

RETHINKING STRESS:

Transforming the Stress of Daily Hassles, Adversity, and Job Burnout into Health and High Performance

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Stressed?

Daily Hassles

Demands

Deadlines

Disappointments

Conflicts

Irritations



- ▶ Social psychology researchers estimate:

30 stress events per day

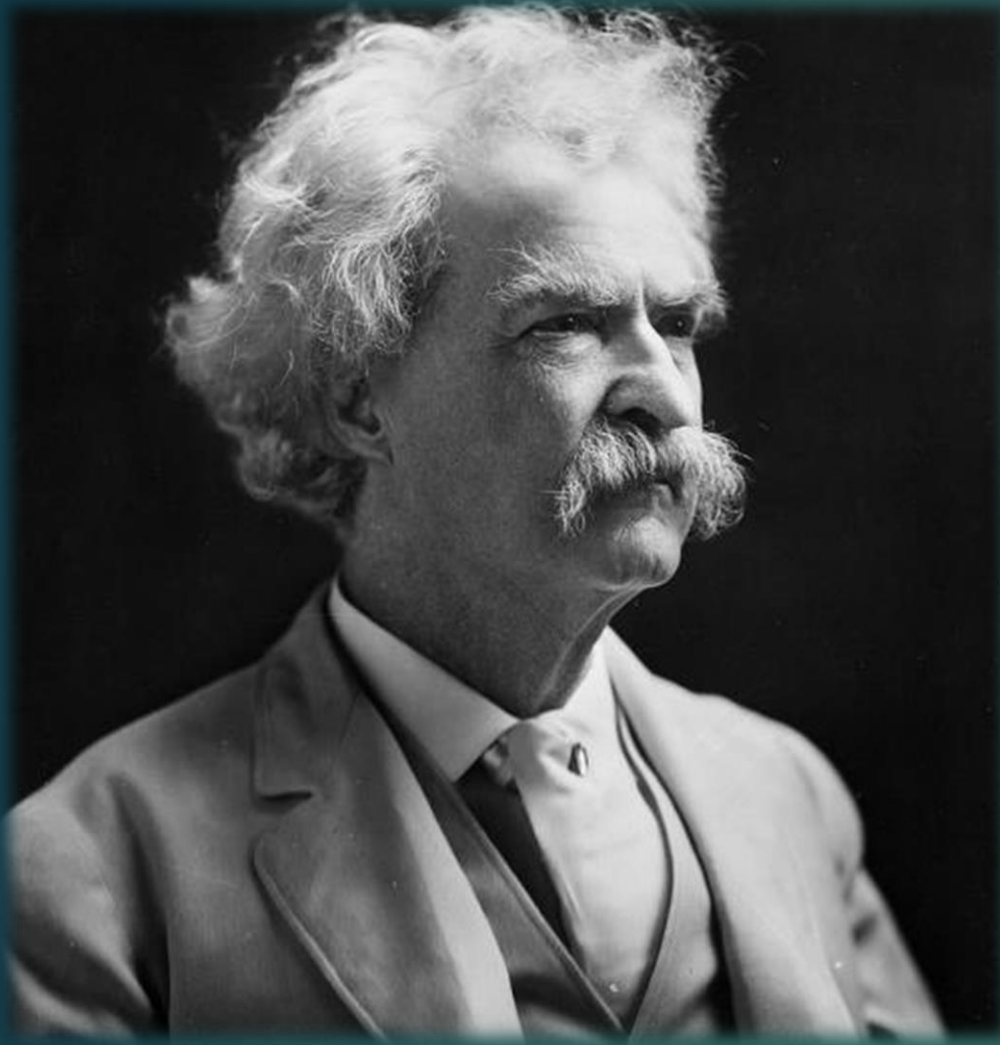
- ▶ Stress-response habits predict:

Mood, health,
relationships, productivity

What is your current relationship with stress ?



Identify one of the more stressful things you are facing. In what ways have you responded to it?



***“I’m an old man
now,
and I have known a
great many
problems
in my life...***

***...most of which
never happened.”***

— Mark Twain



What is Stress?

