

Know Stress - Knowledge Guide

Know Stress has a dual meaning. Knowing is understanding the types of stress and there is no such condition as **No** Stress. You will always have some level of stress, the key is understanding and controlling it.

Stress is our built-in response to danger or anger, a surge in hormones as we choose between fight, flight or freeze.

Stress Categories:

Distress (Negative stress) - The silent killer. If not detected and controlled, it slowly drains you and could lead to death.

Eustress (Positive stress) - Exercise, attending a wedding, graduation, etc.

Potential Causes of Distress:

Professional - Leadership, relationships, change

Personal - Children, finances, divorce

SmartPhone:

It is one of the greatest innovations of all time. It puts some much power and functionally in our hands. It has brought us together, but it has also divided us. It makes communication so easy and instantaneous, yet it has created so much distress, such as making it easy for us to be bombarded with information, being constantly "Available" and forces us to attempt to multitask. It has created the 21st Century addiction FOMO.

Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO):

The temptation to constantly check your smartphone for texts, e-mails, social media, etc. You may be addicted if you:

1. check your phone when you wake up.
2. answer your phone while talking to someone.
3. use your phone while walking.
4. keep your phone in plain sight.

Multitasking:

Multitasking is a misnomer. Human beings cannot perform two cognitive activities simultaneously. We can switch rapidly between multiple thoughts, giving the illusion of multitasking. Our brain ricochets between tasks and has to refocus each time. These mental gymnastics waste time. Efficiency increases when we focus on completing one task at a time.

Proper Sleep:

Sleep is a nonnegotiable biological necessity. It is our life-support system. Our sleep is usually the first thing we ignore. Proper rest helps reduce distress. Try to go to sleep at the same time and wake up at the same time. Proper rest keeps you sharp, improves your ability to remember, learn and make decisions, refreshes our emotional state and reduces distress.

Secondhand Distress:

Our emotions are transmitted through a wireless network in our brain, called mirror neurons. These neurons allow us to empathize with others and understand what they are feeling. When we see someone yawn, our mirror neurons activate, making us yawn. Through this same process, we pick up negativity and distress, like secondhand smoke. Secondhand distress is contagious. Observing someone who is distressed, especially a coworker or family member, can immediately cause us distress.

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Distress Responses:

Acute – This response is usually sudden and short lived, similar to a Shock and Awe type of response, which usually dissipates quickly.

Chronic – This response is typically more subtle and the effects last much longer.

Mind Over Matter (MOM):

The first step, the most significant step, in reducing distress is identifying the source.

Understanding your emotions helps you feel a little less distressed. The next time you sense distress, try to determine the source. Research has proven, you are likely to feel a little better, just from knowing. This puts you in a better position to start problem solving and ultimately improve how you feel. Sometimes you can't resolve distress on your own. It's okay to seek professional help.

Mynd TimeSM:

Technology Fasting - Everyone needs to unplug physically, mentally and emotionally from technology. Technology monopolizes our world and deemphasizes face-to-face communication. We've grown accustomed to fast, ever on and feeling the need to immediately respond or risk falling victim to the new 21st Century addiction, the Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO.) We all need technology fasting daily.

Still-Time (Relax) - Schedule this time alone. First thing in the morning, mid-day or prior to bedtime. Find a place where you won't be interrupted. Set an alarm. Relax your body, close your eyes, then get quiet. If you can't sit still, then engage in any mindless physical activity, like rocking in a chair or watching some natural motion like fire or running water. You can also play a calming recording, like ocean waves braking on shore. Positive and Peaceful thoughts only. One thought could be thinking about all the good times in your life, starting with your earliest memories and slowly work your way to the present. The benefits of slowing down are numerous. When we're idle, we allow our minds to wander. This daydreaming makes us more creative, better at problem-solving and better at producing creative ideas.

Self-Reflection (Introspection) - This time should be dedicated to thinking about all and any aspects of your life, personal or professional. This can be right after Still-Time but make it a separate and dedicated time. At the end of the day is a good time, when everything is fresh in your mind. If you are too busy to stop and think, then you are too busy!

Distress Reduction:

Some of the distress in your life can be reduced or eliminated by creating boundaries. These boundaries play an important part in managing your day-to-day distress. Tips for creating boundaries:

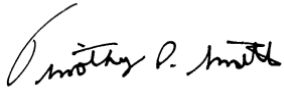
1. Avoid stressful people and situations
2. Avoid "hot" topics
3. Take control of your environment

Distress Perspective:

How you think about distress matters. We need to be more intentional about handling distress. Inoculate yourself by starting your day with positive thoughts. A scientific study tracked 30,000 people for 8 years. They learned changing how you think about distress makes you healthier? When you change your mind about distress, you can change your body's physical response to stress. Research has also proven you can't be stressed and thankful at the same time. If you are feeling blessed, you won't be stressed. The power of positive thoughts!

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I invite you and your colleagues to consider joining the LinkedIn group I started to make people's lives easier, [Contagious Performance ImprovementSM Made Easy](#).



Timothy Dean Smith
Inspirational Speaker
People-Centered Leadership Coach
(607) 221-6191
www.tdspi.com
tds@tdspi.com
[LinkedIn Profile](#)
[SpeakerHub Profile](#)

Contagious Performance ImprovementSM

Leading the future-proof culture made easy
[Let's have a conversation](#)

