

The Starter Kit for Resetting the Brain's Auto Pilot from Stressed to Stress-Free

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This document provides a starter kit, beginning on the next page, for achieving a relative immunity to stress. Be sure to save this PDF to your desktop.

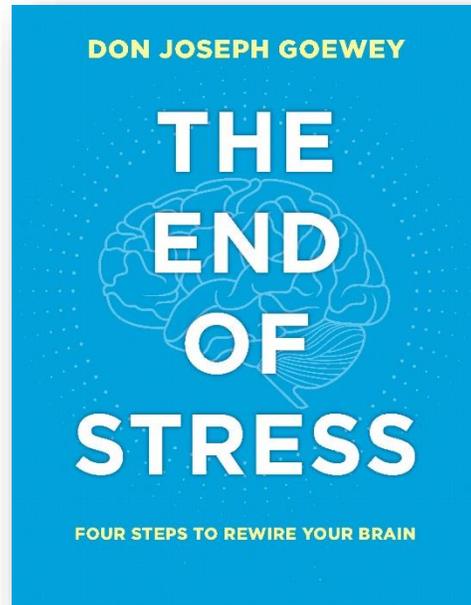
The five tools in the starter kit, if practiced consistently, can begin to change your brain's auto-pilot from one that habituates stress reactions to one that sustains a dynamic state of calm. This, in turn, generates the neurological conditions for enhancing higher brain function.

Neuroplasticity is the scientific term used to define the brain's capacity to change in this way. Briefly, neuroplasticity refers to a change of experience produced by a change in attitude that literally changes brain structure.

In short, your brain structure is attuned to your state of mind.

Make a specific shift in mindset over an eight-week period and the brain will strengthen neural circuits that inhibit stress reactions. In the absence of stress hormones, the higher brain will begin to stimulate the growth of new networks and connections to increase brain capacity. The result is a brain making you smarter, more creative, and more emotionally and socially intelligent.

If you wish to take this change even further, you can purchase my book by clicking on the image of the book cover (above). It will transfer you to Amazon.



The Starter Kit

1. Start Each Day in Quiet.



Every morning wake up ahead of the rush to start your day in quiet.

Go to a place where you won't be disturbed and for five minutes do the following exercise.

- Close your eyes.
- Tilt your head toward your heart.
- Follow your breathing, allowing each breath to soften your heart and open your mind.
- Feel appreciation for the gift of another day of life, and for another day to share with the people you love.
- Set the intention to have a great day, achieving meaningful results in your work.
- Equally, set the intention to succeed at sustaining a mental attitude of love, peace and joy.

This simple process can make a big difference in how your day goes. A number of studies show that when individuals consciously frame their day in this manner, on that day they experience more positive emotions (such as excitement, joy, and pride); they exhibit more interest in their work; and they are more likely to feel connected with others and be more supportive. They are also more likely to sleep better that night.¹

2. Count Your Blessings



A large body of recent research finds that people who are grateful have higher levels of happiness and well-being.²

A proven way to increase your level of happiness is simply counting your blessings, and happiness is the opposite of stress.

People who score high on a standard measure of are more creative than people who are feeling stressed.³ In fact, stress and unhappiness drops your chances of creative insight to slightly below random chance. Meaning, if you have a creative thought it was an accident.

People who practice gratitude also exercise more and have fewer medical visits than those who focus on sources of aggravation.⁴

The research shows that counting your blessing just once a week works better than doing it every day.

Here is all you need to do to get the benefit:

- Just once a week, at bedtime, write down three things that happened during the previous week for which you are grateful.
- Then write down three things in your life for which you feel blessed.

3. Bust Negative, Stress-Provoking Thoughts



We human being cause all kinds of stress reactions in our heads. The problem is the brain's fear center cannot tell the difference between a real threat and one we've imagined. When the mind invents an emergency, the brain's fear center believes it is real, and sets off a stress reaction. Your brain is flooded with stress hormones, debilitating higher brain function.

