

Turning Stressful Encounters into Opportunities for Growth



Leonard L Gibbons, DrPH, MPH, HT, RD
Lifestyle Intervention Specialist
Public Health Nutritionist
Herbal Therapist
Registered Dietitian

Definitions

Stress is the body's response to **any demand** made upon it; **your response** to the **challenges of life.**

Stressors are the **external (e.g. work life) and internal (e.g. pessimism) demands of daily living.**



Definitions

*"The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word '**crisis**'. One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for **opportunity**. In a **crisis**, be aware of the danger—but recognize the **opportunity**."*

J. F. Kennedy



J.F. Kennedy's statement is based on a misunderstanding of Chinese Characters.
<https://www.china-admissions.com/blog/inchina-a-crisis-is-also-an-opportunity/>

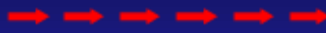
STRESS MANAGEMENT

*Stress management is a process of **responding to the stressors** of life by making choices that **prevent or minimize harmful consequences (danger)** and **create or maximize positive results (opportunities)**.*

STRESS

Activating Event Consequence

Stressor



Response

Common **External** Stressors

Major life changes, work or school, relationship difficulties, lifestyle, financial problems, being too busy, and physical danger.

Physiological

Emotional

Spiritual

Social

Common **Internal** Stressors

Pessimism, inability to accept uncertainty, rigid thinking, negative-self talk, unrealistic expectations, perfectionism and all-or-nothing attitude.

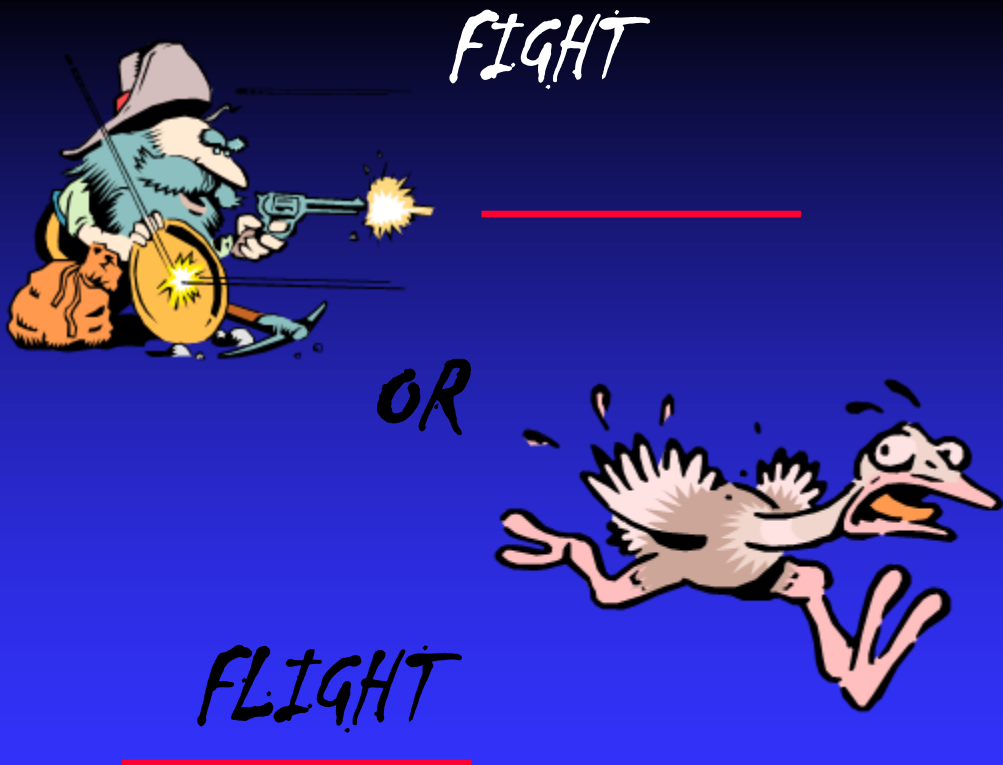
***WHAT IS THE
HUMAN
REACTION TO
THREATING
STRESSORS?***

Physiological Changes:

- Heart rate ↑
- Blood thickens, BP ↑
- Respiration ↑
- Cortisol & Adrenaline ↑
- Sugar in blood ↑
- Muscle function ↑
- Senses keener ↑
- Digestive process ↓

STRESS REACTIONS ARE:

- *USEFUL*
- *ADAPTIVE*
- *FUNCTIONAL*



*Where is
the
real
DANGER?*

**ACUTE
STRESS?**

NO!

