**How to Make Stress Your Friend**

**By Kelly McGonigal**

**Text Source:**

<https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend?language=en#t-821465>

**Vocab Builder**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WORD/PHRASE** | **PRONUNCIATION** | **CONTEXT** | **MEANING** **(Spanish Equivalent)** |
| **NOUNS** |
| blood vessels | /blôd ˈve-sels/ | *Their blood vessels stayed relaxed like this.*  | blood tubes(Sp.: *vasos sanguíneos*) |
| resilience | /rɪ-ˈsɪ-lɪens/ | *You create resilience.* | capacity to recover quickly from difficulties |
| **VERBS** |
| constrict | /cons-ˈtrik/ | *Your blood vessels constrict like this.* | contract (Sp.: *contraerse*) |
| pound | /paund/ | *Their heart was still pounding.* | beat (Sp.: *latir*) |
| get rid of (noun) | /get ˈrɪ-*r*ov/ | *I no longer want to get rid of your stress.* | throw away (Sp.: *deshacerse*) |
| handle  | /ˈhᴂn-del/ | *You can trust yourself to handle life's challenges* | manage  (Sp.: *manejar, lidear con*) |
| **ADJECTIVES** |
| moderate | /ˈma-*r*e-ret/ | *How about a moderate amount of stress?* | light(Sp: *moderado/a, ligero/a*) |
| profound | /pro-ˈfaund/ | *You're making a pretty profound statement.* | deep(Sp.: *profundo/a*) |
| cardiovascular | /ˈkar-dio ˈvᴂs-kɪu-lar/ | *Stress is associated with cardiovascular disease.* | related to your heart and blood vessels |
| **ADVERBS** |
| prematurely | /ˈprɪ-ma-,chur-lɪ/ | *182,000 Americans died prematurely.* | before the expected time (Sp: *prematuramente*) |

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**Level: B1-B2**

**1**. **Warm Up.** **Speaking.**

* Have you had a lot of stress in your life lately?
* What is your opinion about stress? How do you view it?
* What do you do to handle stress?

**2**. **Listening**. **General Comprehension Questions.**

* What is Kelly’s main focus in this monologue?
* What is her most recent opinion about stress?

**3**. **Pronunciation:** **Say it correctly!**

**Directions:** Read the following excerpts from the text for pronunciation assessment. Pay closer attention to blended and flapped sounds.

|  |
| --- |
|  Blending Flapped *t* or *d*  |

a) I want you to just raise your hand if you've experienced relatively li*tt*le stress.

b) I*t* increases the risk of everything.

c) How much stress have you experienced in the last year?

d) They had the lowest risk of dying of anyone in the study, inclu*d*ing people who had relatively li*tt*le stress.

e) I*t* actually looks a lot like what happens in moments of joy and courage.

f) Over a lifetime of stressful experiences, this one biological change could be the difference between a stress-induced hear*t* attack a*t* age 50 and living well into your 90s.

g) I no longer want to get ri*d* of your stress. I want to make you be*tt*er at stress. And we just did a li*tt*le intervention.

h) If you raised your hand and said you'd ha*d* a lo*t* of stress in the last year, we coul*d* have saved your life.

i) You *d*on’t have to face them alone.

**4. Speaking: Monologues.**

**A.** **In Kelly’s monologue, she states that, “*in the study, when participants viewed their stress response as helpful, their blood vessels stayed relaxed like this. Their heart was still pounding, but this is a much healthier cardiovascular profile. It actually looks a lot like what happens in moments of joy and courage.*”**

* Had you ever thought that, if handled smartly, stress could influence our body positively?
* Do you think that we people have the capacity to change the perspective of things, depending on the way we see them?
* Are you the kind of person who gets frightened by stress, or are you more like the ones who face it with determination?

**B.** **According to Kelly McGuligan, “*when you choose to view your stress response as helpful, you create the biology of courage. And when you choose to connect with others under stress, you can create resilience.”***

* In what way do you think other people can help us go through stress with less physical and psychological consequences?
* Do you think that extroverting our feelings actually leads to emotional relief? Why?
* When you feel stressed out, do you resort to other people in search of support and understanding? Tell us about it!

