

## 4 Tips To Change the Way You Deal with Stress

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Dr. James C. Dobson once said “there are very few certainties that touch us all in this mortal experience, but one of the absolutes is that we will experience hardship and stress at some point.” Stress may be inevitable, but how we handle it is our choice.

Stress is different for all individuals, so there is no “cookie cutter” solution to manage it. You may have to experiment to find what works best for you. Finding healthy, positive ways to deal with stress will add to your overall [well-being](#).

When dealing with stressful situations, consider the four points below. They may aid in decreasing the amount of stress and changing the way you view it.

1. **Nothing and no one can “make” you feel anything.** How you feel and the way you deal with a situation is a choice. I’m reminded of a counselor who would often state “no one can drive your car unless you give them the keys.” You cannot control others’ actions, but you can be responsible for your reactions.

The serenity prayer states “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” When applied, this can be a great stress reliever. Look at the situation and ask yourself “is this something I can change?” If so, start exploring positive ways to change the situation.

If the situation cannot be changed, such as an illness or the economy, accept it for what it is. Accepting does not mean giving up. By accepting the situation and finding ways you can cope with what cannot be changed, stress can be drastically reduced.

2. **Exchange attitude for gratitude.** Our attitude has a profound effect on how we deal with situations. Negative attitudes affect our physical, spiritual, and mental wellbeing.

When in a particularly stressful situation, try exchanging attitude for gratitude. When you are running late for a meeting because you are stuck in traffic, change your attitude. Instead of being frustrated about

the traffic, find some gratitude. Look around and think of all the things you can be thankful for. Sometimes you can find gratitude in the smallest things. You can be thankful for life, health, strength, friends, family, nature, etc. Focusing on gratitude can definitely change your attitude.

3. **Relax, relax, relax.** Amidst the hustle and bustle of everyday life, sometimes we forget to take care of ourselves. If we do not help ourselves, how can we effectively help others? Relaxation rejuvenates the body, mind, and spirit and leaves us better equipped to handle stressful situations when they come.

Try to find something that you enjoy and do it every day. If you can set aside time for relaxation, do it. Try to set aside a designated, uninterrupted time and stick to it. Many people state they don't have time to relax, but relaxation does not have to be time-consuming. Relaxation can include periodic 5-10 minute breaks of breathing exercises or watching your favorite show for 30 minutes. Relaxation can also include connecting with positive people.

4. **Look at the big picture.** Evaluate your stressful situation from a "big picture" point of view. Ask yourself "how important is this?" and "will this matter in the long run?" If the answer is no, it's likely not worth your time and energy.

Stress does not have to be a part of life. Success stress management is all about learning how and when to take control. It's important to remember that you control how stress affects you. You can control the stress or let stress control you.