**CHRONIC,
unrelieved
stress causes
the damage.**

**WE SIMPLY
STEW
IN OUR
OWN
JUICES!**



STRESS TRIGGERS DISEASE

heart disease
asthma
diabetes
mental illness
high blood pressure
ulcers
cancer
common cold and flu

Stress, Survival, and Illness

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Parts of Your Stress Response	Survival Value in Facing Danger	Stress-Related Symptoms and Illness
Muscles tense to prepare for fight or flight	Faster reaction times	Headaches and backaches
Increased adrenaline secreted into the bloodstream	Mobilizes resources for rapid action	Irritability, anxiety disorders, and insomnia
Blood vessels constrict and blood pressure rises	Speeds circulation of needed oxygen and nutrients	Hypertension
Heart rate and force of contraction increase	Speeds circulation	Heart pounding, wear and tear on arteries, leading to coronary heart disease

Stress, Survival, and Illness

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Parts of Your Stress Response	Survival Value in Facing Danger	Stress-Related Symptoms and Illness
Blood clotting occurs more quickly to minimize loss from cuts or hemorrhage	Helps stop bleeding if injured	Atherosclerotic coronary disease and stroke
Blood vessels in brain constrict and then dilate	Blood shifts to large muscles	Migraine headaches
Sugars added to bloodstream	Rapid source of energy for muscles	Diabetes mellitus Elevated cholesterol

Stress Overload Signals

- ❑ Minor problems throw me for a loop.
- ❑ Nothing gives me pleasure any more.
- ❑ I can't stop thinking about my problems.
- ❑ I feel frustrated or angry much of the time.



The Stress Tank

STRESSORS

Strain/Loss of Job
 Trouble Financially
 Relationship Conflict
 Excessive Change
 Sustained Illness
 Steady Worry
 Ordinary Hassles
 Recurring Irritations

TANK SIZE

Condition of Health
 Relationship/Social Support
 Executive Hardiness
 Attitude - Belief System
 Type of Personality
 Endowment/Hereditry

OVERFLOW

Health Breakdown
 Accident Proneness
 Relationship Issues
 Mental Illness

CLOSING PRESSURE RELIEF VALVE

Caffeine
 Liquor/Alcohol
 Overuse of Drugs
 Smoking
 Escapist/Addictive Behavior



OPENING PRESSURE RELIEF VALVE

Prayer - Spiritual Centering
 Relaxation - Massage
 Exercise - Activity
 Viewpoint
 Eating Healthfully
 No – Set effective limits
 Time Management

Adapted with permission

STRESS
IS YOUR RESPONSE
TO
STRESSORS



Almost everything that happens in our lives requires a particular viewpoint, belief, or interpretation in order for it to evoke a response (whether positive or negative) in us.

“Stress arises out of the way we interpret our circumstances and interaction with people.....”

Barbara B. Brown. *Between Health and Illness: New Notions on the Nature of Stress and Well Being* . Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984, p. 182.

*It's not the event itself, but rather the way the event is **perceived**, that determines the level of stress and the resulting stress response. A roller coaster ride terrifies some people, creating distress, while it's exhilarating for others, creating eustress.*



Attitude determines whether we perceive any experience as pleasant or unpleasant, and adopting the right one can convert a negative stress into a positive one."

