

# M2 Be A Stress Master Series: Week 1

The most searched health symptom on Google is “stress.” It’s a term many of us use frequently. But what does it really mean? What is stress to one person, is not to another. What is stress to us one day, is not to us on another day.

We often put our attention on attempting to control our external circumstances (and all of us know how that goes). This series explores how can we reduce stress and create more ease, joy, and positive moments in our lives, regardless of what life throws at us.

## WHAT IS STRESS ANYWAY?

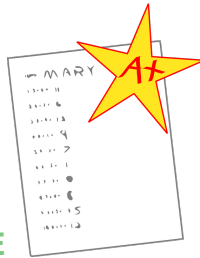
- **Eustress** – Good or healthy stress; results in enhanced function.
  - Examples are exercise, creative passions, calendar events, learning new things, meeting new people, driving in new areas
- **Distress** – Bad or unhealthy stress; results in anxiety, withdrawal, impaired function, burnout.
  - Examples are too many irons in the fire, demands from others infringing on your time, multi-tasking, over consumption of distressing news and media (even music and movies), not sleeping adequately.
- **Allostatic Load**– The amount of demand we can handle before good Eustress becomes Distress.
- **Chronic Stress**– The body adapts to the stress response and doesn’t even know it is in a state of excess tension until symptoms begin to arise.

## STRESS-PRODUCING MENTAL TENDENCIES

- Resistance to what is
- Threat to self-image
  - Defend image with same zeal as we defend life
  - Survival instinct expands to include self-image
- Assumption
  - Reacting to our *interpretation* of what is happening, filtered through our stored memories
- Control
  - Trying to get life to fit my picture of how it should be
  - Anxiety and worry
- Fragmentation – pressure, mental division
  - I’m here but I want to be there. Not living life as it is unfolding, but pining for something else, past, present or future.
- The Two Arrows
  - First arrow = painful life event - it IS unpleasant!
  - Second arrow = our reaction to that painful life event

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## WEEK 1 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Self-awareness is the gateway to personal transformation.

- List your Eustress and Distress situations
- What is your allopathic load? External/Internal
- How is your body Instant Messaging you?
- What are you doing in response to the IM's received?
- What are your go-to mental tendencies?
- What "second arrows" are you shooting yourself with?
- How much of your stress response is coming from "second arrows"

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