

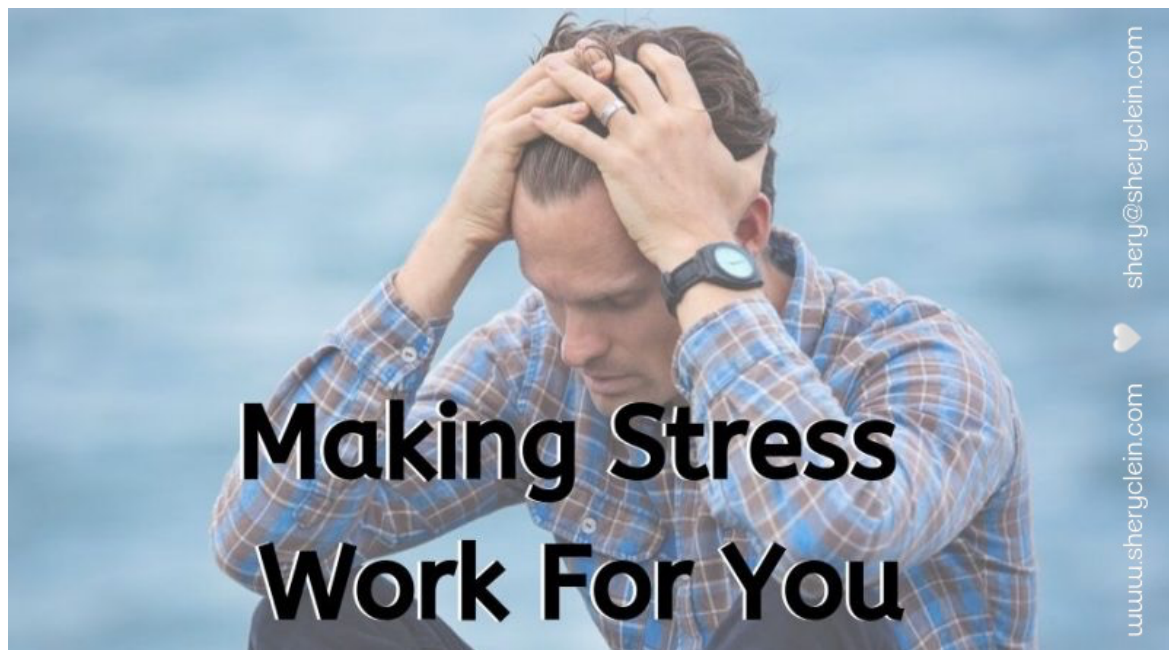
MindfulLiving™ Module 4

Respond, Don't React Formula

Chapter 9 - Reading

Cultivating Emotional Intelligence
By Shery Clein, MindfulLiving™ Coach

Harnessing the Upsides of Stress



Changing your mindset doesn't mean adopting an overly optimistic view of the world. The key isn't to deny stress but to recognise and acknowledge it and find the upside. A full-throttle fight-or-flight response isn't the only possible reaction to stress, mainly when it doesn't involve a life-threatening situation.

For individuals with a more stress-hardy mindset, the stress response is often moderated by the challenge response. This response accounts for some people's "excite-and-delight" experience in stressful situations, such as skydiving. Unlike the typical stress response, the challenge response affects the cardiovascular system differently. Instead of constricting blood vessels and ramping up inflammation, it allows maximum blood flow, much like exercise. The balance of hormones also differs, including higher levels of DHEA.



❖ Shifting Your Mindset

Dialling back from a full-on fight-or-flight response can be as simple as changing your mindset. Studies show that when participants are told, "You're the kind of person whose performance improves under pressure," their performance can improve by as much as one-third. How can you shift your mindset? Here are a few suggestions inspired by Kelly McGonigal's book, *The Upside of Stress*:

❖ **Recognize Your Body's Response:** When you notice a racing heart—such as before giving a presentation or initiating a tough conversation—realise that your body is trying to give you more energy. See if you can capitalise on that.

❖ **Reflect on Your Feelings:** If you're nervous, consider why. Ask yourself if it's because you're engaging in something that matters to you and reinforces your values, giving meaning to your life.

❖ **Redirect Your Energy:** Don't deny the stress; redirect your energy away from it and toward the task at hand.

❖ **Practice Kindness:** If you're feeling overwhelmed, try doing a small act of kindness for someone and notice the mental reward you reap.

❖ **Nurture Social Connections:** Building and maintaining social networks creates resilience.

❖ **Focus on Purpose:** When you're stuck in a traffic jam taking your daughter to school, remember that it's because you love her and want her to receive a good education.

❖ **Embrace the Stress:** Instead of pretending stress doesn't exist, acknowledge it. Ask yourself why you're experiencing it and look for any positive aspects. Are you learning something from it? Are you gaining strength? Are you connecting with people on a deeper level? Do you feel more intensely alive?



A Note from Shery Clein

Shery Clein, MindfulLiving™ Coach, thank you for your valuable participation. We appreciate your dedication and commitment. Our goal is to help you address uncomfortable issues and overcome obstacles. Most importantly, enjoy, relax, and have fun! Remember to contact us if you have any questions or need assistance. Blessings. Stay Healthy 💙 Love, Shery.

