

When you have just the right amount of growth promoting positive stress, it's referred to as "Eustress". It can jump-start your adrenalin and motivate you to perform your tasks more quickly and take important actions in alignment with your goals. Eustress can lead to focused attention, emotional balance, rational thinking and flow states.

Distress, on the other hand, can cause impaired attention, boredom, confusion, apathy, anxiety, burnout, overwhelming and disorganized behavior. Your autonomic nervous system is only meant to turn on for brief periods, not an entire career, which is what is happening when you're under "chronic stress". Your body doesn't know the difference between stressful thoughts and emotions and real physical danger. Your mind and body react the same way to both so when you perceive the demands of your work environment, financial situation or relationship to be threatening, you can become stuck in a chronic stress response. Your body literally thinks it's fighting for its life. Over time, this state of stress will inevitably lead to a collapse in health, well-being and performance.

# JOURNAL

How do you know the difference between "good stress" and "bad stress" in your life? Give some examples of both.

*Good Stress*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*Bad Stress*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

# JOURNAL: PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

*When have you experienced performance anxiety?*

*What did your body feel like during that experience?*

*How did you manage the sensations?*

*What was the impact of your anxiety on your performance?*



# EXERCISE: STRAW BREATHING

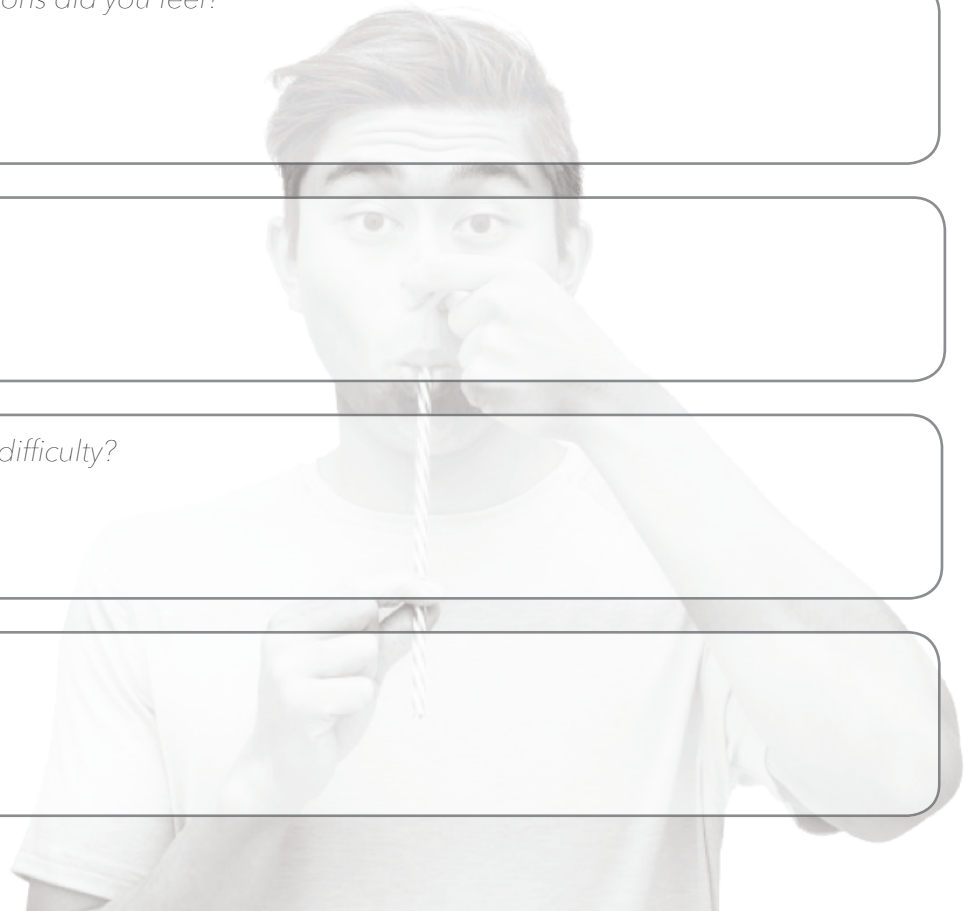
The intention of this exercise is to observe your relationship to an “interoceptive stressor”. Some participants will notice the sensations of panic and react by quitting the exercise prematurely. Other participants will strive to win the exercise, vowing to pass out before quitting. And some may experiment with mindfulness –noticing that they can accept the unpleasant sensations and respond by experimenting with various breathing strategies and conscious relaxation, even in the presence of anxiety. How long one can stay with the exercise is ultimately not the point. Lung capacity and tolerance to discomfort will vary from person to person. The main point is for participants to notice their sensations, thoughts and reactions in the face of an inherently panic-inducing challenge. Regardless of the experience you have in this exercise, there is room for growth. Mindfulness, when practiced over time has been shown to help self-regulate the response to unpleasant interoceptive sensations.

*What sensations, thoughts and emotions did you feel?*

*In what ways did you “self-regulate”?*

*How did you respond or react to the difficulty?*

*What else did you notice?*



# JOURNAL: MINDFULNESS AND SELF-REGULATION

*What is your relationship to emotions?*

*How do you typically respond or react to emotions when they arise?*

