

Special Bonus Lesson

"The Single Most Important Thing You Can Do To Reduce Stress in Your Life"

Learn the **one key insight** that turned my life around and enabled me to become a successful stress coach for more than 30 years.

The Single Most Important Thing You Can Do To Reduce Stress In Your Life

By Morton C. Orman, M.D.
© 2011

Dear Reader:

Congratulations. In this bonus lesson, I'm going to tell you about the single most important thing you can do to reduce stress in your life—now and throughout your lifetime.

This **one key insight** turned my life around.

Before this insight, I was angry, frustrated, and unhappy much of the time. I was uncomfortable around other people, and my interpersonal relationships suffered as a consequence. I was successful as a physician, but I couldn't enjoy this success, because I felt so dysfunctional personally.

Then I grasped the insight I am going to share with you—and everything changed.

Things didn't change right away, but I knew I was on a new course. As time went on, I gradually stopped being angry, anxious, and frustrated. The quality of my relationships improved, and I felt happier and more relaxed than ever before.

This one new insight led me to finally discover how to cope with my own stress—after many years of struggle and failure--and then to become an effective stress coach for other people.

The “Mother of All Stress Tips”

During my 30-plus years of helping people cope with stress, I’ve been asked to do many media interviews. Invariably, each interviewer always asks me for **tips** about coping with stress to share with their audience.

I am usually reluctant to honor these requests, because I don’t believe tips are all that helpful.

There is one tip, however, I am very willing to share with you. That’s because it’s not a tip at all, at least in the conventional sense, since it can’t be conveyed in a brief 30-second sound bite.

Nonetheless, I call it the “mother of all tips” for dealing with stress.

If you understand this one key principle, and if you explore its many implications, your ability to cope with stress (i.e. specific problems in your life) will improve dramatically.

A Tip For Everyone

The “tip” I am about to share with you is not a simple prescription you can follow to reduce your stress in a given situation. Nor is it something quick and easy you can do to prevent stress from developing in your life.

Rather, it’s a particular way of thinking about stress--and about life--that is not very common. Otherwise, everyone would already know about it and would already be taking advantage of its many benefits.

You can learn to profit from this new way of thinking, however, no matter what your age or what you do in life. You can apply it to relationship conflicts, financial problems, work or school related problems, or to anything else that’s important to you.

You name the problem....this tip can help.

Throughout history, many people have discovered this principle and have used it to enhance their lives.

Yet, despite its incredible power, **most people will never embrace it.**

There are two main reasons for this. First, you won't likely agree with this tip the first time you hear it.

Second, there are strong psychological factors—within us and our society—that make it difficult to accept this key principle.

Are You Ready?....Here It Comes!

So what's this fabulous tip I've been talking about? What's this timeless bit of wisdom that changed my life so dramatically?

Here it is:

The single most important thing you can do to reduce stress in your life is to.....*learn to appreciate the value of **being wrong.***

That's it—eight simple words.

But I assure you, there's nothing more powerful for coping with stress in all the world.

There are no other tips, singly or collectively, that can equal the implications of these eight simple words.

In other words, there is nothing more powerful for coping with stress (i.e. problems in your life) than openly and honestly acknowledging that **you could be, and probably are, wrong about a wide range of very important matters.**

Of all the things I've learned for reducing stress in my lifetime, this one key insight made the greatest impact. However, nothing was harder for me to do.

Getting into college was much, much easier. Succeeding in college and then in medical school was a breeze by comparison. Even learning to become a doctor and accepting the responsibility of caring for other people was easier to accomplish.

That's because none of these endeavors ever required me to appreciate the **value** of being wrong.

In fact, they took me in exactly the opposite direction.

They all instilled within me a deep desire—common to all human beings—to want to be **right** as much as possible, and to want to **avoid being wrong** at all costs.

I Told You This Would Not Be Easy To Embrace

If the single most important way to reduce stress is to appreciate the value of being wrong, you can understand why this is so very hard for people to do.

Almost no one sees any positive value in being wrong. Instead, we abhor being wrong and try to avoid it like the plague.

A Major Shift In Thinking

So, when I speak about appreciating the **value of being wrong**, I'm really talking about something highly unusual in our society.

