

The Upside of Stressful Experiences #1

_____ opinions on stress. Which do you agree _____ ?

A) Stress is harmful and should be _____ avoided and reduced.

B) Stress is beneficial and should be _____ and utilized.

_____ many people _____ the _____ more agreeable than the latter, but the latest scientific understanding on stress _____ your idea on stress. Actually, stress can be both positive and negative, and the same stressful experience can cause good or bad _____ depending on how you _____. Of course, _____ to _____ stresses _____ our physical and psychological health. Imposing unnecessary and unreasonable stress on others is _____. Not to mention, _____ to justify causing unnecessary stress by saying, “_____.” However, it’s impossible to _____ any stressful experiences. Also, we cannot _____ happened to us. The only thing we can do is change how we _____. By changing how we think about stress, we can _____ bad effects and _____ a positive.

Here are two extreme opinions on stress. Which do you agree more than the other?

A) Stress is harmful and should be definitely avoided and reduced.

B) Stress is beneficial and should be accepted and utilized.

Perhaps many people find the former more agreeable than the latter, but the latest scientific understanding on stress will suggest you modify your idea on stress. Actually, stress can be both positive and negative, and the same stressful experience can cause good or bad effects depending on how you interpret it. Of course, chronic exposure to meaningless stresses significantly deteriorates our physical and psychological health. Imposing unnecessary and unreasonable stress on others is unacceptable. Not to mention, it should never be tolerated to justify causing unnecessary stress by saying, “It's for your own growth.” However, it’s impossible to get through life without any stressful experiences. Also, we cannot undo distressing events that have already happened to us. The only thing we can do is change how we interpret them. By changing how we think about stress, we can mitigate its bad effects and possibly turn it into a positive.

chronic	慢性的な	tolerate	容認する
deteriorate	悪化する	mitigate	緩和する
psychological	心理的な	distressing	苦しい
impose	課す	possibly	もしかすると
unreasonable	不合理な	exposure	露出
justify	正当化する		

The Upside of Stressful Experiences #2

There is a _____ that stress is bad for our health, but what does the latest science _____ stress? In 1998, _____ in the US were asked how much stress _____ experienced in the last year. Eight years later, the researchers _____ public records to _____ the participants. They found that high levels of stress increased the risk of dying by 43 _____. However, this was only _____ that stress is bad for their health. The researchers also asked them, “Do you believe that stress is harmful to your health?” Those who reported high levels of stress but did not _____ harmful were _____ likely to die. _____ believe, but we can find similar _____ in other cases as well. For example, there is a study on housekeeping workers, whose job is as physically _____ as _____ exercises. _____ believed that their work was good exercises and _____ health benefits, they got much _____. Similarly, people with a positive _____ aging live longer by around 8 years than those who have negative stereotypes about _____. Also, those _____ positive views of aging had an 80 percent lower risk of _____. _____, the exact same situation _____ causing different outcomes depending on how we _____. Of course, it doesn’t mean that you can lose weight by just watching TV and eating snacks _____ yourself that these are good exercises. Changing our _____ is _____ . When two _____ are possible, our _____ influence which one is more likely. When we view stress _____, our bodies and minds will _____ stress _____.

There is a widespread idea that stress is bad for our health, but what does the latest science say about stress? In 1998, thirty thousand adults in the US were asked how much stress they had experienced in the last year. Eight years later, the researchers examined public records to find out who had died among the participants. They found that high levels of stress increased the risk of dying by 43 percent. However, this was only true for people who believed that stress is bad for their health. The researchers also asked them, “Do you believe that stress is harmful to your health?” Those who reported high levels of stress but did not view stress as harmful were the least likely to die. It might be hard to believe, but we can find similar phenomena in other cases as well. For example, there is a study on housekeeping workers, whose job is as physically tough as intense exercises. When they believed that their work was good exercises and expected health benefits, they got much fitter than when they didn’t think so. Similarly, people with a positive attitude about aging live longer by around 8 years than those who have negative stereotypes about growing older. Also, those with the most positive views of aging had an 80 percent lower risk of heart attacks. Thus, the exact same situation ends up causing different outcomes depending on how we perceive it. Of course, it doesn’t mean that you can lose weight by just watching TV and eating snacks if you tell yourself that these are good exercises. Changing our perception is never about having an illusion. When two outcomes are possible, our expectations influence which one is more likely. When we view stress differently, our bodies and minds will respond to stress differently.

widespread	広範囲にわたる	stereotype	固定観念
participant	参加者	perceive	知覚する
phenomena	現象	perception	認識
intense	強烈な		