Stressors – anything that may knock us out of balance

Stress-responses – what our body and mind does to try to establish balance

Stress levels – daily hassles to life-altering tragedy

Physiology

Effects of Chronic Stress

- ▶ Increased pain, inflammation
- ▶ Immune system compromise
- ▶ Insomnia
- ▶ Slowed tissue, cell recovery
- ▶ Cardiovascular disease
- ▶ Metabolic syndrome
- ▶ Chronic fatigue
- ▶ Anxiety, depression
- ▶ Stress-related disease



60-80% of doctor visits have stress component!



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

STRESS

PORTRAIT OF A KILLER



DVD

Stress is Toxic!!

There are 2 Basic Responses to Stress...

1. Those who **avoid** stress and stay stuck!
2. Those who learn to embrace stress... learn from it... and **use it as fuel** to thrive during hard times.



How do I tend to avoid stress?

Everyone can build resilience!

Everyone Faces Adversity...

Change

Trauma

Loss

Pain



Our mindset toward adversity is the critical factor to resilience and thriving

What about Good Stress?



Bungee jumping stimulates the fight-or-flight stress response, along with feel good chemicals!

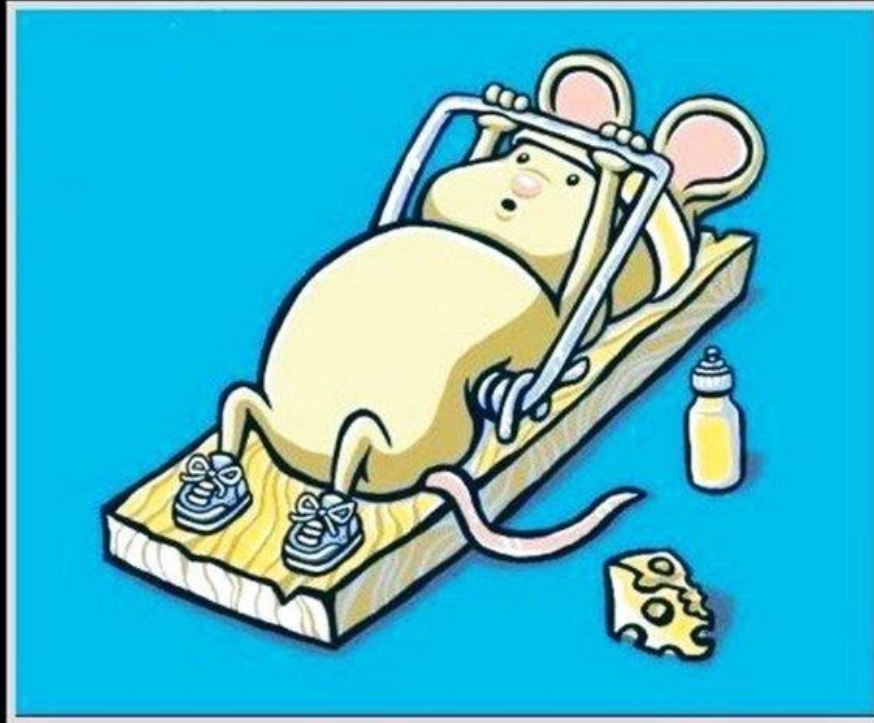


**"It's not what happens to you that matters
...but what you do with it"** —Dr. Hans Selye

