

**EVERYTHING
I WISH I'D
KNOWN
ABOUT
STRESS**

A Hopeful Toolkit

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floe.

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1. Brain-dump all the things which are causing you stress right now, no matter how big or small. [10 minutes]

2. When it comes to weather, meteorological agencies always give storms and hurricanes a different name. For example, we had Storm Eunice, here in the UK, in 2022. Go through the list you've just written and assign each a hurricane name. My biggest source of stress now is called Hurricane Nadia. [2 minutes]

3. Scan your body from the tips of your toes to the top of your head, whilst thinking of those stressful hurricanes you've just named. Take your time to scan each part of your body, to tune in with it and to fully understand what it feels to be holding that stress. Where is it most prevalent? Where are you holding it? [5 minutes]

4. Remain tuned in to yourself, and brainstorm at least three things (more if you can think of them) that you could do to eliminate or reduce the stress itself or the effects of the stress. [5 minutes]

5. Of those ideas, reflect upon which one is the kindest to you, full of self-compassion, if not necessarily the easiest, and then highlight it in some way [2 minutes]

6. Choose the biggest stress hurricane from your list. Time travel back to a time before the storm. Are the causes, the chain of events, the reasons, the 'why' clear yet? If so, write about it in as much clarity as you've mustered. If not, turn to one of the other stress hurricanes and work through that in the same way. [8 minutes]

7. Think of someone you care about. Imagine they're right in the middle of *your* stress hurricane. Write them a letter including the advice you'd give. [11 minutes]

8. Some of our greatest learnings come from the most horrible and hardest of places. Consider what this stress hurricane has taught you, perhaps, about communication, boundaries, your resilience, your support network. What might you do differently, going forward? [5 minutes]

9. What stressbusters are healthy and kind for you short- and long-term? What brings you joy, lights you up, makes you happy? How have you soothed and grounded yourself in the past when you've been frustrated or angry, or felt trapped, hopeless, or overwhelmed? Write a list of as many as you can think of and, if it helps, write them inside the image of a

box representing your self-care toolkit – because that’s what these things are. [6 minutes]

10. Complete this sentence:

Peace would look and feel like... [2 minutes]

Make space for yourself

If you find yourself overextended and overcommitted, it is important to alleviate that pressure as quickly as possible to make way for breathing space. Consider what can be cancelled, delegated, postponed, or re-negotiated, and then be sure to cancel, delegate, postpone and renegotiate it. *Your health is truly the most important thing.*

Start subtracting

This is one of my very favourite approaches to managing stress: if life doesn't add up, start subtracting. Instead of adding this project and that responsibility on top of what's already a topsy-turvy platform of busyness, stress, and anxiety, start removing the things which aren't important, no longer serve, or keep tripping you up. For example, remove toxic people, working outside of work hours, clutter, bad habits, meaningless tasks, obligations, using social media, social events you don't enjoy, gossip, half-finished and never-to-be-begun-again craft projects, expired ideas, email subscriptions, outdated clothing, outdated food, and so on. Remove as much as possible that's creating unnecessary noise and cluttering up your life and headspace.

Things I could remove:

My stress log:

My stressor I will tackle first:

Actions I could take:

No matter how big or how small, what went well today, this week, or this month?

What didn't go well and why?

The things I'm stuck on, or the recurring issues or stressors, are:

What I need to do about those:

Lesson log, or 'what I've learned':

My next priorities:

My bliss list:

My diss list:

1. What would my ideal day look like?

2. Am I happy with my job? If not, why not?

3. What job would I love to do? What career feels more aligned?

4. Something I'd like to do more of, regularly, is...

5. What does 'success' mean to me? What does it look and feel like?

6. What's one habit I'd like to kick to the curb?

7. What's a habit I'd like to start?

8. What's one small step I can take today towards any of this?

9. What or who is holding me back?

10. In a year's time, I'd like to be...

11. If I could change just one thing right now, it'd be...

12. What help do I need right now?

Over to you: what are your 'I am nots'?

Choose just one thing for now as your first non-negotiable
so you can get that locked in:

What am I specifically feeling envious of?

What is that envy telling me about what I'd like to do, be, and have?

My won't-leave-me-alone dream is:

The first step I can take towards it is:

When I was younger, I would while away the time by:

The things which would make me laugh were:

My favourite pastime was:

My most treasured items were:

The songs which bring back memories are:
