

The
Thinking Person's
S T R E S S **Management**
W O R K B O O K



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Cognitive Restructuring & Stress Management

Most stress management programs focus on physical techniques for reducing stress like meditation, exercise and progressive muscle relaxation. This workbook will guide you through a proven method to manage stress called *cognitive restructuring*. Cognitive restructuring helps you reduce stress by showing you how your thinking contributes to every stressful event you experience.

Physical techniques reduce stress.

Physical approaches to stress management attempt to dampen or reduce your body's responses to threats and other stressors. In contrast, cognitive restructuring can prevent stress. It is utilized during a stressful event and does not have any physical effect on the body. It simply teaches you how to change your *thinking* when stressful situations arise. Cognitive stress management is *proactive* while physical stress management is often used *retroactively*.

Physical techniques take time.

Physical techniques for reducing stress require time spent practicing the technique. Meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, biofeedback, yoga and exercise all require a daily commitment of time to help you manage your stress.

Cognitive restructuring requires no extra time at all. Once you master it, you simply use it whenever you need it. You don't have to set aside time each day to practice it.

Since time pressure is a major source of stress, having a technique in your tool kit for managing stress that requires no extra time obviously provides a distinct advantage.

This article is not meant to discourage you from the practice of physical stress management techniques. In fact, these techniques are excellent for erasing the buildup of stress. Still, it's important for you to know that, for many reasons, cognitive techniques are sometimes more practical especially when you want to manage your stress *while it's happening*.

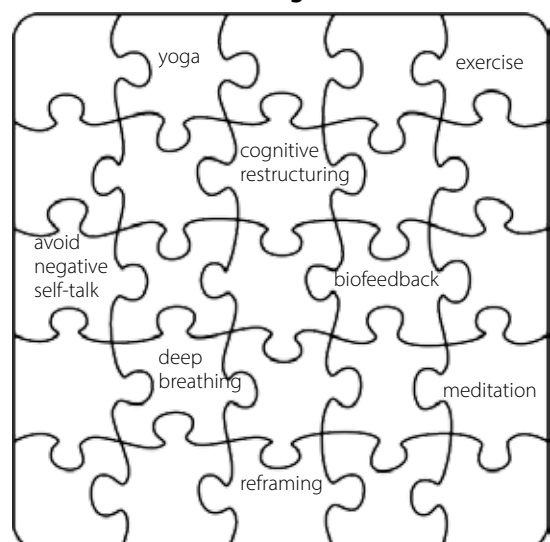
Cognitive restructuring is perfect for work.

Since cognitive restructuring is a *thinking* technique, no one knows you are using it but you. You certainly can't stop to meditate if your boss is getting on your nerves, but you can practice cognitive restructuring. And this workbook will show you how. This is why cognitive restructuring may be the perfect tool for managing stress at work.

According to a study published on The National Institute Of Health's Website (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17615474>), cognitive restructuring was determined to be the "most effective" workplace stress management technique. Because cognitive restructuring allows you to manage stress on the fly, it prevents stress from bothering you in the first place. And as a result, it will make you more resilient and better able to handle a wide variety of challenges, without getting frustrated, bogged down, annoyed or angry.

As you glance through this workbook you'll notice that every article has a corresponding exercise on the facing page. Completing these exercises will help give you hands-on experience in the use of various cognitive restructuring techniques. For your first exercise you're going to learn the difference between the terms stress and stressors. This exercise is important because the practice of cognitive restructuring relies heavily on your ability to break down a stressful event into its component parts, two of which are represented by stress and stressors.

The Stress Management Puzzle



Listing Your Stress and Stressors...

Stressors are the triggering events and circumstances that cause you to feel stressed. (A flat tire, a traffic jam, a demanding boss, etc.) Stress is what you often feel after you've come in contact with a stressor (anxious, tense, upset). It's also how your body reacts (headaches, muscle tension, stomach upsets, etc.) It's important to know the difference between stress and stressors because (as you will soon see) stressors don't automatically cause stress. In the columns below, describe five stressful episodes you have encountered in the last few days.

Stressors

In this column, describe the events, thoughts, and interactions that caused you to feel stressed.

I got caught in a traffic jam before an important meeting.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Stress

In this column, describe how the event made you feel: angry, sad, frustrated, annoyed, etc. Also note any associated stress symptoms: headaches, muscle tension, stomach upsets, coming down with a cold, etc.

I felt upset and tense. I could feel a headache coming on.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Notice any patterns in your list of stressors? Is your stress occurring mostly at work, with a certain person or during a particular activity like driving or waiting in line? Show this list to a friend or spouse. Try to find something on the list of stressors that doesn't bother him or her. Identifying these discrepancies will help you see how cognitive restructuring works: If a stressor doesn't bother him or her, why does it have to bother you?

How Do You *Think* About Stress?

If you're like most people, you blame events and circumstances for your stress - never realizing that it's your thoughts and beliefs about these events that are the true source of your stress. If this sounds hard to believe, please read the following example.

Let's say a person has \$1,000 invested in the stock market. One morning she decides to sell her stock and notices her investment is down \$20. No big deal, she thinks.

That afternoon she goes out to lunch at a restaurant. She hands the waiter a 50 dollar bill for a \$15 lunch. She puts the change in her coat pocket without counting it. When she gets back to work and moves the money to her purse, she realizes she's \$20 short. She's not sure if she lost the money or the waiter shortchanged her, but either way she's upset.

The stimulus in these two events is exactly the same...she lost \$20. But her interpretation is different. Thus, the first event has virtually no effect while the second event leaves her feeling rather upset.

The main difference between the two events is what she thought about them. In the stock market example, she thought: *"\$20 down is not so bad, it could have been much worse; I understood the risk I was taking when I invested the money."*

In the second example, she's quite upset: *"Perhaps the waiter did it on purpose- or the restaurant cashier - how outrageous,"* she thinks! *"Or maybe I just lost the \$20 when I reached into my pocket for my keys in the parking lot."* As she ponders the possibility that she made a "stupid mistake" she says to herself: *"What an idiot I am!"*

Her thinking about the second event is entirely different even though *the net loss is exactly the same!* Believe it or not, this kind of thinking occurs in just about every stressful event you encounter. Your thoughts about an event are often the *cause* of your stress. This may seem like bad news, but it's also good news - *depending on the way you think about it.* If you can create stress in your own mind, you can eliminate it there, too.

Most of us think like the woman did in the second example: Berating ourselves for innocent mistakes

and often seeing a situation like this in the worst possible light. But we can also teach ourselves to see things more clearly and more rationally. For example, we could say to ourselves: *"It could have been much worse, everyone loses money now and then. And if the waiter did it, I'm sure it was an honest mistake. This event will remind me to always count my change."*



"That waiter knew I wouldn't count my change carefully. He probably cheats people like that all the time. I'm never going back there again!"

The next time you feel stressed, notice your thoughts. See what's going on inside your head. Try to determine whether your thinking is contributing to your stress. During stressful events your mind fills with all kinds of distorted thoughts such as: *Why does this always happen to me? Or, this is the worst thing that could have happened. Or, I must be a bad person because I let this happen.* These are all examples of cognitive distortions which are more commonly known as negative self-talk. In the next exercise you'll be asked to monitor your self-talk.

Monitoring Your Self-Talk

When you say things to yourself like "I hate myself; I'm lousy at everything; I'm a terrible parent; My boss is a total jerk; Life is so unfair; I can't stand waiting a minute longer; He shouldn't have done that; This job is impossible;" these are all examples of negative self-talk. In order to practice cognitive restructuring you need to become aware of your self-talk. The next time something stressful occurs, listen to your self-talk and jot down a record of what happens in the columns below.

Stressful Event

My boss asked me to work late on Friday.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Associated Thoughts

"Why does he always ask ME? I'm such a pushover."

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

The ABC's of Cognitive Restructuring

If you were on your way to work, and a major traffic jam caused you to be two hours late, how would you feel? Stressed? Of course. And if you're like most people, you'd blame your stress on the traffic or some other outside force beyond your control. But in fact, your stress was mostly the result of your *thoughts* about the event, not the event itself.

Imagine for a moment, what your thoughts would have been as you sat in that traffic jam: "Why does this stuff *always* happen to me? I'm such an *idiot* for not checking the traffic report before I left for work. This is the *worst* thing that could have possibly happened."

If that's similar to what you would have thought in this situation you are certainly not alone. Just about everybody thinks this way. But **you** need to realize it's your thinking that is causing your stress. And you have the power to change your thoughts through the use of cognitive restructuring.

Cognitive restructuring (CR) can give you the tools you need to dispute negative, stress-inducing thoughts at the precise moment they occur. In the above example CR would encourage you to *restructure* your thoughts by saying to yourself: "This stuff doesn't *always* happen to me. In fact, it hasn't happened in several months. If it happened more often I *would* have checked that traffic report. This is nowhere near the *worst* thing that could have happened."

Once you learn to dispute your irrational thinking and faulty logic, through the use of cognitive restructuring, you begin to substitute accurate, objective thoughts at the moment you feel the most stressed.

The next time you get stuck in traffic, you might tell yourself: "This happens to everyone. It's no big deal. Chances are, this traffic jam will clear quickly.

But if it doesn't I'll pull over and call my boss and let her know what's happening."

Psychologist, Albert Ellis came up with a simple way of summarizing the cognitive restructuring process using the equation: **A+B=C**. In this equation **A** stands for the **Activating event**. **B** stands for your **Beliefs** about the event and **C** stands for the **Consequence** of A+B.

So in the previous example, the Activating event, or **A** is the traffic jam. **B** is your belief that this is the worst thing that could have happened. **C** is what you feel when you combine **A+B**. In this case the consequence was that you felt frustrated and upset. But if you change your thinking at **B** you can change the outcome or consequence of this event.

So if you *believe* that getting stuck in traffic is the worst thing that could have happened to you, the consequence of A+B is going to be a LOT of *stress*. But, if you *believe* that you can deal with this situation by making a phone call, your C is going to be entirely different. In other words, your stress



is going to be *much* less.

So while you might not be able to control events and circumstances, like traffic jams, you can control your reaction to them by controlling your thoughts and beliefs. That's what cognitive restructuring is all about.

The exercise on the next page will help you identify your ABC's.

Knowing Your ABC's

During the next 7 days, analyze how **A**ctivating events (for example, a missed deadline) plus your thoughts and **B**eliefs about those events (for example, *this is the worst possible thing that could have happened*) can add up to stressful **C**onsequences (for example, anger, frustration and tension). Any time you experience stress during the course of the next week, try to isolate the activating event and notate it in column A. Then try to determine what your thoughts were at that time and notate them in column B. And finally, record what you felt as the result of A+B in the column C.

A

Activating events. What was it that started you feeling stressed?

I got a \$100 speeding ticket for going 12mph over the speed limit.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

B

Beliefs. What were you saying to yourself before, during and after a stressful event?

*What an idiot I am. Why can't the cops catch real criminals?
It's not fair!*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

C

Consequences. How did you feel at the conclusion of the stressful event?

Angry, frustrated, neck muscles tense.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

In looking over your list of A's, B's & C's can you think of any thoughts you might have substituted in column B that would have resulted in a less stressful outcome in column C?

When Learning Your ABC's, Don't Forget D for Dispute

In Dr. Albert Ellis' equation $A+B=C$ (which we discussed on page 6) **A stands for the Activating Event.** That's the cause of stress - a flat tire, a broken appliance, or an angry boss. These are all A's or *Activating events*.

B stands for Beliefs. What you think about the flat tire and the broken appliance or the angry boss represent your *beliefs* or your interpretation of what has taken place.

C stands for the Consequence. How you feel and what happens to you physically (i.e., a stiff neck or a tension headache) and emotionally (i.e., anger, fear, frustration, sadness) is the *consequence* of $A+B$.

This equation helps you understand how your beliefs about events - not the events themselves - are the true source of your stress. During an activating event your thinking tends to be distorted: "This flat tire is going to ruin my whole day," or, "This appliance is going to cost a fortune to fix," or, "My boss is going to kill me when she discovers the mistake I've made." In these examples your *Beliefs* are exaggerated and faulty. You're doing what Dr. Ellis calls *awfulizing*. You're assuming that the worst possible scenario is the *only* possible scenario. While sometimes the worst thing does happen, *most of the time it doesn't*. Why put yourself through all that misery every single time, when the worst possible scenario rarely comes to pass?

That's where the letter "D" can help. You need to Dispute statements that simply aren't true or are hardly ever true:

A flat tire is not going to ruin your *whole* day. A broken appliance isn't *automatically* going to cost a fortune and your boss certainly isn't going to *kill* you. Flat tires are relatively easy to repair, bosses don't always expect you to be perfect, and sometimes you can fix an appliance yourself with the help of the troubleshooting guide in the back of your owners' manual. When you dispute your distorted thoughts you immediately lower your stress, you start to think of solutions and most importantly, you change the **Consequence of $A+B$** . You'll be astounded by how effective this one simple idea can be when it comes to preventing and eliminating stress.