Stress Inoculation Research

Hardiness = **“The courage to grow from stress”**

Salvador Maddi Bell Telephone de-regulation – 1980's



**What doesn't kill you,
makes you stronger**

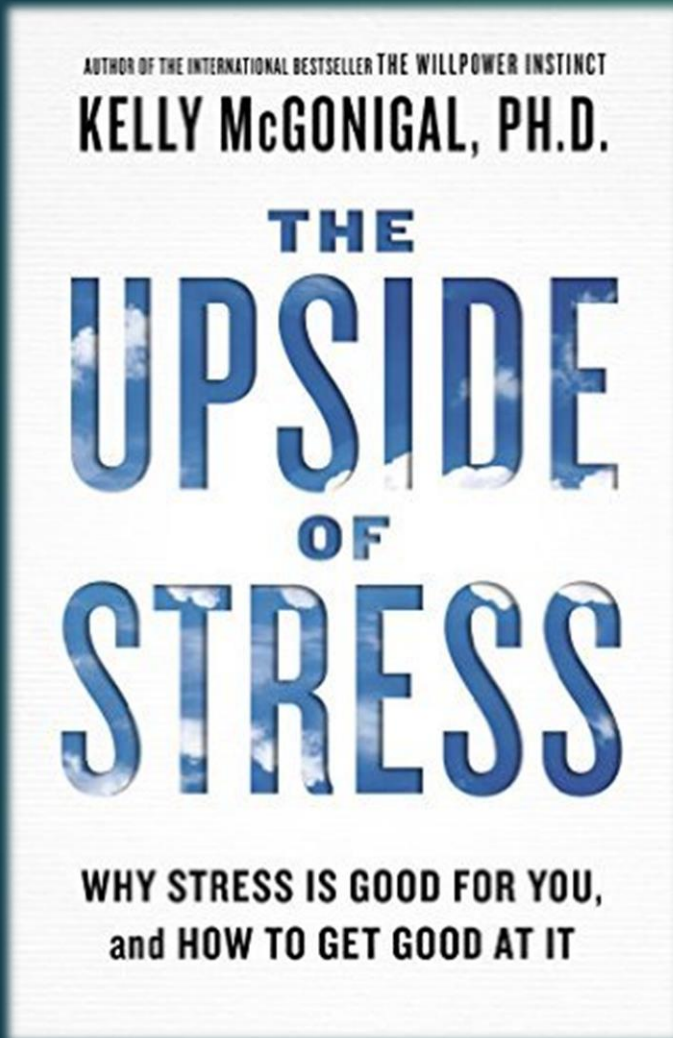
Stress Redefined...

“Stress is what arises when
something we care about
is at stake”

-Kelly McGonigal, PhD

Think about a recent stress. What did you
care about that was at stake?

Scientific Shift: Is There a Positive Side to Stress?



Can stress be helpful?

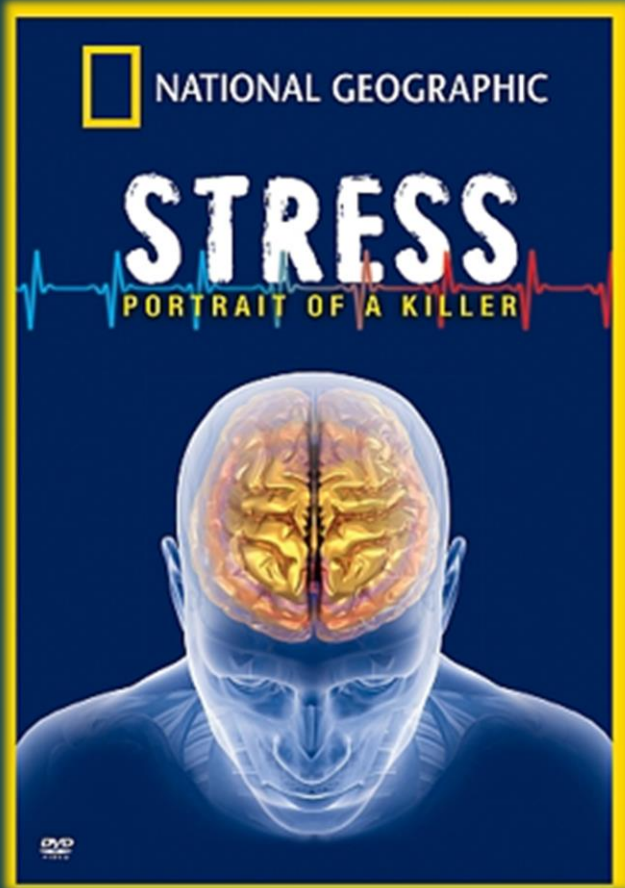
Welcoming stress....
can boost health,
performance, and more!



Stress as
Harmful



Stress can be
Enhancing



Yes, stress can be toxic...
But, stress can also:

Be **Fuel** !

Motivation

Energy

- ▶ Improve performance
- ▶ Learn from adversity
- ▶ Keep me connected
- ▶ Help avoid danger
- ▶ Protect self or others
- ▶ Focus on goals
- ▶ Live a meaningful life

Stress Response Mindsets: Alternatives to Fight/Flight/Freeze



Fight/Flight = Threat

Or, use stress as signal to:

1. Rise to challenge
2. Connect
3. Learn/Grow



How the Stress Response Helps **Rise to the Challenge:**

McGonigal (2015)

1. Focuses your attention
2. Heightens your senses
3. Increases motivation
4. Mobilizes energy



Think about a time you have turned stress
into a challenge....

