



## STRATEGIES FOR RESILIENCE

Optimizing and sustaining performance with resilience to cope with the inevitable stressors of life is really a matter of leveraging energy- becoming aware of your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energy levels and finding ways to regularly renew energy expended.

1. **Raise Awareness** – Create a ritual of checking in with yourself- monitoring your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energy/state, perceived stress level. You can't change it if you aren't aware.
2. **Cool Down to Power Up!** –learn and practice an in-the-moment ritual to cool down your amygdala, your stress reaction, and power up your frontal lobe and energy. There are multiple choices- the key is to make it a habit that takes no effort.
3. **Create and Commit to Long Range Stress Strategies** –
  1. Commit to a meeting with yourself dedicated to this
  2. Identify your values, strengths, purpose (your why)
  3. Create a word/phrase/mantra that reminds you of your why
  4. Do an energy/stress audit
  5. Create strategies to balance your energy, choose your perspective and strengthen your resilience

## Creating Stress Strategies to Support Your Life – Cynthia Ackrill, MD

Do you want to keep playing Whack-a-mole and reacting to everything thrown your way, or do you want to take the time to create proactive strategies that will support your best energy, focus, health, and happiness?

3 things that tend to raise my stress level or drain my energy:

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3 things that lower my stress level or replenish my energy:

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1. Build up your **self-awareness**. How do you know when you are stressed?

How is your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energy? Learn to ask yourself what you really need in that moment- a stretch, a break, a connection?

I know I am stressed when \_\_\_\_\_.

Others know I am stressed when I \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Learn a quick **Cool Down to Power Up** technique to use in the first moments you feel stressed. Use breathwork, channel a positive emotion or gratitude, or use a mantra to restore your perspective to neutral so you have full access to your power to mindfully choose your responses instead of reacting. Practice this daily until it is easy and automatic.

When I feel the first signs of stress I will \_\_\_\_\_.  
In fact, I will practice that \_\_\_ times/day. When? \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Set up your most important meeting- with yourself- to assess the bigger picture and create strategies.

It is on my calendar for \_\_\_\_\_ and I will repeat it \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Start with your **Why** – the big picture. What do you most value? ([link to values exercise](#))

What do you want your life to represent? How do you want people to experience you? What is your mission or purpose? This is what motivates you intrinsically.

Top 3-5 values:

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Mission/Purpose

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5. What **strengths** do you bring? <http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/questionnaires.aspx> Take the VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire- it's free!

Top 5 strengths:

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6. What is your **best mindset, attitude?** (Think *who* you are when you are at your best?)

I am at my best when I am

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7. From these create your **mantra or GPS**- a word or statement that reminds you of who you are at your best and opens you perspective to the bigger picture. Repeat it, write this keeps you mindful when challenges threaten to kick you into mindless survival mode.

My guiding words: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do an **energy/stress audit**. ([Download paper plate exercise](#))

a. What's on your plate taking up your precious time, energy, and focus. Include the obvious and then go back and fill in the rest = **ENERGY OUT**  
Family, Friends, Work, Household, Pets, Community, Church, Finances, Other projects, Self-Improvement, "Shoulds", Worries, Emotions, Stories, Guilt, Dreams, Etc. Write down anything on which you spend mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual energy.  
Which things best represent your values? Which are in line with your purpose?  
Which use your unique strengths?  
Which particularly trigger your stress reaction?

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b. Then assess what supports you = **ENERGY IN**  
What do you do to take care of yourself?  
What renews you, gives you energy- physically, mentally, emotionally spiritually?

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9. What can you do to **reduce the stressor load**? DELEGATE, DELETE, DEFER

I can delegate \_\_\_\_\_.  
I can delete \_\_\_\_\_.  
I will put this on my deferred to-do list: \_\_\_\_\_.

10. How can you **realign your perspective**? Use your mantra or GPS to mindfully put the stressors that remain into the bigger picture. Create habits of mindset. Repeat- keep bringing your attention to your intention- this supports the itunes

My mantra/GPS is \_\_\_\_\_.

11. **Build up your resilience.** Life is full of stressors and we can increase our strengths and adaptability to meet the challenges. Choose habits that support your energy- physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We have universal critical needs- nutrition, hydration, oxygen, exercise, sleep, rest, stimulation/play, social connection. And then we have individual needs- those things that particularly energize us. For example, a volunteer activity you love may give you far more energy than it would take for someone else.

Habits that would support my energy:

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(Handout on successfully setting habit goals available on my website: )

12. **Stay Accountable** to yourself. Create a regular check in system to reassess, readjust, stay mindful. Put you on your calendar- it will be the best time investment you can make.

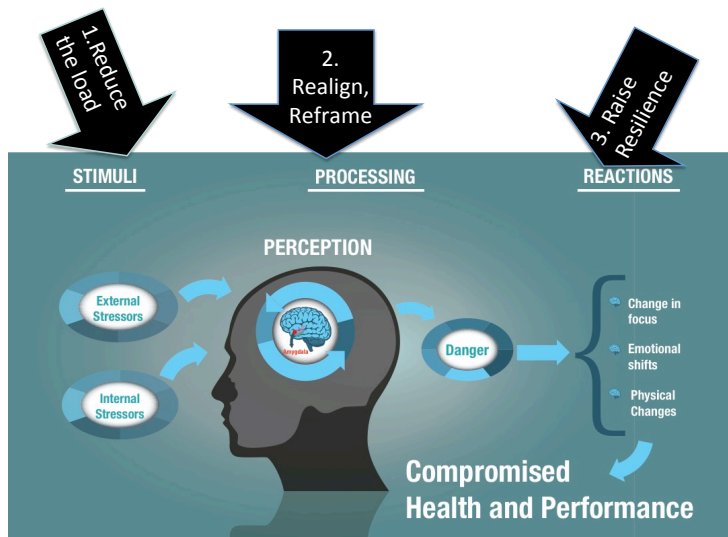
I will schedule a meeting with myself every \_\_\_\_\_

13. **CELEBRATE YOUR WINS!!!** This is truly critical. We are hardwired to continually measure what we have not accomplished or how far it is to a goal, but we actually succeed more when we celebrate each forward step.

