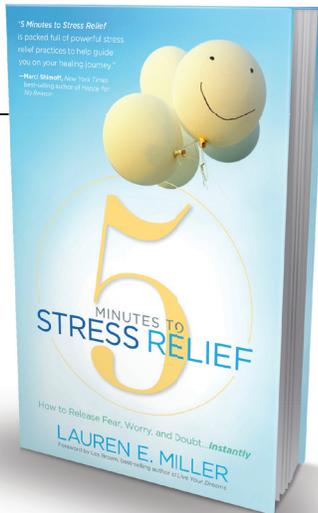


5 Minutes to Stress Relief

How to Release Fear, Worry, and Doubt... Instantly

by Lauren E. Miller



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SUCCESS Points

This book will teach you how to:

- Identify the real source of your stress
- Transform your physical, emotional and spiritual experiences
- Feel complete
- Release stress

What You Focus on Increases

Minding your thoughts and words can reduce your stress.

QUICK OVERVIEW

In her latest book Lauren Miller combines spiritual wisdom with Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) to help readers de-stress. She opens *5 Minutes to Stress Release* by delving into what stress really is, what causes it, and explains how unraveling the source can help you reduce or eliminate it.

Miller is a stress reduction expert who has used the techniques she shares to deal with two extremely stressful situations simultaneously—divorce and cancer. By consciously choosing your perspective, thoughts and words, you can shape your life, she says.

APPLY AND ACHIEVE

Miller explains that feeling love and acceptance can relieve stress. In contrast, feeling judged or judgmental can cut you off from all sorts of helpful and healthy emotions. That's why one of the practices she prescribes is a "No Judgment Day."

Choose one day this week to be your "No Judgment Day." For 24 hours, refrain from criticizing or condemning yourself and the people around you. Monitor your words and your thoughts. If you start thinking something negative or judgmental, hold that thought captive. Refocus your attention on the *cause* of the behavior or attitudes you feel are "judge worthy." Try to empathize with the person (or yourself) instead.

SUMMARY

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Do any of the following statements sound familiar? According to the American Psychological Association:

Three-quarters of Americans experience symptoms related to stress in a given month, including:

- 77% who experience physical symptoms
- 73% who experience psychological symptoms

One-third of Americans feel they are living with extreme stress.

About one-half of Americans (48%) feel that their stress has increased in the past five years.

Money and work are the leading causes of stress (mentioned by 75% of Americans).

Physical symptoms of stress include:

- Fatigue (51%)
- Change in appetite (23%)
- Headache (44%)
- Teeth grinding (17%)
- Upset stomach (34%)
- Change in sex drive (15%)
- Muscle tension (30%)
- Dizziness (13%)

Psychological symptoms of stress include:

- Irritability or anger (50%)
- Lack of energy (45%)
- Nervousness (45%)
- Feeling as though you could cry (35%)

Stress impacts lives in dramatic ways:

- About one-half of Americans say that stress has a negative impact on both their personal and professional lives.
- About one-third (31%) of employed adults have difficulty managing work and family responsibilities.
- More than one-third (35%) of employed adults cite jobs interfering with their family or personal time as a significant source of stress.
- Stress causes more than half of Americans (54%) to fight with people close to them.
- One in four people report that they have been alienated from a friend or family member because of stress.
- 8% of Americans connect stress to divorce or separation.
- Workplace stress costs more than \$300 billion each year in healthcare, missed work, and stress reduction.
- Workers who report that they are stressed incur healthcare costs that are 46% higher, or an average of \$600 more per person, than non-stressed employees.

Corporate stress is one of the most common forms of stress in our society. Public speaking, job security, lateral communication, absenteeism,

meetings, time crunch/deadlines, performance reviews, quotas, budgets, and phobias of crowds, closed spaces (elevators), and flying are among the top triggers of corporate stress.

Take Action

Stress is simply a signal within your body that gives you the opportunity to identify and adjust your perception of any situation. You are not a victim to life unless you choose to be, and many people who suffer from workplace stress fall into that category.

Practice being the observer of your life instead of the reactor. Practice becoming a curious human being about everything that unfolds before you. When you play the part of watcher, you begin to remember that you have time to consider how you want to respond. Because we live in such a fast-paced society, we often fall victim to time. Carve out moments between what happens before you and your desired response to it. Practice slowing time down. By thinking before you react, you choose how you want to form your life.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON BEHIND ALL OF THE STRESS?

When experiencing any stress in this life, it is beneficial to understand the beliefs you hold behind your stress. You form your choices by your thoughts; you form your life by your choices. It is also useful to explore the meaning behind the emotions and the words you use to describe the stress in your life.

Complete this sentence and write your response:

I feel stressed out when:

What is stress? If you look up the word in the dictionary, *stress* is a force that strains (for example, creates a great demand on one's emotions and resources) or deforms. You often give away the power to define whom you are to people, events, and circumstances in your life, thereby creating endless opportunities for stress.

Have you ever considered the possibility that you are complete, apart from any event or person in your life? How would that affect your daily stress level?

What emotions are behind your stress? Here are some to consider:

<i>Fear</i>	<i>Embarrassment</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>
<i>Invalidation</i>	<i>Anger</i>	<i>Worry</i>
<i>Doubt</i>	<i>Guilt</i>	<i>Shame</i>

Actually, stress is just the icing on the cake. The cake is the main emotion behind the stress, often disguised by a physical ailment (for example, back pain, headache, or neck pain). You hide your true emotions in the guise of

Be Patient with Yourself

People gravitate toward that which is familiar to them in life. If you are used to the energy of victimization, which manifests in complaining and focusing on what is *not* working out, that's where you will hang out. When you choose to move into the "unfamiliar," which might include shifting your focus to what *is* working out for you and taking full responsibility for your life, be patient with yourself and the process. It takes time and commitment to make the shift, so perhaps start with a month of daily practice on the techniques that work for you and go from there.

physical pain, which is actually the physical expression of your emotional pain.

You often suppress your true emotions because you have grown up receiving messages such as: "Don't think," "don't feel," or "don't talk." Most emotional and physical problems are due to unresolved physical events that happened in your lifetime.

If you take time to observe very young children, you will see that, by nature, they do not even know what stress is. Why? They do not have all of the disconnects and blocks in their body's energy system that you have created throughout your lifetime (because of your past pain in life) in order to, from your perception, survive.

As we get older and receive negative feedback on certain emotions that we freely express as children, we begin to experience stress or pressure to withhold our authentic self for fear of judgment. As adults, we forget that life is about experiences. Your emotions are meant to be experienced, not defined. You have allowed others to define your emotional state as good or bad, and acceptable or unacceptable, and you have built your sense of self-worth around other people's opinions of you.

Stress comes when you deny yourself the experience of your authentic feelings for fear of judgment. When you reconnect with your feelings and emotional state without judgment, you free yourself to love and accept all that you are, just as you are, in spite of any circumstance in life.

Behind the Scenes of Stress

"What am I afraid of?"

Behind every experience of anger is a fear. The next time you feel angry, ask yourself, "What if I fail?" Know that *your* definition of failure flows directly from your belief system.

"What will other people think?"

When we worry about what other people will think, we end up becoming our own publicist and exhaust ourselves by protecting our reputation. We stress out doing daily damage control when we could be putting that energy toward learning, growing, and creating solutions.

"What am I worried about?"

The German word for *worry* means "to strangle" and the Greek word for *worry* means "to divide the mind." The word *doubt* means to be uncertain about something. Most of the time, stress is felt when you doubt yourself and your ability to handle a situation.

"Why do I feel disconnected and unsafe?"

Human beings need to feel safe and connected for inspiration, creativity, and productivity to take place. Positive feedback is a powerful motivator, and it can come from within, such as personal satisfaction and affirmation, or from coworkers and reviews. When you practice remembering your worth, the world around you will also begin to recognize and respond to it.

WHEN WILL YOU BE HAPPY?

Anthony de Mello's book, *The Way to Love*, speaks the simple truth. An "attachment" is an emotional state of clinging caused by the belief that, without some particular thing or person, you cannot be happy.

A powerful daily mantra is: “I am okay with or without this.”

Attachment contains two elements:

1. *The thrill you experience when you get what you are attached to.*
2. *The anxiety that always accompanies the attachment for fear that one may lose it.*

You waste so much energy in life striving for happiness, and say, “If I can only lose this weight, then I will be happy,” or “If I could only make this amount of money, then I will be happy.” During my experience with cancer, I remember thinking, at a low moment, “If I weren’t bald and breastless, I would be happy and able to handle this.”

You think, “If I can get this one thing, then I will be happy.” *This is not true.*

Complete the two powerful statements, which will reveal your attachments:

I am okay with:

I am okay without:

If you feel anxiety and stress inside when you speak the word *without*, then you know you have an attachment.

Some people have said, “Well, I’m *not* okay without this particular thing or person.” Great! Brutal honesty is the first step to healing false beliefs.

A powerful daily mantra is: “I am okay with or without this.” *Go for it!* You will notice that, when you release the tension caused by needing something in order to feel okay about you, you have an endless supply of energy to put toward creative ideas and solutions to any situation at hand.

Take Action

Fast from negative thinking this week. One of your greatest strengths lies in your ability to control the act of labeling your thoughts as threatening. As life unfolds before you, you have thoughts about what you experience or encounter. These thoughts can remain in a place of simple observation or take on the ability to create an emotion—good or bad—depending on the labels you use.

As soon as you label a thought as threatening (that is, you will not be okay in some way, shape, or form), you give birth to a negative emotion such as fear, doubt, or worry. The fuel behind these emotions usually comes down to this type of thought: “I’m not okay” or “I won’t be able to handle this.”

Your greatest ability to tune into all available options for solution-based thinking flows directly from a place of remembering that *no matter what happens*, you have the God-given ability to handle it *and* you are always okay.

A moment in my own life offers a great illustration for this truth. My 10-year-old son walked in to my room

and found me weeping on my knees after I had lost all of my hair to chemo. He snuck up behind me and put his little hands on my head.

“Mom, don’t cry. Your soul still has hair!”

Instantly, I stopped crying and asked him to repeat that wisdom.

You can apply this truth to all of life. No matter what threat you feel at any single moment in life, remember your natural, God-given state of being: “You are safe and complete in God, lacking nothing.” When you seek that which is already within and around you, it is as if you are asking a fish if he knows where the water is. Wake up and release all of your attachments to the outside things that you think will make you happy.

QUICK STRESS RELIEF TIPS THAT YOU CAN DO IN LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES!

Create your own anchor.

You have the ability to anchor any positive experience to your biology by simply activating as many sensory channels as possible. You can use your imagination or real-life experiences to do this.

For example, while I was visiting my parents in Pennsylvania this past summer, I was standing in my mom’s beautiful, expansive flower garden, surrounded by the warmth of the sun. The colors in this garden were breathtakingly vibrant, and a beautiful, sweet-smelling aroma floated through it. Butterflies of every imaginable color, hummingbirds, and chipmunks filled the garden. I was overwhelmed with expansive inner peace, gratitude for my life in that moment, and joy to the point that I had shrrills (chills from God’s spirit within me) running all over my skin. At the peak state of this spectacularly inspiring sensory experience, I placed my right hand over my heart and took a deep breath.

I am now back in Colorado, working on my computer; however, I now have the ability to resurrect that powerful sensory experience from this past summer in my mom’s garden by simply placing my right hand over my heart and taking a deep breath as I close my eyes. For a moment, I can take myself back to that beautiful moment and experience.

This week, create your own positive anchor. Choose a moment when you feel a positive emotional state that you would like to anchor into

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your body. This can also work with your imagination, as long as you elicit as many sensory modalities as possible.

For example, you may close your eyes and think of a time that you felt profound peace and calm—perhaps you were standing on the beach or in the mountains. Engage your imagination and resurrect your sensory experiences around this memory: What did it look like, feel like, and sound like? Increase your connection to the positive emotional and sensory experiences around this memory and, at the peak state, choose your physical anchor: Make the “OK” sign (touch your thumb to your pointer finger and stick the remaining three fingers upward), clasp your hands together, and place your hand over your heart. Be creative! You will be able to resurrect this positive memory, and the emotions and senses that went with it, any time in your future.

Hourly movement

Nothing thrives when stagnant, so get up and move throughout your day. Take a one- to five-minute movement moment every hour. Consider different ways to move when you are in transition and be spontaneous.

Have fun!

Noodle release

Buy yourself a swimming pool noodle (a Styrofoam flotation device, usually found at Target or K-Mart) and cut it in half. The next time you

Wake up and release all of your attachments to the outside things that you think will make you happy.

are ticked off about something or with someone, take your noodle and whack your bed, couch, or any object that will not be damaged. You can verbalize your anger as you let it out. Again, I usually end up cracking myself up doing this, which instantly puts life in to perspective. This is an awesome stress relief technique for children. When my daughter gets mad, she will often say, “Mom, I just need to go get the noodle!”

CONCLUSION: A MOMENT OF PEACE

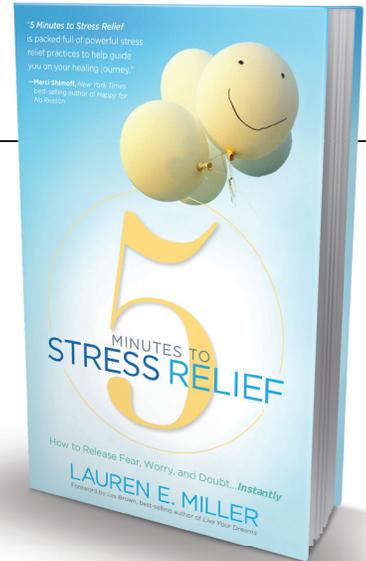
Your perspective in life is extremely innovative and expedient at gathering information to support its view. If your perspective is one of negativity, such as “Nothing ever works out for me,” then evidence of that view will start showing up all around you. If your perspective is one of love, gratitude, and appreciation, which says, “Everything unfolds perfectly for me in life,” then the evidence will appear to support that view. Remember: You choose every day of your life on Earth.

Get In Alignment

You are more likely to achieve your desired outcome as you create congruency in the following areas:

- **Spiritual/Vision:** What is the bigger purpose for your desired outcome? How does your desired outcome benefit other people? Will it create a greater good? How so?
- **Actions:** What actions will you take to accomplish your desired outcome? What will you do?
- **Values:** Is this desired outcome aligned with your beliefs and with what you value most in life? Why is having this outcome important to you?
- **Identity:** Is this desired outcome aligned with who you are?
- **Capabilities:** What God-given gifts and talents will you need to use or access in order to achieve your desired outcome?
- **Environment:** Where, when, and with whom will you create this desired outcome?

Take time this week to make a list of 10 things you value most in life. As new goals emerge throughout the week, give yourself permission to step back from the “doing” aspects of accomplishing those goals. Reflect on how those goals align with what you value most. Think about your God-given talents and skills, who you are, who is in alignment with what you value most in life, and the greater good that will result in your life and the lives of others when you complete your desired outcome. Practicing this reflection process in your life will create congruency within—spiritually, emotionally, and physically—and result in clarity of focus, productivity, and a sense of purpose.



About the Author

Laura Miller is a stress-release expert, an award-winning speaker and best-selling author. She is the founder of StressSolutionsUniversity.com and has been featured in *Redbook*, *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Family Circle*, as well as on CNBC, MSNBC, Lifetime and The Discovery Channel.

Action Steps

Get more out of this SUCCESS Book Summary by applying what you've learned. Here are a few questions, thoughts and activities to get you started.

1. When do you feel stressed out?
2. Go through the list of emotions in this summary and identify which may be causing your stress.
3. What causes you to worry? How could you reframe that situation to reduce worry?
4. Are you waiting for the perfect circumstances to be happy?
5. List five positive things about your life right now. What is going right in your life?
6. Create an anchor this week. (See the how-to tips under "Quick Stress Relief Tips That You Can Do in Less Than Five Minutes!")
7. Take the "No Judgment Day" challenge as described in the "Apply and Achieve" section of the summary.

Recommended Reading

If you enjoyed the summary of **5 Minutes to Stress Relief**, check out:

How to Stop Worrying and Start Living by Dale Carnegie

Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers by Robert Sapolsky

Happy for No Reason by Marci Shimoff

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