

# Stress Management Redefined



***8 Steps To Remove Stress***

***Before It **Kills** You***

\*\*\*

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Originally Written in 2011

Updated (and slightly embarrassed) in 2022  
What even is this font?

## What do you learn in most boring stress books?

1. How to generally *reduce* stress (meditation, exercise, more stuff we already know, etc.)
2. How to *cope* with stressful situations

## What will you learn in Stress Management Redefined?

1. The science behind why stress can **kill** you
2. How to **prevent** some stress before it ever happens
3. How to identify and **permanently remove the roots of stress** (the stressors)
4. ~~How to get into Nascar with very little experience~~

Isn't that better than just...*reducing it*?

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## Purpose: To Expose & Disempower A Killer (Yes, Killer)

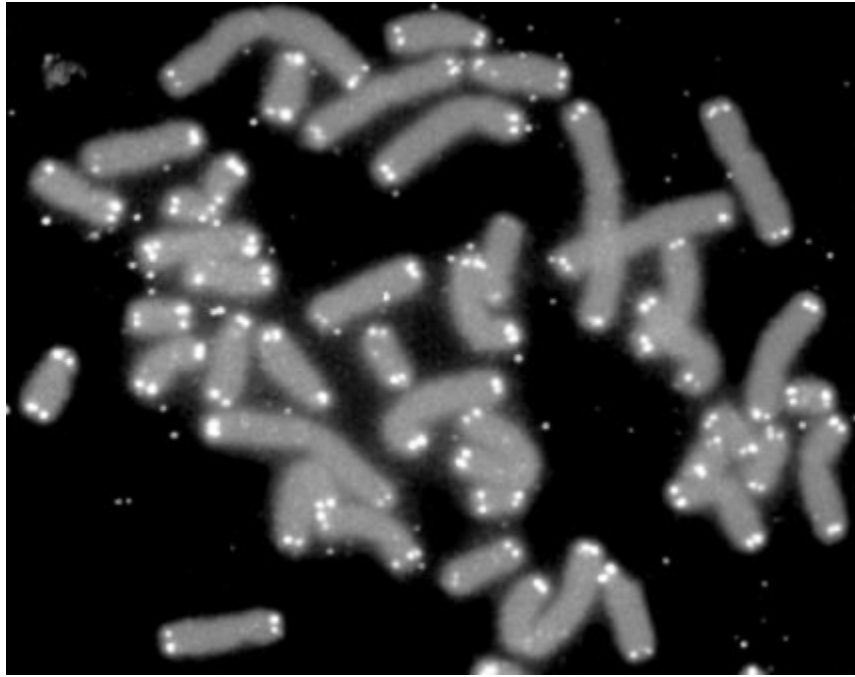
If you want temporary relief, you have the wrong book – Stress Management Redefined is about getting you to the mental and emotional state where you can think clearly enough to ~~violently rip out the roots of stress in riotous glory~~ **calmly displace stressors in serene victory.**

I want to help you defeat the stress in your life. But first, you should know that it isn't just to make you feel better – it's to save your life. I'm not being dramatic. You're right – I am a little bit – but do not take stress lightly (or stressfully) because scientific evidence confirms that **stress kills.**

### Shoelaces and Telomeres

Shoelaces are a type of twine. Ok, that wasn't very relevant to stress, but I'm going somewhere with this. Shoelaces are twine held together at both ends by plastic pieces called **aglets**. Their purpose is to keep shoelaces from fraying at the ends and looking weird/being unusable.

There is something else of great importance that has very similar characteristics to this shoelace/aglet relationship. Can you guess from the following photo?



You guessed (in)correctly!

This is a picture of human chromosomes – which are chains of DNA – and yeah, they’re very important as you may know. And what of those little white dots you see at the end of the chromosomes? Those are called **telomeres**.

Telomeres are to chromosomes as aglets are to shoelaces – they both prevent “fraying.” Telomeres act as a buffer to protect the ends of the chromosomes.

“The primary purpose of telomeres is to prevent both ends of the chromosomes from degenerating.” ([source](#))

Unfortunately, this is where stress comes in...

Stress does nasty things to us even at the *cellular level*. **It shortens/destroys our vitally important telomeres.** Generally, that’s bad news and is associated with faster aging. Specifically, it seems to be deadly news.