I'm talking about a major shift in your thinking that, for you, might look and feel like this:

- **Welcoming**, not avoiding, being wrong
- Viewing being wrong as your **friend**, not your enemy
- Viewing being wrong as a **virtue**, not a sin
- Being **proud** of yourself for discovering how wrong you've been
- Feeling **joyous** about the prospect of discovering many more ways in which you may be wrong

How Can There Be Any Value In Being Wrong?

Accepting that you may be wrong can **benefit you**, both by reducing your stress and by enhancing, rather than detracting from, the quality of your life.

But since you've built your life around **being right**:

- Why would you give that up and begin to embrace being wrong?
- How could you ever feel proud or joyous about discovering you are wrong?
- And what does all this have to do with stress, anyway?

Before I address these questions, I want to make sure you're not misinterpreting what I've said so far. I don't want you thinking I believe it is fine to be wrong, or that you should feel joyous about making mistakes, or otherwise congratulate yourself for major failures, omissions, or other serious wrongdoings.

I'm talking about something different--**what it really means to be human**--and the inescapable role that being wrong plays in each of our lives.

To Err....Is To Be Human

As human beings, we may be **socially** conditioned to want to be right, yet we are **biologically** structured to be wrong much of the time. For instance:

- There are many aspects of physical reality (like oxygen in the air) that our bodies cannot see, touch, hear, smell, taste, nor feel.
- Einstein showed that the physical universe is actually four-dimensional, yet our bodies can only appreciate three.
- Our eyes are capable of seeing only a fraction of the total spectrum of light emitted by the sun.
- Our ears are incapable of hearing many sounds that other animals readily recognize.

Our **conceptual** and **psychological** abilities are also limited in many ways:

- Our minds can focus only upon a few key aspects of our environment at one time.
- Our perception of events is limited to only a small percentage of the total number of independent elements that are available to be perceived.
- While we've been taught to think about causes in linear terms (A causes B, which then causes C), life actually takes place in much more complex, multi-causal ways.
- While we've also been taught to think in either/or ways (e.g., good/bad, right/wrong, win/lose, etc.), these thought patterns are often inconsistent with the truth about reality.

Thus, when you consider what it really means to be human, and how our bodies and minds are biologically designed to **misperceive reality**, you can see that even the best and brightest among us are going to be wrong much of the time.

The History of Mistaken Ideas

Take note of the many widely accepted ideas throughout history that were later shown to be patently false. Here are just a few:

- The sun and other planets revolve around the earth
- The earth is flat, and if you go over the edge, you will surely die
- It's impossible for a human being to run a mile in less than four minutes
- It's impossible to land people on the moon and bring them back alive
- The correct way to treat anemia is with leeches
- Tiger Woods is a paragon of virtue, honesty, and personal integrity

While it's tempting to believe we've come so far as a society to never be capable of such individual or collective mistakes, this is not the case.

We are just as likely to be wrong in our era, as others were before us.

Even in our own lifetime, many widely accepted ideas have turned out to be false. The impossibility of running a sub-four-minute mile and landing a man on the moon are just two examples.

But it shouldn't surprise you to know that much of the scientific "knowledge" I acquired in medical school, almost forty years ago, actually turned out to be wrong. That's because for every generation of doctors, new technologies and understandings in modern medicine constantly emerge to radically alter many of the earlier theories that were once thought to be true.

The Link To Human Stress

So, what does all this have to do with the amount of stress in your life? Well, just about everything.

In my book, *The 14 Day Stress Cure*, I distinguish two key factors that underlie (i.e. cause) almost all of human stress: **blindness** and **certainty**.

Blindness is just another way of labeling our tendency to be wrong. When we are wrong about something, we are usually **blind** to certain aspects of truth or reality that are not immediately apparent to us.

For example, it's a fact that for human beings, **life itself is rarely stressful**. Rather, it's how we perceive and react to life events, either consciously or unconsciously, that causes us to feel stressed.

Yet, we are mostly **blind** to this well-concealed truth.

We are similarly blind to many other **hidden causes**, mostly within us, that contribute to our stress and to commonly recurring problems in our lives.

Blindness is Only Half the Story

Now if blindness were the only factor causing us to experience stress, we could easily learn to compensate for our mistakes.

But we don't do this.

Thus, there must be another fundamental cause operating in the background. This second fundamental cause is **certainty**.

Certainty is nothing more than our commitment (usually a very strong emotional commitment) to want to be right as much as possible, and our accompanying reluctance to admit we might be wrong. This commitment to certainty (“I know I am right, and I’m not even going to consider that I might be wrong”) makes it difficult for us to embrace our faulty biologic and conceptual framework (i.e. our bodies).