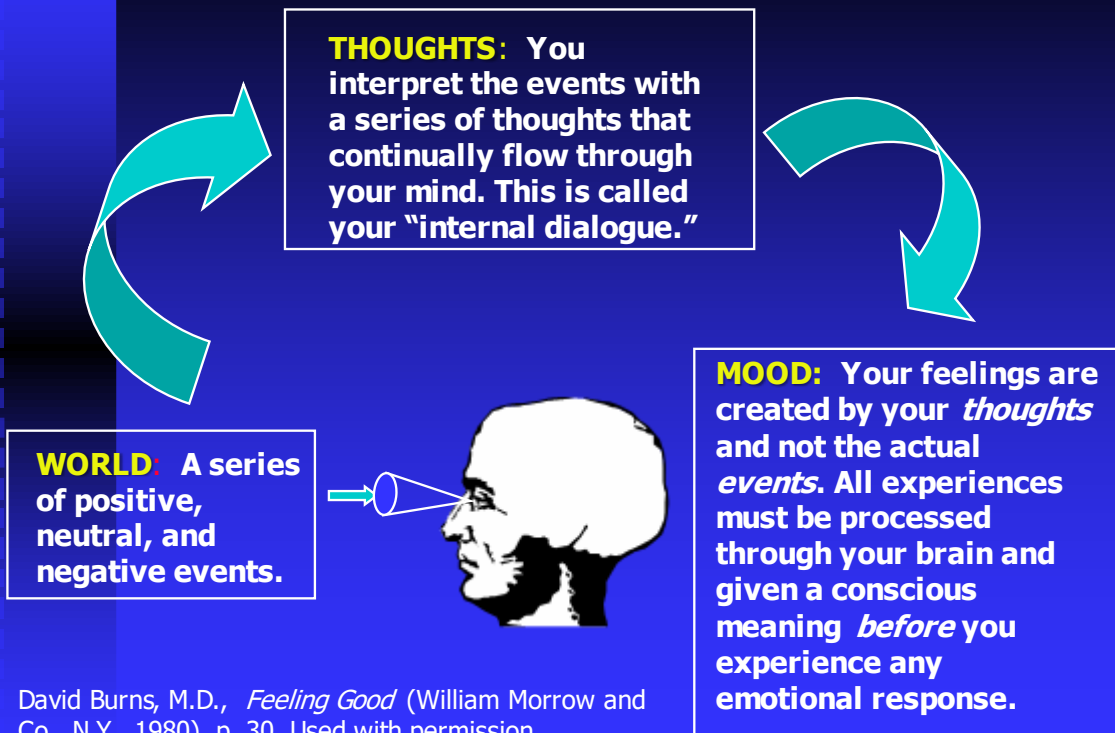
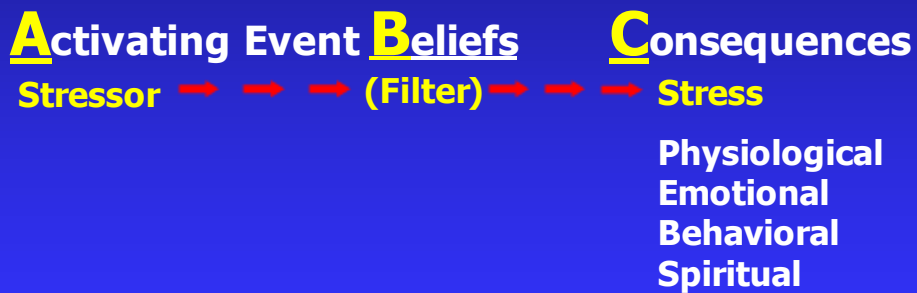
Hans Selye, M.D. "The Real Benefits of Eustress,"
Psychology Today, March, 1978, p. 63.