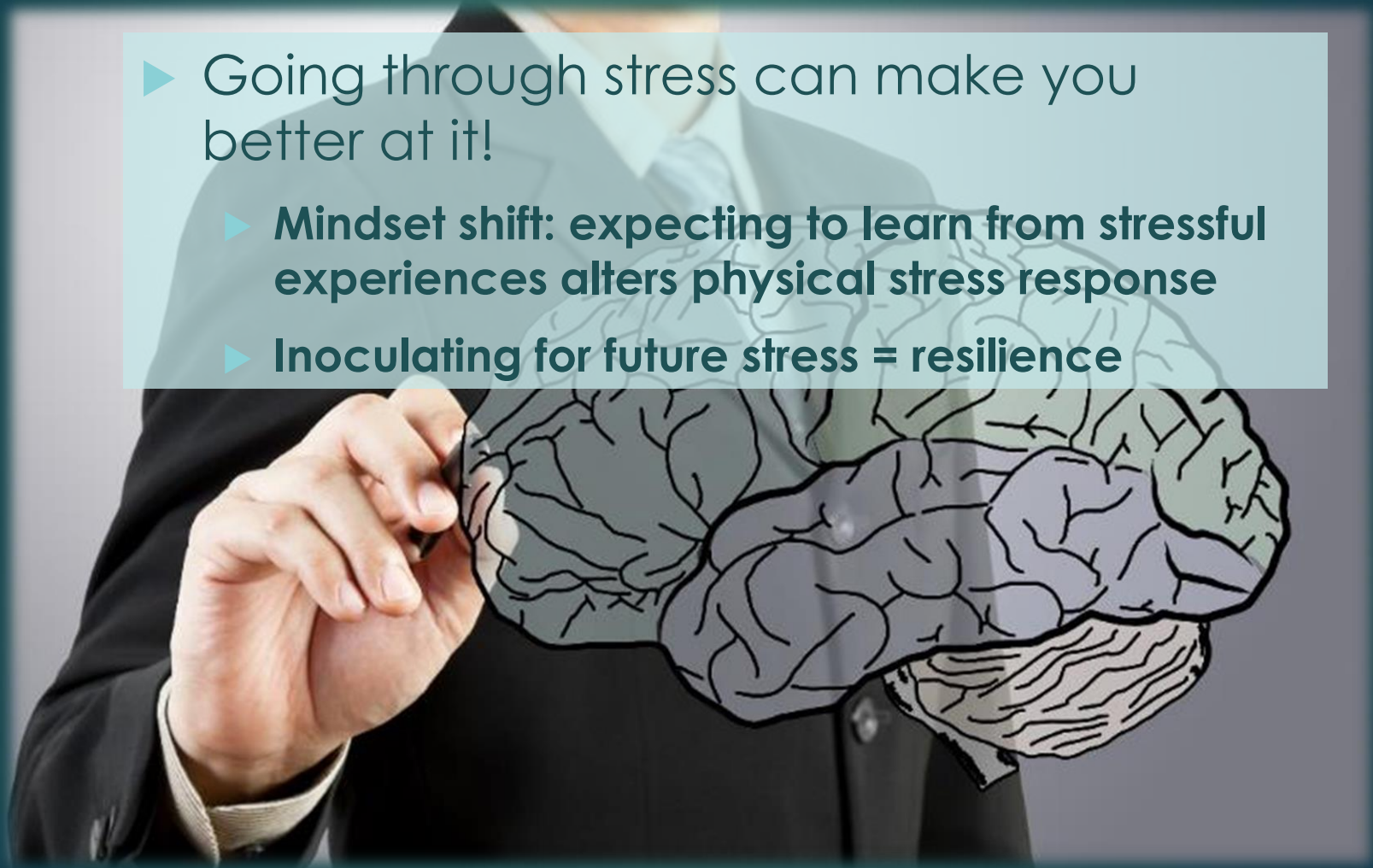
Protect & Connect Stress Response



Think about times your stress has moved you to connect....