So when learning your ABC's, don't forget the letter **D** for **Dispute**.



Disputing Your Distorted Thinking

Distorted thinking is a major cause of stress. However, you can learn to dispute your own distorted thoughts, and thereby lower your stress. Stress is often a signal that your thinking may be muddled, irrational or confused. In the left column below jot down the examples you've already written in column B on page 7. In the right column attempt to argue, dispute, reality test, or think more objectively about what you wrote in the Faulty Beliefs column. If you need ideas for how to dispute your faulty beliefs see page 10 for assistance.

Faulty Beliefs

It was unfair of the cop to single me out for a traffic ticket. I was an idiot for not slowing down more quickly.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Rational Counter Arguments

Yes, other people were going faster, but life isn't always fair and I was speeding. I made a mistake. I'll be more careful next time.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

12 Irrational Things We Say to Ourselves and How to Dispute Them

1. "I can't stand this."

Dispute: I already have.

2. "This is the worst thing that could have happened."

Dispute: If it *really* was the worst thing that could have happened I wouldn't be standing here right now.

3. "I'm such an idiot for letting that happen."

Dispute: I made a mistake. Everyone makes mistakes.

4. "I'll never learn to use this _____."

Dispute: I've learned to use other things that were just as difficult and I can learn to use this one, too.

5. "Why does this stuff always happen to me?"

Dispute: This stuff happens to everybody, not just me.

6. "He never returns my calls."

Dispute: It always takes longer than I would like, but eventually he *does* return my calls.

7. "My neighbors are completely inconsiderate."

Dispute: My neighbors probably don't realize how much this bothers me.

8. "Nobody cares about this issue but me."

Dispute: Of course other people care about this issue; I just need to seek them out.

9. "Life seems so unfair to me."

Dispute: Life isn't always fair and it's foolish to expect that it would be, but sometimes I am fortunate, too.

10. "I'm a terrible parent."

Dispute: I could have handled this situation

better. The next time it comes up I'll be better prepared.

11. "If I let someone else do this it won't get done right. I must do it myself."

Dispute: I can't do everything. I'll let someone else do it and it doesn't have to be perfect.

12. "My boss is the world's worst."

Dispute: I wish my boss treated me better, but he certainly isn't the world's worst. In fact my last boss had his bad moments, too.



More Practice Disputing

Fill in the blanks below to customize an *irrational belief* and your *rational dispute*. In the first example, you might fill in the blanks as follows: *My Boss* is a total idiot because he *always asks me for things at the last minute*. Your rational dispute might be: *My Boss* isn't all bad. After all, he did *give me plenty of warning on that job he gave me the other day*. Try to make your rational dispute as accurate and objective as possible.

1. Irrational belief about a boss or coworker: _____ is a total idiot because he/she _____

Rational Dispute: _____ isn't all bad. After all, he/she did _____

2. Irrational belief about your own skills: I wish I was better at _____
_____, but I've always been lousy at that.

Rational Dispute: I *could* be better at _____, but I would have to:

3. Irrational belief about a spouse, friend, or family member: My _____ is the absolute worst.

Rational Dispute: My _____ has done some pretty good things too. They are: _____

4. Irrational belief about a vendor or a friend: _____ never returns my calls.

Rational Dispute: _____ takes longer than I would like to return my calls. Perhaps I could get him/her to act more promptly by: _____

5. Irrational belief about a situation: _____ is unfair. I can't stand it when life is unfair.

Rational Dispute: Sometimes life isn't fair. But I have been lucky too. Like when I: _____

6. Irrational belief about a recent event: This _____ is just awful. It's never going to work out right.

Rational Dispute: This _____ seems awful right now, but in time it won't seem nearly as terrible as it does today.

Listening to Your Self-Talk

Have you ever said to yourself, “*This is the worst possible thing that could have happened?*” Or, have you ever heard yourself saying, “*I can handle this situation; I know I can.*” These are examples of negative and positive self-talk. In order to master the art of cognitive restructuring you need to become aware of your negative self-talk and substitute a more realistic, or positive, alternative.

Most people don’t even realize how often their self-talk is negative. Your brain thinks much faster than you or anybody else can talk and thus it rapidly inserts pessimistic ideas and judgments so quickly you’re often not even aware of it.

Self-talk doesn’t have to be negative.

Self-talk can be rational or irrational. Rational (neutral or positive) self-talk correctly guides and inspires you. It gives you confidence. Irrational (overly negative) self-talk can undermine your self-esteem and cause you to feel angry, frustrated, or depressed.

Becoming aware of your self-talk is the first step toward mastering it. For example, let’s say you’ve had problems with a certain vendor who “*never* returns your phone calls.” This problem is in quotes because the statement is a highly inaccurate *interpretation*. In point of fact, the vendor takes *longer than you would like* to return your phone calls. But eventually, he *always* gets back to you. This may sound like splitting hairs, but you’ll see in a moment why this distinction is important.

You’ve spoken to this vendor about his tardy replies and he has said he will make an effort to get back to you promptly. He has promised to call you back that afternoon with a price on a printing job that you need to get out in a hurry.

When he hasn’t called by the end of the day your negative self-talk kicks into high gear. *Why didn’t*

that so-and-so call me back? He never returns my calls! There must be something wrong with that guy! Doesn’t he want my business? He must think we’re too small an account and he doesn’t care.

Your self-talk makes you furious.

You finally call him at 4:45 PM and discover he’s already left for the day. Now you’re really furious. “*I can’t believe he left without giving me a call. He’s an imbecile.*” You ask for his voice mail and leave him an angry message telling him you wish to terminate your relationship.

You try to calm yourself with positive self-talk, but the damage is done. As you tidy your desk to go

home you find a note your assistant left that was hidden under a pile of papers. Your vendor *had* called back with the prices you requested. You slam your fist down in frustration as you realize that these prices are by far the lowest of the three vendors who bid on the job.

Your negative self-talk distorted your thinking, causing you to make inaccurate conclusions and faulty judgments. Transforming distorted, irrational self-talk into rational and clear self-talk is the goal of the next exercise.



“If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself but to your own estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.”

-*Marcus Aurelius*

Changing Your Self-Talk

Describe the event:

Describe one recent event that really left you feeling angry or frustrated.