BONUS: I can cause less stress by \_\_\_\_\_

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## Stress Reducing Choices



## REDUCE EXPOSURE TO STRESSORS, ENERGY DRAINS

- Identify your stressors- what drains your energy?
- Let go of unimportant/not urgent (Covey) – use your values and purpose to prioritize
- Let go of items based on old stories (Update your story about who you are!)
- Go on a “should” diet!
- Address your inner critic – thank it for getting you here, but ask it to step aside!
- Address information overload – make a plan for what you take in
- Reduce distractions – choosing what not to do is as important as what to do!
- Clarify expectations, job descriptions, boundaries to reduce confusion, inefficiency, conflicts, resentment
- Use your strengths- [www.authentichappiness.com](http://www.authentichappiness.com) - VIA Character Strengths
- Delegate your weaknesses...it’s not only ok- it’s smart!
- Act proactively

## REALIGN PERCEPTIONS

- Define your mission, values and goals
- Create reminders of these and your role in the “bigger picture”
- Align your actions with your values- mindfulness
- Learn to identify your needs and feelings
- Communicate clearly
- Practice being open- “What if?”
- Practice mindsets that help: curiosity, gratitude, big picture
- Manage your emotions- trust your gut more, ask, “What’s needed now?”

- Create a positive culture internally and externally (See <http://www.positivityratio.com/single.php> and [www.heartmath.com](http://www.heartmath.com) )

### RAISE RESILIENCE

- Balance your energy renewing activities to meet your energy drains – be creative! What renews you?
- Take care of your body- exercise, nutrition, sleep hygiene, preventive medical care
- Practice **active relaxation** DAILY!!
- Train your physiology- Breathwork, Meditation, Biofeedback, Mind/body work, Massage
- Connect with nature
- Connect with meaning
- Nurture your connections- intimate, social, community, spiritual
- Forgive, laugh, play, love, celebrate!

### **KEYS TO CREATING STRATEGIES TO EASE THE DRAIN OF STRESS**

1. Start/middle/end with your WHY – let your values and purpose guide your choices and boundaries.
2. Create habits, rituals to keep your WHY perspective- this develops mindfulness.
3. Put self-care first. Weekly, put YOU on your calendar.
4. Continue to build self-**awareness**. Be brave and ask for input.
5. Operate from your strengths.
6. Know your needs & create habits to meet them.
7. Make self-development part of your life. **Mindfully** deciding who do you want to be is the foundation to what you want to do.
8. Learn/practice emotional regulation.
9. Practice your best mindset – positive, **curious**, mindful, accepting.
10. Practice self-compassion. Thank your inner critic, and ask him/her to step aside.
11. Practice authenticity, vulnerability, transparency. (These are key leadership strengths.)
12. Communicate clearly. Try Non-Violent Communication. Use your voice with **courage**.
13. Practice focus/distraction management. (Multipurpose instead of multitask!)
14. Integrate work/life- this is the future, get creative!
15. Don't add to the stress epidemic.
16. Celebrate more!!!!!!

## More COOL DOWN TO POWER UP Techniques – Cool off your Amygdala to power up your frontal lobe.

1. **“Heart Lock-In”** <http://www.heartmath.com/>
  - Bring attention to your breath
  - Slow it down a bit
  - Shift your attention from your busy head to the area around your heart
  - Feel the breath coming in and out of this area
  - Bring to mind a positive feeling and hold that feeling in your heart area
2. **4-7-8 BREATH-**
  - Breathe in to bottom of lungs (soft belly rises) to a count of 4,
  - Hold for a count of 7,
  - Release slowly for a count of 8...REPEAT!
  - (Practice 4-8 of these in a row at least twice/day)

### 2. Alternate Nostril Breathing



Press thumb against R nostril. Breathe in through the L nostril.  
Breathe out through the R nostril, then back in through R nostril.  
Breathe out through L, then back in through L.  
Out through R, in through R.  
Out through L, in through L  
Repeat for full minute.

3. **SELF MASSAGE-** Massage your forehead from between the eyebrows out along eyebrows for several minutes (massaging acupressure point for the pineal gland.)



4. **BrainGym-** Official sets of exercises proven to stimulate more brain activity and coordination. <http://www.braingym.org/> Funny brain gym exercises! <http://bit.ly/1eRiLyZ>

NOTE: Please do not hesitate to contact me to ask questions or share thoughts or suggestions. I do ask that you not reproduce any of these materials without my permission and with full and proper attribution. If you find this information helpful and know others who would benefit, I truly appreciate referrals and testimonials as they help me help more people connect to their health, happiness, and effectiveness!

I would love to have you sign up on my website to receive tips about stress management and to follow me on twitter [@cackrill](#) and [facebook](#) where I post interesting articles and tips that repeated bring your attention to your intention to live with less stress!

THANK YOU!!!

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