

TOP 7 **MYTHS** THAT PERPETUATE STRESS

(AND HOW TO DISPEL THEM)



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The Power to Rejoice

21 Days to Victory Over Your Problems

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INTRODUCTION

Top 7 Myths that Perpetuate Stress (And How to Dispel Them)

Stress has been dubbed the “Health Epidemic of the 21st Century” by the World Health Organization (WHO).

A couple of reasons for this conclusion:

- 75 to 90 percent of all doctor visits are for stress-related complaints. (American Psychological Association)
- Stress is linked to the six leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide. (American Psychological Association)

This occurs despite Amazon listing over 32,000 titles on stress. These include Christian books, secular self-help books and stress reduction workbooks. There is even a Stress Management for Dummies book. In addition, a Google search of “Stress” produces over 16 million responses.

In light of all of these “Solutions”, how can stress be dubbed the “Health Epidemic of the 21st Century”?

One of the main reasons is the myths that perpetuate stress.

With that in mind, my goals are to:

- 1) Identify seven common stress myths.
- 2) Dispel those myths.
- 3) Jumpstart your journey to a stress-free life.

MYTH NUMBER 1: STRESS ACTUALLY EXISTS.

As Hans Selye, who introduced the term "Stress", said in *The Stress of Life*: "If we are to use this concept (stress) in a strictly scientific manner, it is important to keep in mind that stress is an abstraction; it has no independent existence."

Most people are either unaware of this quote or have forgotten it. In either case, it results in thinking of stress as an actual "thing". Clients tell me, "I am under a lot of stress" or "I am dealing with a lot of stress". To illustrate that stress is not a thing, during seminars, I sometimes provide a bucket and challenge anyone to go outside the meeting room and fill the bucket with stress and bring it back. I have never had anyone take me up on it.

We have become accustomed to using the word "Stress" as an all-encompassing label for circumstances in our life (heavy workload, job layoff, heavy debt load, traffic delays, family conflict, etc.). While these circumstances are actual "things", do not confuse them with the abstraction and call them stress. (See Myth 2)

MYTH NUMBER 2: CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSE STRESS.

"I am stressed out because..." "I have too much work to do", "I have to give a presentation", "I have been laid off", "I have a been diagnosed with cancer", "I have a conflict with my sister". Perhaps you have uttered these or similar statements.

These are classic examples of "Misdiagnosis". As anyone who has seen a doctor knows, the first step to curing a problem is making an accurate diagnosis. All too often that is not the case with stress.

For example, it is popular to say that work causes stress. However, all workers are stressed. According to the American Psychological Association, 35 percent of working adults say they feel tense or stressed out during the work day.

If work caused stress, 100 percent of working adults would feel tense or stressed out during the work day.

Look at an example of how two nurses who experienced the same circumstance but reacted entirely differently. Marilyn and Freda work in the same unit.

Due to a lower-than-expected number of patients in their unit, the nurse manager asked both of them to work their shift in a different unit. Immediately, Marilyn said this change caused her to become stressed out. She complained that it was unrealistic to expect her to function in an unfamiliar unit. On the other hand, Freda did not become stressed at all. She saw the temporary assignment as an opportunity to interact with a different nursing team, make new friends and to build some additional skills. So, the circumstance did not cause Marilyn's stress. Instead, what she thought about the circumstance caused her stress.

This illustrates that there is only one cause of stress - one's thoughts about circumstances, not the circumstances themselves. As Proverbs 23:7 says: "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he", or as Proverbs 4:23 says: "Be careful what you think because your thoughts control your life." Latin philosopher Rene Descartes said: "I think, therefore I am."

The logical conclusion is that our thoughts, not our circumstances, create our stress.

Like changing any habit, changing your thought process takes effort. However, the benefit of doing so is that you will be able to live a stress-free life. Indeed, I have many clients who were highly stressed, who are now living stress-free as a result of applying the techniques I teach.

MYTH NUMBER 3: STRESS IS INEVITABLE. EVERYONE EXPERIENCES IT.

As Richard Ecker, author of *The Stress Myth* said, "We like to believe that stress is inevitable - that life is so complex these days, that we're being dragged around by a runaway world which offers us less and less that we can depend on. But this belief is nothing but a myth, a myth that is the core of the stress problem...This myth...has done more to perpetuate unwanted stress in our society than any other single factor. Ironically, the main proponents of this myth are the very ones who claim to be teaching people how to deal with stress."

According to Gallup, 79 percent of Americans feel stress sometimes or frequently during their day. If stress were inevitable, 100% of Americans would feel stress sometimes or frequently during their day.

Think of a situation that does not upset you, but upsets others. An example might be delays while commuting to work. Some people experience extreme stress during these delays. Others (such as my friend, Aaron) are not stressed at all. In fact, he anticipates delays and uses the time to listen to personal development recordings.

This proves that becoming stressed during commuting delays is not inevitable. If it were, everyone who experienced commuting delays would be stressed. Pick any area of life (public speaking, being a single parent, working in a particular profession, flying, etc.), and you can find some people who are stressed and others who are not.

As Maureen Killoran, said "Stress is not what happens to us. It's our response to what happens. And response is something we can choose."

MYTH NUMBER 4: STRESS IS A MOTIVATOR.

There is a notion that without stress, people would sit around all day and do nothing. The thinking is that we need stress in order to provide energy to get us moving.

