



## Lecture 1: Stress Mapping and Notetaking

In this session I'll going to prep you to use a daily stress mapping and notetaking system.

Labelling your stress is one of the most important things you can do to get more control of it and reduce it. You want to bring your stress in to focus and make it less fuzzy in your mind. When things are fuzzy they are harder to see and harder to change. So, labels are useful here because they clearly define your stress as stress, your stress then becomes more solid and clear in your mind, and that allows you to focus on the features of your stress, understand it with more clarity and change it. In essence, you get to hold stress with both your hands and creatively mold it like clay.

Feel the power that this metaphor of molding like clay suggests. It's counter-intuitive – because normally we push things out of our minds that cause us pain. We're instinctually driven to recoil from painful things and push them out of our awareness. The irony about this is that when we push stress away from the conscious mind it gets more power over us in the unconscious mind. Out-of-awareness we have no way to influence it and change it. So, bringing stress in to your conscious awareness will allow you to get creative and flexible in response to it.

In order to achieve this sort of clarity you need to be willing to do what I call stress mapping every day for 30 days. Don't worry, this is fast and easy – it will take you 30 seconds a day. But stress mapping will give you more focus and control over the problem.

Having said that, to achieve this sort of focus you need to devote time it every day. You're a busy executive or a high powered professional or a stay-at-home Mum juggling kids, family, friends and perhaps part time work. But you need to make the decision that reducing your stress is a high priority – once you've decided then you can commit to it – this is just like learning an musical instrument, running a marathon or learning a language. The easiest way to achieve this is to block out time in your scheduler for 30 days for stress reduction. Please stop the recording and do that now, mornings are best for this, and once you've scheduled it in, come back to me and restart the recording.

Stress Mapping is a daily tool that allows you to chart your highest level of stress each day. In the evening you'll be prompted to rate your stress level and say a few words about the stressors you experienced on that day. Rating your stress at one 1, 2 or 3 means you experienced low-level stress, rating it at 4, 5 or 6 means mid-level stress, rating your stress at 8 or higher means you experienced extremely high levels of stress on that day. 8-10 is very high stress and if you're in this range regularly it can signal you need extra help.





You've been prompted to sign up to an SMS reminder prompt system. Through those SMS messages you'll be reminding to complete a stress rater and make quick notes about stressors in your day, each evening around 7pm.

So, each day you rate your level of stress and you write a few words about the stressors you experienced on that day. Each week we meet online and I give you a charted stress map that allows you to see your stress levels over the week and we talk about the highs and lows. We use the map to tailor your stress reduction strategies to the unique experiences you have in your life.

Most important is that you're going to be prompted to choose a goal for the level of stress you'd like to achieve within 21 days. Like the rating system, you choose a number between 1 and 10. Note that there's no 0 – that's because some level of stress is normal and healthy. Generally, levels 1 2 and 3 would be considered normal stress levels. These are healthy stress levels that if you feel them, you find them helpful to push you toward completing a task or addressing a problem.

So, you choose a target goal and all our work is to get you to that goal within the time we have together.

Ok, so now you know how this system works and you're ready to go! In the next session you're going to practice shifting the focus of your attention. This a mental exercise, a little like a guided meditation, and best to do it at home when you're safe and relaxed.

Remember that you can book at free 20-minute consult with me directly [here](#).



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