Blindness and **Certainty**, therefore, play a dual role in causing much of our stress to occur. Together, they form a **one-two punch** that keeps us trapped in our wrong ideas and never lets us glimpse many of the truths that lie beyond them.

As a result of rarely noticing this one-two punch happening within us, we continue to generate stress in our lives, and we find it almost impossible to free ourselves from it.

Our Modern Age of Arrogance

Of these two primary causes, **certainty** poses the bigger threat.

At the bottom of it all, it is our certainty—our stubborn, pigheaded, obstinate, inflexible, prideful, closed-minded, emotion-laden **arrogance**—that keeps us from acknowledging how incredibly **blind** we are and from making the necessary corrections that could allow us to compensate for our misguided thoughts, perceptions, and other automatic tendencies.

How To Overcome Blindness And Certainty

The best way to overcome both blindness and certainty is to *learn to appreciate the value of being wrong*.

Instead of stubbornly holding on to your favorite theories, opinions, or other strongly-held ideas, **let go of your certainty** and open up to the possibility some of these may be wrong.

Sometimes you will find that your favorite beliefs are incomplete or partially misleading. Other times you may find that the truth is actually 180 degrees different from what you've spent years thinking it was. And other times you will find, after checking your favorite ideas for deficiencies, that they actually are well-grounded and provide you with sound guidance.

So don't be afraid to challenge long-held beliefs just because you are emotionally attached to them.

Look to see if they are serving you well, or if they get you into repeated trouble. If repeated trouble turns out to be the case, begin to look at the bright side--that identifying and then correcting some of your wrong ideas can eventually bring you enormous **positive dividends** and significantly reduce your stress.

Here are a few things you might want to consider:

- Start getting comfortable with the notion that all human beings, including you, are frequently going to be wrong
- Don't be afraid to repeatedly question the validity of your favorite ideas
- Actively seek out opportunities where you might discover you may be wrong
- Cultivate relationships with people who can give you honest feedback
- Go to seminars or workshops that promise to reveal flaws in your thinking
- Read books or listen to tapes authored by people who are truly wise, and who are not afraid to challenge widely-held popular beliefs.

In short, become a student of your own and others' wrong or misleading ideas.

The more you do this, the more you will begin to understand just how much NOT DOING SO has cost you over the years.

The good news about identifying wrong ideas is that most often, newer and better ones will usually take their place.

As you begin to profit from adopting these improved ideas, you will begin looking forward to discovering other areas where you've been wrong.

When you get really good at spotting wrong ideas, you may even begin to feel **joyous** about discovering yet another one. And an interesting thing will start to happen—the number and intensity of problems (i.e. stress) in your life will begin to diminish, and some may disappear completely.

The Secret To Being Successful

I've got to be honest with you. There's no chance at all that you are going to give up your desire to be right.

Despite everything I've said so far....this isn't going to happen. I know because I understand human beings. I also know because I haven't given up my desire to be right, despite everything I have just told you.

What I have discovered, however, is that the very best way to end up being right is to have a healthy respect for how frequently you can be wrong. Our bodies and minds have been programmed to contain many false ideas, and to perceive many false "realities" that have little basis in the real world around us.

Thus, find out where you've been harboring wrong thoughts about life, and you will move in the direction of being right (and successful) more of the time.

That's why I say there is **value** in being wrong.

The value is that when you embrace the notion you've been programmed to be wrong:

- by your culture
- by your family
- by other influential people in your life
- by your own faulty conclusions

you can correct your misunderstandings **and end up being right**—or at least more right than you were before.

Let me give you an example from my own life to illustrate this point.

From Repeated Relationship Failures To Eventual Success

For most of my teenage and early adult life, I was a miserable failure in relationships with women. No matter how hard I tried, all of my romantic relationships followed the same basic pattern:

- First, there would be the mutual attraction, passionate phase
- Then, a cooling off phase
- Then, an open hostility and conflict phase
- And then, eventual demise

Time after time, I repeated this disappointing pattern, always with great hope at the outset, followed by painful feelings of loss, heartache, and disappointment—weeks, months, or in some cases years later.

