

When we talk about stress, most folks agree it's not ideal.

Stress, especially high stress, is responsible for a whole host of issues:

- Headaches
- Insomnia
- Eating disorders
- Shortness of breath
- Body aches
- And even panic attacks

But did you know, chronic stress KILLS brain cells? It shrinks the prefrontal cortex and reduces your ability to learn and remember.

**That's scary!**

**But get this - that is only** if you view stress negatively!

Psychologist Kelly McGonigal says we need to make stress our friend!

In a study, 30,000 people were asked - “How stressful is your life?”

8 years later, 43% of those who answered very stressful had died, but only if the participants believed that high stress was deadly!

People who viewed high stress as not harmful were fine - as a matter of fact, they had the highest rate of survival!

**Conclusion: stress + belief = the result.**

The study was surprising in several ways:

1. People who believe stress is enhancing are less depressed and more satisfied with life.
2. More energy and fewer health problems.
3. Happier and more productive at work.

The study went a step further and measured cortisol after a traumatic event (such as a car accident).

Interestingly, those who had big surges of adrenaline immediately following a hugely stressful event recovered way better than those who “stayed calm”.

Researchers also found that those with no stress - had a low level of joy and happiness and had high levels of shame and anger.

This study proves that stress is a whole lot more nuanced than previously thought.

On one hand - if it's handled properly, it can actually make you smarter and more successful. It can make life more meaningful and make you more compassionate and kind.

On the other hand - It can cause a downward spiral, bring on health issues, cause feelings of being out of control, and hopelessness.

## **THE DIFFERENCE? MINDSET!**

And resilience is the keyword to turning stress around - how?

1. Stress is bad only if we see it as bad - threat or challenge? This is how we build muscle btw - by challenging (stressing) our muscles.
2. Don't calm down - embrace the excitement, it's not a crisis according to Eric Barker. It's a strong cup of coffee.
3. View stress as a helper - these psychological changes we experience with stress is nitric oxide to the brain - your brain works better (blood flow).
4. Think STRENGTH - stress hormones can work on your behalf - ask for help - ALIGN with them - you have a community to tap and memories and prior successes - use them.
5. Decide and execute your goals - goals push us beyond our day-to-day and create a MINDSET that - even in times of big stress - increases A) Motivation B) Courage because, how else are you going to be there for others?
6. Choosing MEANING over avoiding the discomfort of stress challenges you to the next level up - resilience.
7. AND instead of coping with harmful avoidance behaviors (overeating, drinking, staying up too late, on the phone, etc), you EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE!