



Decrease Stress, Enhance Joy, and Increase Success, *Today!*

Course Objective:

- Identify several methods to reduce stress, increase health, and ensure well-being to avoid burnout

Main Points:

- We can increase joy and decrease stress no matter what our situation.
- Humans have a finite amount of time and energy. So, we must use it wisely.
- Our energy is best spent and most effective in the present moment.
- We can train our brains to decrease stress and enhance joy.
- We have two different mode of thinking, our Default and our Focused mode. You will have more joy and less stress if you “train” your mind to
 - Recognize which "mode" you are in
 - Evaluate if it is helpful to be in the Default in that moment
 - Switch to the mode that is most useful
 - Consciously build the neural pathways to fortify your focused mode

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes. Including you. -Anne Lamott”

What is Stress?

“Stress is when the demands on your body, or your expectations of those demands, exceed your ability to handle them.” Megan Gunner, U of M



I experience stress when:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I am around people for long periods of time ○ I am alone for many hours in a day ○ I sit for long periods of time ○ There are too few activities in a day ○ I experience surprises ○ I am being rushed, pushed, or hurried ○ I am forced to make quick decisions ○ I am given too many directions at once ○ Directions given are unclear ○ My expectations are not met ○ I do too many activities in a day ○ I get interrupted several times ○ I do not get enough quiet time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I am told “no” ○ Rules are inconsistent or keep changing ○ I am not given a choice ○ I do not get enough adult contact ○ I have a long list of things to do ○ I am forced to quit before I am finished ○ Those around me experience intense emotions ○ I do not get enough down time ○ There is a lack of routine ○ Things get off schedule ○ When I am uncomfortable physically ○ There is a change of plans ○ Other people get anger or yell |
|---|--|

Stress can be good or bad. Stress is negative when:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| ● Imbalance of demands and resources | ✓ Consider: Can you take steps to keep demands and resources in balance? |
| ● Feel a lack of control | ✓ Consider: What is your plan to help you feel a sense of control? |
| ● The experience lacks meaning | ✓ Consider: What is the positive meaning behind what you are doing? |

Resource: Dr. Amit Sood, The Mayo Guide to Stress-Free Living



What is one idea you have that will help decrease stress in your life?



Decrease Stress, Enhance Joy, and Increase Success, Today!

Your stress level is impacted by:

- ✓ Choices we make
- ✓ Temperament
- ✓ Development
- ✓ External/internal stressors
- ✓ Relationship quality
- ✓ Genetics



Default Mode: "Wandering Mind", internal focus, planning, problem-solving, worrying, evaluating

Focused Mode: *External focus on novel, pleasurable, and meaningful things in the present moment



Top Strategies to Decrease Stress and Enhance Joy

1) Take time to decompress:



Reflect: What actually helps you calm and relax?



2) "Catch" negative thoughts and reframe

First Thought

New Thought

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| I did something wrong. | → | That person is asking for help and understanding. |
| I wish I did not have so much do. | → | I am so thankful I get to work. |
| I am missing out on something. | → | I am exactly where I need to be. |
| Why do I always get stuck with this?! | → | I must be good at this task because others trust me to do it! |
| He is so stubborn! | → | |
| That parent is always late. They don't respect me. They are so rude! | → | |

3) Be a "Fire Fighter"



- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| "Why does this stuff get dumped on me?!" | → | "They must have faith in you and know you will be the most responsible one to take that on." |
| "I can't believe he would do that to me!" | → | That sounds upsetting for you. I wonder what is going on with him. He must be having a difficult time in some way." |
| "I did not like it when you did that." | → | "I am sorry. Please, tell me more. What I could have done to help you? What might have been more helpful in that situation?" |



Decrease Stress, Enhance Joy, and Increase Success, Today!

4) Focus on what you can control

WHAT DO YOU HAVE CONTROL OVER?

WHAT DOES THE OTHER PERSON CONTROL?



5) Enjoy the moment


- ✓ "Take 10" - Build in routine where you take time to connect with loved ones when you reunite (let go and love.) Focus. Appreciate. Breathe. Remind yourself, "For this next 10 minutes, all I need to do is focus on this person, this moment. There is no problem that needs to be solved and no other work that will be done."

6) Give kind attention

- ✓ Practice acceptance. Enjoy those around you and focus on what you appreciate.
- ✓ Express gratitude (from the heart, be specific, send in multiple ways, do not wait)
- ✓ Help someone (or let someone help you)

7) Increase positive thoughts (to intentionally grow your focused mode)

- ✓ Ask yourself, "Will it matter 5 years from now?" If the answer is "no", let it go.
- ✓ Avoid negative perspectives.
- ✓ Celebrate what you did well?



List three things you can celebrate that you accomplished this year.

“Every day may not be good. But, there is something good in every day.”
-Alice Morse Earle

“Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.”
-Mother Teresa

- ✓ Spend time with positive thinkers.



What will you do to reduce stress, increase health, and ensure you well-being?

- Make sure to keep demands and resources balanced
- Develop a plan to help me feel a sense of control
- Focus on the positive meaning behind what I am doing
- Take time to decompress
- Catch negative thoughts and reframe
- Be a "Fire Fighter" (the calm, cool water)
- Focus on what I can control
- Enjoy the moment
- Give kind attention: "Take 10"
- Practice acceptance
- Express gratitude
- Help someone (or let them help me)
- Ask yourself if it really matters (and let go)
- Celebrate what I/we did well
- Avoid negative perspectives
- Spend time with positive thinkers