Describe your self-talk (thoughts):

Describe your self-talk during the event. Was it negative? Pessimistic? Doubting? Angry? Blaming? Did it make you feel worse?

Rethink the situation:

Try rethinking the whole situation with a more accurate, rational approach. Remember, cognitive restructuring is different from positive thinking because it isn't necessarily asking you to make your thinking more positive. It's actually asking you to first NOTICE and then CHANGE your thinking when it's *overly* negative. You're actually trying to neutralize your thinking by making sure it's truthful and accurate.

When you find yourself in a stressful situation where you are experiencing negative self-talk, here's a list of things you can do to quickly take control of the situation:

- **Calm yourself.**
- **Write down what triggered the negative thoughts.**
- **Identify the moods that you felt in the situation.**
- **Write down the thoughts you experienced when you felt the mood.**
- **Identify the evidence that supports these thoughts.**
- **Identify the evidence that contradicts them.**
- **Now, identify fair, balanced thoughts about the situation.**
- **Finally, observe your mood now, and decide on your next steps.**

Go through this process whenever you experience a negative mood, or when you feel fear, apprehension, or anxiety about a person or situation.

Don't Over-Generalize

"A depressed salesperson noticed bird dung on his car window and thought, 'That's just my luck. The birds are always [defecating] on my window!' This is a perfect example of an over-generalization. When I asked him about this experience, he admitted that in twenty years of traveling he could not remember another time when he found bird dung on his window." - From FEELING GOOD by David Burns, M.D.

If you've ever heard yourself say: "I *always* get stuck in the longest line," or "I'm *never* going to be any good at using this new device," then you've heard yourself over-generalize. These statements may seem true when you say them, but they are quite inaccurate and only add to your overall levels of stress.

Generalizations undermine your effectiveness.

As an example, let's say you are trying to learn how to use the navigation system on your new smart phone. You sit down with the phone in your hand and the over-generalizations begin. "I'll never learn to use this stupid thing. It's impossible. I'm bad with anything technical. Why did I have to get a new phone anyway!"

As much as we tend to believe these overly negative thoughts, we must learn to first hear them inside our heads and then dispel them with simple logic.

Find evidence to contradict over-generalizations.

When you say, "I'll never learn to use this stupid thing," consider the evidence you have to contradict this statement. Perhaps you've already learned certain other things about your phone such as how to set up the calendar. Perhaps you have previously learned how to use other programs on your laptop computer. Give yourself credit for these accomplishments which *directly contradict your negative statements*.

You say you're bad with anything technical, yet you learned how to program your coffee pot to start brewing coffee for you every morning, and that was somewhat technical. And come to think of it, the new programs on the laptop seemed daunting at first, but you picked that up in no time.

Don't make the mental mistake of treating this kind of contradictory evidence as the *exception*. Instead, treat it as living proof that things don't always turn out to be as difficult or impossible as your over-generalizations might suggest.



Examples of Over-Generalizations

I'll never learn.
This copier is always breaking down.
She is always late.
I'll never get a raise.
The people in that place are always mean.
The service is always terrible here.
That boy is always getting into trouble.
I'm the worst parent in the whole world.
My boss is always criticizing me.
She's always rude.

Analyzing Your Over-Generalizations

Activity #1

Think of an activity or skill you wish you were better at. (Choose an activity where your lack of skill makes you feel inadequate.) Imagine what your self-talk would be if you were engaged in this activity now. As you imagine yourself performing this activity, see if any negative over-generalizations come to mind. Write them in the space below.

Now imagine you are teaching a child to perform this same skill. Without any trace of condescension, what would you say to this child to help him or her learn it?

Next time you perform this activity try to be as supportive with yourself as you would be if you were teaching a child.

Activity #2

Pick a person or activity that you really dislike. (It should be someone or something you encounter regularly.) What is your negative self-talk concerning this person or activity?

Circle any of the above statements that sound like over-generalizations. On the lines below, provide any evidence that directly contradicts these over-generalizations.

Your Stinking Thinking: Shoulding and Awfulizing

"I know I'll *never* get a raise. It's pointless to even think about. John got a raise at his review, but they probably won't even consider me for one. I'm not good enough."

"This traffic jam is *awful*. It will never let up. I'll be stuck here forever. If we don't move soon I'm going to have to rearrange my whole schedule. This is just terrible."

Are you an awfulizer?

The above statements are examples of "stinking thinking," also known as cognitive distortions. Cognitive restructuring teaches you how to fix your stinking thinking. One of the most common ways people distort reality is by *awfulizing*. They anticipate the worst possible outcome, whether or not it's likely to happen.

The awfulizer *predicts* disaster, and carries on as if it were inevitable. Rarely do awfulizers turn out to be right. But they quickly forget the many times they were wrong and always remember the few times they were right.

The awfulizer always expects the worst.

The awfulizer *always* expects the dentist to find a cavity when he goes in for a checkup. The awfulizer *always* expects a tumor to be malignant. The awfulizer *always* expects a traffic jam to last forever. The awfulizer expects that a person who was once rude to *always* be rude. The awfulizer expects a machine that once broke down to *always* break down.

You might take the position that the awfulizer is going to be well prepared for life's little upsets, but in fact, the awfulizer spends most of his life *being upset*. He is *surprised* by pleasant outcomes.

If you are a person who tends to awfulize, the first step to changing your overly negative thoughts is becoming aware of them. Consider the times you awfulized and were surprised by a pleasant outcome. The next time you catch yourself awfulizing about a potential problem, try assuming the outcome will be pleasant, or at the very least, resolved without undue stress or strain. See how this novel assumption makes you feel as you proceed. Make a note of what actually happens vs. what you expected would happen. Even if the event doesn't turn out perfectly, notice how much more tolerable the situation becomes when you refrained from awfulizing.

Don't should on yourself.

Another form of stinking thinking is what psychologist Albert Ellis calls *shoulding*. We often use should statements as a kind of personal or interpersonal put-down. *I should* drive an expensive car. He *should* be more polite. I *should* be a better tennis player. She *should* look where she's going when she drives. *I should* always look perfect when I go out. He *should* never interrupt.

Every time you hear yourself use the word *should*, you need to run up a mental red flag. *Should* statements about yourself leave you feeling depressed and *should* statements about others leave you feeling angry.

Learn to state your *shoulds* in the form of preferences: I would *prefer* my boss to be more polite but it's not going to kill me if he isn't. I would *prefer* my hair to look good when I go out, but sometimes I just don't have the time to do it. I would *prefer* to be a better tennis player, but I am playing as well as I can. These preference statements will save you from a lot of stress.



How to Stop Your Stinking Thinking

In the left-hand column you'll be prompted to recall situations which you probably *expected* to turn out badly. These are situations where you *awfulized*, i.e., anticipated a negative outcome. In the right-hand column describe how these situations actually turned out. For example, next to health scare you might write: *Discovered a skin growth; thought it was cancer. Outcome: Had it checked and it turned out to be benign.*

Awfulization:

Actual Outcome:

health scare _____

job crisis _____

financial crisis _____

relationship problem _____

problem with family or children _____

Changing SHOULD STATEMENTS to Preference Statements

Fill in the blanks in the following should statements. Then rewrite your should in the form of a preference statement. For example, in the first lines below you might write: I should be better at *public speaking* I would prefer to be better at *public speaking*, but *people will understand if I'm not perfect or appear a little nervous.*

I *should* be better at _____

I would prefer to be better at _____, but _____

My neighbor *should* _____

I would prefer it if my neighbor would _____, but _____

My spouse definitely *should* _____

I would prefer it if my spouse _____, but _____

My boss *should* treat me _____

I would prefer it if my boss _____, but _____

My family *should* _____

I would prefer it if my family _____, but _____

(Notice that what you write after the "but" portion of a preference statement is the key to staying rational and sane!)

Understanding Low Frustration Tolerance

If you get easily frustrated waiting for a long traffic light, getting caught behind a slow driver, trying to assemble a children's toy, or by machines that don't work perfectly, you may be suffering from a behavior pattern known as Low Frustration Tolerance (LFT).

Listen to a writer's description of how he discovered early signs of LFT in his young son. "My five year old son, Kevin was playing blocks with his two year old sister, Ann. They were both trying to pile up as many blocks as they could. Kevin naturally had much better small motor skills than his two year old sister, but the outcome of the block piling was surprising."

Signs of LFT in children.

"Ann patiently piled the blocks and squealed with delight when they would fall down. As soon as they would fall, she would immediately start piling them back up. Kevin, on the other hand, would get frustrated when the blocks fell, smashing the fallen blocks with his hand in an obvious sign of frustration."

"Ann, with inferior motor skills, but *superior* patience, was consistently able to build higher block towers than her brother who was 3 ½ years older. Kevin's *psychological* inability to cope with this modest dose of frustration was undermining his clearly superior *physical* skills. (P.S. When he noticed his little sister was doing better at this activity than he was, he kicked the blocks and stomped off in total disgust.)"

Adults who get easily frustrated.

Low Frustration Tolerance is not limited to children. Adults also suffer with this problem and usually don't even know it. If you find yourself easily angered or upset dealing with minor frustrations

such as assembling things, being put on hold, getting disconnected, or having to learn something new, you may be suffering from LFT. As psychologist Albert Ellis remarks, "Anger rarely stems from mere frustration, but from *low frustration tolerance*." In other words, frustration in and of itself is not necessarily anger producing. What causes you to get angry (if you have LFT) is your inability to *tolerate* frustration.

Adults see frustration as unfair.

Adults with low frustration tolerance see their frustrations as being *unfair*. Why should they have to put up with this extra work, inconvenience, or extra effort; *it isn't fair*. Things shouldn't be this difficult! Ellis suggests that in order to deal with this problem, people need to change their views about frustration. They must acknowledge that frustration *does* exist and that nothing important is ever achieved without it.



Erich Fromm on Frustration

"We might consider a basic fact of life: that nothing important is achieved without accepting frustration. The idea that one can learn without effort, i.e., without frustration, may be good as an advertising slogan, but is certainly not true in the acquisition of major skills. Without the capacity to accept frustration man would hardly have developed [or achieved anything] at all."

Find Out If You Have: Low Frustration Tolerance

Read each statement below. Choose a number from one to four to indicate how you feel about each statement. Choose (1) for **strongly disagree** (2) for **mildly disagree** (3) for **mildly agree** and (4) for **strongly agree**. Write this number down in the space provided at the end of each line.

1. I find myself feeling frustrated when I have to assemble something. _____
2. I find myself feeling frustrated when I have to call for tech support. _____
3. I get frustrated trying to navigate through phone mail systems. _____
4. Driving in heavy traffic is aggravating. _____
5. Interruptions such as telemarketing calls are aggravating. _____
6. When I try to fix things myself, I sometimes give up in disgust. _____
7. Unexpected setbacks are upsetting. _____
8. I hate making mistakes. _____
9. I dislike being stuck behind a slow driver. _____
10. I have little tolerance for other people's mistakes. _____

Total Score _____

If your score is between:

- 35-40 You undoubtedly suffer from Low Frustration Tolerance. Just being aware of your problem and noticing what pushes your buttons will help you begin to grapple with LFT more effectively.
- 30-34 You clearly show signs of having LFT. But you probably have times of the day when you can handle frustration more easily, perhaps first thing in the morning. Tackle your hardest tasks at these times.
- 25-29 You are having trouble with frustration occasionally, but you have the means to bring this under control, especially now that you are more aware of it.
- 20-24 You are dealing with your frustrations well. If you want to do even better: Try to accept frustration as an inevitable part of life. See it as something that will help you accomplish what you want to achieve in life.
- 10-19 You have a remarkable tolerance for frustration. You should be a politician!

Reframing: Find the Good in a Bad Situation

For many people, a certain amount of bad news leads to inertia, or feeling stuck, because we all tend to *dwell* on bad news more than we do on good news. When bad news leads to inaction it can only mean more bad news. Now we have the *secondary* reaction of feeling bad about our inertia: *We feel bad about feeling bad!*

But finding the good in a bad situation is an effective way to break this vicious cycle. For people who do this, *there's no time for inertia*. When a setback occurs, this type of person asks him or herself, "What can I learn from this; how can I do this better next time; what positive outcome might result from this negative event?"

Examples of finding the good in a bad situation.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving was founded by a bereft mother whose 13 year old daughter was killed by a drunk driver. Home Depot was started by two guys who were fired (from a place called Handy Dan's). One of the longest field goals in NFL history was kicked by a man with a club foot.

Sometimes it's hard to keep going when things aren't going your way.

Sometimes we just need to have faith that good *will* ultimately come out of a bad situation. But it's hard to keep going when things aren't going your way. In these situations, try looking back for examples where bad things *really did* turn out for the best. Perhaps a divorce led to a new and better spouse. Perhaps a layoff led to a better job. Perhaps a health scare led to a healthy change in behavior. Remembering these examples gives you the faith and the inspiration to keep moving forward in a crisis.