“Studies have found shortened telomeres in many cancers, including pancreatic, bone, prostate, bladder, lung, kidney, and head and neck. In addition, people with many types of cancer have been found to possess shorter leukocyte telomeres than healthy controls.” ([original source](#) is the Journal of the American Medical Association)

In a different study that focused on spouses taking on the stressful job of caring for partners with dementia, the results were very convincing when compared to those of similar age without that stressful job. Of the 119 stressed caregivers, 78 died during the survey. In a response to the outcome of the study, Janice Kiecolt-Glaser was quoted:

"This really makes a link to why chronic stress **can actually kill people**," said Janice Kiecolt-Glaser, professor of psychology and psychiatry at Ohio State University. "We haven't had a good mechanism before."

She explained that people under stress tend to respond by doing things that can increase their levels of IL-6. Previous studies have associated IL-6 with several diseases, including heart disease, arthritis, osteoporosis, type-2 diabetes and certain cancers.

For example, they may smoke or overeat; smoking raises IL-6 levels, and the chemical is secreted by fat cells. Stressed people also may not get enough exercise or sleep, she added. Exercise reduces IL-6, she said, and normal sleep helps regulate levels of the chemical.

It clearly points to the need to control stress better, she said.

(source – [CBS news](#))

Most stress advice is to exercise, get sleep, squeeze a ball, eat well, relax, etc. Do you see the problem with that? The lack of those *good* things is caused by stress.

To do them and not address the *underlying* stressors is a very difficult, constant fight (one that is likely to stress you out).

We need to find the stressors and do something about *them*.

### Baboons

A few months ago I watched a fascinating National Geographic documentary called [Stress – Portrait Of A Killer](#). The documentary followed neurobiologist Robert Sapolsky of Stanford as he studied a baboon troop over a period of 2-3 decades. The baboons with more stress were found to have shortened telomeres.

When a disease struck the troop from eating infected meat – the most stressed baboons died while the others survived. An interesting side note is that the alpha males were the ones that died. The beta males and females survived. Sapolsky said the supportive bonding of the beta males and females activated the regrowth of telomeres with the enzyme known as telomerase. Stress was the deciding factor of life or death for the troop.

In summary: **Stress shortens telomeres, and shortened telomeres can kill you.**

### Are You Motivated To De-stress Now?

I have seen stress wreak havoc on people I love and I needed to show you how serious stress is. BUT... this book will not be a boring one. I'm going to show you how to eliminate stress while simultaneously entertaining you.

I imagine the worst way to write a book about how to manage stress is to write it like an academic textbook (boring – formal – wordy), so I didn't do that. The topic is not light-hearted, but don't think I won't try to make you laugh.

You may have noticed that this digital book is completely free. The three reasons I'm giving it away for free are love, hope, and want...

1. **I love** to help others and this is a universal problem
2. **I hope** you will share it so that others can benefit from it
3. **I want** to promote my writing and [blog](#) by giving away a quality product

*Get ready to have fun, read some funny stories, and peacefully stroll towards stress-freedom. Enjoy!*



# Introduction

After reading Stress Management Redefined, you will...

1. Be able to prevent some stress before it happens
2. Dispel stress masterfully when it does occur
3. Think clearly in the midst of chaos

Is this really proven? Personally, I have used these methods to great success. I even documented the success of using this guide for a personal situation that I wrote about **as it was happening**. You'll read about it later.

## The Inspiration To Write About Stress

When I decided to write my first digital book, I had a few topic ideas in mind. Before I could decide on one – life decided for me...

It was a bout of financial stress. It caught me off guard because it hit me suddenly – the day I checked my financial accounts. After I checked my accounts and saw the fruits of unemployment, my immediate reaction was to panic in the most unproductive way possible.

I was stressed.

I found myself welling up with anxiety and anger as I questioned why I was in this position. How could my situation be so terrible? Thoughts of unspecific doom

assaulted my mind like famished piranhas attacking a piece of bloodied meat.  
What was I going to do?

I started asking questions...

“Wait a second here...Why did I get stressed out? Why does stress even exist?  
How do I make it stop!?”

Like ~~most~~ .01% of people, I wrote a book to answer those questions.

### Our brains are incredible, yet...stupid?

Stress exists for one main purpose – to provoke us to take action – and it does that effectively in many instances. For example, when we see a masked man with a knife running towards us – a **very** stressful situation – stress does a pretty decent job at motivating us to RUN FAST (away from knifey boy unless you’re Bruce Lee).