This tool helps you prevent a stressful thought pattern from exciting a stress reaction, first by bringing it into awareness, and then by collapsing it. The instruction is to practice this tool every day, throughout the day.

Here's how:

- Be aware of stressful, anxiety-provoking situations, or "offending" personalities, or anything else that provokes in you a stressful, unkind, hostile, or pessimistic attitude.
- Notice the negative emotions stressful thoughts carry and the perception of threat it produces.
- Don't try to change these thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. Simply observe them. If you criticize yourself for thinking and feeling negatively, simply observe this as another stress-provoking thought.
- Tell yourself: This thought or feeling is in me, not in reality. Take a moment and see the truth in this. Let it sink in.
- Next, stop believing the stressful thought. Your mind may insist that this thought is true. Ignore its objection for a moment and notice how your experience changes when you stop believing a stress-provoking thought.

When you don't believe a negative thought it has no power. It doesn't turn into stress, anxiety, or pessimism. It's just a thought that passes.

4. Stop Worrying



The Clear Button

Forty percent of Americans worry every day, and yet a study found that 85% of what we worry about never happens. ⁵

This is exactly what the great essayist Michel de Montaigne was referring to when he wrote:

*My life has been full of terrible misfortunes,
most of which never happened.”*

You can bust worried thinking and spare your brain enormous wear and tear by utilizing the Clear Button:

1. Imagine there is a button at the center of your palm that, when pushed, sends a signal to the primitive brain to stop negative, stressful, or pessimistic thinking or judgments.
2. Press the button and keep pressing as you become aware of your breath.
3. Take a breath. On the inhale count “1,” and on the exhale think red.
4. Take another breath. On the inhale count “2,” and on the exhale think blue.
5. Take a third breath. On the inhale count “3,” and on the exhale think green.

Take one more breath and on the exhale, let your mind go completely.

Relax into the present moment.

Assert your intention to be at peace as you relate to whatever challenge you face, confident in the clarity your state of calm now affords you.

5. Take Breaks



At Work, Step Away Periodically

Breaks create the brain state in which the dots begin to connect themselves. Breaks also improve memory and support what is called "memory consolidation," which is essential to envisioning something novel or learning something new. Researchers have found that blood flow to brain networks responsible for memory and learning increases during breaks.⁶

Every 90 minutes or so take a break from your work. Step outside or go to a window and see what Mother Earth is doing. Let your mind relax. Look at the sky, notice the quality of light, watch clouds pass; see the wind blow or the rain fall. In short, stop and stand still long enough to smell the proverbial roses.



Take Walks in Green Settings

Research has found that moderate walking three times weekly for a year increased brain connectivity and brain function.⁷ Improvement was also found in working memory and memory consolidation, which is key to learning.

Walking in a green area is especially beneficial, reducing depression and increasing self-esteem.⁸

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Notes

¹ Lyubomirsky, Sonja, *The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want* Penguin Group US. Kindle Edition. (2007-12-27). Pg. 91

² "Count Your Blessings," Health and Happiness, Time, 2006,
http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1631176_1630611_1630512,00.html

³ Annette Bolte, Thomas Goschke, and Julius Kuhl, "Emotion and Intuition: Effects of Positive and Negative Mood on Implicit Judgments of Semantic Coherence," *Psychological Science* 14 (2003): 416–22.

⁵ Matthews, G., & Wells, A. (2000). Attention, automaticity, and affective disorder. *Behavior modification*, 24, 69-93

⁶ Bernard Mazoyer, Olivier Houdé, et al, Regional cerebral blood flow increases during wakeful rest following cognitive training, *Brain Research Bulletin* Volume 80, Issue 3, 28 September 2009, Pages 133-138

⁷ Erikson, K., Kramer, et al., Exercise training increases size of hippocampus and improves memory, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108: 3017-22, January 31, 2011

⁸ Mental Health Benefits from Nature: Green Exercise Reduces Depression and Aggression in Adults and Children
http://mindbodyfitness.suite101.com/article.cfm/mental_health_benefits_from_nature#ixzzovYX3K9dL