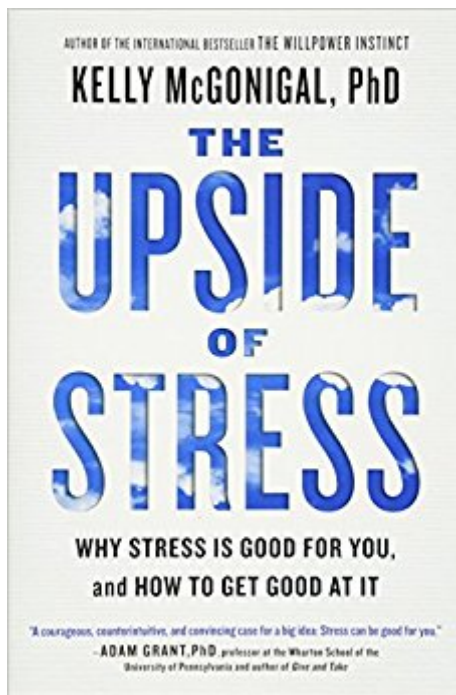




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The Upside Of Stress: Why Stress Is Good For You, And How To Get Good At It



Synopsis

Drawing from groundbreaking research, psychologist and award-winning teacher Kelly McGonigal, PhD, offers a surprising new view of stress—one that reveals the upside of stress, and shows us exactly how to capitalize on its benefits. You hear it all the time: stress causes heart disease; stress causes insomnia; stress is bad for you! But what if changing how you think about stress could make you happier, healthier, and better able to reach your goals? Combining exciting new research on resilience and mindset, Kelly McGonigal, PhD, proves that undergoing stress is not bad for you; it is undergoing stress while believing that stress is bad for you that makes it harmful. In fact, stress has many benefits, from giving us greater focus and energy, to strengthening our personal relationships. McGonigal shows readers how to cultivate a mindset that embraces stress, and activate the brain's natural ability to learn from challenging experiences. Both practical and life-changing, *The Upside of Stress* is not a guide to getting rid of stress, but a toolkit for getting better at it—by understanding, accepting, and leveraging it to your advantage.

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Customer Reviews

Advance Praise for *The Upside of Stress*: “In this smart, practical book, Kelly McGonigal shows that stress isn't nearly as bad as its reputation. In fact, if we change our mindsets just a bit, we can transform stress from a barrier that thwarts to a resource that propels us. *The Upside of Stress* is a perfect how-to guide for anyone who wants to tap into the biology of courage and the psychology of thriving under pressure.” —Daniel H. Pink, author of *Drive* and *To Sell Is Human* “A fascinating tour of cutting-edge research on how stress affects us

in ways, both good and bad, that we never suspect. McGonigal brings scientific studies to life, makes her lessons tangible and provides fascinating take-aways for anyone who experiences stress -- which, let's face it, is all of us, often all the time.

• Charles Duhigg, MBA, author of *The Power of Habit* "A courageous, counterintuitive, and convincing case for a big idea: stress can be good for you. This enchanting, evidence-based book has already transformed how I think about stress, and I recommend it highly to anyone who lives in the 21st century."

• Adam Grant, Ph.D., Wharton professor and author of *Give and Take* "Through stories and science, McGonigal reveals how to change your mindset and tap into your resources for handling stress."

• Amy Cuddy, Ph.D., Associate Professor at Harvard Business School and author of *Presence* "The Upside of Stress turns our common misunderstanding of what we often believe is the necessary toxicity of a pressured life completely upside down. Kelly McGonigal powerfully teaches us how to transform the suffering of misguided stress into a meaningful and thriving life. Read this book even if you think you are too stressed to take the time--It has the potential to change your life forever."

• Daniel J Siegel, M.D., author of *Mindsight* and *Brainstorm* "Often we regard stress as a regrettable but necessary evil -- the heavy price we pay for achievement in a fast-forward, competitive, "always on" world. In this important and engaging book, Kelly McGonigal challenges us to discard that familiar, fear-based mindset and embrace stress as a path to realizing our most creative potential."

• Steve Silberman, author of *NeuroTribes* "Kelly McGonigal debunks decades of myths that have persisted around stress. The book is research based, immensely practical, compelling and insightful from the first page. This book will be a game changer for countless people."

• Jim Loehr, EdD, Co-Founder of the Human Performance Institute and author of *The New Toughness Training for Sports* "The Upside of Stress delivers an important truth: it is better to chase meaning than try to avoid discomfort. Through the insights of this book, you'll find your courage to pursue what matters most and trust yourself to handle any stress that follows."

• Nilofer Merchant, CEO, Silicon Valley strategist, and author of *The New How* "Kelly McGonigal has pulled back the curtain to reveal what allows exceptional people and organizations like my Navy SEAL brotherhood to thrive through adversity. True excellence is only achieved under great adversity, and by embracing those challenges with a positive mindset."

• Scott Brauer, Co-Founder of Acumen Performance Group, and former Navy SEAL and U.S. Naval Officer "The upside of Kelly McGonigal is that she not only shows how what we thought we knew about stress was backwards, but that getting it right will change your life for the better." This book provides an

accessible user's guide to leveraging the most cutting edge research in psychology and neuroscience to enhance your health and well-being." •Matthew D. Lieberman, PhD, Chair of Social Psychology at University of California Los Angeles • For those individuals and teams that discover that stress is life's secret ingredient, they will be rewarded with expanded self confidence and rapidly growing organizations. •Robert Daugherty, chairman of Knowledge Investment Partners, LLC If you've ever complained of being stressed out, you need to read this perceptive, thought-provoking book. Kelly McGonigal reveals the surprising truth about why we should embrace the many unsung benefits of stress. The Upside of Stress will change the way you think and it will change your experience of your life. •Gretchen Rubin, author of Better Than Before and The Happiness Project • The message that stress can actually convey health benefits is important and needs to be heard. • This thoughtful analysis on the role of mindset will prompt you to re-think your relationship with stress, and help you realize its benefits. •Andrew Weil, MD, author of Spontaneous Happiness • Praise for Kelly McGonigal and The Willpower Instinct: • "Tired of the endless debate about whether man possesses free will or is predestined to lounge about gobbling Krispy Kreme donuts while watching TV? If you want action, not theory, The Willpower Instinct is the solution for the chronically slothful." • USA Today • "A fun and readable survey of the field, bringing willpower wisdom out of the labs." • TIME magazine

Kelly McGonigal, PhD, is a health psychologist and lecturer at Stanford University, and the author of the international bestseller The Willpower Instinct (Avery, 2011). As a leader in the field of "science to help," McGonigal is a passionate about translating cutting-edge research from psychology, neuroscience, and medicine into practical strategies for health, happiness, and personal success. McGonigal has taught for a wide range of programs at Stanford University, including the School of Medicine, the Graduate School of Business, and Stanford

Continuing her studies, where her popular public courses include "The Science of Willpower" and "How to Think Like a Psychologist." She has received Stanford's highest teaching honor, the Walter J. Gores award, for her undergraduate psychology teaching. Through her work with the Stanford Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, she studies methods for training mindfulness, empathy, and compassion. Her research has appeared in such journals as Motivation and Emotion, the Journal of Happiness Studies, and the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

Sometimes, you need 3.5 stars. The book flowed as follows: Part 1, Rethink Stress - Chap 1: McGonigal works to show that you can change an established mindset, and that changing said mindset leads to positive outcomes (in relation to stress). She backs this stuff up with lots of research, which is a big plus in my view and made the chapter interesting to read. Lastly, she defines what a "changed mindset" looks like in relation to stress. She's telling us that our view shouldn't be that stress is all-good or that stress is all-bad, but that stress is a little of both. Overall, solid chapter. - Chap 2: Reframing stress. Why stress is actually not bad for you, and why stress can be harnessed and translated into good. Research cited: young monkeys separated from their mothers actually had bigger prefrontal cortexes (making them more resilient). More surprising research: Men who are stressed out (contestants on a game show) had unusually high rates of trust and cooperation - around 75%. "Stress made the men prosocial. The stronger their hearts' response to stress, the more altruistic they became." Surprising and informative. - Chap 3: A meaningful life is a stressful life. That's the title and, frankly, a good summary of this chapter. This is the point at which the book started to get a bit more choppy for me. Chapter three felt like chapter 2, continued. I underlined this sentence: "The most meaningful challenges in your life will come with a few dark nights." That rings absolutely true. However, is it really materially different from saying that stress can be good for us? I don't think this section needed to be a standalone chapter. Moving to Part 2 of the book, titled Transform Stress - Chap 4:

Reframing stress, part 3. Encourages you to take your body's reaction (sweat, shaking, surge of adrenaline, anxiety) as a positive, not a negative. Think: my body, and all of its bristling, pent-up energy, can give me the courage to act in times of challenge. To me this chapter falls in with reframing stress (covered in part 1). I liked that Chapter 4 was a little more action-oriented than Chapter 3 since it is asking you to analyze your body's reaction to stress and view it as a positive, not a negative. There is an exercise in this chapter titled "Transform Stress: Turn Nerves into Excitement" that closes with, "When you need to take a leap and want to do well, don't worry about forcing yourself to relax. Instead, embrace the nerves, tell yourself you're excited, and know that your heart is in it." As I said, a bit more action-oriented, but still fundamentally in the camp of reframing how the audience thinks about stress. - Chapter 5: Strong chapter. She tells you to deal with stress by getting outside of your own head. How? Focus on helping others. Be generous. Don't wait until you feel great about life to give to others, as being generous actually generates satisfaction. Next tidbit: people who feel alone with their stress - that no one else has issues like theirs - fall into avoidant/isolating behavior, with negative results. Resilient folks - who deal with stress well - understand that suffering is a part of everyone's life, not just their own. This was a very valuable chapter: I really liked how prescriptive this chapter is. However, it also happens to clock in at 50 pages, and I did lose steam about mid-way through. There are a LOT of stories in this one. - Chapter 6: Titled "How adversity makes you stronger." This piece talks about cultivating a growth versus fixed mentality. This topic has been hashed out already, so I'm a bit sad that this chapter was the closer for the "meat" of the book. Lastly, turning to the final reflections chapter (the conclusion) - it's three pages total. A few snippets: "When you put away this book, you likely won't have a clear sense of how its ideas will take root in your life. That's part of the magic of mindset interventions." "Would you struggle to remember any details at all? I can live with that. [Paraphrase: The parts that matter, I hope, will land in the heart]."

Half of the last chapter is a story about how she now sets "stress goals" each year, defining how she will grow from stress. Overall, like most books, The Upside of Stress falls into the camp of valuable, but could have been summarized in about 3 chapters. 3-4 stars.

This book is one of the best I have ever read in my life, not because it was just another interesting read, but because it was life transforming. If you want to know that your pain doesn't have to be meaningless, and that it can be redeemed, check this book out. It features all sorts of stories and

studies that show how what you once thought was detrimental to your well-being, can be seen as a way to become a better person. It helped me to determine the top three values in my life: Love, Self-control, and Courage. Now that I know them, I see that it is in the stressful times, not the peaceful times, that those characteristics are developed. I wish this was a book every student had to read in high school and complete all the exercises. I exaggerate not when I say that the world would be a better place for it. I hope you buy, read, and experience all the healing and renewing that this book has to offer!

I gave this five stars because Kelly hits the nail on the head here! She proposed to inform you about the upside of stress and does it thoroughly. Using hundreds of scientific studies to back up her conclusions with personal stories and those of her students you get the message. These techniques are fully tested and work! She also infuses a down to earth, self-effacing tone that endears you to her. I have read a number of books and articles about stress. This is the most in depth and courageous book by far. She doesn't stay in the safe zone of typical advice, but ventures into the edges of science to redefine what others only have a hunch about, that when you reframe stress as meaningful you can cope better and even use it to improve your life and other around you. Don't hesitate to pick this book up!

What a hopeful new view of stress. Could it be that all we have been told to think of stress could be from a false premise - that stress is bad for us? If you have an open mind and feel that you have tried every stress management tool you know to no avail, read this book! I am very sensitive to stressors, but having read this book, I feel better prepared to handle stress and view it as something helpful instead of harmful. As a health coach I have in the past repeatedly told clients that stress should be managed and even avoided, but my message will change having read this book.

I was so pleased to read this book, based on scientific evidence, that tells the story of stress. I feel as if another Western 'inconvenient truth' has been addressed. Stress is not all bad for you, you do not need to take a pill to stop stress from killing you. Stress now has a meaningful part to play in life. You just need to understand the different types of stress and be mindful in its presence. What could be more simple?

Arrived when expected in perfect condition, in an excellent and safe heavy duty cardboard book mailer. The book was brand new, with the binding tight and unopened. The slip cover was perfect,

without any marks, wrinkles, or tears at all. It is difficult to find a book in this new and perfect condition, even in a bookstore. I am impressed!! watched the author review this book on G5.tv learning, and had to buy it for my friends to look at. Use stress positively as a motivator, not negatively as a roadblock. Worth a quick skim, and then read the parts that interest you more. (...)

Absolutely amazing book about stress. It challenges everything we've been taught about the one thing which is so devastating in many peoples lives. Stress is always present somehow and not knowing and understand why it's there and what it can do to body and mind - if we are not aware that stress can actually help us, can be fatal. Reading this book makes all the difference. All of the sudden you get concrete tools to use to turn a seemingly negative situation and a crippling state of mind in to power, strength and motivation. Excellent read! What ever book, tv program or other entertainment is going on - put it away and read this book. It can change everything!

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