While stress works well in immediate action scenarios, there was absolutely nothing I could do about my situation when I was hit with stress. **I was driving home.**

Should I have pulled over immediately and started asking people for money? ~~It depends on who was walking by.~~

Should I have totaled my car to get insurance money? ~~Hey, whatever it takes man.~~

Most of the stressful situations we find ourselves in are not quick fixes – and stress only works *well* for quick fixes (e.g. RUN!). I could not do anything to change my stressful situation while driving home. A smart brain would have at least *waited until I could write something down.*

Dear brain,

Stressors that require longer-term planning and strategizing are better off handled by an unstressed mind. Thanks for listening.

Love,

The more active part of you

Happy endings are fantastic, so I'll give you one.

On the same day that I was surprised with stress, I was able to turn it into relaxed, stress-free productivity. How I did this is what I'm going to share with you.

If you're extremely stressed out about something at this very moment, please jump directly to [section two](#) so that you can defeat it now. Otherwise, please continue in an orderly fashion.

# Stress Freedom Begins Now...

## Section 1: Snipe Stress Before It Gets Close To You

### 1. Be Informed

I *found out* that I was not in financial bliss when it was something I should have known inside and out. If I'm tracking my accounts regularly and projecting expenses, how often will I be surprised? Not very often. A negative (avoidable) surprise is an issue for two reasons.

1. It means you could have **taken action sooner**. You might not have had *the opportunity* to be stressed out with preemptive action.
2. Surprises by their very nature provoke a **heightened emotional response**.
  - a. When you arrive at your surprise birthday party, the surprise is so pleasant that you might get butterflies and a special feeling of love in that moment that they flick the lights on and scream words at you.
  - b. When I unexpectedly found out a girl I liked also liked me, my brain started releasing chemicals that seemed illegal.
  - c. A heightened response also occurs with negative surprises – imagine ignoring your finances for a while and then suddenly realizing that you're about to foreclose on your house.

**Fact: Stressful surprises are less fun than other surprises.**

### **Things you need to be well-informed about:**

- Your Financial Situation – money is the #1 stressor in the world (get out the spreadsheet!)
  - Know all of your debts, their interest levels, and payment schedules
  - Know all of your assets, income sources & amounts, and how they measure up to your debt
  - Potential major (mandatory) costs – baby on the way? Car with a lot of miles/problems? Paying for college education? Tooth pain?
- Health – It is better not to be surprised by medical bills or death of a loved one
  - Your health
  - The health of loved ones
  - The age and life-expectancy of your pets
- Work – determine the risk of being laid off or getting a pay cut
  - The economic state of the global economy, your country, state, and city
  - The financial status of your employer
  - Any rumors or news about your employer cutting its workforce or “looking for ways to cut costs”
- General

- What lifestyle you're heading towards (I recommend [deep thinking sessions!](#))
- How your daily actions will shape your future self (watch TV all day = body fat = health problems = self-image problems = stressful)

Stress should not be a surprise unless you're suddenly in danger and need the adrenaline. The key word is suddenly. If you ignore details for 15 years and then realize you're overweight, broke, and not the person you want to be – you are the one to blame for the associated stress. It is a tough truth about life, especially if you're in that situation now. Just keep in mind that it is never too late to change! Start today (after you finish reading this).

## 2. Know Your Purpose and FOCUS on it

One type of preventable stress occurs when we're [overwhelmed with options](#). Not long ago, I was stressed about my blog because of the **sheer number of actions I wanted take to improve it!** Ideas are great, but I was juggling about 60 of them in my head at the same time. It was stressful because I wanted to do them all at once and wasn't doing any of them.

The key to overcoming this is to **write down the important ideas and tasks you have (and organize them into categories if you wish)**. Once you have these things written down where they can't "get away," you'll have the peace of mind to choose what to do without worrying about forgetting the others.

Then, prioritize 1-3 personal and 1-3 professional areas of focus. Once you define them, focus to complete them to your satisfaction (replacing them with new projects as you complete them). Think about it – would you rather fight 60 battles

at once or just one at a time? It comes as no surprise that juggling 60 tasks at once stresses us out.

By the way, not only is multi-tasking stressful, but it [is scientifically shown to be unproductive](#).

### 3. Know Your Limits & Say NO

A common reason for stress comes from the physical meaning of the word. When you try to drive your SUV over your home-made bridge, the supports are stressed to the point that they SNAP! In a similar way, it is possible for a person to have so many responsibilities that they SNAP and have a nervous breakdown.

Sometimes we foolishly act as the flimsy bridge telling the SUV to “come on down!”