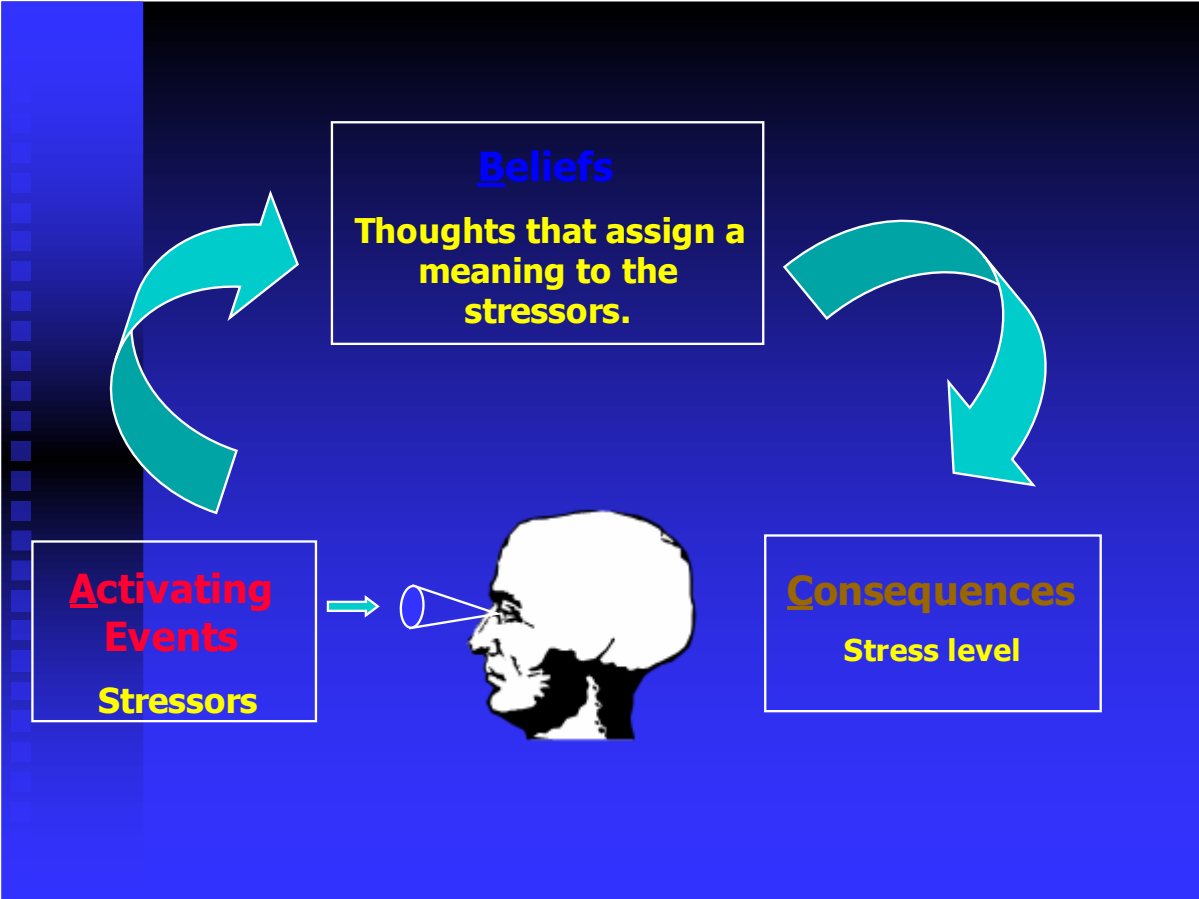
Advanced Understanding of Stress

Stress is not your reaction to the stressor, so much as it is a reaction to your interpretation of the stressor. Your beliefs empower the stressors in your life, enabling them to produce the level of stress you experience. To a great degree you can control the level of stress you will experience.

