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## Your Choices in Regards to Stress

“If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment.” Marcus Aurelius (Roman emperor, AD 161-180)

I have been talking about anxiety and stress quite a bit in my weekly messages. It seems that more and more people are experiencing a great deal of stress as a result of their sense of their current situations and/or their life choices. Just yesterday I was speaking with a gentleman who told me, very confidently, that he really had no choice but to accept his life the way it is. I listen to people of all ages tell me that they have to “stay the course” and that they cannot change things.

The truth about stress is that we create it. Stress is caused by resisting reality. Without the world outside of us telling us that things should be other than the way they are, we could not experience any emotional stress.

Consider - does a leaf blowing in the wind feel stress? No, it floats and goes wherever the wind takes it. No outside influence so therefore no stress. An airplane flies faster through the sky by adjusting its wing configuration to minimize resistance. Less resistance, more speed and less stress on the engines and wings.

The ‘stress as resistance’ model is so powerful because once you get it, you will see that your experience of stress doesn’t come from life pushing on you - it comes from you pushing back.

Change happens easily when you focus on changing what is within your control; your attitude and your actions. When we approach the circumstances of our life from a resistant or reactive (emotional) place, they tend to seem overwhelming; when we approach them from a different point of view, we can often overwhelm them.

As you learn to stop resisting reality, let go of trying to control what is outside of your control and make clear choices about how you want to be and act in the world. I promise that you will find yourself with less stress and more peace.

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