



# STRESS MANAGEMENT

Do you feel overwhelmed, overworked, and overloaded? You are not alone. Chronic stress is a serious problem for many people. Stress is a fact of life for us all. It can be a killer, causing physical and psychological damage or it can be a catalyst to personal growth and well-being.

**WHEN WE LOOK AT EMOTIONAL** intelligence, the realm of stress management is critical. In the book "The EQ Edge" authored by Steven Stein, he defines stress management as your ability to be flexible, tolerate stress, and be optimistic. It depicts success in this area with your ability to stay calm and focused, change direction or beliefs when presented with new evidence, demonstrate resilience, maintain a positive attitude, and constructively withstand adverse events and conflicting emotions without caving in.

Regarding stress tolerance, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have the capacity to be relaxed and composed and calmly face difficulties without getting carried away by strong emotions?
- Do you know what are your stress levels today?

I encourage you to do this quick exercise: Consider all the domains of your life such as work, school, family, relationships, health, parenting, community, etc. Now write a specific situation that causes you stress in each of the domains and rank them based on the intensity level of stress from 1 to 10. Now read each of the specific situations once again. What is your stress mindset for each of the specific situations? Is your stressor harmful or helpful?

## 1. If your stress mindset associates stress as harmful:

- Stress blocks your learning, growth, and productivity.
- Stress worsens your health and zest level
- Stress should be avoided because its effects are negative

## 2. If your stress mindset associates stress as helpful:

- Stress enhances your learning, growth, and productivity.
- Stress improves your health and zest level
- Stress should be used because its effects are positive

In the Strengths-Based Workbook for Stress Relief, Ryan Niemiec, PsyD, explains that when stress has a hold of you, your attention begins to narrow and hyperfocus. This is your brains' way of attempting to drill down to the problem at hand and try to fix it. For instance, when you feel a sudden increase of tension as the congested traffic of the highway moves down to one lane and there is construction on either side.

Your attention narrows closely to the road, centering your vehicle, keeping a lookout for construction workers, attending to the proximity of the car in front of you. In this case, the narrowing effect of stress was helpful.

On the other hand, what if you are about to give a work presentation and feel your stress and anxiety elevating. You might narrow your focus to one person in the audience you think will be critical of you. Or you might narrow your thoughts to feeling that you are not prepared or that you will make a mistake. In this case, the narrowing effects of stress might be perceived as harmful.

In the *Upside of Stress*, scientist Kelly McGonigal reviews a massive amount of stress research and points out that "the most common effects of stress include strengths, growth, and resilience". She breaks these down into the five most reported positive changes that people experience following a loss, trauma, or life challenge:

1. A sense of personal strength
2. Increased appreciation for life
3. Spiritual growth
4. Enhanced social connections and relationships with others
5. Identifying new possibilities and life directions

I hope you are beginning to change your mindset about stress and notice something important that is usually not clear when stress hits you: It provides you with an opportunity to learn, to challenge yourself, and to become stronger.

Please feel free to contact AlliancesHub to receive more information about increasing your emotional intelligence with our stress management and intuitive decision making workshop. ●




### ABOUT JOE

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