Each time one of my romantic relationships failed, I thought I had identified the underlying reasons. Mostly, those reasons lay with the women I had chosen. And each time I vowed to never again get involved with another woman who shared those traits.

However, after continuing to experience the same painful fate, over and over again, it finally dawned on me, in my early 30s, that I might have something to do with these repeated relationship failures.

After all, there was only one **constant factor** in all of these relationship failures, and that was me.

This realization caused me to do some very deep soul-searching. Eventually I discovered that, from a very young age, I had adopted an unconscious **formula** for how to succeed in romantic relationships.

This formula went something like this:

- Boy meets girl
- Boy and girl decide to have a romantic relationship
- Boy is supposed to dominate and always get his way

- Girl is supposed to put up with this and never complain
- Boy and girl live happily ever after

The first thing I noticed about this formula was that it had clearly been present, in the background of my thinking, for many years. Yet I had never been aware of it, nor did I appreciate the damage it was doing in my life.

In other words, it was a **hidden cause of stress in my life**, and while I was busy blaming other things for my relationship woes, I had never identified this insidious hidden cause.

The next thing I noticed about this relationship formula was that it wasn't a formula for success at all. While I had clearly been programmed to believe it was, once I finally saw it...I realized it was actually a formula for failing in interpersonal relationships.

In other words, I had **wrongly** assumed this formula would produce relationship success, when it was actually designed to produce just the opposite—a consistent track record of relationship failures.

I couldn't have been more wrong.

The good news, however, was that once I discovered **just how wrong I had been** about how to succeed in relationships with women, I was able to avoid falling into the traps this formula laid for me.

I was able to consciously choose to behave more appropriately and treat my future female partners with equality and respect. I was able to consciously give up (i.e. disrupt) many of my automatic relationship destroying patterns and focus instead on those things that fostered mutual satisfaction and relationship harmony.

I have now been happily married to my wife Christina for more than 25 years. And every day, I thank my good fortune for being wise enough to admit how absolutely wrong I had been about how to be a successful partner.

Other Examples of the Value of Being Wrong

There are literally hundreds of specific areas in life where people are prone to be wrong. Here are just a few:

- **Investing in the stock market**—If you've ever invested in the stock market, you know how easy it is to be wrong. Emotions, hunches, and faulty expectations often cause us to buy when we should sell, sell when we should hold, and hold when we should cut our losses and run for the hills.
- **Marketing a product**—Have you ever had a great idea for a product or service that you were sure would be a hit with many people? If you've ever invested money in an advertising campaign without thoroughly testing out your assumptions first, you know again that it is easy to be wrong.
- **Getting angry at someone**—Notice how often we are wrong when we are triggered to become angry at someone. Often we assume motives or intentions that the other person never had. We can even think people are intentionally trying to harm us, when in fact they are actually trying to help or support us.
- **Having low-self esteem**—If having low self esteem wasn't such a terrible problem, we might think it quite humorous. After all, isn't it amazing how many perfectly wonderful, talented, capable human beings can talk themselves into believing they are worthless? Can you imagine how very hard such people must work to deny all the evidence to the contrary? It's truly astounding how much negativity the human mind can create, and how much of that negativity is completely false.
- **Not forgiving someone**—Anger and lack of forgiveness are frequently rooted in erroneous assumptions or conclusions. Show me a person who's unwilling to forgive another person, and I'll show you a person who is probably deeply wrong about many things.
- **Blaming ourselves or others when things go wrong**—Blaming behavior is frequently rooted in faulty cause/effect logic. Often,

causes are incorrectly believed to be unilateral, when in truth they are almost always multilateral. In addition, even when someone truly is to blame for some unwanted outcome, it usually doesn't help to focus on who was wrong. Looking back on what happened in order to improve future actions may be fine. But looking back just to assign blame is frequently a wrong-headed strategy.

- **Believing what most experts tell you about stress**—We have also seen that many popular beliefs about stress are wrong. If anyone tells you it is possible to cope with your “stress,” please run the other way. And if anyone tells you that the best way to cope with your stress is to manage it, just remember that this is only one of several possible strategies. For my money, getting at **root causes** pays many more dividends.

Training In Appreciating The Value Of Being Wrong

Now that you've gotten this far in this bonus lesson, I can tell you a little secret:

THIS ENTIRE “OVERCOMING NEGATIVE EMOTIONS” COURSE
IS A DETAILED TRAINING IN
THE VALUE OF
BEING WRONG!