**5. Vocabulary: Word Families.**

**A. Complete the chart with word families of the given word:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **VERB** | **NOUN** | **ADJECTIVE** |
| think | *thought* | *thoughtful* |
|  | strength |  |
|  | blood |  |
| experience |  |  |
|  |  | relative |
|  | risk |  |
| increase |  |  |
|  | response |  |
|  | joy |  |
|  | death |  |
|  |  | harmful |
|  |  | mature |
| believe |  |  |
|  | energy |  |
|  | participant |  |
|  | courage |  |
| reveal |  |  |
|  |  | induced |

**6. Pronunciation: Practicing Pronunciation of -ED Forms**

Read the following excerpts from *How to make stress your friend* by Kelly McGonical. Under which pronunciation pattern would you place the -*ed* forms in bold letters? Keep in mind that the phonetic feature of obscuration may influence the pronunciation of the -*ed* suffix in the sentence (comments). See the examples below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sentence** | **-ED Form Pronunciation** | **Comments** |
| **/t/** | **/d/** | **/ɪd/** |
| Who’s **experienced** / a lot of stress?  | **x** |  |  |  |
| I’ve **changed** my mind / about stress. |  | **x** |  | Obscuration(chang***ed*** + **m**y) |
| I've **turned** stress / into the enemy.  |  |  |  |  |
| This study **tracked** / 30,000 adults / in the United States / for eight years.  |  |  |  |  |
| And they **started** by asking people, / "How much stress / have you experienced / in the last year?" |  |  |  |  |
| They also **asked**, /"Do you believe /that stress /is harmful /for your health? |  |  |  |  |
| They **used** public death records /to find out / who died. |  |  |  |  |
| This was only true /for the people who **believed /**that stress is harmful for your health. |  |  |  |  |
| And the researchers **estimated** that / over the eight years they were tracking deaths / 182,000 Americans / died prematurely. |  |  |  |  |
| You can see /why this study /**freaked** me out.  |  |  |  | Obscuration(freak***ed*** + **me**) |
| Chronic stress /is sometimes **associated** /with cardiovascular disease. |  |  |  |  |
| When participants /**viewed** their stress response /as helpful… |  |  |  |  |
| …their blood vessels **stayed** relaxed **/** like this.  |  |  |  |  |
| My goal / as a health psychologist / has **changed.**  |  |  |  |  |
| You **raised** your hand.  |  |  |  |  |

**Lesson: How to Make Stress Your Friend.**

**Answer Key**

**Exercise 5: Word Families.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **VERB**  | **NOUN**  | **ADJECTIVE**  |
| think  | *thought*  | *thoughtful*  |
| strengthen   | strength  | strong  |
| bleed  | blood  | bloody  |
| experience  | experience   | experienced  |
|  relate  | relative /relation | relative  |
|  risk | risk  | risky |
| increase  | increase  | increasing  |
|  respond  | response  | responsive  |
|  enjoy | joy  | joyful   |
|  die | death  | dead  |
|  harm |  harm  | harmful  |
|  mature | maturity | mature  |
| believe  | belief | believed  |
|  energize | energy  | energetic / energizing   |
| participate   | participant  | participating |
| encourage | courage  | courageous   |
| reveal  | reveal   | revealing   |
|  induce  | induction  | induced  |

**Exercise 6: Pronunciation of -ED Forms.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sentence** | **-ED Form Pronunciation** | **Phonetic Features in the Sentence** |
| **/t/** | **/d/** | **/ɪd/** |
| Who’s **experienced** / a lot of stress?  | **x** |  |  | - |
| I’ve **changed** my mind / about stress. | **x** |  |  | Obscuration |
| I've **turned** stress / into the enemy.  |  | **x** |  | - |
| This study **tracked** / 30,000 adults / in the United States / for eight years.  | **x** |  |  | - |
| And they **started** by asking people, / "How much stress / have you experienced / in the last year?" |  |  | **x** | - |
| They also **asked**, /"Do you believe /that stress /is harmful /for your health? | **x** |  |  | - |
| They **used** public death records /to find out / who died. |  |  |  | Obscuration |
| This was only true /for the people who **believed /**that stress is harmful for your health. |  | **x** |  | - |
| And the researchers **estimated** that / over the eight years they were tracking deaths / 182,000 Americans / died prematurely. |  |  | **x** | - |
| You can see /why this study /**freaked** me out.  | **x** |  |  | Obscuration |
| Chronic stress /is sometimes **associated** /with cardiovascular disease. |  |  | **x** |  |
| When participants /**viewed** their stress response /as helpful… | **x** |  |  | - |
| …their blood vessels **stayed** relaxed **/** like this.  |  | **x** |  |  |
| My goal / as a health psychologist / has **changed.**  | **x** |  |  |  |
| You **raised** your hand.  | **x** |  |  | Obscuration |