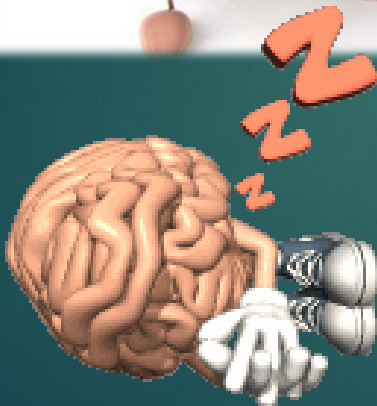
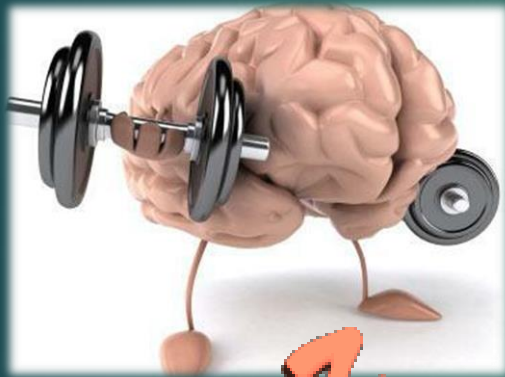
Stress Recovery: Stuck or Learning Resilience ?

- ▶ Going through stress can make you better at it!
 - ▶ **Mindset shift: expecting to learn from stressful experiences alters physical stress response**
 - ▶ **Inoculating for future stress = resilience**



How Stress Mindset Shift Helps Learning and Growing

Neuro-steroids activated



Integrates the experience

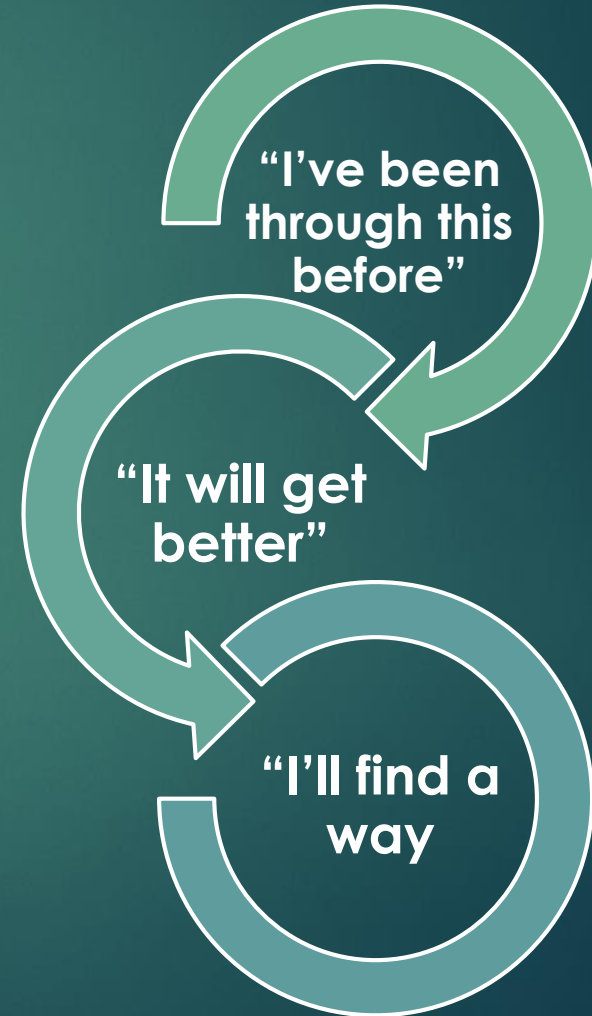
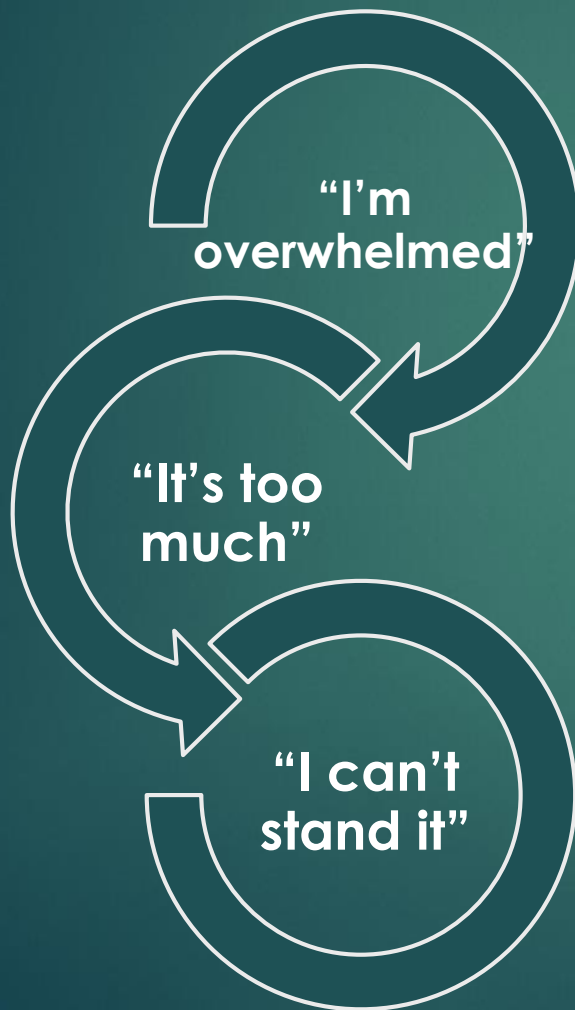
Enhances performance and productivity

