



Are these events stressful?



YES NO



YES NO



YES NO



YES NO



YES NO



What is Stress?

What is stress?

- “Stress” is a word that was created by Dr. Hans Selye in 1936.
- There is NO such thing as “stress.”
- People have been taught to label the symptoms of fear as “stress.”
- In the words of UCLA Clinical Psychologist Robert Maurer:

“I’ve treated hundreds of men who feel the weight of jobs, families and financial responsibilities bearing down on them. And I’ve helped most of them relieve the pressure by convincing them of one thing: stress doesn’t exist. That’s right. You heard me correctly. Stress will one day take its place in medical history as a disease we couldn’t cure because it didn’t exist...Those who suffer from it usually report one or more of the following symptoms: rapid heart rate, neck tension, lower-back pain, dry mouth, headache, loss of interest in sex, overeating, stomach distress, frequent urination, diarrhea, crying, insomnia, fatigue, sweating and rapid breathing. But these are not symptoms of that phantom disease, stress. Rather, they are symptoms of an emotion that’s far more primitive. An emotion that originates in a pea-sized part of the brain called amygdala. An emotion that causes our hearts to beat faster, our muscles to tense, our mouths to dry up and our digestive systems to shut down (is this sounding familiar?) as we prepare to fight or flee. It is the age-old emotion of fear.” (Men’s Health, February 2003, Page 38-39)

Stimuli become negative when:

- An individual perceives the demands on them are greater than their ability to cope.

Change and stimuli:

- Fear can potentially be felt whenever you have to adapt to change.
- Because change is an every day fact of life, so are stimuli which can be perceived fearfully.
- You can’t avoid stimuli, as you can’t avoid change.
- But you can perceive stimuli differently so that you do not see them as fearful.



Stimuli can occur during:

- Negative events, such as physical danger, or
- Positive events, such as listening to music.

Stimuli are not only desirable, but essential to life, as stimuli help facilitate adaptation and change.

4 Basic sources of stimuli:

- The environment (e.g., weather, noise)
- Social stimuli (e.g., deadlines, financial problems)
- Physiology (e.g., illness, poor nutrition, poor sleep)
- Thoughts

How you perceive events determines the effects of an event:

- Most people think of “stress” as caused by external events.
- However, events in themselves are not “stressful.”
- Rather, how we interpret and react to events determines whether we fear them or not.

Perception is the key!

- How you interpret and label a situation and what you predict for the future is what determines whether you fear or not fear a situation (e.g., if it relaxes or “stresses” you).



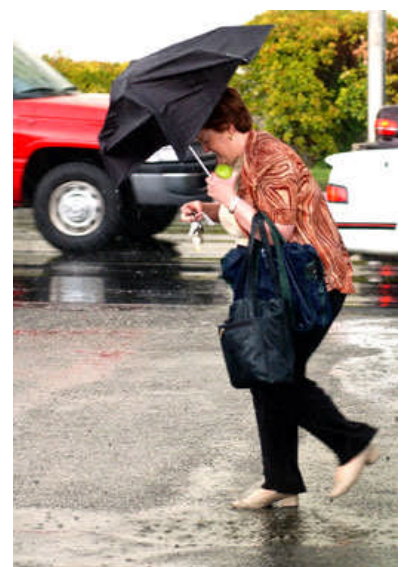
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