybody to remember is it is easier said than done; you will fail, but tomorrow's another day, get up and try it again.

**Kay Frances:** Yes.

**Peter Margaritis:** And start with one thing. I've talked to some folks, well, I mean, I've always wanted to play the guitar, so I've got a guitar, I'm going to play that. Also, I'm going to try to learn the language. Excuse me, that was my brother in a conversation today, the three or four things that he's going to do. I'm like, "Dude, just pick one."

**Kay Frances:** Right.

**Peter Margaritis:** You're not going to do all three.

**Kay Frances:** That's right.

**Peter Margaritis:** Just pick one.

**Kay Frances:** Yeah. You know, sometimes, you have to kind of take one thing at a time. Multi-tasking is completely overrated, I think. And I don't think we have the ability to do it that we think we do. Literally, mentally, you really can only focus on one thing. You can do muscle memory and talk, you can crochet and talk, you might jump from one thing to another, and it's very fast, but you're not really multitasking. You're doing one task, another; one task, another. So, you know, you lose your rhythm and this doesn't really work. I mean, that's what the science tells us.

**Peter Margaritis:** So, as we wrap up this interview, you've given a lot of advice and a lot different things out there for them to do. So, could you put that in a little package with a nice little bow and tell him the one thing to stick with to do to try to adhere whether we're locked indoors for the next three weeks or the next month-and-a-half to help them deal with the stress?

**Kay Frances:** Remember, it's temporary. It's temporary and make the best of it the best you can, have the most fun you can, be honest with yourself about your feelings, though. Again, I don't think people should gloss over. I find myself doing that. It's like the grief process. You try to gloss over a couple of the steps. You're going to have to come back and revisit or come out in another way through unhealthy habits or bouts of rage or depression, any of that. Just day at a time. You know, it's a simple advice. It's the stuff our moms all told us, but it's so true. Just take it one day at a time. Make the best of it. Look at these changes as an adventure. Try to find the opportunities in the adversity. And I guess that would sum it up.

**Peter Margaritis:** So, I love having this conversation with you, but you just said something that's very powerful, that struck me right between the eyes, is don't gloss over your feelings.

**Kay Frances:** Yes. I believe we're keeping it real. Be honest with yourself.



**Peter Margaritis:** Don't compartmentalize them. When you're feeling a certain way, and you can feel what was in your body, share it with your family, share it with your spouse. I have two dogs and they listen to me all the time. They just think I'm the smartest person in the world.

**Kay Frances:** Right?

**Peter Margaritis:** But just even talking to them some time—so, before this all happened, it was just me and the dogs when I was home, at times, I would talk to my dogs. So, they listened, but it's getting it out.

**Kay Frances:** Sure.

**Peter Margaritis:** That's definite.

**Kay Frances:** Wait, hold on a minute.

**Peter Margaritis:** Hold on. Uh-oh.

**Kay Frances:** She just walked by. Where did she go? I don't have a dog. This is who I live with.

**Peter Margaritis:** I know. And her name is?

**Kay Frances:** Seisan.

**Peter Margaritis:** Seisan, that's right.

**Kay Frances:** Hi, Seisan. Can you say hi to the people?

**Peter Margaritis:** Hi, Seisan.

**Kay Frances:** She is so over me. I think she's really hard on me being in her territory. That's my girl though.

**Peter Margaritis:** She goes, mom's one of those FTEs I heard about a little a while ago. I'm going to have to put her on a warning. Oh, well, thank you so very much. I always enjoy the conversation. You always make me laugh. So, this has been my therapy for today, is a conversation with you, you making me laugh and also giving some great advice. And I can't thank you enough for taking time out of your day to spend with me.

**Kay Frances:** It's absolutely my pleasure. And, Peter, keep doing the good work you're doing. This is a wonderful thing you do, and you're really helping people, and just keep fighting the good fight. That's all we can do.

**Peter Margaritis:** Thank you very much. Now, I'm just going to sign off by saying, please, everyone, be healthy, practice social distancing, be safe, and implement a couple of these tips from Kay today to help ease your stress.

**Announcer:** Like what you just heard? Because it's c-suiteradio.com. C-Suite Radio, turning the volume up on business.