While this seems like a repeat of having too many projects, there is a key difference. I want you to recognize your limits in life as a whole – including social obligations, fun activities, sleeping needs, and energy levels.

**When we don't recognize our physical and emotional limits, we make promises we can't fulfill, and stress ensues:**

- Sure, I'll have the project done by tomorrow (even though you have two more important projects due then?)
- Yes, I can come to your wedding (even though you don't want to and know you'll cancel?)
- I will absolutely accept this 7th job (even though it will leave you with no free time, reduce your overall performance, and burn you out?)

Being able to say NO to yourself and others is one of the best skills a person can have. Saying no allows you to focus on what you want to say YES to. You're not a leaf being blown around by the wind – you're a dynamic human being that can make choices. "NO" gives you control over your life – **it decreases your chances of getting stressed out.**

### \*\*\* End of Section One \*\*\*

Next up is section two – the fun part (everyone knows that preventative maintenance is boring).

But before you get to section two, let me see if your stress can be dissolved with one adorable picture...





Aww, look at the...well, beauty is subjective. But still...



Aww, look at the cute little ducklings. Is the stress gone yet? Not permanently, because cute little duckling pictures only treat the symptoms of stress!

### The Strategy of Section Two

1. Temporarily gain clarity of mind so that you can...
2. Seek and destroy stressors

We can't win when we're stressed, because our emotions will interfere with our thinking. So the first step actually is to treat the symptoms. After you're sufficiently calmed, it's time to attack the stressors like Mike Tyson.

## Section 2: When Stress Attacks, Get Your Gloves Out And Bite Its Ear Off

Ok, so you tried to snipe stress from long distance with the three techniques from [Section 1](#), but it managed to flank you and is all up in your grill, foo (too much slang?). We've all been there - stress is grasping your neck and squeezing...tighter and tighter...

You wonder if a panic attack is very close...

- You have bills to pay with money you don't have
- Your [dreams](#) seem impossible at this point
- Your health is a wreck
- Your house is a mess and the....

**STOP. Grab your boxing gloves (back left pocket). This one's going to KO - you're going to knock the #\$%@ out of stress. But before you start swingin'...**

### 1. Simply Pause.... And Accept That You're Stressed Out

Oh no, this sounds even *more* boring than section one. It's not though. You know why? We're not used to pausing. It's a very interesting experience to halt everything but your breathing.

Think of this as the trainer talking to the boxer before the big fight. You need to get your mind straight and focused on the task at hand, lest you flail your arms wildly and get knocked out in the first round. Stress is a cunning fighter, but its weakness is a calm opponent. When you're calm, stress is in deep trouble.

Now accept your situation – as terrible as it may be. Don't draw conclusions – just accept your factual situation. Why? It is only when you accept your stressful condition and cause that you can develop strategies to change it. Denial leads to more stress down the road because it is stressful to not fix lingering problems.

**This one is important!** You can't win if you can't think properly.

If you're tense from stress, focus on these words, take your time, and just let go. Only this moment matters...

1. Close your eyes and deeply breathe in fresh air (or polluted air if you live in Los Angeles).....
2. Get **serious** about calming yourself and do not take no for an answer.....
3. Slow your thoughts.....
4. Take several drawn-out deep breaths.....

**5. Consciously relax your muscles- especially in the neck, shoulders, jaw and face while you continue to take deep breaths....**

**Bonus: It is great to do this even if you aren't stressed. Try it out. Ahhhhh. 😊**

Stress can be decreased alone, but others can be a tremendous help. Consider that the baboons who had emotional support were the ones to survive the sickness. Try these tips if you're still unable to calm down:

- Talk to God (if you [believe in the supernatural](#))
- Call a good friend that you know will support you emotionally
- Hold and pet your cat or dog (pets are proven to reduce stress)

Focus on relaxing and calming yourself. **Think about the positive things in life.** Look, I know it is cliché, but positive thinking gives results.

The goal is to free your mind from the chains of stressful emotions so you can think clearly again. That's the reason why my typically-logical text suddenly turned into wildflowers and fluffy clouds (with the light trickling of rainfall on the roof as you peer out the window in your cozy bed).

Once you have sufficiently calmed yourself, you can begin to implement the rest of the (logical) advice in this book. If there is one thing I've learned from arguing, it's that logic has no chance against strong negative emotions. Thus, we fought negative emotions with positive ones.

**Hitting pause is a devastating left jab to the jaw of stress. Stress thrives on its opponent being frantic and hasty-minded. Now that you've prepared yourself well and landed a nice pause-punch, you're about to follow that left jab up with**

a nasty 3 hit combo to knock stress out. Then you'll be able to face your life with calm confidence and a fearless attitude. Speaking of fear...

### 2. Downsize Your Overblown Fears

I am terrified of bears.

One night I was talking to some good friends about bear attacks and near bear attack stories. Some of the stories involved people we knew, which brought the frightening possibility to life in my mind. Sure enough, that same night I had a nightmare about bears.

*The next page has a sample bear nightmare to give you an idea of the terror.*

*(The actual dream was far less comical, I assure you)*





I woke up sweating and scared. It took five minutes for me to calm down to the point that I was not scared of a bear **jumping into my window in the middle of a medium-sized city to eat me**. The nightmare seemed so real that my typically-rational mind ran off the logical trail, straight into a bear's den.

The fear was unfounded, as are most stress-inducing fears. Yes, it is possible to get attacked by a bear and that is terrifying. There was, however, ZERO chance of a bear breaking into our apartment. ~~As a joke, you should dress up as a bear and break into my house.~~

The fear of negative consequences as a result of current circumstances produces stress. For example, fearing that you might get stabbed by knifey boy (legitimate fear) is stressful. Most of the time, however, our minds take it too far. So let's catch and evaluate our fears for legitimacy before they cause short and long-term stress. Here's how to...

### Grab Fear Before It Stresses You Out

In order to ensnare your irrational fears, you must admit that you are fearful of something in the first place. As Alcoholics Anonymous famously says, "the first step is acknowledging the problem." Are you afraid of losing control of your life due to financial strain? Are you fearful of being alone? I've had both of these fears and they are very common.

Fear can be embarrassing. We tell ourselves we're not scared of something because we think it would be embarrassing to fear that. This is the opposite of acceptance – denial.

"Oh, I can't be one of *those people who fear being alone*."



Fears often carry specific (negative) connotations with them. If you fear being alone for the rest of your life, then you (and others) could assume it is because you have a good chance of really being alone for the rest of your life. Why?

One would think it's because you're not worthy of marriage for some reason. And suddenly, fearing you'll be alone for the rest of your life quickly transforms into "you're not good enough!"

Before we label this progression as wholly preposterous – consider that it is not inherently illogical, *but it only makes sense if the underlying fear is logical.*

So how do we know if fear is logical?

The majority of the time, fear is rooted in what *might* happen. So the first question is **"can the feared outcome be avoided by taking action?"** Usually the answer is yes (and the fear is significantly weakened – hurray!).

*Think about what worries you that can be avoided by taking action.*

Do you fear being alone? You can exercise and eat well to improve your health and appearance, sign up for the many dating services online or elsewhere, and start asking people out. There are many possible actions to take to improve that situation, and thus the fear is invalid by the fact that actionable remedies exist. Unlike a tiger chasing you, your actions combined with perseverance will make a difference.

If your fear cannot be avoided (death), then you must accept your fate and take it from there. Being afraid is a choice –like stress – and it is unhelpful in most cases. The exception is when you are on top of a skyscraper looking down and wondering what it feels like to fly. In that case, be *very* afraid.

### 3. Identify Hidden Roots

We live in a world that gives pills to treat **symptoms**. We live in a world where people take great effort to keep up their **appearance** of “having it together” instead of accepting themselves with flaws and improving from there. We live in a world where vulnerability is rare and the media **spins the truth** to fit their agenda.

Let it be of no surprise then that many of us are inexperienced with seeking out the root causes of issues. Think of a recent argument you’ve had. That argument was a lot deeper than disagreeing on an issue – you probably had pride, sensitivities, emotional stimuli, a history with that topic or person, and dormant stress that provoked you to argue (instead of discuss) the topic.

Here are two well-hidden roots of “bad” stress to yank out (“bad stress” is the kind that harms us and doesn’t help us).

1. **Allowing Thoughts of Vague Doom (shallow thinking)** - When I had financial stress, my mind was going off into beyond-worst-case scenario land. But when I actually considered the numbers, solutions, and time I had to improve the situation, it wasn’t nearly as catastrophic as my emotions indicated.
  - a. My stress was based on abstract financial fear. It wasn’t “I’m going to be homeless if I don’t make 318 dollars this month.” It was “Ahhh, general financial strain!” There is no answer to that vague problem.
  - b. Lesson: clarify your situation (as said in [be informed](#)).
2. **Insecurity / Lack of Confidence** – If you were the most confident person in the world, you wouldn’t be stressed out very much.
  - a. Confidence example: You’re in a lot of debt? So what? Your excellent skills, creativity, and ability to provide insane value will make you a

good bit of money as an entrepreneur or in a 9-5 job. You'll come up with great ideas to make money. Problem solved.

