



FRIDAY'S LAWS

DISTRESS REDUCTION EXERCISE

BASED ON FRIDAY'S LAWS

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These are stressful times, to put it simply. But stress does not need to mean distress, or suffering. Whenever you recognize that you're feeling distressed, and you're ready to release and reduce those feelings, this exercise can help.

You want the Adult area of your brain (Upper Cerebral Cortex) to guide the Parent (Frontal Lobe) and Child (Temporal Lobe) areas, so that you can think effectively. The concepts presented here are explored in greater detail in the book "Friday's Laws: How to become normal when you're not and how to stay normal when you are."

First, begin by taking in a deep breath, breathing in through your nose, for a count of four:

1 — 2 — 3 — 4

Pause. Then exhale, through your mouth, for a count of six:

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6

Do this several times.

Now that you have regulated your breathing, you're ready to begin the exercise.



Why this works: When people become over-stressed, we tend to hold our breath — preparing the mind and body for fight or flight. But this also builds up carbon dioxide levels in the lungs and brain. By doing this 4/6 breathing exercise, you can begin a rebalancing process called hemostasis, which is necessary for good physical and mental health.

Read the following aloud to yourself, reflecting with a 4/6 breath after each one.

1

LIFE IS DIFFICULT.

Life is difficult because it's supposed to be. Even when everything works right, life will still be difficult for me. I'm no longer in my mother's womb, where it was perfect, where there were no needs and no wants. That was my Period of Awe. That was the Station. I came from perfect. That was the only time in my life when my life was not difficult. My psychological Child brain is constantly trying to get me back to the Station, to perfect, to difficulty-free existence. The goal is not to make my Child grow up. The goal is to know a little quicker when the Child is giving me crazy ideas of danger and bad things to come.

I'm on my womb-to-tomb trip. There is no Station, no one place to arrive at once and for all. The true joy of life is the trip. The Station is only a dream that constantly outdistances me. So, I am going to laugh more and I am going to cry less. My life must be lived as I go along. The Station will come soon enough.



In 1 — 2 — 3 — 4. PAUSE.
Out 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6

2

PERCEPTION IS REALITY.

My mind works in the following progression: perceptions, thoughts, emotions, behaviors, symptoms. This is how my mind works. What I perceive leads to what I think, which leads to what I feel, which leads to what I do, which creates my symptoms. I have good symptoms, and I have bad symptoms. I am doing this exercise to reduce the symptoms I do not want.

I want to calibrate my Neurotic Delusion of Control (NDC). My NDC wants me to believe I am in control of my life. My NDC is the source of my crazy ideas, which are a normal and necessary part of daily functioning. But I am not my ideas. My NDC is in a constant state of flux. I seek to control only what I can control.

Words literally change the structure of my brain. I am using my Adult to change my thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. I can reduce my negative symptoms by changing my thinking.



In 1 — 2 — 3 — 4. PAUSE.
Out 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6

3

CHANGE IS THE TOUGHEST THING A HUMAN BEING CAN DO.

I can change WHO I am. WHO I am is more important than all the things that I DO. Life is best described as a Struggle of Adaptation. When people don't adapt and change, their lives are more difficult than they need to be. Right now, I am consciously changing myself, which is very difficult to do. I have self-compassion for how difficult this is. How I adapt to this struggle becomes the essence of my living successfully. My goal is to know, a little quicker when my crazy ideas are crazy. When I am doing significant and substantial changing, other people will be aware only of the outward, observable symptoms of my change. My sense of self will be different.



In 1 — 2 — 3 — 4. PAUSE.
Out 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6

4

YOU CAN NEVER CHANGE ANOTHER HUMAN BEING; YOU CAN ONLY CHANGE YOURSELF. ONCE YOU CHANGE, THEY CHANGE, BUT YOU CANNOT CHANGE THEM.

True change occurs inside me, at the level of the temporal lobe, and can only be guided by the influences of my Upper Cerebral Cortex and my Frontal Lobe, which I am calling my Adult and Parent. When it comes to changing the who-I-am, I struggle mightily. This is hard. I'd prefer to change other people, not me. And my Child brain wants me to stay as I am. My Child wants me to change others, not myself. But change must begin with me.

Once I do change, I'll look at other people and situations differently. If I change the way I look at things, the things I look at change. Perception is, after all, reality.



In 1 — 2 — 3 — 4. PAUSE.
Out 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6

5

**I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR
EVERYTHING I DO AND SAY. I
AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR
YOUR RESPONSE.**

Someone else may be responsible for why I'm struggling, but I am 100% responsible for how I react. No one makes me feel anything without my permission. My feelings are my own. My reactions are statements about me, not about the people or situations with which I am dealing. When I realize this, I can think and live more effectively.

I have to own my feelings if I am going to do something about them. If I think that someone else is responsible for what I think, feel, or do, then that person has more influence on my life than he or she deserves. I am responsible for my responses, and also for my life.

Happiness is my responsibility. It doesn't come from the outside in. If I am more responsible for my responses, I can be happier because I am in charge of my life.



In 1 — 2 — 3 — 4. PAUSE.
Out 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6

6

**THE FUTURE AND THE PAST ARE
SELDOM AS GOOD OR AS BAD
AS WE ANTICIPATE OR
REMEMBER.**

Most of my problems deal with my past and my future. I can separate my past and my future from how I am functioning now. My future and my past do not exist. No one can see five seconds, five minutes, or five years ago; and no one can see five seconds, minutes, or years into the future. The past at best describes an agreement of what people say occurred. The future at best is a probability of what will occur.

My Child brain produces the intense memories and projections I've experienced as well as my hopes and fears of what will happen in my future. Using my Adult to determine the probabilities and possibilities of what past events have occurred to me and the probabilities and possibilities of what future events will happen is important. I will not let my Child make major life decisions.



In 1 — 2 — 3 — 4. PAUSE.
Out 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6

7

NOBODY HAS A SQUEAKY-CLEAN PSYCHE.

I do not have all the answers. I have not figured out how to not have any wants or any needs. I am not free of emotional baggage.

I can ponder my life's lake, where each foot of water in my psychological lake represents a year in my life. I can only see a foot or two down into my lake. These two feet of water that I can see represent my consciousness. The depth of water beneath these two feet of visible water is my unconsciousness. I have a healthy lake and life and the water in my whole lake is constantly circulating. A goal of keeping my life-lake healthy is to circulate both water and memories freely. Sometimes, when things go bump in the night, I can seek the help of someone I trust to talk about the things that are bothering me.

Nobody is perfect; nobody has a squeaky-clean psyche. I am going to make my life as productive and appropriate as possible.



In 1 — 2 — 3 — 4. PAUSE.
Out 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6

8

THE ONLY THING THAT LASTS FOREVER IS NOW.

I can get obsessed with time. I have so many regrets over things that happened to me yesterday and I have so many fears of what may or may not happen to me tomorrow. My regrets and fears are twin thieves that rob me of today. My Child and my Parent constantly swirl my regrets and fears to the point that sometimes my Adult has trouble fixing things for me. The past and future do not exist in absolute terms for my Adult. I cannot see 5 minutes from now, or 5 minutes ago. My Adult knows that NOW is the only thing that lasts forever for me while I am alive.

My Parent and my Child will not dictate my behavior when I realize the only thing that lasts forever is now.

I will live in the present, in the eternal now, the time and space that lasts forever for as long as I breathe.



Now breathe in deeply through
your nose for a count of 4.
Pause. Exhale though your
mouth for a count of 6.

And what is good has gotten better and
what is bad has gone.