



Mantra Magic >>> The Handout

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Hi everybody, I'm Dr Neil Neimark, Board Certified Family Physician and founder of [Dr. Neil MD Mastering Stress Series](http://www.NeilMD.com) of books, audios and online training materials where we teach you how to use powerful skills and not just pills to reduce your stress, anxiety, worry and depression and reclaim your health, happiness and peace of mind.

Thanks for joining me today! One of the things I emphasize to patients when I'm teaching them about stress mastery is that you have to have a plan. You have to be prepared. And – anticipating life's difficulties is an important part of any successful strategy for dealing with stress.

If you go out into the world unprepared without some kind of stress management plan in place – you're going to get beat up – no doubt about it.

Let me give you an example. You wouldn't go out to the beach for a day in the sun without some kind of sunscreen on – would you? You'd get burnt to a crisp.

Well if you venture out into the world without a stress management plan in place, you're also going to get burnt to a crisp - but this time it won't only be physically but also mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Look, when life's inevitable stresses, setbacks, difficulties and disappointments come your way – and you're not prepared - it can be brutal.

So, don't do that to yourself, that's just crazy. Instead, be prepared and protected. Let me give you a simple but powerful strategy that can help protect you from life's relentless slings and arrows – and it's called a stress management mantra.

What's a mantra? It's a word or phrase or small prayer that's typically used in meditation to help you deal with intrusive thoughts, worries and distractions – by reminding you to refocus on the feeling of peace, calm and equanimity that you are trying to achieve.

Now why is this so important? Because just like intrusive thoughts can distract you from achieving inner peace during meditation, so too – virtually every one of life's stresses can – and most often will - distract you from achieving what you truly want in life. And when this happens, you usually end up doing the complete opposite of what you intend to do.

In other words, almost every stress in life will tend to distract you from your goals – and you need to have a phrase or a word or a little prayer that can help you refocus - when times get

tough – on what it is you really value in life – which can be a sense of peace, calm, equanimity, fulfillment and doing good in the world.

For example, if I'm in traffic and somebody cuts me off or I'm having an emotionally charged meeting with a business associate or I have to deal with a difficult patient (not that that ever happens in my practice!) – then just before I'm ready to react – or most likely overreact – I might say to myself this little mantra, "I choose to be calm. I choose to be clear. I choose to respond from my values."

Now that's a little mantra that I chose for myself that helps me refocus on what I really want and value in my life. And if you really want more peace and tranquility and more happiness in your life, you have to have a way to avoid reacting to every little perceived slight, stress or difficulty in life.

Why? Because when you choose to react to difficulties rather than respond to them - you're really just giving away your personal power and your peace of mind. You're giving your happiness away.

When you choose to react with anger or upset to stressful circumstances, you are really reacting from your emotional and reptilian brain – and the moment you make the decision to react instead of respond, the biology of your stress response shunts blood away from your rational thinking brain – and you will end up doing stupid things, saying stupid things and really messing up your life.

We call that an amygdala hijacking – because the amygdala is the part of your emotional or limbic brain that reacts from a place of perceived threat, harm or fear - and when your amygdala takes over, you are locked in fight or flight – and your rational brain is shut down and you can no longer think clearly or make rational decisions.

So the next time you face a stressful situation, instead of just getting angry, reacting and escalating the situation – pause for a moment, take a deep breath and CHOOSE to mentally recite to yourself the powerful mantra you have chosen for yourself, like "I choose to be calm, I choose to be clear, I choose to respond from my values."

Remember, you have to pick a mantra in advance and be prepared to silently recite it whenever you feel a big stress coming your way. It's like having a life preserver with you in a stormy sea. You can't wait until you're thrown overboard to start inflating the life preserver - you have to have it available and be prepared to grab it when you need it.

If you don't have a mantra in mind, you can make one up for yourself, or find a little prayer or quotation that serves as a life preserver – ready to keep you from drowning in your own irrational reactions and stupid decisions - that we all tend to make during stressful times.

Here's a couple of other mantra ideas that might fit your personality better. You can say, "I choose to be happy no matter what my external circumstances are" or "I choose peace of mind" or whatever fits with your unique personality and goals.

I like using the word "choose" in a mantra because it brings us into our personal power where we have the ability to affect the outcomes in our life – and that's an important part of stress mastery.

So, this is Dr Neil Neimark signing off for now reminding you to take control of your stress before it takes control of you – and do it by choosing your own special mantra today.