- b. Confidence example: Stressed about your weight? Well, your admirable work ethic and new dedication to eat well and exercise will surely put you on the fast path to slenderness. The extra weight will be gone relatively soon. Not a big deal, right?
- c. On the other hand, imagine if you had no confidence in yourself to make money, lose weight, or handle issues? Suddenly that mound of debt looks like the Swiss Alps (at least the snow-caps are nice to look at, huh?) and that belly fat looks like a permanent addition to your body. It doesn't have to be that way! How to [build confidence](#) is outside of the scope of this book, but reading some of the [articles](#) at [stephenguise.com](http://stephenguise.com) can certainly help you with this.

### 4. Overpower Stress With Pure Logic

We know that logic is essentially useless in an emotionally-charged environment, but logic is **very** powerful outside of that. The basic principle of logic is “what makes sense.”

Logic and emotions are often pitted against each other as opposing forces. This is only true some of the time (i.e. arguments). Logic supports some emotions and invalidates others.

- **Supporting an emotion:** When you're making love to your spouse and full of positive emotions, logic agrees, “this is fantastic!” ;-)

- **Invalidating an emotion:** When you feel like getting angry because someone accidentally stepped on your foot, your logic should kick in to save the day. “They did not mean to step on my foot. Showing anger to them will only make them feel bad about their mistake and nobody will benefit from it.”

Logic can work in the same way to deal with stress. Is the stress valid or not? Man with a knife – valid. Financial problems – invalid.

Why is it invalid for financial problems? It is a problem and we should respond, right? The reason stress is invalid here is *it does not help you to solve that problem like strategic thinking would* **and** *it carries health/emotional consequences*. The stress response is natural, but we are developed enough intellectually to replace that response with something more appropriate.

### Story Time

*In gym class in middle school – being a silly playful kid – I threw a basketball backwards over my head (trying to swish it).*

*Unsurprisingly, instead of going anywhere near the basket, it hit “Eric” on the back of his head.*

*This particular student happened to have an extreme anger problem and proceeded to continuously threaten to kill me...for the rest of the school year. Eric wasn’t being logical. I even apologized five times.*

*I hope you're reading this Eric - you need to relax, man. Oh, and I'm sorry about that one time in middle school (count = 6).*

**One of the best ways to quell stress is to use logic to solve an issue.**

I want to clarify that this is not to treat the stress response, but to actually discredit the stress response cognitively (before it takes form). I realize that some people are more emotionally-driven than others, but all of us can make at least *some movement* in the right direction.

### Death

If you're stressed about your family member being close to death, face the fact that everyone dies. You will die. Death is **normal and expected**. This isn't to say that you shouldn't grieve the loss of a loved one. On the contrary, I strongly support *expressing those emotions to release them (logic is in agreement with this)*. **But...** it accomplishes nothing to *worry* about the inevitable.

### Finances

If you're in financial turmoil, consider the worst-case scenario and the most-likely scenario. If the worst happens and you lose everything, is there a family member or friend who would be there to support you while you get back on your feet? If the worst is being homeless, then that is tough, but it is probably avoidable and when you are homeless, you can still break out of it with hard work and confidence.

You consider the worst to set the bottom limit in your mind (remember the vague doom I talked about?). That said, you should expect the most-likely scenario

because it is most-likely and expecting unlikely negative things is... irrational and emotionally unhealthy.

### Weight

If you're overweight and stressed out it, just look at all of the amazing weight loss stories out there. Logic and the experiences of others say that almost no amount of weight is too much to lose. Weight is much more certain than finances because you're in complete control of it.

In the meantime, remember that your weight is not tied to your worth or happiness.

### Health

With health, it is *\*vitaly\** important to have a positive outlook. There is a very real effect that optimism (and the placebo effect) has on our health. How to gain a positive outlook is beyond this book.

This is the most difficult one, but people like Lance Armstrong have gone about it the right way – optimistic, positive, and determined to get their health back. Consider the multitudes of people living past their “death date” given by doctors.

It's smart to develop a strategic plan of diet and lifestyle to give your body what it needs to heal (that's where logic comes in). Accepting your health status is helpful as knowledge of what you're fighting helps you live accordingly.

Health is in between weight and finances as far as control is concerned. You have control over your dietary choices and lifestyle, but there is always a chance of health problems. Since stress can kill you, you really don't want to be stressed out when you already have poor health.

I recommend acceptance, optimism, and strategic living. You need these things because health is rarely a quick fix. It takes time to change the state of your body. This is the one area where the stressor could be more permanent, and for that you need to work on creating a healthy mindset and treating the stress symptoms (using those other stress books).

### Work/School

Work and school are simple – you can only do your best. If more is expected of you than your best, then maybe you're not in the right place. If you have deadlines to meet, then make sure you're prepared and organized to avoid the stress surprise (i.e. I just remembered the report is due tomorrow!).

If it is simply more than you can handle – change places, reduce other activities, etc. Don't accept your fate to be chronically stressed out – it isn't worth it. If you absolutely have to be in that situation, make sure you're working towards a solution and using stress-reducing methods in the meantime.

### Logic & Confidence – What A Team!

Combine logic with confidence. This means viewing your current situation and possible outcomes objectively, yet being fully confident in yourself to achieve the best possible result.

If you don't have confidence, I would actually suggest “fake it ‘til you make it.” The reason you can fake it until you make it is because you are FULL of unrealized potential right now. You might believe you're faking it, but you're really just giving yourself a chance to make it. Four months ago, I didn't believe I could write a book. Now, I believe I am capable of writing a NY Times Bestseller. [Confidence matters.](#)

**2022 update: I wrote this book and that sentence 11 years ago. I'm not a NYT bestseller, but I make a living writing books!**

So many people run from logic and truth, thinking that seeing reality is going to make things worse. Let me tell you - reality is it whether or not we recognize it. You can run from it for a time, but it will always be waiting for you at the other end of the tunnel. If you face it boldly, you'll be one step closer to living a genuinely healthy, happy, and low-stress life.

You know what really stresses me out? Living a lie. Distracting myself from what is really going on in my life. That underlying knowledge of the truth will never go away, so it is best to deal with it in the present moment.

**Live Update:** Oh my, I just had a terrible argument with my father and I'm not sure we'll ever be able to communicate well. A part of me wanted to drink a beer to calm myself, but I know that's an unhealthy "escape reality" habit and a great way to become an alcoholic. Instead of drinking, I decided to face the reality of the situation (which is difficult to do, honestly) and started reading section 2 of Stress Management Redefined. Now I'm calm and level-headed (author testimonial!).

### Accurate Information

Did you know that now more than half of the Fortune 100 companies are involved in some form of information trafficking? That's because accurate information is valuable. It is no different for us – the more quality information we have about our situation, the better we can respond to it.

Logic is your friend and a crushing uppercut to stress. It helps you to see reality and *do your best with it*. As Tony Horton from [P90X](#) says, "do your best and forget the rest."

You can never do more than your best, so don't stress it. 😊



### 5. Eliminate Stressors Systematically With Lists

Upon impact, stress disrupts our emotional health and clouds our minds. Our lives will seem impossibly bad or overwhelming in the moment stress arrives. Solutions aren't on the mind because our emotions are being provoked ruthlessly by our stressors. This is a problem.

The previous four steps were designed to gradually guide your mind to a state where stressors can be conquered with clarity, purpose, and intelligence. Now that we're calmer, yet still very aware of our stressors, this is the step in which we identify and destroy.

Stress is a formidable beast. I wrote this section just after recovering from it (using this book). Stress is also incredibly sneaky sometimes. It hides in painful memories 8 years ago. It ducks behind seemingly small matters that add up. It lays dormant for a time until it is triggered by a simple event or word.

Some stress – such as overblown fears – can be removed with a simple mindset shift, but most stress cannot (finances and relationships, anyone?). By the way, if you know you can't reconcile a relationship (rare in reality, common in belief), it is best for you to *avoid* that person or get professional help.

If you don't believe your stressors have been addressed directly or indirectly, then it is possible that your mindset and personality is simply bent towards it. If it is not an environmental issue, then it is purely a battle of the mind. This gets into genetic predisposition and the like, but my *belief* is that genetic predisposition is not final.

For these stressors that take more than a mindset shift, we need to play some offense. We must determine what is required to take down these stressors permanently and then come up with a game plan to execute. We have to fight back, but how?