Just drive past any playground. Notice how the children, despite not being stressed, do not have any problem generating the energy to engage in all sorts of activities.

MYTH NUMBER 5: STRESS IMPROVES PERFORMANCE.

Perhaps you have noticed that when you have goals or deadlines, you see an improvement in your focus and performance. However, recognize two things:

1) this performance improvement is temporary, and 2) the performance improvement is due to **stimulation**, not stress. Whereas stimulation can help you perform better in the short term, stress robs you of energy and your ability to reach anything near peak performance.

So, the message is to never mistake stimulation for stress.

MYTH NUMBER 6: THERE IS “GOOD” STRESS.

Although Dr. Hans Selye, the founder of the modern stress concept, created this idea a long time ago, this is a myth. Let me give you some statistics:

- Forty-three percent of adults suffer adverse health effects from stress.
- 75 to 90 percent of doctor visits are for stress-related complaints.
- Stress is linked to the six leading causes of death - heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide.

Source: American Psychological Association

During all of my years as a coach, I have not had one client say, “You have got to help me. I have too much good stress.” On the other hand, I have had hundreds of people ask me to help them get rid of their stress.

While **stimulation** can lead to a short term improvement in performance, **stress** is never good.

MYTH NUMBER 7: THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD FOR DEALING WITH STRESS IS TO MANAGE IT.

When experiencing a circumstance as stressful, many people attempt to “Manage” it by using various techniques, some of which are healthy, others of which are unhealthy. Examples of healthy techniques include:

- Going for a walk
- Spending time in nature
- Sweating out tension with a good workout
- Getting a massage
- Gardening
- Spending time with loved ones, including a pet
- Listening to music
- Watching a funny movie
- Meditating
- Deep breathing exercises
- Tai chi
- Taking a vacation

Examples of unhealthy techniques include:

- Smoking/excessive use of alcohol
- Drug abuse
- Over eating/under eating
- Sleeping a great deal
- Filling up every moment of the day with activities
- Zoning out in front of the TV or computer

- Withdrawing from friends, family and activities
- Procrastinating

If you have used any of these techniques, whether healthy or unhealthy, you may have found some of them to be helpful in the short term. Ultimately, however, they do not resolve the circumstance(s) you are facing.

Why? Both the healthy and unhealthy tactics only address the **symptoms**, not the **cause** of Stress.

If your car's "Check Engine" light came on, you would not "manage" the situation by covering the light with masking tape so that the light is no longer visible. Likewise, you would not ask your mechanic to disconnect the power source to the "Check Engine" light. Instead, you would want to determine what is causing the light to come on so that you can take appropriate steps to remove the cause.

Stress management tactics, like covering the "Check Engine" light or disconnecting the light's power source, only address the symptom of the problem, not the cause. As Andrew Bernstein said: "Stress doesn't come from what's going on in your life, it comes from what you think about what's going on in your life."

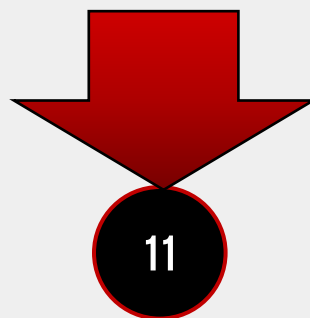
Since your thinking causes your stress, you must think differently about the circumstances in your life in order to live stress-free, .

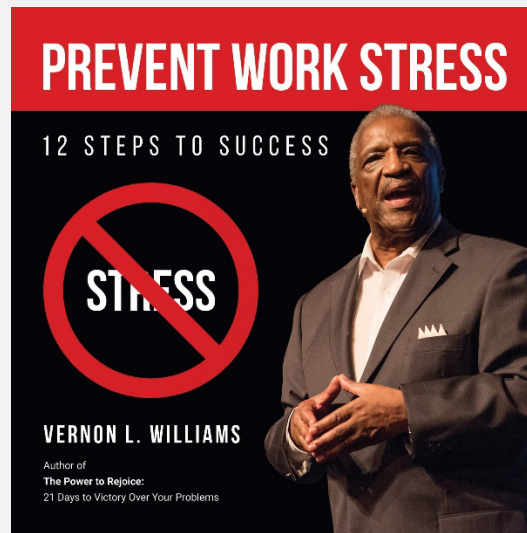
As William James said, "The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another."

Tired of work stressing you out?

Download this life-changing program and find out how to prevent (not manage) work stress in 30 days.

Guaranteed!





If followed, the 12 steps of this Bible-based program will help you have:

- Fewer headaches
- Less muscle and joint pain
- Better sleep
- Fewer skin problems
- Less digestive problems
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer colds
- Lower blood sugar
- Fewer sexual/reproductive problems
- Fewer respiratory problems

“I used to get an upset stomach regularly. That no longer happens. Thanks, Vernon.”

—Darlene Vollmer

“My stress level was at a 10 on a 10-point scale. I had been hospitalized twice because my blood pressure was so high, and I was having other heart-related issues. I was on several medications. I hired Vernon L. Williams as my coach. After one three-hour session I was able to dramatically change my approach to my work. Today, I am stress-free and off all medications.”

—Robert L. Carter

Limited-Time Offer! The regular price is \$37. Download now and the price is \$24 - a 35% discount.

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