



# 5 Strategies for Developing Stress Resilience by Dr. Scott Livingston

## 1. Reframe Your Context

Use the lines below to write out the context of the situation you are facing:

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Now, review what you wrote and underline all the items you consider to be facts.

Next, circle all the emotions you identify in your writing.

As you examine the facts and emotions, practice some flexibility. Could you see the facts and emotions in a different way? Let go of your need to be right or wrong - just find a different way to think and feel about your situation.

## 2. Choose Your Focus

What is it you really want to focus on?

The research on happiness tells us that the more you focus on happiness as a goal, the less happy you are. Rather than focusing on the end goal of happiness, for example, focus on the quality of the inputs that ultimately may lead to happiness.

What is a goal you want for your life? Do you want to be happy? Do you want to be wise? Do you want to be a great leader? After determining your goal, use the lines below to write down the inputs that will help you reach this goal. Choose to focus on the quality of your inputs rather than on the outcome you desire.

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## 3. Find The Good

What are your worst case scenarios right now? Use the lines below to write down what your plan might be if your worst case scenario happened.

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For each scenario, imagine what the upside might be. Where do you see opportunities for the growth and good that will emerge?

#### 4. Helpful or Harmful Thoughts

Identify one situation where you are having a catastrophizing thought or assuming the world is out to get you. Now, talk yourself out of these ideas and find a more realistic pattern of thinking. For instance, if you are feeling overwhelmed because of the uncertainty of your job, remind yourself that what is happening in the world right now is not an indicator of your future. You are not helpless. How does changing your thoughts from helpful to harmful make you feel about your outlook?

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#### 5. Make Stress Your Friend

There are two important things to know about stress:

1. It is a message to your body.
2. It is felt in your body.

During times of stress, we need to make sure that we are caring for the vessel that is harboring the stress. Since your stress is telling you something, write down at least one thing that can help you reach a goal for some common health.

According to Dr. Henry Thompson in his book, [The Stress Effect](#), there are seven places in our lives that can help us make stress our friend. I have given a suggested goal for each of the categories, and have also included some blank lines for you to customize each one if you choose.

- **Awarenesses Goal**

I will schedule daily intentional time for myself so I can review my progress regularly.

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- **Nutrition Goal**

I will substitute unhealthy snack foods with fruits, nuts, and vegetables during the day.

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- **Exercise Goal**

I will begin or add 20 minutes of daily walking to my current routine.

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- **Sleep Goal**

I will practice getting 8 hours of sleep every night.

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- **Attitude Goal**

I will find at least 2 different pathways to a positive outcome when I am feeling down.

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- **Learning Goal**

I will read at least 1 biography of a leader who made it through a difficult time.

*(Victor Frankl, Winston Churchill, Dietrich Bonhoeffer are great places to start)*

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- **Support Goal**

I will set up time in my week to cultivate the relationships that matter most to me.

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*\*This is not intended as medical advice.*

*Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare practitioner to devise a plan specific to your needs.*