

Did You Break Your Stress Ball Again? Stress Inoculation Tips

Kristin L. Roush, Ph.D.

Laughter ... the best medicine

- 1) "After my Lactation Care Provider career, I think I'll become a Hostage Negotiator. Seems less stressful."
- 2) My doctor told me to start killing people. Well, not in those exact words. She said I had to reduce the stress in my life. Same thing.
- 3) How to reduce workplace stress: Stand up, stretch, take a walk, go to the airport, get on a plane, never return.
- 4) Some days you eat salads and go to the gym. Some days you eat cupcakes and refuse to put on pants. It's called balance.
- 5) Before you diagnose yourself with depression or low self-esteem, first make sure you are not in fact, surrounded by assholes.
- 6) I don't like Monday mornings ... or people who like Monday mornings ... or Mondays ... or mornings ... or people.

The Chinese word for crisis is a combination of the character for danger and the character for opportunity. See handout, "Chinese Parable: Good luck or bad luck?"

Ten Insights to Help Inoculate Against Stress

- 1) **Perspective:** stress resides in the eye of the beholder. Rose bush or Thorn bush?
- 2) **Choices:** We have the *power* to choose how to perceive, perhaps it is our most treasured freedom. "You do not have to be a victim of your autobiography."

- 3) **Motivation:** Do you have drive or are you driven? Are you motivated by fear or inadequacy?
- 4) **Guilt or Resentment?:** Never do anything that you will feel guilt about or resentment about. If you must pick, go with guilt. It is easier to recover from.
- 5) **Do you have p TSD? PRE-Traumatic Stress Disorder:** Are you living in the future by worrying?
- 6) **Control:** Give it up. You are only responsible *for* what you are in control *of*. (Exception: you are legally and morally responsible for your children and/or other dependents) You are only in control of you – specifically, your behaviors.
- 7) **Perfection:** You do not have to be perfect in order to be good enough. This is an old artifact of a defense mechanism that was actually adaptive in your childhood. It's now mal-adaptive in adulthood.
- 8) **Optimal Level of Arousal:** Actually, a moderate amount of arousal improves performance. Not too little and not too much. Just right.
- 9) **Pain is inevitable; suffering is optional.** Legitimate pain (and joy) is the price of doing the business of life. We need to normalize pain, not be phobic. Suffering is caused by attachment to or aversion to your pain.
- 10) LET IT GO!!!**

Ten Self-Care Tips

- 1) **TP cardboard roll:** Use it to enhance perspective, to become more mindful of the present moment; to focus your attention.
- 2) **Prayer Closet:** Make a space in your home for quiet contemplation. When not at home, bathroom stalls work. Also, drape anything over your head to help you be/feel quiet and attentive.
- 3) **Pause App:** this is a simple free app that invites you to slowly follow a blob around your phone screen. Two or three minutes of focused attention can provide quick calming.
- 4) **Deal With It! Six Steps:** what happened, feelings/mindful self-compassion, responsible for, in control of now, choose to do, let it go.
- 5) **EFT Tapping:** “Acupuncture without the needles.” Tap on Karate Chop point or just below both collarbones, or on breast plate. “Even though I am

feeling really stressed out, I deeply and completely love and accept myself.”
Repeat a few times while taking conscious breaths.

- 6) **Assertiveness:** The middle ground between being passive on one end and aggressive on the other. Assertiveness is being responsive to my needs/rights while being respectful of others' needs/rights.
- 7) **Metta:** Say a lovingkindness prayer for yourself or for others: :May I accept things as they are, may I be free from suffering and the cause of suffering, may I have ease of wellbeing, may I be protected and safe, may I be happy.”
- 8) **Ritual:** Use ritual to physically represent your intentions to manage or release emotions. God Bag, candle, throw a rock, write a letter then burn it, release balloons ...
- 9) **Mindful Self-Compassion:** the “new self-esteem.” “ah, frustration; ah, anger.” Place your hand over your heart and say “This is a moment of _____ . _____ is a part of life. May I be kind to myself. May I give myself the compassion I need.
- 10) **Random Act of Kindness:** As an expression of your gratitude, give to someone else. It is hard to feel like a victim (depression) when you are in gratitude or giving to others.

Kristin L. Roush, Ph.D.

www.MovedandShaken.com 505.463.8628 KristinLR@aol.com