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## Keep Stress and Worry in Perspective

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What is the impact of Stress and Worry on us personally?



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## Stress & Worry Impact

Increases likelihood of becoming sick

Strong negative impact on the following conditions:

Depression (51%)

Heart Attack or Stroke (48%)

High Blood Pressure (42%)

Cancer (30%)

Physical symptoms of stress

47% - headache

35% - upset stomach

53% - fatigue

15% - feeling dizzy



**“Our life is what our thoughts makes it.”**

-Marcus Aurelius



## Eustress vs. Distress

### **Eustress**

1. Positive stress
2. Comes from situations we feel we have some control over
3. Energizes us and increases our focus and concentration
4. Can heighten productivity and creativity, if controlled

### **Distress**

1. Destructive, negatives stress
2. When we have no control of the situation
3. Makes us feel threatened or afraid
4. Reduces our range of potential thoughts and behaviors, focusing only on “fight or flight” responses



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## Losing Perspective

Sometimes, for any number of reasons, stress and worry become harder to keep in perspective. A stressful situation that we have been dealing with effectively starts to consume more and more of our thoughts. Often, we become more irritable, less cooperative, and more distant from others. Why are we unable to put this issue into perspective?



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## Stress and Worry in My Life

- How much control do you personally have over the stressful situations in your life?

Control	Some Control	No Control



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## Stress and Worry in My Life

How many of the currently stressful circumstances in our life are actually out of our control? If we dwell on those situations, we lock ourselves into a hopeless perspective on stress and worry. It is far more productive to focus on those situations where we can influence the outcome to at least some degree. For instance, if we can't change a co-worker's personality or working style, at least we can change our reaction to that person.



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## Dale Carnegie's How to Stop Worrying and Start Living: Perspective Principles

1. Live in “day-tight compartments.”
2. How to face trouble:
  - Ask yourself, “What is the worst that can possibly happen?”
  - Prepare to accept the worst.
  - Try to improve on the worst.
3. Remind yourself of the exorbitant price you can pay for worry in terms of your health.
4. Cooperate with the inevitable.
5. Decide just how much anxiety a thing may be worth and refuse to give it anymore.
6. Do the very best you can.
7. Count your blessings – not your troubles.

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## Commitment

### Principle I will apply:

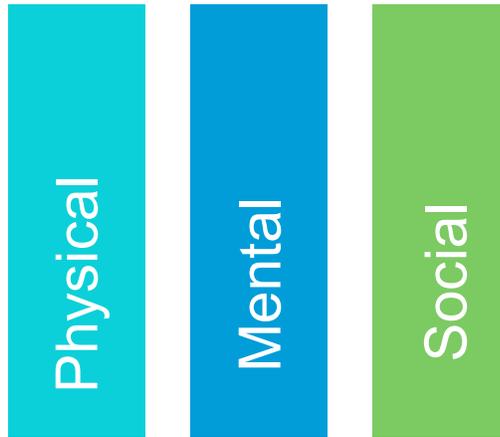
### Situation where I will apply it:

1. Live in “day-tight compartments.”
2. How to face trouble:
  - Ask yourself, “What is the worst that can possibly happen?”
  - Prepare to accept the worst.
  - Try to improve on the worst.
3. Remind yourself of the exorbitant price you can pay for worry in terms of your health.
4. Cooperate with the inevitable.
5. Decide just how much anxiety a thing may be worth and refuse to give it anymore.
6. Do the very best you can.
7. Analyze your own mistakes and criticize yourself

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## Three Pillars of Perspective

When we are trying to regain our perspective on stress and worry, a good place to start is to look at three specific ways to gain perspective: physical, mental, and social. By setting specific goals in each of these three pillars, we can gain perspective on our stress and worry.



## What are you currently doing to help manage stress in these areas?

Physical	Mental	Social



## Physical Perspective

One of the best ways to get perspective on stress and worry is to get healthy and get moving! Yet, the more stressed we are, the more likely we are to ignore our physical needs. Let's look at some ways to address stress and worry by addressing our physical needs:



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## Physical Commitment

One way that I will physically gain perspective on stress:

How this will help me:

- 1) Sleep.** Eight hours each night. Studies have shown that eight hours of sleep is necessary for humans to rest adequately each day. Cutting down our sleep to even seven hours has a detrimental effect on our coping skills and mental alertness.
- 2) Take breaks.** Many of us get going on work or projects and keep going until the job is finished, without taking a break. Breaks allow the mind to cool off, relax, and go somewhere else for a while. Stand up, walk around, and let the body loosen up.
- 3) Take deep breaths and slow your breathing.** Under stress, people often hold their breath or use shallow, rapid breaths. Deep breathing is a biofeedback technique that communicates to our physical selves that we are going to be okay. Start by breathing in and out to a slow count of three, then four, and then five. You will feel the stress unwind and calmness set in.
- 4) Eat healthy meals.** Food is the fuel that drives our health, balance, energy, and stamina. In order to be at our physical and mental best in stressful situations, we need to eat healthy, replenishing meals. Ask, "What could I do to make this meal healthier?"
- 5) Slow down.** This may be the most difficult of all in our hectic, fast-paced lives. Slowing down is safer and more productive. We are less likely to make mistakes and have more thorough and successful results. Most importantly, it restores our perspective.
- 6) Exercise.** Exercise has been used for centuries as ways to stay healthy, focused, and flexible. It is a great method for releasing physical energy in a positive, healthy way.



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## Mental Perspective

Our second pillar of perspective is our mental outlook. Dr. Albert Ellis, the great psychologist, first recognized that our perspective is determined not by what happens to us, but by how we think about what happens to us. Our mental outlook shapes whether we view events as positive or negative, or whether we actually see events in a realistic light.



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## Mental Commitment

One way that I will mentally gain perspective on stress:

How this will help me:

- 1) **Set realistic expectations.** Our level of serenity in any situation is largely determined by our expectations. While we wouldn't want to set our expectations too low, we also wouldn't want to set them so high that they are unattainable. Careful research and planning will go a long way towards setting expectations that are both realistic and challenging.
- 2) **Visualize successful outcomes.** Whether we picture a positive or negative result in a situation, visualization affects outcomes. Even something as simple as saying, "This will never work," is a form of visualization. Replace that type of thinking with statements like, "We are going to find a way to make this work."
- 3) **Add up your assets.** We often lose perspective because we stop seeing the assets that we bring to a stressful situation. Personal assets like experience, intelligence, diligence, common sense, and interpersonal skills are tremendously important for creating positive outcomes in stressful situations.
- 4) **Stay within your ethical boundaries.** It is highly stressful to live outside our personal ethical boundaries, whether we stray there on our own or are pushed by someone else. To keep a steady, healthy mental perspective, it is critical for us to feel that we are leading ethical professional lives.
- 5) **Believe in yourself.** Remind yourself of all the achievements in your life and the individual strengths that you bring to any situation. If we believe in ourselves, others will believe in us, too. In this way, we overcome self-doubt and move steadily forward



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## Social Perspective

Our third pillar of perspective is our social interaction. Friends and colleagues are critical to helping us gain perspective in our lives. People who know us well and have known us over a period of time can see us in ways that we can't see ourselves. They can help us get perspective on our blind spots and our strengths.



## Social Commitment

One way that I will socially gain perspective on stress:

How this will help me:

- 1) **Talk to someone you trust.** This means talking to someone who will tell us what we need to hear, and not what we think we want to hear. Someone we trust who will be honest while being respectful and point us towards effective ways of coping.
- 2) **Minimize your time with negative people.** Sometimes, in the pursuit of social connections, we hang around or connect with people who bring unnecessary negativity into our lives. When we face stressful situations, these are the last people we need to hear from. Surround yourself with those friends and colleagues who are supportive and optimistic.
- 3) **See the humorous side of stressful situations and laugh a little.** When we lose perspective, we often lose our sense of humor as well. When this happens, we tend to take ourselves a little too seriously. Find humor and laugh with others.
- 4) **Ask for help.** In many situations, there is no need to go it alone, and isolation only leads to more stress. Reach out to others, be honest, and ask for assistance when you need it. You might be surprised how responsive people will be.
- 5) **Plan fun and relaxation.** Whether it is a vacation, a golf game, or a night on the town, planning fun, relaxing events gets our mind off our stress and focuses on interacting with others.
- 6) **Volunteer.** To get perspective and to avoid feeling sorry for ourselves is to focus on helping others. Pick a need that you feel strongly about, have some experience or training in, and go for it!



## Targeting What Needs to Change

In Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, he describes his fruitless attempts over the years to rid himself of numerous negative behaviors. Only when he decided to focus on a single behavior, was he successful at eliminating it.



**What was the most useful idea from this webinar that will help me deal with my “Stress and Worry?”**



**“Knowledge isn't power until it is applied.”**  
-Dale Carnegie



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