**How to make stress your friend**

**Video Transcript**

**By Kelly McGonical**

I have a confession to make. But first, I want you to make a little confession to me. In the past year, I want you to just raise your hand if you've experienced relatively little stress. Anyone?

How about a moderate amount of stress?

Who has experienced a lot of stress? Yeah. Me too.

But that is not my confession. My confession is this: I am a health psychologist, and my mission is to help people be happier and healthier. But I fear that something I've been teaching for the last 10 years is doing more harm than good, and it has to do with stress. For years I've been telling people, stress makes you sick. It increases the risk of everything from the common cold to cardiovascular disease. Basically, I've turned stress into the enemy. But I have changed my mind about stress, and today, I want to change yours.

Let me start with the study that made me rethink my whole approach to stress. This study tracked 30,000 adults in the United States for eight years, and they started by asking people, "How much stress have you experienced in the last year?" They also asked, "Do you believe that stress is harmful for your health?" And then they used public death records to find out who died.

Okay. Some bad news first. People who experienced a lot of stress in the previous year had a 43 percent increased risk of dying. But that was only true for the people who also believed that stress is harmful for your health.

People who experienced a lot of stress but did not view stress as harmful were no more likely to die. In fact, they had the lowest risk of dying of anyone in the study, including people who had relatively little stress.

Now the researchers estimated that over the eight years they were tracking deaths, 182,000 Americans died prematurely, not from stress, but from the belief that stress is bad for you.

You can see why this study freaked me out. Here I've been spending so much energy telling people stress is bad for your health.

So, this study got me wondering: Can changing how you think about stress make you healthier? And here the science says yes. When you change your mind about stress, you can change your body's response to stress.

Now, in a typical stress response, your heart rate goes up, and your blood vessels constrict like this. And this is one of the reasons that chronic stress is sometimes associated with cardiovascular disease. It's not really healthy to be in this state all the time. But in the study, when participants viewed their stress response as helpful, their blood vessels stayed relaxed like this. Their heart was still pounding, but this is a much healthier cardiovascular profile. It actually looks a lot like what happens in moments of joy and courage. Over a lifetime of stressful experiences, this one biological change could be the difference between a stress-induced heart attack at age 50 and living well into your 90s. And this is really what the new science of stress reveals, that how you think about stress matters.

So, my goal as a health psychologist has changed. I no longer want to get rid of your stress. I want to make you better at stress. And we just did a little intervention. If you raised your hand and said you'd had a lot of stress in the last year, we could have saved your life, because hopefully the next time your heart is pounding from stress, you're going to remember this talk and you're going to think to yourself, this is my body helping me rise to this challenge. And when you view stress in that way, your body believes you, and your stress response becomes healthier.

And so, we see once again that the harmful effects of stress on your health are not inevitable. How you think and how you act can transform your experience of stress. When you choose to view your stress response as helpful, you create the biology of courage. And when you choose to connect with others under stress, you can create resilience. Now I wouldn't necessarily ask for more stressful experiences in my life, but this science has given me a whole new appreciation for stress. Stress gives us access to our hearts. The compassionate heart that finds joy and meaning in connecting with others, and yes, your pounding physical heart, working so hard to give you strength and energy. And when you choose to view stress in this way, you're not just getting better at stress, you're actually making a pretty profound statement. You're saying that you can trust yourself to handle life's challenges. And you're remembering that you don't have to face them alone.