This technique works for mundane matters as well.

Finding the good in a bad situation should be like an affirmation for working through mundane matters as well. When it rains on your parade think, "Good, it won't be so crowded." When you get stuck in the grocery line, think, "Great I can read that magazine article on the rack while I wait!" When your takeout order gets mixed up, think, "Hey, I get to try something new."

The ten million dollar mistake.

Perhaps you've heard the true story of the IBM junior executive who made a mistake that cost the company ten million dollars. When the executive submitted his resignation to Tom Watson, the CEO of IBM at the time replied: "I've just spent ten million dollars on your education; do you think I'm going to fire you now?"

When you find the good in a bad situation you'll make stressful

situations tolerable and intolerable situations manageable. The key to making this technique work is to use it often. Let's face it, a lot of self-help advice seems obvious. You don't have to read this article to know you should look for the good in a bad situation. The hope is that this article will *inspire* you to follow this advice over and over again *at every single opportunity that arises*. It's like calisthenics for the mind -and like any calisthenic - the more you do it, the more good it does you.



Finding the Good in Your Bad Situations

List five significant past events that, at the time, seemed to be turning out badly, but in hindsight have turned out for the best.

Bad Events in the Past

Got fired.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Turned Out for the Best

Got a better job.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

In the left column below, list five recent events that have gone badly or are going badly. In the right column try to come up with three good reasons why this event could have some positive implications.

Recent Event Gone/Going Badly

Ex: *Got a flat tire.*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

1. *I learned how to change a flat.*
2. *It happened in my driveway.*
3. *I signed up for emergency roadside service.*
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Perception vs. Reality

One of the biggest impediments to clear, rational thinking is faulty perception. We continually make the mistake of assuming that our *perception* of events and what is actually happening are one in the same. This is simply not the case. In fact, human beings tend to filter out as much information as they take in. (Just try to *consciously* focus on everything you are hearing, seeing, and feeling the next time you're in an important business meeting and you'll see that it's virtually impossible.) And the things you do take in are often subject to massive amounts of interpretation.

When a snake is actually a stick.

In fact, in the course of evolution, human beings have learned to *interpret* faster than they perceive: If you see something that *looks* like a snake you will probably act as if it *were* a snake. Let's say you're walking along a wooded path and you see a stick in the leaves that *looks* like a snake. Your mind *interprets* the information it receives from your eyes and *decides* that it is a snake.

From an evolutionary standpoint this bit of *misinterpretation* makes perfect sense. In terms of safety, it's better to mistake a stick for a snake than vice versa. The first error is minor but the second error could be life-threatening.

Our brain *interprets* the information it receives.

By the time you realize the snake is just a stick, besides feeling foolish, you'll notice your heart is pounding and your pulse is racing. (Especially if you are afraid of snakes.) This bit of evolutionary wizardry means that our thinking-brain is *interpreting* faster than our lower brain (where the information from the eye is first received) is *reporting*. This would seem to suggest that there is a potentially wide gap between perception and reality.

Despite this gap we act as if our *perception* of the world and the *world* are one in the same. As one writer put it, "It's not so much that we *believe* what we see, but that we *see* what we already believe." If your boss was sitting at the cubicle next to yours and all you could see beneath the cubicle wall was her foot tapping, you might *perceive* this as a sign of

impatience. Especially if you happened to be working on a report she was waiting for at that moment. This perception might cause you to feel stressed. It might make it difficult to concentrate. But if you were to go around the corner to investigate, you might be surprised to discover that she's actually tapping her foot to music she's listening to on earbuds. In this case your *perception* was a faulty *interpretation* of what was actually happening.

Past events color your perception.

Sometimes past events color your perception. Let's say you've had trouble with some computer equipment in the past and you've had it serviced by the IT department. Based on what has *happened before* you assume the equipment is broken again. When you call IT and the guy comes and simply connects a cable you suddenly realize that your equipment problem was really a *perceptual* problem.

Watch out for the tendency in all human beings to mistake their *perception* of reality for reality itself. Once you are on-guard for this common human failing you can learn to counteract it with many of the cognitive restructuring techniques that you have learned in this workbook. Reality test your perceptions with objective friends and coworkers. Remind yourself that other people's perceptions are as accurate or as potentially flawed as yours. Always allow your coworkers or your subordinates the chance to repeat back your instructions, or clarify what they are trying to tell you.

The gap between perception and reality.

Acknowledging this gap between perception and reality will help you function better, negotiate more effectively, think more clearly and relate better to your family, friends and co-workers.



Perception vs. Reality in Action

Think of an example where you truly thought some piece of equipment was broken but it turned out to be unplugged or disconnected. What caused you to misperceive the situation? Was it past history? Were you being overly pessimistic? Describe how your perceptual problem became an equipment problem and how you could avoid making the same mistake again.

Think of a disagreement you are having with someone and list three reasons why they might be right.

Now think about how you would react to the same situation if you were in their shoes. Describe it:

How does this exercise change your perception? _____

There are many things that INFLUENCE our perception. There was a study of an Israeli parole board that found that its panel was more likely to rule favorably AFTER lunch than JUST before lunch. Circle some of the things below that have negatively affected your perception in the past week.

- | | | | |
|------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Hunger | Health | Feeling tired | Caffeine intake |
| Mood | Time of day | Lack of exercise | Noise |
| Depression | Time of the month | Food intake | Distracted |

Describe a problem you are currently having where you feel stuck: _____

Your perception is: _____

The reality is: _____

Test: How Rational is Your Thinking?

Read each of the ten short scenarios below. Choose one of the four statements which follows each scenario that most aptly describes what your *thinking* would be if you found yourself in this situation. Simply circle the number that precedes the statement you choose.

1. Your significant other is meeting you for lunch at

12 noon. It's now 12:30, your first thoughts are:

1. He/she probably got stuck in traffic and will be here any minute.
2. It's a bit annoying when people are late.
3. I'm worried, maybe he/she got in an accident.
4. Perhaps something terrible has happened.

2. You are waiting at an unusually long traffic light.

There is no other traffic in sight. Your thoughts are:

1. Completely unrelated to the wait. (i.e., this song on the radio is my favorite.)
2. This wait is a bit annoying.
3. This is the longest light I've ever seen.
4. Who's the idiot who programmed this light to be so long? There are no cops around, maybe I'll just go through it.

