

How to Create **MONSTER STRESS**

Here are some sure-fire ways to wrack your system with nerve-wrangling, muscle-knotting, stomach-churning stress. If you want to alleviate or prevent stress, **DON'T DO THESE:**

- ★ **Expectations:** Believing another person will change for you or do as you think they should just because you expect it of them is unrealistic and unfair (to both of you). Sometimes these things happen, but not because of your expectations.
- ★ **Assumptions:** Mind-reading or thinking you know how others think, feel or will act is another name for expectation. It creates stress no matter what you call it.
- ★ **Projections:** Putting your thoughts or beliefs on others is an act of imagination and not reality. Projections are just assumptions in reverse.
- ★ **Judgments:** “You can’t judge a book by its cover,” and you can’t judge a person by an act or event, by their appearance, or by their opinion. You’re a person, so the same is true for you.
- ★ **Comparisons:** In a world of individuals, there is no such thing as better than or worse than, only different from. Comparing is simply another name for judging.
- ★ **Perfectionism:** No one can do “the best,” but only their best. And your (or someone else’s) best may be different from day to day. Being impeccable is an admirable trait, whereas trying to be perfect is crazy-making (and impossible).
- ★ **Rigidity:** Absolutes and “my way or the highway” immobilizes progress and connection to others.
- ★ **Worry:** Obsessing about what hasn’t happened yet, and may never happen, keeps you out of the present and the ability to do something to resolve whatever it is you’re worried about.
- ★ **Regret:** Regret is just worry about the past. If there is something that can be done about it, do it and then let it go. If nothing can be done, skip the do it step.
- ★ **Self-Doubt:** We all have some of this, but when it rules us we can become paralyzed by second-guessing or indecision.
- ★ **Overwhelm:** Too much is too much. When you don’t learn to prioritize, delegate, or simplify, you burn out.
- ★ **Blame:** Blame changes nothing. Take responsibility for yourself, and hold others accountable for themselves without playing the “blame game.”
- ★ **Shoulds:** A should is a Subversive Humiliating Opinion Undermining Life’s Desires!” Shoulds keep you weighted down under unnecessary inner pressure.
- ★ **Personalizations:** Taking something someone else says personally feeds self-judgment and is rarely accurate anyway. What people say is more about them than about you.
- ★ **Polarized Thinking:** Black or white, good or bad, right or wrong is the offspring of judgment and perfectionism. When there’s no middle ground, there’s nowhere to go, no room for growth.