PERSONALITY LINGO

YOUR PERSONALITY under STRESS

by author MARY MISCISIN

Stress is a complex and pervasive factor in all of our lives.

Situations that are stressful to one person may be exciting or motivating to another. How we react to and handle the stressors in our lives depends upon a lot of things; workload, time constraints, the people we interact with, our past experiences... and there is something more- our personality. There are inherent connections between stress and personality styles. Once we gain an awareness of these connections, we can use the insights to put our personality strengths to work for us (instead of against us) to improve our stress levels.

What's happening?

Have you ever been "stressing out" but noticed others seemed to be oblivious to your frustrations- or actually enjoying the chaos of the moment? Although there are some commonalities in the stressors we all experience, it is the differences that can be the most confusing and exasperating. We all have different things we value, and when the people in our lives are not operating in the same mode as we are, or circumstances are not cooperating with our plans, there can be a mismatch of priorities, conflicting approaches and STRESS!

When people are stressed, many resort to meeting their needs any way they can. Most people are not consciously aware of their own coping behaviors. They instinctively turn to behaviors that meet their immediate need for relief, not realizing they can create long-term pain. This article focuses on those situations which are found to be more profoundly stressful to one style over another. Being able to recognize when we, or someone we know, is stressed can be the first step in turning it around. Tapping into your own natural preferences and personality strengths in positive and resourceful ways are key to getting satisfaction at work as well as in your personal life.

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CONNECTORS (NF-Blues)

Because this style finds great pleasure in connecting with and contributing to others, they can become overextended spending great amounts of time solving others' problems and end up putting their own needs last. In addition, if they spend too much time in a relationship or environment where there is constant change, conflict, or "negativity", the stress can become overwhelming.

COMMON STRESSORS:

- **Conflict**
- **Isolation or feeling left out**
- **Rejection**
- **Negativity**
- **Being "used" or taken advantage of**
- **Apathy**
- **Insincerity**
- **Lack of acknowledgment or appreciation**
- **Not able to express genuine self**
- **Saying "no"**

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STRESS TIPS

It's easy to think that if others would just change the way they behave it would lessen your stress. However, it is more powerful to focus on what you can directly control—and that is your own behavior. The following are some suggestions:

HONOR "NEGATIVE" EMOTIONS

Some people express themselves in assertive ways that can seem rude or mean. When safe and appropriate, allow others the freedom to debate, even if they get a bit loud and boisterous. Also remember that some people need a period to be sad or grumpy, so hold your "cheering up" for when they are ready.

RELEASE GRUDGES

Don't fall into the trap of wasting your emotional energy on others you feel have wronged you. Go to your inner source of guidance. Is this really who you are in the world—righteous and unforgiving? How can you reframe the situation to learn something from the experience? Learn to genuinely forgive and let it go.

EXPRESS YOURSELF

Find ways to release your creativity, uniqueness and individuality. Do you like to dance, draw or sing? When is the last time you got a chance to indulge in a passion and express your true self?

WATCH YOUR WORDS

Whether aloud or quietly to yourself, do you use over-generalizations in your vocabulary? Using words such as "always", "never", "constantly", "no one"… deletes the exceptions and forces your brain to focus on the negative, making things seem worse. For example, saying "I am always overwhelmed" does not include the moments when you are not. Saying "no one understands me" prevents the brain from finding those who might. Be specific: "She misunderstood me yesterday."

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PLANNERS (SJ-Golds)

When those with this style are fatigued, stressed, or otherwise pushed to their limits they can dig in their heels and become overly rigid, self-righteous, and possessive. Their normally positive, helpful attitude can turn pessimistic, negative, and highly opinionated. They may worry about things they have no control over and get compulsive about the things they can control. Believing, "If you want it done right you have to do it yourself"—they may try to take charge and do everything themselves, not allowing others to do their own job.

COMMON STRESSORS:

- **Lack of follow through, when others don't do as promised**
- **Self or others not adhering to schedule or plans**
- **Change- especially frequent, unplanned, or unanticipated**
- **Unclear expectations; lack of rules, instructions, or guidelines**
- **Not knowing where they fit**
- **Lack of consistency, leadership, or a master plan**
- **Neglect of family time or traditions**
- **Missing deadlines, not enough time to complete tasks**
- **Rule breakers; rules or policies not being enforced**
- **Interruptions**

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STRESS TIPS

Not surprisingly, this style seeks to maintain a certain equilibrium. Too much or too little responsibility can cause them stress. Sometimes lack of closure on projects or even issues from the past can cause worry or disturb them in the present. How do you find reprieve while maintaining your health, sanity, and responsibilities? The following are some suggestions:

VALIDATE YOURSELF

Acknowledge the things you accomplish and your contributions, rather than focus constantly on the things that aren't yet complete. You are respectful, responsible and loyal, constantly striving very hard to do a good job. Know that your efforts are appreciated even if it isn't always expressed in a way you readily recognize.

BE RESPONSIBLE…FOR YOURSELF

Take time to take care of yourself. It is your duty to spend time nourishing your own health and wellbeing, not anyone else's. How can you possibly perform your functions if you yourself are in no condition to do so? It is of utmost importance that you explore and find avenues for self-preservation.

START NEW TRADITIONS

Are some of your traditions adding more stress than pleasure? Maybe it is time to allow or enlist some help from others to modernize a tradition. Just because it's always been done a certain way in the past does not mean it is still the best way. Families, organizations and norms are constantly shifting and changing. Embrace change and explore new ways to enhance old customs.

DELEGATE

Be aware of how hard you are driving yourself. Learn to discern the projects and tasks that can be passed on to others. Realize that sometimes others are actually eager to pitch in and help. When you are able to let go of having things accomplished in a very specific manner, you open up all kinds of possibilities.

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THINKERS (NT-Greens)

As a natural non-conformist, this style's approach to the world may not always mesh with the rest of society. On a never-ending quest for competency, improvement and autonomy, they have a tendency to "do their own thing" regardless of whether others think their ways are eccentric or not. For instance, work can be play and "play" can be work. It is not unusual for them to "work" on projects during a regular scheduled holiday while others feel compelled to picnic because it is what they believe they are "supposed to do" on that particular day.

COMMON STRESSORS:

- **Overly sensitive people, emotional outbursts**
- **Lack of independent thinking**
- **Small talk or chit chat**
- **Mistakes and ineptitude in self and others**
- **Not enough time to gather data**
- **Lack of mental stimulation, redundancy, or routine**
- **Policies and procedures that block progress**
- **Nothing new to look forward to**
- **People who don't try to solve things before seeking help**
- **Made to look incompetent**

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STRESS TIPS

If your personality shows traits of this style and you feel yourself fading from stress, it is time to shift your focus outward. You are a big-picture thinker in many areas, therefore use this ability and apply it to your situations. What you focus on becomes real for you, so relocate your attention to more empowering thoughts and ideas. Consistently analyze whether your actions are taking you in the direction you really want to go. The following are some suggestions:

▶ BALANCE YOUR CRITIQUES

Refrain from "punishing" or getting irritated at others for not living up to your expectations and high standards. Some people simply don't care about the same things as you do—and never will. Take action to change the things that you can and recognize the things that you cannot so you can channel your energy into other pursuits that are higher on your priority list.

▶ SCHEDULE TIME FOR HEALTH

If your health goes down the tubes because you are not taking a break to exercise and eat right, how do you expect to have your full capabilities to work at your potential? Design a strategy for maintaining your health. Investigate programs and create one that fits your particular needs. For fun, chart your progress.

▶ PRIORITIZE

Instead of placing the same importance on every project and task, learn to discern the difference between things that really do need to be top notch and those that just need to be done.

▶ HONOR YOUR INDEPENDENCE

You are not anti-social, a misfit, or unfriendly just because you prefer independent activities. Don't force yourself to get involved with functions you are not interested in just because of social pressures. You have the unique ability and inherent nature to be content and find pleasure in solo activities, so enjoy them!

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MOVERS (SP-Oranges)

If your personality shows traits of this style, your quick thinking and demand for action can get you ahead of yourself. Since you usually enjoy operating in a rush of adrenaline, you might have a tendency to arrange your life so you are constantly on the edge and perhaps putting others on edge as well.

COMMON STRESSORS:

- **Lack of freedom or choices, feeling trapped**
- **Not being able to use your skills**
- **Forced to keep quiet or not participate**
- **Insufficient attention**
- **Waiting, slow actions**
- **Indecisiveness**
- **Routine**
- **Lack of physical contact**
- **Details, paperwork**
- **Inactivity, restriction of physical movement**

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STRESS TIPS

What you may find fun and exhilarating, others may perceive as stressful. In fact, the people in your life that are depending on you may not find your behavior very fun at all. So how do you get your own needs for freedom, spontaneity, and attention met without trampling others in the process? The following are some suggestions:

MOVE THAT BODY!

Get some physical activity. Exercise: pump iron, jump rope, climb trees. When stressed, go for a walk, jog, or run to cool off- but do come back when your thinking clears. Get out and dance, roller skate, bike ride, something that will get you in action- now!

COMPETE

Get involved in competitions and games. Take charge of arranging events if that's what it takes. Find ways to compete that won't jeopardize your job, health, or budget. Making a bet or challenging someone to meet a deadline is a great way to get you motivated to stay on target and have some fun along the way.

FOCUS

Make it a contest with yourself to see how long you can concentrate on one thing and complete it before starting something else. Decide what is most important and what has to be addressed. Reduce distractions by turning off your phone or putting away projects that are not a priority. Instead of reading emails the second you receive them, block a specific time of day or period of time to read and respond. You'll be amazed at how much you accomplish.

