

Stress Master's Quick List

■ *“Makes me feel” thinking.* You have an entirely untrue belief (honest mistake) that other people and circumstances create your stress and uncomfortable emotions. What you *think* (and don't realize) really decides your level of stress and your moods. Change that unknown thinking and how you feel about yourself. You are worth the work.

■ *“I'm my shirt” thinking.* You've got the notion that your essence and your value are somehow determined by what you do, think, have, or feel. Wrong! The truth is that what you do, think, have, or feel is no more you than your clothing is you. You are of the utmost value, no matter what!

■ *“I just know” thinking.* You are not a fortune teller or mind reader. If you worry and are wrong (you worried needlessly), you hurt once. If you worry and are right (the worst *did* happen), you hurt twice. Once is more than enough and is usually unnecessary.

■ *“Makes me do” thinking.* This is the untrue thought that you do what you do because you have to; that other people, commitments, or situations force you to act in particular ways. Not likely! You don't “have to,” when there are options—even “bad” ones. Take responsibility and take control.

■ *“Terrible” thinking.* You don't know something is “terrible,” “bad,” “the worst,” “just awful,” “horrible,” or “tragic” until you know

how it has turned out. It may eventually be terrific. Use such labels sparingly and only when you can reasonably judge.

- *“What people say” thinking.* What people say isn’t nearly as important as what they mean. People too rarely say what they mean, particularly if they are upset or are duck-like thinkers anyway. (It isn’t true that people are more likely to tell the truth when they’re upset. They are only more apt to blurt out what they think is true and probably isn’t.)

- *“It’s not fair” thinking.* From your childhood and from playing games with rules, you’ve kept the false belief that life, other people (including spouses), nature, or whatever happens should treat you fairly. But life isn’t a game. Life is life—not fair. Fair is where you find ferris wheels. You can count on being treated in ways that others believe (consciously or subconsciously) to be in *their* best interest. You fully deserve to do the same. When you are doing what’s truly in your best interest, you are increasingly free of damaging stress and uncomfortable moods. You are more unconditionally loving of yourself and others.

- *“Racy” thinking.* This thinking leads to being in a hurry, and most hurrying is needless. Life isn’t a race track where you pause only briefly to make “pit stops.” What you’re rushing for is rarely, if ever, worth the price you pay. “Racy” thinking often takes over when you’re in automobiles or when you’re getting ready to go somewhere.