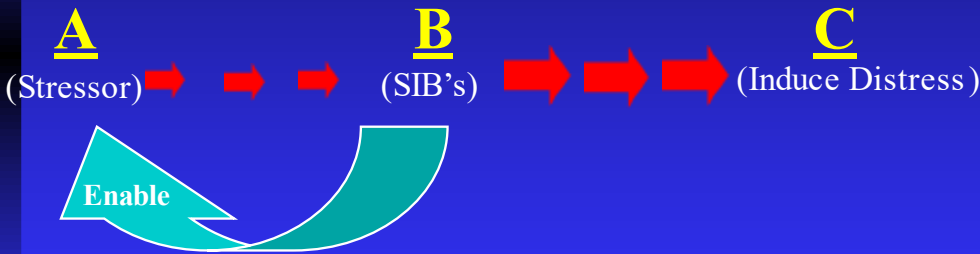
Advanced Understanding of Stress

The Big ABC's of Stress Management

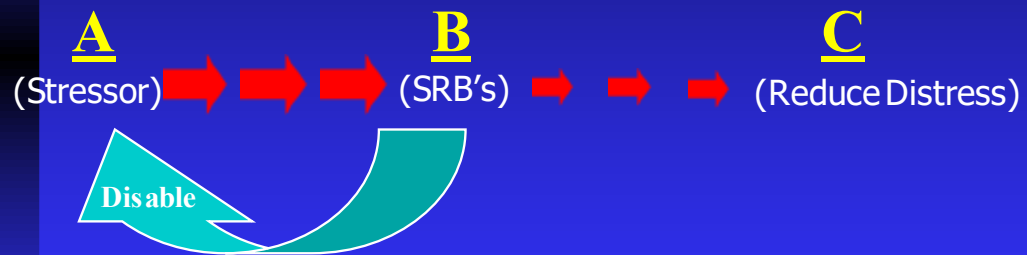




The Effects of Stress- Inducing Beliefs (SIB's)



The Effects of Stress- Reducing Beliefs (SRB's)



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What about B Enables or Disables Stressors

A Stressor 1. B Beliefs about "A" C Distress or Eustress

Stress-Inducing Belief
Airplanes are unsafe for travel
(Fear, Anxiety, Nervousness, Tension,
Sleeplessness)



Stress-Reducing Belief
Statistically, planes are safer than cars
(Excitement, Anticipation, Calm, Relaxation)



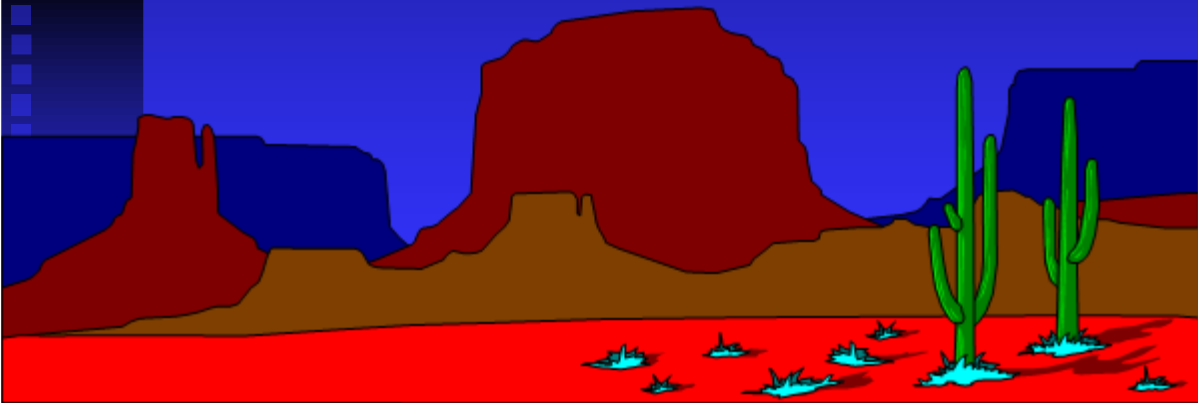
What about B Enables or Disables Stressors

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>
Stressor	1. Beliefs about "A" 2. <u>Interpretation</u> of "A"	Distress or Eustress

YOU MAKE THE CALL!

To a great extent, whether an event creates distress or eustress depends on how you call it.

If we can change an interpretation of an event, we can effectively change the impact that event will have on us.

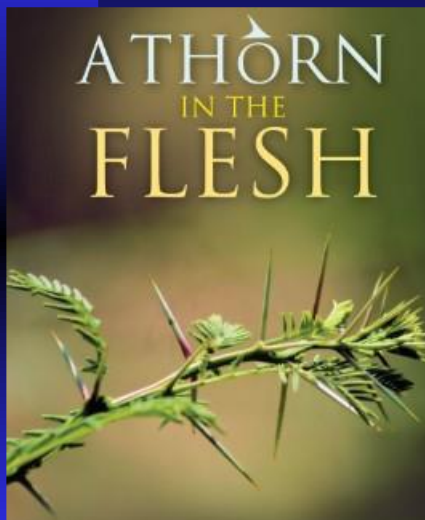


Managing stress at an advanced level requires the development of a **healthy, reality-based viewpoint** as a basis for positively interpreting the events of our lives and thus controlling the effect they will have on us.