### Lists

Stress, if it were a being, would not want to be in the spotlight. It thrives on being in the background – unaddressed, but terribly destructive. So once you’ve paused and calmed down, addressed your overblown fears, identified hidden roots of your stress, and used logic to face your stressful reality – start writing down your “hit list.”

**Note: Don’t label it “hit list” and then list people on it (it gives the wrong impression). Maybe “hit list” is the wrong term to use here... ☺**

Write the list of stressors that affect you in the present day:

- What are you worried about?
- What just happened that you’re having a tough time with?
- What big tests or presentations are you nervous about?
- Who do you have a poor relationship with?
- What are you NOT doing that eats you up inside (i.e. unresolved passions)?
- Do you find there is inadequate time for relaxation?
  - Is it externally controlled?
    - So what optional activities take away from that?
    - If no optional activities are involved, how might you alter your schedule or decrease your time spent on certain activities?
  - Is it self-imposed?
    - Can you schedule leisure time in your calendar?

- Why do you feel the need to be doing something all the time?

Once you have your “master list” of stressors, make a strategic “take-down” list for **each individual item**. Start with the most anxiety-laden item and make a list of steps (sequential or not) to destroy this stressor – break it down into as many sub-lists as required.

Once you take down the king of your stressors, the others are child’s play. If your big one is a huge long-term project (finances, health), you can certainly work at those lower down in the list at the same time. I say to start with the top items because that’s probably where 90% of your stress resides.

### A Personal Account

#### Live Update List:

1. Poor relationship with father (sub list = actionable solutions)
  - a. Talk to trusted friends and mentors – asking for advice and input.  
They’ll probably tell me to apologize for my role in the communication barriers between us
  - b. Figure out how to communicate and/or get on good terms with him
  - c. Move out - something I want to do anyways
    - i. Get an income that can sustain me
      1. “Stable job”
      2. Internet work/freelancing/marketing

Can you see from that list that I'm no longer furious and upset and looking at the problem logically? From A and B, I realized that I should probably apologize even though I don't feel like it.

**REAL TIME ACTION UPDATE:** Because I was calm - just **30 minutes** after the intense argument - I was able to walk downstairs and sincerely apologize to my father for my role in the tussle (letter b above). I asked if we could forget the past and start over. He was grateful, we agreed and voila! My stress levels have dropped **dramatically**.

We're on good terms again. Before that, I was feeling the frantic need to move out, which actually amplified my financial stress. This is a great example of how stressors can amplify each other and why this book will help you. Keep it. If you get stressed out, go straight to [section two](#) and start reading.

**Several Days Later Update:** My father and I will always have very different views on how communication works between humans, but our relationship seems better now than before we had the argument. If it were not for this book, I'm not sure how I would have handled it (or how short my telomeres would be right now, haha). This topic and the events in my life just happened to come together in such a way that I could "test" my own product. Cool. 😊

**2-3 Weeks Later:** We are communicating well and on good terms (though anything "debate-like" could trigger the communication barrier). I believe that there is greater understanding between us, and that is very helpful in communication. This stressor has been permanently removed in my life (if it flares up again, I'm very confident it can be resolved quickly).

## Pay Attention To Common Solutions

You might find (as I did) that many stressors are intertwined and that they point to one solution. Gaining solid income would relieve my financial stress, fulfill my passion to travel, and allow me to strike out in independence. **You should discover one or more common solutions. These are what you should focus on accomplishing to permanently remove the major stressors in your life.**

### A Brief Recap

#### Preventing Stress

1. Be informed about the important details in life to prevent negative surprises.
2. Know your primary focus in professional and personal life to avoid stress by numbers
3. Understand your limits - don't "overbook" yourself or you'll burn yourself out

#### Removing Stress

1. Pause to relax yourself to sap the strength of logic-blocking emotions
2. Evaluate your fears to determine if you can take action to dissolve them
3. Find the hidden roots of stressful thought patterns and yank them

4. Use logic to clarify (and accept) the reality of your situation
5. Eliminate stressors systematically with lists – the final blow to stress is **killing the source permanently**. Step 5 is about identifying the sources and taking them out – like a hitman eliminates his “list.”

**Pop, pop...BAM!**  
**Knockout!**

**\*ding ding ding\***

**Nice try, stress.**

I hope this guide works as well for you as it did for me. The next time you're stressed out, give this digital treat a try. I wish you the best in your journey and hope that this has and will continue to help you in some way.

**You may share this book freely as long as you do not modify it in any way or try to sell it.**

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I wish you a stress-free life. ☺

Sincerely,

Stephen Guise