The Upside of Stressful Experiences #3

For many, _____ most _____ moments in life is public speaking. Whether it is a presentation to the _____ company or a speech at a _____, _____ you show up on stage, your _____ goes up, your _____ are sweating, and your _____. _____, your stress response _____ depending on how you interpret the situation. _____ heart is pounding under pressure, one can either _____ something to be avoided and suppressed or a sign of excitement and enthusiasm. Many people believe that the best strategy is the _____, trying to calm down under pressure, but studies have _____. A researcher at Harvard Business School designed an experiment to _____ effect. _____ people who _____ to give a speech, some of them were told to relax and _____ by saying to themselves, "I am calm," _____ others _____ to accept the anxiety and say, "I am excited". _____ strategy _____ anxiety go away. However, speakers _____ the stress _____ more confident, _____, and _____ to the audience than speakers who tried to calm down. Moreover, this _____ influences _____ from an audience but also _____ responses within the body. In a similar experiment, subjects who _____ potentially helpful to _____ one's health, performance, and growth _____ more of the _____, DHEA, that reduces the risk of stress-_____ diseases, such as anxiety disorder, _____, and _____ disease. You can _____ stress into energy by _____, _____, _____ and denying it. Next time you feel your heart _____ pressure, you can talk to yourself, "This is my _____ working _____ to _____ more oxygen to my body and brain _____ I _____ to this challenge."

For many, one of the most distressing moments in life is public speaking. Whether it is a presentation to the entire company or a speech at a wedding, right before you show up on stage, your heart rate goes up, your palms are sweating, and your mouth feels dry. Again, your stress response varies depending on how you interpret the situation. When the heart is pounding under pressure, one can either take it as something to be avoided and suppressed or a sign of excitement and enthusiasm. Many people believe that the best strategy is the former one, trying to calm down under pressure, but studies have shown otherwise. A researcher at Harvard Business School designed an experiment to examine the effect. Among people who were about to give a speech, some of them were told to relax and calm their nerves by saying to themselves, "I am calm," while others were told to accept the anxiety and say, "I am excited". Neither strategy made the anxiety go away. However, speakers who embraced the stress appeared more confident, persuasive, and competent to the audience than speakers who tried to calm down. Moreover, this mindset intervention not only influences subjective perceptions from an audience but also physiological responses within the body. In a similar experiment, subjects who considered stress as potentially helpful to promote one's health, performance, and growth released more of the hormone, DHEA, that reduces the risk of stress-related diseases, such as anxiety disorder, depression, and heart disease. You can convert stress into energy by embracing it, rather than avoiding, resisting and denying it. Next time you feel your heart pounding under pressure, you can talk to yourself, "This is my heart working harder to deliver more oxygen to my body and brain so that I can rise to this challenge."

suppress	抑圧する	physiological	生理的な
embrace	受け入れる	hormone	ホルモン
persuasive	説得力のある	anxiety disorder	不安障害
competent	有能な	convert	変換する
subjective	主観的な	resist	抵抗する

The Upside of Stressful Experiences #4

Do you think stress makes us _____ and self-_____, or makes us _____ and _____ to help others? In fact, humans can make both of these choices, _____, stress can cause _____ depending on which action we take. Researchers at the University at Buffalo have shown that those who _____ time helping friends, neighbors, and family members _____ likely to increase their health risks _____ experience _____ life events, including job loss, the _____ of a _____, and financial difficulties. Caring for others _____ to stress. If we look inside the body and see what happens _____, the hormone oxytocin is released in response to stress. It is _____ - _____ as the happiness hormone, _____ positive and _____ feelings, but another important _____ oxytocin is to _____ - _____ the brain's social instincts. _____ to be connected with others, encouraging us to help others and _____ support. When we do have _____ with other people, more of this hormone is _____, making us feel warm and content. Moreover, oxytocin helps _____ and _____. In other words, compassion under stress makes us _____ and _____. In the _____ past, our ancestors couldn't _____, so _____ that evolution _____ behaviors under _____. It is a tough choice to _____ others _____ is stressed out, but it is _____ better for yourself. We say "_____, " and this is true in a physiological sense. The benefit of _____ not only cycles through society _____ comes back to us, but also _____ benefits ourselves within the body. Even _____ other people give you back, your body _____ you for your _____.

