



Welcome to the Special Stress Tool for Students.

Stress is not what you have been told. You can quickly and easily do something about it. This five minute podcast will give you everything you need to decrease or eliminate 80-90% of your bad stress.

This short episode will also help with the times when you don't feel distressed but you find your focus is drifting off a task you need to get done. The procedures will help you regain and maintain your ability to focus on getting your work done, because the same brain processes are at work when your focus wanders as when you are feeling stressed.

In 1936, Hans Selye defined stress as "the body's non-specific reaction to any demand for change." He later on described stress as the "work of living." Our body always has work to do so there is always some stress. Even while we are sleeping there is stress. Our heart keeps beating and we keep breathing. While we are dreaming our adrenal glands are busy putting our hormones. He says the only human that has no stress is a dead one.

So the most accurate and actual definition of "stress" is "the WORK of living that our body must do."

Selye later divided the work we have to do into two types which really makes sense. There is work we like to do which he called Eustress and there is work we don't like to do which he called Distress.

Walking into a church is a good example to illustrate the difference between Eustress and Distress. The actual stress involved is the work of walking the body must do to get you into the church.

This is the really important part. The body does not care if it is walking into a wedding or walking into a funeral. The body is just walking. Whether the walking into the church is Eustress or Distress depends on the story about the work that is going on in our brain.

So Eustress and distress are both stories. They are stories we tell ourselves about the work our body must do. They can be real or they can be imaginary. We choose the story and it tells us if the event is eustress or if it is distress.

If we tell ourselves the same distressing story long enough we will eventually come to believe it is true.

If you want to prove that almost all our emotional distress is simply the result of stories we tell ourselves, do this. The next time you are feeling fearful, nervous, anxious, or distressed just look around. If you can see something that is actually dangerous, run for safety. If there is no danger, the only place your distress can be coming from is your story; it's coming from your brain.

The quickest way to stop the story that is going on in your brain is to change what you are thinking about. Here's a Tool that will empower you to do that. I call it Change the Channel.

Telling and re-telling yourself negative stories is like watching a movie you know will make you miserable. You wouldn't watch the movie, would you? You would either change the channel or turn off the TV.

As soon as you realize you are becoming distressed by a negative story you are telling yourself, stop. Physically look around to see if there is danger present. If there is, run. If there is no danger you know the feelings are being generated in your brain by your story.

The looking around is very important in the beginning because it interrupts your automatic thinking habit and creates a space that will allow you to gain control of your thoughts. The next step is to choose something else to think about, choose a different story.

I suggest you pick something like a pleasant memory or something that is neutral. I suggest you don't try to change to positive thinking because in the moment you are changing from the negativity of distress to neutral you are very unlikely to believe anything positive can happen.

After practicing this for a while, when negative feelings begin to creep in, a simple reminder to Change the Channel is often all that is needed to stop the process. Some people use statements such as: I don't need to go there. I can choose where I want to go.

Remember this. Every time you successfully change the channel you are making a new habit that will keep you more in control of your thoughts.

Changing your perspective will also help you control your stories, so let's look at what is the demand on a student? What is the actual "work" of being a student? Putting it the simplest way, the work of being a student is to learn the material presented. Nothing more, nothing less. Learning the material.

Everything else is a distraction. Everything else is a story, maybe a library full of stories that are burning up your time and energy and distracting you from your work. Stories about how hard the work is, the teacher doesn't like me or doesn't care. I don't have enough time. I wish it was spring break. I wonder if I am going to find a job when I get done. I would rather go out with my friends than study. Or maybe it's the unbelievably good looking blonde on the front row. I am totally in love and don't want to think about anything else.

So focus on the work. Change the channel as often as you need to. If you don't waste time with your stories you will have a lot more time and energy to pursue your goals, dreams, and plans. You might even have the time to pursue the blonde on the front row.

It takes practice but it really is that simple. Focus on doing the work. Don't waste time by telling yourself distressing stories about the work.

Mastering your distressing thinking now will also make the rest of your life a lot more enjoyable.

If you have questions or feedback, please feel free to email them to me, [doug@lifeskills5000.com](mailto:doug@lifeskills5000.com)

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