3. Your boss asks you to work late on Friday. As you nod your head yes, your thoughts are:

1. This is a nuisance but it doesn't happen too often so I can deal with it this time.
2. This seems unfair; why doesn't he do it himself?
3. This is awful; I shouldn't have to stay late on a Friday.
4. That jerk, who does he think he is? This kind of request is intolerable.

4. Your mother calls and simply inquires why you haven't visited her lately. Your thoughts are:

1. You're right, it has been awhile.
2. It's a bit annoying that I *have* to visit her.
3. She does this to me on purpose. I know it. She *knows* it makes me feel guilty.
4. I can't stand it when she asks me that question. It makes me crazy!

5. You get turned down for a promotion. It's been a year since your last one. Your thoughts are:

1. It's OK, I can't expect a promotion every year.
2. I can't help it. This bothers me.
3. They don't appreciate me in this place and this is proof of it.
4. I think my boss has it in for me. I hate this job.

6. Your neighbor has his music turned up all the way. You can hear it through the walls of your apartment. Your thoughts are:

1. I guess he's having a good time. If it goes on much later I'll call him and ask him to turn it down.
2. It bothers me when he plays it that loud. I'll just call him and let him know.
3. This isn't right, he should have more respect for his neighbors.
4. Anybody who is that inconsiderate probably won't even bother to turn it down if I do call him.

7. Your significant other finds you've left a wet towel on the bed and asks that you try not to do it again. Your thoughts are:

1. He/she's right. I'll make an effort to change.
2. He or she is over reacting, but I can deal with it.
3. Why is he/she always criticizing me?
4. He/she should talk, he/she's just as bad as I am. Maybe worse!

8. It rains on the day you planned to have an outdoor picnic. Your thoughts are:

1. We'll postpone it to another day. No big deal.
2. I was counting on good weather. This is annoying, but I guess I can deal with it.
3. I can't believe it rains on the one day I plan to have a picnic!
4. This stinks. It *always* rains when I plan something like this. Now we'll *never* be able to have this picnic!

Test: How Rational is Your Thinking?

9. You're leaving your house for work and discover your car has a flat tire. Your thoughts are:

1. I can change this myself or call roadside assistance or get someone to help me. I'll be on my way in no time.
2. What a nuisance. Flat tires are a pain, but I can get this fixed and I won't be too late.
3. This is the worst. I just can't deal with this.
4. Why does this stuff *always* happen to me. My boss is never going to understand why I am late again.

10. You discover an email sent on your behalf that has several mistakes in it. It was typed by your assistant and "signed" by you. Your thoughts about this are:

1. I should have proofed the email before she sent it. Next time I'll be more careful.
2. These kind of mistakes are annoying, but it happens. I can deal with it.
3. SHE should have proofed the email before she sent it out. It's all her fault.
4. This is awful. I can't stand it when emails go out with mistakes. It makes us look like idiots.

Total Score: _____



Find out what your score means:

To compute your score simply add up all the numbers you circled. If your score is:

- | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10-14 | You are the most rational thinker on the planet. You should be nominated for sainthood. |
| 15-19 | You are very rational. Life is full of annoying surprises, but for the most part you handle them well. |
| 20-24 | You are rational most of the time. Sometimes you let disturbances get under your skin which causes you to become <i>irrational</i> . |
| 25-29 | You are on the border. Your thinking is sometimes irrational. Try to look at things more objectively. Think things through. |
| 30-34 | You are easily upset. Reading a book on cognitive therapy may be helpful. |
| 35-40 | Your thinking is often irrational. You get upset and angry at the drop of a hat. You feel the world is treating you unfairly. You may need professional help working through your distorted thinking. |

Editor's Note: The following seven pages are excerpted from "THE STRESS MANAGEMENT JOURNAL" which is a 28 day journal designed to help people monitor and learn about their stress.

MASTERING STRESS DAY 1

A flat tire, a pressing deadline, a computer crash, a nasty boss, a traffic jam, and a long line, are all examples of events and circumstances that most people consider stressful.

But what if we told you that none of these examples are stressful unless you decide they are? And what if we told you that you could decide to short-circuit stress almost any time you want?

Sounds impossible, doesn't it? That's because your stressful reactions seem automatic. But they don't have to be. You can learn to mentally control your reactions by understanding the sequence of stress.

Look at the A+B=C equation in the box to the right. This is what we call the sequence of stress. A represents the stressful event. B represents your beliefs about that event. And C represents what you feel afterward (which is usually stress). Most people believe that A equals C. In other words, that stressful events automatically lead to stress. But usually it's your thoughts and beliefs about stressful events that are the true sources of your distress.

Study the box to the right and you'll see how you can significantly lower your stress by changing your thoughts and beliefs at B.

Assignment for today:

Try to do at least three simple things, such as taking a walk, looking at a sunset, or listening to your favorite music, that make you feel good about being alive. These are called uplifts. Uplifts offset stressful events. Keep track of your uplifts every day and tally them up in the box below.

**Dr. Albert Ellis and Dr. Aaron Beck are cofounders of a branch of psychology generally referred to as Cognitive Therapy. Ellis started writing about something he called Rational Emotive Therapy in the mid 1950's and Beck started writing about something he called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in the early 1960's. Beck's name: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or CBT is the name psychologists still use today. Cognitive restructuring is one of the main tools of this form of therapy.*

UPLIFTS

AN ALTERNATE DEFINITION OF STRESS

“Nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so.”

- WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THE SEQUENCE OF STRESS:

$$A + B = C$$

The **A**ctivating event plus your **B**eliefs about that event equals the **C**onsequence

A If you are driving on the highway and you get a flat tire: that's the Activating event.

+

B If you say to yourself, *this is just awful, why does this stuff always happen to me?* that's your Belief.

=

C If, as a result of A+B, you feel upset - that's the Consequence.

You can change your thinking at B. You can say to yourself: "This stuff happens to everyone and I can handle it. I'll call roadside assistance or I'll change the tire myself. It's no big deal. I'll be back on the road in no time."

When you change your thinking at B you won't feel as stressed at C.

Based on the work of psychologist Albert Ellis*

Total number of times I felt stressed today _____

MASTERING STRESS

DAY 4

Decide today not to wallow in your problems. *Shift your focus forward* by looking for solutions instead.

COGNITIVE TECHNIQUE #3

SHIFT YOUR FOCUS FORWARD

When you are first confronted with a problem you tend to focus more on its existence than on the possible existence of a solution. This can have a paralyzing effect on your behavior. When you shift your focus forward, you move as quickly as you can from the realization of a problem to the active pursuit of a solution. Be confident that a compromise or a solution exists, and you will quickly see your stress melt away.

