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| Image result for listening icon | ENG211 Listening task: **“How to make stress your friend”** |



Source: https://www.youtube.[com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ycy_OetF_aE)/watch?v=Ycy\_OetF\_aE

* **Listen to Kelly McGonigal, a psychologist, speaking about stress. While listening to the speech, take down notes under the following prompts. Later, you will use your notes to answer some questions. You will listen once..**

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| **The confession the speaker makes** |
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| **The study in the U.S.A** |
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| **Social stress test** |
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| **Physical responses to stress** |
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| **The Harvard University study** |
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| **The change in the speaker’s aim as a health psychologist** |
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This is the end of the talk.

* **Now answer the questions below using your notes.**

1. What was the mistake the speaker made?
2. What did the study carried out in the U.S.A. prove?
3. What are the two stages of the social stress test?
4. How are the participants in the test demoralized?
5. Write two of the physical responses the human body gives to stress.
6. How did the participants in the Harvard University study feel after the experimenters talked to them about stress?
7. The speaker used to try to help people \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ whereas now she is trying to help people learn \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**ANSWER KEY**

1. She told people that stress was bad for their health / stress made them sick / stress increased the risk of certain illnesses from the common cold to cardiovascular disease. / She has turned stress into the enemy. / What she has been teaching about stress is doing more harm than good.
2. It proved that it is not the level of stress people experience that cause premature death but the belief that stress is harmful.
3. 1) Giving an impromptu speech about their weaknesses, 2) A math test
4. They are made to talk under bright lights with a camera in their face. / The evaluators are trained in giving discouraging non-verbal feedback. / Experimenters are trained to harass the participants.
5. Any two of the following:

* Heart pounding / heart rate going up
* Blood vessels constricting/ getting narrower/ shrinking
* Breathing faster
* Sweating

1. They felt less stressed out/ less anxious / more confident.
2. She used to try to help people get rid of their stress whereas now she is trying to help people learn how to become better at stress.

 **TAPESCRIPT**

0:11I have a confession to make. But first, I want you to make a little confession to me. In the past year, I want you to just raise your hand if you've experienced relatively little stress. Anyone?

0:31How about a moderate amount of stress?

0:34Who has experienced a lot of stress? Yeah. Me too.

0:39But that is not my confession. My confession is this: I am a health psychologist, and my mission is to help people be happier and healthier. But I fear that something I've been teaching for the last 10 years is doing more harm than good, and it has to do with stress. For years I've been telling people, stress makes you sick. It increases the risk of everything from the common cold to cardiovascular disease. Basically, I've turned stress into the enemy. But I have changed my mind about stress, and today, I want to change yours.

1:20Let me start with the study that made me rethink my whole approach to stress. This study tracked 30,000 adults in the United States for eight years, and they started by asking people, "How much stress have you experienced in the last year?" They also asked, "Do you believe that stress is harmful for your health?" And then they used public death records to find out who died.

1:48Okay. Some bad news first. People who experienced a lot of stress in the previous year had a 43 percent increased risk of dying. But that was only true for the people who also believed that stress is harmful for your health.

2:09People who experienced a lot of stress but did not view stress as harmful were no more likely to die. In fact, they had the lowest risk of dying of anyone in the study, including people who had relatively little stress.

2:23Now the researchers estimated that over the eight years they were tracking deaths, 182,000 Americans died prematurely, not from stress, but from the belief that stress is bad for you.

2:37That is over 20,000 deaths a year. Now, if that estimate is correct, that would make believing stress is bad for you the 15th largest cause of death in the United States last year, killing more people than skin cancer, HIV/AIDS and homicide.

2:58You can see why this study freaked me out. Here I've been spending so much energy telling peoplestress is bad for your health.

3:08So this study got me wondering: Can changing how you think about stress make you healthier? And here the science says yes. When you change your mind about stress, you can change your body's response to stress.

3:21Now to explain how this works, I want you all to pretend that you are participants in a study designed to stress you out. It's called the social stress test. You come into the laboratory, and you're told you have to give a five-minute impromptu speech on your personal weaknesses to a panel of expert evaluators sitting right in front of you, and to make sure you feel the pressure, there are bright lights and a camera in your face, kind of like this.

3:51And the evaluators have been trained to give you discouraging, non-verbal feedback, like this.

4:04(Exhales)

4:08Now that you're sufficiently demoralized, time for part two: a math test. And unbeknownst to you, the experimenter has been trained to harass you during it. Now we're going to all do this together. It's going to be fun. For me.

4:24Okay.

4:26I want you all to count backwards from 996 in increments of seven. You're going to do this out loud, as fast as you can, starting with 996. Go!

4:38(Audience counting)

4:40Go faster. Faster please. You're going too slow.

4:44(Audience counting)

4:45Stop. Stop, stop, stop. That guy made a mistake. We are going to have to start all over again.

4:51You're not very good at this, are you? Okay, so you get the idea. If you were actually in this study, you'd probably be a little stressed out. Your heart might be pounding, you might be breathing faster, maybe breaking out into a sweat. And normally, we interpret these physical changes as anxiety or signs that we aren't coping very well with the pressure.

5:12But what if you viewed them instead as signs that your body was energized, was preparing you to meet this challenge? Now that is exactly what participants were told in a study conducted at Harvard University. Before they went through the social stress test, they were taught to rethink their stress response as helpful. That pounding heart is preparing you for action. If you're breathing faster, it's no problem. It's getting more oxygen to your brain. And participants who learned to view the stress response as helpful for their performance, well, they were less stressed out, less anxious, more confident, but the most fascinating finding to me was how their physical stress response changed.

5:54Now, in a typical stress response, your heart rate goes up, and your blood vessels constrict like this. And this is one of the reasons that chronic stress is sometimes associated with cardiovascular disease. It's not really healthy to be in this state all the time. But in the study, when participants viewed their stress response as helpful, their blood vessels stayed relaxed like this. Their heart was still pounding, but this is a much healthier cardiovascular profile. It actually looks a lot like what happens in moments of joy and courage. Over a lifetime of stressful experiences, this one biological change could be the difference between a stress-induced heart attack at age 50 and living well into your 90s. And this is really what the new science of stress reveals, that how you think about stress matters.

6:52So my goal as a health psychologist has changed. I no longer want to get rid of your stress. I want to make you better at stress. And we just did a little intervention. If you raised your hand and said you'd had a lot of stress in the last year, we could have saved your life, because hopefully the next time your heart is pounding from stress, you're going to remember this talk and you're going to think to yourself, this is my body helping me rise to this challenge. And when you view stress in that way, your body believes you, and your stress response becomes healthier.