THE CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT

"A Thorn...A Messenger from Satan"



2 Corinthians 12:7-10

"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

The Purpose Behind Our Stressors

“We are **hard pressed** on every side, yet **not crushed**; we are **perplexed**, but **not in despair**; **persecuted**, but **not forsaken**; **struck down**, but **not destroyed**; always bearing about in the body the **dying of the Lord** Jesus, (self sacrifice and self denial) that the **life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body...**

(righteousness, joy and peace in the holy Ghost)” 2 Cor. 4:8-10



It's For Our Good

“ For **all things are for your sake (good)**, that the **abundant grace** might **through the thanksgiving** of many abound (**overflow**) to the **glory of God**. **Therefore, we do not lose heart**; while our outward man is perishing, the inward man is renewed day by day.” 2 Cor 4: 15, 16



“...the trying of your faith **worketh patience**. But let patience have her perfect work, **that ye may be perfect** and entire, **wanting nothing.**” James 1: 2-4

Light Affliction

“For **our light affliction**, which is **but for a moment**, is **working for us** a far more exceeding and **eternal weight of glory**; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal (**temporary**); but the things which are not seen are **eternal**.” 2 Cor 4: 17,18



44

It's Ordered by the Lord

“**In everything give thanks** for this is **the will of God** in Christ Jesus concerning you.” 1 Thess. 5:18

“The **steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord** and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down for **the Lord upholdeth him** with His hand.” Psalm 37:23

“...the **path of the just** is as the **shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day**” Prov. 4:18

Give Thanks At All Times

"Be anxious for nothing [don't worry about anything], **pray without ceasing** [Pray at all times over all things trusting that God will direct your path]. **In everything** [that follows] **give thanks** [why?] for **this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.**" *Philippians 4:8*

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances." *Philippians 4:11*

THE CHOICE

*"Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the
vines, though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the
pen and no cattle in the stalls,
**yet I will rejoice
and be joyful in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God who helps
me.**"*

Ancient Hebrew Song
Habakkuk 3:17, 18

“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”

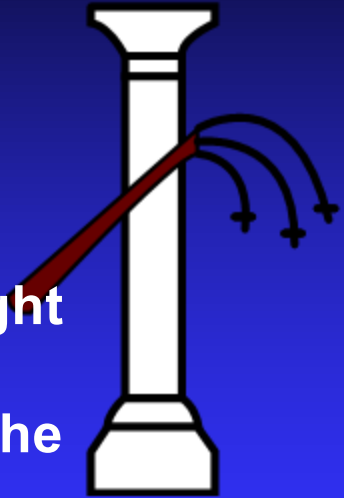
Philippians 4:11

The Circumstances. . .

“I have worked much harder (than my accusers), been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. . .



“Five times I received the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and day in the open sea. I have been constantly on the move. . .

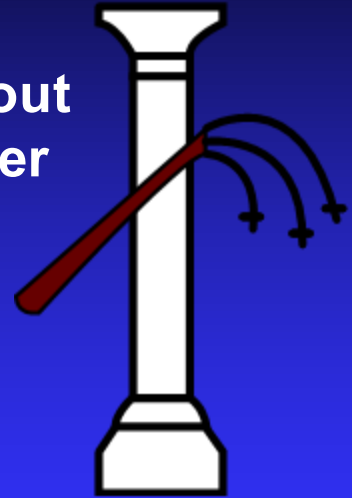


“I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from the Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. . .



“I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.”

*Apostle Paul
(2 Corinthians II:23 -28)*

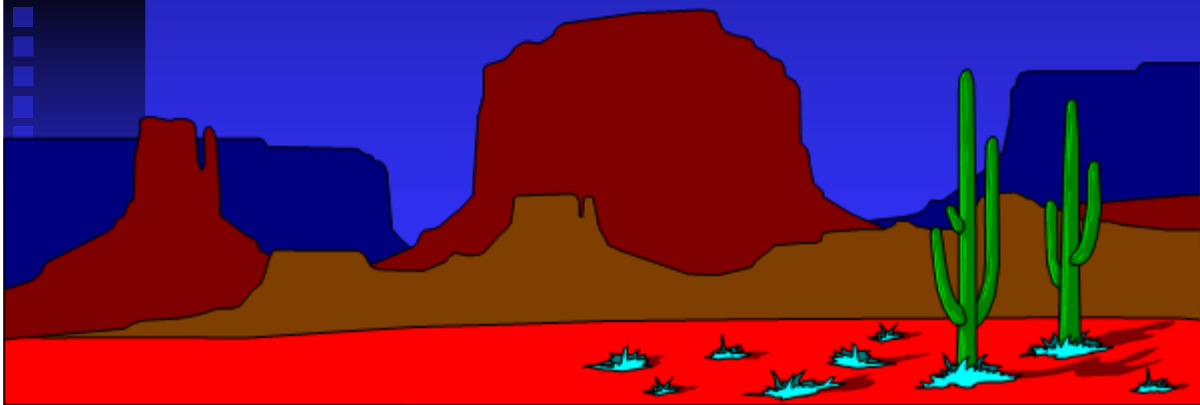


“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want **I can do everything through Him who gives me strength”**

Philippians 4:11 -13

"Suffering ceases to be suffering in some way at the moment it finds a meaning. . ."

Victor E. Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning*
(Washington Square Press, Inc., New York,
1963) pp. 164, 178, 179



God is in Charge

"Above the distractions of earth [God] sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best." FLB 42.4



THE RESPONSE

*"The Lord your God is with you
He is **mighty to save**.
He will **take great delight in you**, He will **quiet you with his love**, **He will rejoice over you with singing.**"*

Ancient Hebrew Song
Zephaniah 3:17



Stress Management Quiz

1. Stress can be defined as the internal and external demands of daily living.
T F
2. Stress management has been defined as responding to the stressors of life by making choices that prevent or minimize danger while creating or maximize opportunities. T F
3. Chronic unrelieved stress can trigger heart disease, asthma, diabetes, mental illness, high blood pressure, ulcers, cancer, the common cold and the flu.
T F
4. Four danger stress signals include the following expressions: Minor problems throw me for a loop; Nothing gives me pleasure anymore; I can't stop thinking about my problems; and, I feel frustrated or angry infrequently. T F
5. Five factors that can close off your stress relief valve include caffeine, alcohol, overuse of drugs, smoking and addictive or escapist behaviors. T F
6. Almost everything that happens in our lives does not require a particular viewpoint, belief, or interpretation in order for it to evoke a response in us.
T F
7. Your beliefs empower the stressors in your life and enable them to produce the level of stress you experience. T F
8. Activating events or the stressors in life always cause us to behave in a particular way. T F
9. Our thoughts about the events in our lives don't create our moods or influence our behaviors. T F
10. If we can change an interpretation of an event, we can effectively change the impact that event will have on us. T F
11. Recognizing our weaknesses is the place to begin in order to receive God's strength. T F
12. The trials, stressors or the difficulties in life are for our good. T F
13. Suffering ceases to be suffering, in some way, at the moment it finds a meaning. T F
14. The three steps in addressing irritations include 1) Thanking God for the irritation, no matter what, because there's a purpose; 2) Identifying possible causes: Did I in any way cause this? and, 3) Determining the ultimate objectives: What qualities does God want to develop in me? T F
15. Above the distractions of earth [God] sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey, and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best. T F
16. The stress tank stress relief valve can be opened by factors such as prayer, relaxation, exercise, having a healthy viewpoint, eating healthfully, setting limits and one's endowment. T F
17. The stressors of life include factors such as the loss of job, financial troubles, relationship conflicts, grief, excessive change and sustained illness. T F
18. Accident proneness, relationship issues and mental illness can be signs that the stress tank has overflowed. T F

19. Attitude determines whether we perceive any experience as pleasant or unpleasant, and adopting the right one can convert a negative stress into a positive one. T F
20. All experiences must be processed through your brain and given a conscious meaning before you experience any emotional response. T F