EXAMPLES & JOURNAL ENTRIES:

ACTIVATING EVENT

IRRATIONAL BELIEFS (SELF-TALK)

CONSEQUENCES

Computer isn't working.

*This thing is **always** breaking down.*

Felt frustrated.

Your friend is late meeting you.

*He's **never** on time.*

Felt annoyed.

Impossible deadline.

*I'll **never** get this done.*

Felt angry.

How did you feel when you focused on the solution rather than the problem?

Pick an Activating event and dispute your irrational beliefs by rewording them in a more positive way.

A: _____

B: _____

Rational Dispute: _____

New B: _____

Different C: _____

Cognitive tip for the day: Some irrational beliefs (i.e., traffic jams are awful) persist over time despite your best efforts to change them. But by challenging these beliefs over and over again (traffic jams only *seem* awful because I'm running late) you will eventually win this battle and permanently lower your levels of stress.

UPLIFTS

Total number of times I felt stressed today _____

MASTERING STRESS
DAY 5

Probably the most important aspect of managing your stress is having a sense of control over what happens to you.

COGNITIVE TECHNIQUE #4

TAKE CONTROL

When your life feels out of control, you will feel helpless and stressed. Disorganization, working without a plan, too many half-finished projects and endless lists of things to do can leave you feeling overwhelmed and powerless. But careful planning, getting organized, learning time management, and setting realistic goals are all steps you can take to help you feel more in control.

EXAMPLES & JOURNAL ENTRIES:

ACTIVATING EVENT	IRRATIONAL BELIEFS (SELF-TALK)	CONSEQUENCES
<i>Person w/ less seniority promoted over me.</i>	<i>Life is out of control.</i>	<i>Angry.</i>
<i>My car is always breaking down.</i>	<i>Life is out of control</i>	<i>Frustrated</i>
<i>My house is a mess.</i>	<i>Life is out of control</i>	<i>Depressed</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Think of three things you can do to gain greater control over a situation listed above.

Pick an Activating event and dispute your irrational beliefs by rewording them in a more positive way.

A: _____

B: _____

Rational Dispute: _____

New B: _____

Different C: _____

Cognitive tip for the day: Take one step, any step, toward reasserting control over whatever situation is causing you to feel stressed. For example, if your child's poor sleeping habits are getting out of control, get a book on the subject. Simply taking this one step will help you feel more in control and consequently less stressed.

UPLIFTS

Total number of times I felt stressed today _____

MASTERING STRESS
DAY 6

When a stressful moment arises today, try imagining how important this event will seem in a week, a month or a year.

COGNITIVE TECHNIQUE #5

KEEP YOUR STRESS IN PERSPECTIVE

On a scale of 1-100 (if a nuclear holocaust gets a 100) where does your problem rank? We rarely ever put our minor annoyances in the proper perspective. To help you do this try seeing the humor in your situation. If you can find something to laugh about (while recounting your situation with a friend) that's half the battle. When problems come up at the end of the day try tackling them the next morning when you're fresh.

EXAMPLES & JOURNAL ENTRIES:

ACTIVATING EVENT	IRRATIONAL BELIEFS (SELF-TALK)	CONSEQUENCES
<i>The store is out of what you want.</i>	<i>They are always running out.</i>	<i>Felt frustrated.</i>
<i>Missed your child's school play.</i>	<i>I'm a terrible parent.</i>	<i>Felt depressed.</i>
<i>Your brother-in-law asks for a loan.</i>	<i>He's an idiot.</i>	<i>Felt angry.</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Pick an event that got blown out of proportion and try to figure out why

Pick an Activating event and dispute your irrational beliefs by rewording them in a more positive* way. A: _____
B: _____

Rational Dispute: _____

New B: _____

Different C: _____

*Cognitive tip for the day: Cognitive restructuring (CR) is not the same as positive thinking. Positive thinking asks you to put a positive spin on life's difficulties. But CR asks you to see things just as they are: To be rational about stressful events and NOT overly negative. So with CR you don't have to pretend that getting a flat tire on the interstate is a happy moment. On the other hand, it's not the end of the world either.

UPLIFTS

Total number of times I felt stressed today _____

About the Author



JAMES E. PORTER, President of StressStop.com, is author of the WELCOA publication: "Stop Stress this Minute" and dozens of workbooks, CDs and videos on managing stress and achieving work-life balance. Mr. Porter's programs and products are used in thousands of hospitals, corporations and government agencies including The Mayo Clinic, Blue Cross Blue Shield, NASA and the US Army, Navy, Marines and the Coast Guard.

He has been interviewed on The CBS Morning News, and his work has been reported on in major news outlets including Good Morning America, Ladies Home Journal, The Associated Press, and The NY Daily News. Mr. Porter is a sought-after speaker

having presented programs for Time, Inc, Glaxo Smith Kline, The Department of Homeland Security, The FBI, The CIA, The National Wellness Conference and for WELCOA. He is a Fellow of The American Institute of Stress and has a monthly column in The Huffington Post.

One of the founders of Cognitive Therapy, Dr. Albert Ellis, described Mr. Porter's film Short Circuiting Stress, "A remarkably clear and useful self-help video."

About the Medical Advisor



DR. PAUL J. ROSCH, M.D., M.A., F.A.C.P is Chairman of the Board of The American Institute of Stress, Clinical Professor of Medicine and Psychiatry at New York Medical College, Honorary Vice President of the International Stress Management Association and has served as Chair of its U.S. branch. He completed his internship and residency training at Johns Hopkins Hospital, and subsequently at the Walter Reed Army Hospital and Institute of Research, where he was Director of the Endocrine Section in the Department of Metabolism. He had a Fellowship at the Institute of Experimental Medicine and Surgery at the University of Montreal with Dr. Hans Selye, who originated the term "stress" as it is currently used, and has co-authored works with Dr. Selye.

He has appeared on numerous national and international television programs, including 60 Minutes, The Today Show, Good Morning America, Nova, CBS, NBC, PBS, BBC and CBC network presentations. His editorials and comments have been published in major medical journals such as the New England Journal of Medicine, Annals of Internal Medicine, Journal of The American Medical Association, British Medical Journal and The Lancet. He has been interviewed and widely quoted in Time, Fortune, Newsweek, The Reader's Digest, The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, USA Today, The Washington Post, The London Times, and numerous other publications here and abroad.