



Based on TED talk «How to make stress your friend» by Kelly McGonigal

[http://www.ted.com/talks/kelly\\_mcgonigal\\_how\\_to\\_make\\_stress\\_your\\_friend](http://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend)

Stress. It makes your heart pound, your breathing quicken and your forehead sweat. But while stress has been made into a public health enemy, new research suggests that stress may only be bad for you if you believe that to be the case. Psychologist Kelly McGonigal urges us to see stress as a positive, and introduces us to an unsung mechanism for stress reduction: reaching out to others.

## Kelly McGonigal How to make stress your friend

### Before watching

1. How much stress have you experienced in the last year?
2. Do you believe that stress is harmful for your health?
3. Can changing how you think about stress make you healthier?



### 1. Explain the meanings of the words / phrases from the presentation.

1. moderate amount	8. to harass sb	15. cuddle hormone	22. stress-induced damage
2. cardiovascular disease	9. to pound (heart)	16. to fine-tune instincts	23. stress resilience
3. to turn sth into sth	10. to break out into a sweat	17. to prime sb to do sth	24. inevitable
4. to die prematurely	11. to meet the challenge	18. to crave contact	25. appreciation for stress
5. homicide	12. blood vessels constrict	19. pituitary gland	26. life expectancy
6. impromptu speech	13. to redeem oneself from	20. to nudge sb to do sth	27. to handle sth
7. unbeknownst to sb	14. hype	21. to bottle sth up	28. inflammatory

## ■ While watching

### 2. Watch the first episode and fill in the gaps with the missing information.

People who experienced a lot of stress in the previous year had a 43 percent ..... (1). But that was only true for the people who also believed that stress is ..... (2) for your health. People who experienced a lot of stress but did not view stress as harmful were no more ..... (3). In fact, they had the lowest risk of dying of anyone in the study, including people who had relatively little stress. Now the researchers ..... (4) that over the eight years they were tracking deaths, 182,000 Americans died ..... (5), not from stress, but from the belief that stress is bad for you. That is over 20,000 deaths a year. Now, if that estimate is correct, that would make believing stress is bad for you the 15th largest cause of death in the United States last year, killing more people than skin cancer, HIV/AIDS and homicide.

**Thesis 1: When you change your mind about stress, you can change your body's response to stress.**

### 3. Watch the second episode and explain the outcomes of the social stress test.

### 4. Watch the third episode and explain the thesis 2. Fill in the gaps.

**Thesis 2: «I no longer want to get rid of your stress. I want to make you better at stress».**

To understand this side of stress, we need to talk about a hormone, oxytocin, and I know oxytocin has already gotten as much hype as a hormone can get. It even has its own cute nickname, the ..... (1), because it's ..... (2) when you hug someone. But this is a very small part of what oxytocin is involved in. Oxytocin is a neuro-hormone. It ..... (3) your brain's social instincts. It ..... (4) things that strengthen close relationships. Oxytocin makes you ..... (5) physical contact with your friends and family. It enhances your empathy. It even makes you more willing to help and support the people you care about. Some people have even suggested we should ..... (6) oxytocin to become more compassionate and caring. But here's what most people don't understand about oxytocin. It's a stress hormone. Your pituitary gland pumps this stuff out as part of the stress response. It's as much a part of your stress response as the adrenaline that makes your heart pound. And when oxytocin is released in the stress response, it is motivating you to seek support. Your biological stress response is ..... (7) you to tell someone how you feel, instead of ..... (8). Your stress response wants to make sure you notice when someone else in your life is struggling so that you can support each other. When life is difficult, your stress response wants you to be surrounded by people who care about you.

### 5. Watch the fourth episode and finish the sentences.

1. Oxytocin doesn't only act on your brain. It also acts on your body, and one of its main roles in your body is (...)

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2. Your heart has receptors for this hormone, and oxytocin helps heart cells (...)

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3. So when you reach out to others under stress, either to seek support or to help someone else, you release more of this hormone, (...)

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