



Simma Lieberman Associates

Stress: Change It, Control it or Let it Go!

You can learn to manage a great deal of your stress by listing each stressor and assessing whether you can change it, control it, or learn to let it go.

We spend so much time worrying about things we can't control that we have no energy left to control the things we can. Then we become so overwhelmed that we feel like our whole life is out of control and we'll never catch up. Once you understand the "change, control, or let go" concept and start putting it into practice, you will be able to deal much better with stressful situations.

So much of our stress comes from trying to control other people, places and things when we simply cannot. Then we are the ones who end up with the stress and resulting headaches! The people we try to control go home, or simply ignore us, barely giving us a thought. That's why it is so easy to build up resentment against other people in situations or jobs, when we don't think we have much control. People tend to blame other people. If you are stressed out because of others, it's important to go through the steps of change, control and letting go. Unless you are ready to leave your job, family, or the planet Earth, chances are you will continue working or being around the "stressful people." Ask yourself if the other person is actually a "stress carrier" or simply has a different style.

Letting go is a process. It takes time, and doesn't happen at once, just because we will it. We have to use our thoughts to control our emotions and our actions. Remind yourself that there are people and events you can't control. All you can control is your attitude and your reactions. It's possible to change your self-talk about the situation. Identify which stresses you can control, and then take appropriate action.

Pick a situation in your life that stresses you out. Can you change it? If so, what can you do, and are you willing to do it? Can you control it? What action can you take? Perhaps you can only change or control a part of it. Do you need to let it go? If so, what can you do in order to let go?

You can view life as unexpected and exciting, or you can view it as scary, because you don't know what the future holds. Take charge, take control or let it go. The choice is yours!

Learn some strategies for reducing your level of stress on the next page.



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Stress Management: How to do it

Let go of things you can't control (and control the things you can)

Identify a specific person, place or thing that stresses you out, and then ask yourself:

1. Can I control it?
2. If yes, how?
3. Am I willing to take control?
4. Can I change it?
5. If yes, how?
6. Am I willing to take action to control or change the situation?
7. If I can't control or change all of it, what part can I control or change?
8. Do I need to let go of it?
9. What techniques can I use to let go of it?
10. What messages can I give myself?

Stop obsessive thoughts and self-talk

Direct Thought Stopping

1. Say or yell to yourself: Stop!
2. Turn focus to the present, asking yourself: Where am I right now?
3. Keep your focus on what is happening in this moment
4. Repeat this as many times as necessary during the day

Thought Substitution

1. Take a deep breath
2. Say or yell to yourself: Stop!
3. Focus on what doing now, what is happening in the moment.
4. Turn your attention to your family place, a place where you feel good, like Hawaii or a meadow, picture it in your mind, the sights, the smells, the sounds, and focus on that.
5. Notice the stress reducing in your body

Breathing: the Ultimate Letting Go

1. Set your alarm 3 minutes early in the morning, and then have it ring again three minutes later, and practice deep breaths during that time.
2. Listen to Simma's interview for a 2 1/2 min guided breathing exercise