Improves health outcomes – reduces depression, anxiety, illness

Recovers negative effects of stress hormones on brain and heart

How could your stress help you learn, grow, and live meaningfully?

What is My Stress Language Under Pressure?



What is My Negative Stress Language Under Pressure?

Think about examples of statements that go through your mind when you're stressed.

Examples:

“This is too much”;

“I’m stressed out”;

“Why do I always do this?”;

“I’m overwhelmed”;

“I’m such a #@%!”.

What thoughts or expressions are your stress language?

Performing Under Pressure Mindset

Just Calm Down??... or “I can do this”

“Stress as Enhancing” mindset studies:

1. Social stress test
 - ▶ Improved performance
 - ▶ Even those with social anxiety disorder!
2. Job burnout
 - ▶ Mid-career teachers, doctors
 - ▶ Attitude toward stress on job – protects from burnout

new mindset



new result



Daily Mindset Shift: Change the Channel !!



Know you have the capacity to change the current mindset channel

Choose to face today's problems as challenges

Use stress as fuel to act

Re-Think Stress

3 Steps to a 'Stress-is-Enhancing' Mindset:

Step 1:

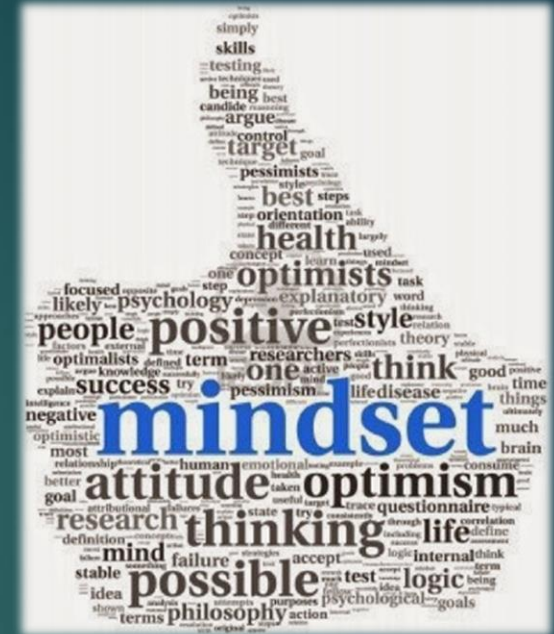
- Acknowledge Stress

Step 2:

- Welcome Stress

Step 3:

- Utilize Stress



Helping Others Protects Against New Stress-Related Disease

Volunteering “vaccinates”
for stress-related disease

Non-Volunteers:
Major stressful life events
increase rate of new serious
health diagnoses

Volunteers:
Stressful life events had no
effect on new stress-related
health diagnoses



U Buffalo 2013 3-year Study,
1000 adults

Conclusion

Stress: "If it doesn't kill me..."

Stress is harmful...except when it's not?!

Stress is debilitating

...except when you use it as fuel, energy
and motivation to resolve problems

Conclusion

Stress: "If it doesn't kill me..."

Stress is harmful...except when it's not?!

Performance stress can impair performance
...except when you become excited and
use the energy to reach your goal

Conclusion

Stress: “If it doesn’t kill me...”