KEEP HEALTHY HABITS

Notice when you may be slipping into unhealthy, compulsive behaviors such as taking physical risks, overindulging in or "extracurricular" activities such as gambling, overeating, drinking... as well as "work-a-holic" marathons. Refocus your energy and take breaks to play more productively by indulging in health-enhancing activities; stretch, drink water, breathe!

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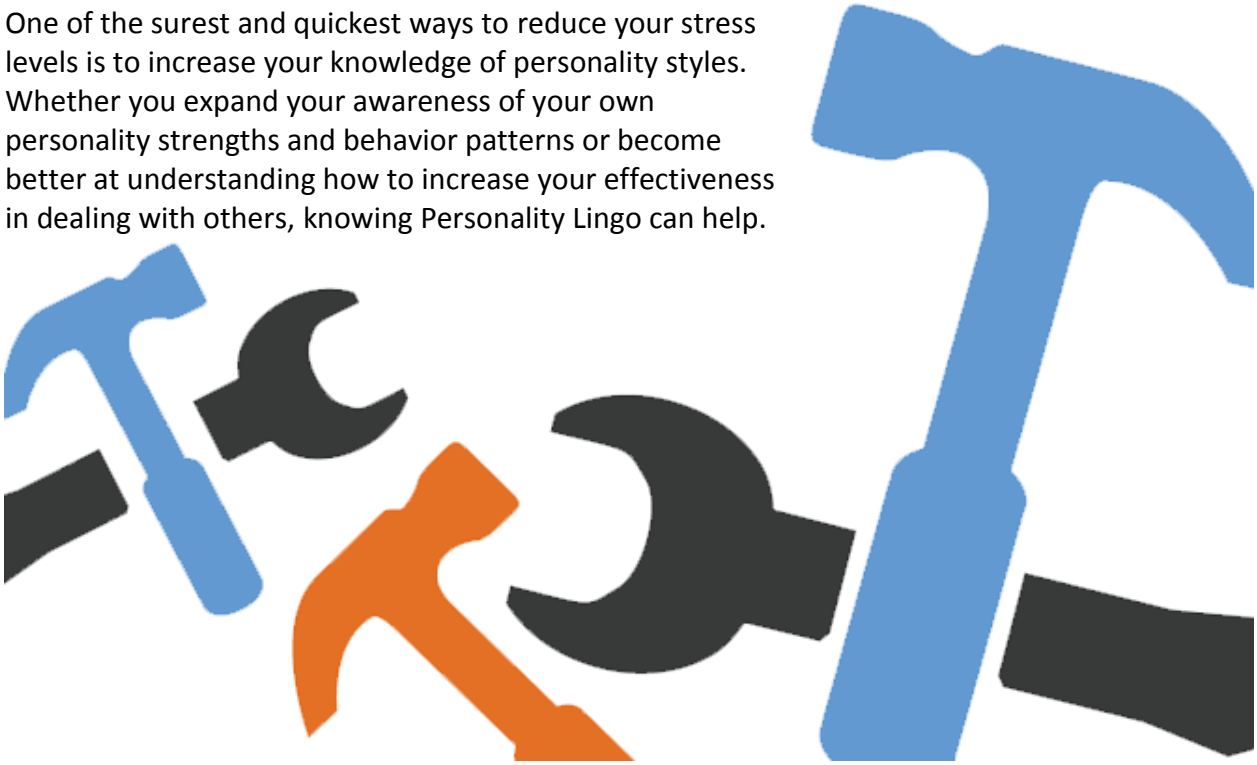
PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

One of the surest and quickest ways to reduce your stress levels is to increase your knowledge of personality styles. Whether you expand your awareness of your own personality strengths and behavior patterns or become better at understanding how to increase your effectiveness in dealing with others, knowing Personality Lingo can help.



OTHER USEFUL TOOLS

- **FREE PERSONALITY TEST**: find out your personality style with this simple quiz

Distinguish the characteristics that make up your own unique personality temperament and gain a new understanding of yourself and how you relate to others. http://personalitylingo.com/freepersonalitytest/

- Learn more about your personality style by pursuing our **PERSONALITY PROFILES**

Whether you are seeking to understand yourself, or searching for answers about the behaviors of others, these profiles will provide insights into the approaches, frustrations and drivers of each personality style. http://personalitylingo.com/personalityereports/

- **TRAINERS:** Looking for ways to teach stress management using personality?

Get our Navigating Stress Trainer's Kit! Through group and individual activities, it provides step-by-step instructions for applying the personality concepts to stress management. http://personalitylingo.com/personality-style-stress-management-training-kit/

- Explore different articles and quizzes on our **FREE RESOURCES** center

Enjoy fun tips, quizzes and activities related to understanding your personality style. Compare the lingo of different personality systems, time management, communication and more! http://personalitylingo.com/resources/

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