Do you think stress makes us selfish and self-defensive, or makes us compassionate and encourages us to help others? In fact, humans can make both of these choices, and again, stress can cause different effects depending on which action we take. Researchers at the University at Buffalo have shown that those who spend their time helping friends, neighbors, and family members were the least likely to increase their health risks when they experience distressing life events, including job loss, the death of a loved one, and financial difficulties. Caring for others creates resilience to stress. If we look inside the body and see what happens under stress, the hormone oxytocin is released in response to stress. It is well-known as the happiness hormone, since it fosters positive and tender feelings, but another important role of oxytocin is to fine-tune the brain's social instincts. It nudges us to be connected with others, encouraging us to help others and seek support. When we do have contact with other people, more of this hormone is secreted, making us feel warm and content. Moreover, oxytocin helps heart cells regenerate and repair from damages. In other words, compassion under stress makes us happier and healthier. In the ancient past, our ancestors couldn't survive without mutual cooperation, so it is no wonder that evolution rewarded altruistic behaviors under threats. It is a tough choice to take care of others when you yourself is stressed out, but it is ultimately better for yourself. We say "what goes around comes around," and this is true in a physiological sense. The benefit of altruism not only cycles through society until it comes back to us, but also instantly benefits ourselves within the body. Even before other people give you back, your body rewards you for your kindness.

selfish	自分勝手な	secrete	分泌する
compassionate	思いやりのある	regenerate	再生する
resilience	回復力	altruistic	利他的な
fine-tune	微調整する	ultimately	最終的に
instinct	本能	mutual	相互の

The Upside of Stressful Experiences #5

You may want to avoid stress as much as possible, but, first of all, a life with no stress is a _____. Of course, _____ and _____ stress are not welcomed. For example, if your boss _____ you without love and rationality, that is never a stress factor but a _____ disaster. Except for such cases, stress may be a natural _____ of _____ days. Working _____ for your goal will _____ stress. According to a study conducted by the Japanese government, the level of our happiness decreases _____ more than seven free hours in a day. More _____, we need to _____ the cost of avoiding stress. Going for a _____ or studying for the future is more stressful than _____ a comfortable sofa. Listening to negative _____ and _____ could be very tough. Taking on tasks or _____ you've _____ could lead to failure and the _____ stress. However, _____ we continuously _____ opportunities to _____, _____ in the long _____? We might be _____ our health, growth, and fulfillment in the future in exchange for our _____. In short, happiness comes down to choosing between the discomfort of challenges and the discomfort of _____ challenges; the discomfort of trying something new, working hard, experiencing _____, or the discomfort of _____, _____, lack of personal _____. In other words, it is a choice between the _____ of _____ and comfort, and the _____ of _____, _____, and community. Of course, _____ is taking a balance between the present comfort and effort for the future. However, those who _____ maximizing pleasure and avoiding stress will not find happiness in _____. Stress is _____ all good _____ all bad. So, how are you going to _____ and _____ stress?

You may want to avoid stress as much as possible, but, first of all, a life with no stress is a lot more painful. Of course, unreasonable and chronic stress are not welcomed. For example, if your boss harasses you without love and rationality, that is never a stress factor but a total disaster. Except for such cases, stress may be a natural byproduct of worthwhile days. Working enthusiastically for your goal will certainly entail some extent of stress. According to a study conducted by the Japanese government, the level of our happiness decreases when we have more than seven free hours in a day. More importantly, we need to acknowledge the cost of avoiding stress. Going for a run or studying for the future is more stressful than lying down on a comfortable sofa. Listening to negative feedback and facing our own flaws could be very tough. Taking on tasks or roles you've never done before could lead to failure and the resulting stress. However, if we continuously avoid these opportunities to reduce stress, what will be the accumulated effect on our lives in the long term? We might be undermining our health, growth, and fulfillment in the future in exchange for our present comfort. In short, happiness comes down to choosing between the discomfort of challenges and the discomfort of lack of challenges; the discomfort of trying something new, working hard, experiencing setbacks, or the discomfort of boredom, aimlessness, lack of personal growth. In other words, it is a choice between the pleasure of immediate ease and comfort, and the pleasure of fulfillment, depth, and community. Of course, what matters is taking a balance between the present comfort and effort for the future. However, those who desperately pursue maximizing pleasure and avoiding stress will not find happiness in the truest sense. Stress is neither all good nor all bad. So, how are you going to view and deal with stress?

harass	嫌がらせをする	fulfillment	充実感
byproduct	副産物	aimlessness	目的の欠如
enthusiastically	熱心に	rationality	合理性
entail	伴う	reasonable	合理的な
acknowledge	認める	setback	挫折
accumulat	蓄積する	desperately	必死に