Stress is harmful....except when it’s not?!

Stress increases the risk of health problems
...except when you use it to reach out, rise
to the occasion, or solve problems

Conclusion

Stress: "If it doesn't kill me..."

Stress is harmful....except when it's not?!

Daily hassles can lead to stress-related disease
...except if you accept hassles as part of life

Conclusion

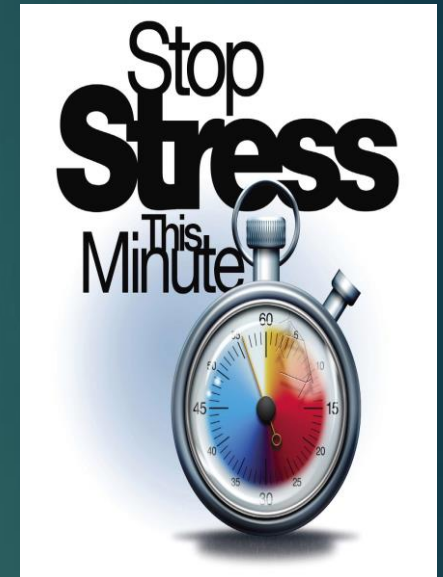
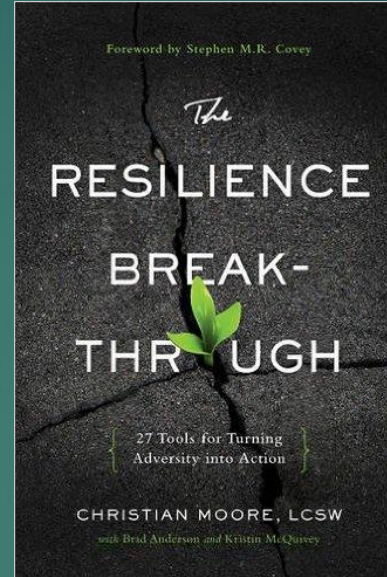
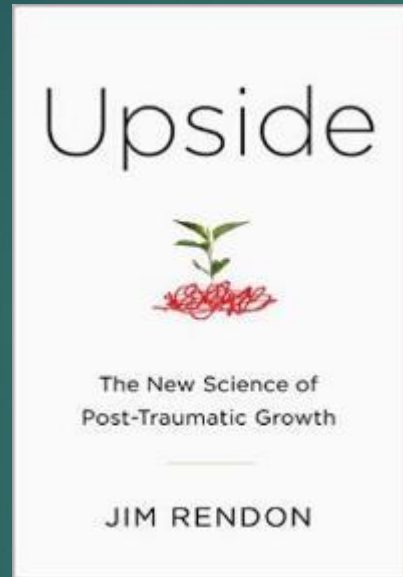
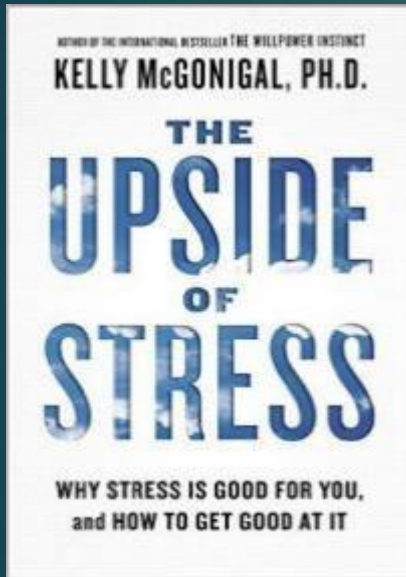
Stress: “If it doesn’t kill me...”

Stress is harmful....except when it’s not?!

Anxiety leads to panic

...except when you believe you are up
for the challenge

For Further Reading



1. The Upside of Stress: Why Stress is Good for You and How to Get Good at It by Kelly McGonigal, Avery, NY, 2015.
2. Upside: The New Science of Post-Traumatic Growth by Jim Rendon, Touchstone, NY, 2015.
3. The Resilience Breakthrough: 27 Tools for Turning Adversity Into Action by Christian Moore, Brad Anderson, and Kristin McQuivey, GreenLeaf, Austin 2014.
4. Stop Stress This Minute by James Porter, WELCOA, Omaha, NE, 2012.

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