Every CD and Study Guide in this program, is designed to show you just how easy it is for intelligent, educated human beings to frequently be wrong...and how this results in stress in our lives.

It's not our fault we are programmed to be wrong.

It's just the way our bodies are designed and how they function.

For example, somebody says something to us, and we immediately (automatically) take it as a personal insult or attack. Or someone looks at us in a certain way, and we immediately (automatically) assume they are unhappy with us.

Sometimes, these triggered, automatic responses will be true, but other times they will not. In almost all instances, however, our impulse will be to believe them to be true.

This is just part of being human.

The only problem is we haven't been trained to appreciate just how frequently we can be triggered to be wrong, and then to notice the specific **conversations** and **action patterns** that got activated within us.

Ideally, we should all receive such training in elementary school, but we don't.

Certainly, by the time we graduate from high school, we all should be aware of these basic concepts, but this rarely happens.

So if we want to obtain such critically important knowledge, we have to look elsewhere.

Fortunately, you've purchased this program, and you'll be receiving some very uncommon training in being able to recognize common ways that most of us are programmed to be wrong.

You will also gain some very powerful tools to help you pinpoint hidden conversations and action patterns, so you can bring them out into the open, where you can examine them for weaknesses and errors.

It All Comes Down To This....

THE AMOUNT OF STRESS YOU HAVE IN YOUR LIFE
IS MOSTLY DEPENDENT ON
HOW GOOD YOU ARE AT TELLING THE TRUTH
(AND RECOGNIZING HOW YOUR BODY HAS BEEN
PROGRAMMED TO DENY OR DISTORT THE TRUTH).

The whole purpose of training you to recognize the specific conversations and action patterns that get triggered within you, and that often give you a distorted view of the truth about life, is so that you can more clearly see them operating within you.

This gives you the opportunity to challenge their validity (or their utility in the case of action patterns).

Ultimately, this requires you to **tell the truth** about whether your triggered thoughts, feelings, strategies, beliefs, opinions, assumptions, conclusions, theories, etc. are reality-based or not.

The further they are from reality, the more stress (i.e. problems) you will likely have in your life—like my “relationship success formula” which was really a blueprint for relationship failure.

Unfortunately, telling the truth is something no one can do for you.

I will show you (with the six Index Cards we create in this program) what conversations and action patterns must have become triggered within you whenever you feel angry, guilty, frustrated, afraid, worried, or sad, but I can't do the work of challenging these hidden causes for you.

Only you can do this.

And believe me, I know it's not an easy thing to do.

But at least you now know there's incredible value in accepting that you may be wrong, and how being wrong is related to having stress.

All I can do, at this point, is encourage you to keep exploring some of the ideas and concepts you'll be introduced to in this program. I trust that if you take this training to heart, and try it out, you'll eventually be rewarded.

Thanks for letting me share my ideas and experiences with you. It has truly been a pleasure creating this course for you, and for the many other people who will have the opportunity to benefit from it.

One More Gift

Before I close this report, I would like to leave you with one more gift. I would like to leave you with a parable I wrote, back in 1991, and published in my book ***The 14 Day Stress Cure.***

This parable is call “Blindness and Certainty,” and as I’ve already revealed, it sums up the two most important things I’ve learned about stress during my lifetime.

The parable is about people who travel to seek advice from a wise man named Asan.

Asan gives the very same advice to everyone who approaches him. Some “get” the advice and their lives improve dramatically. Others receive the very same advice, yet they reject it and their lives don’t improve at all.

The parable begs the question: What will you do when good advice comes your way?

The parable also suggests that in order to be happy (and stress-free), you’ve got to be willing to think, and understand life, differently than most other people do.

So, in closing, enjoy the parable, be well, and best wishes for a life with much less stress.

Blindness And Certainty: A Parable

In ancient times, there lived a wise man named Asan. As legend goes, Asan was one of the happiest and most successful men in all the land. He was also very generous with his wisdom, and people would travel from far and wide to seek his advice about their personal affairs.

Most of Asan's visitors returned home feeling hopeful and inspired. In no time at all, they became happier and more successful than they had ever dreamed possible. Some of his visitors, however, went home feeling unsatisfied and depressed. Their lives did not change, even though Asan had given them the very same advice that he gave to everyone who sought his expert counsel.

One morning, as Asan was relaxing by a river near his home, a young man approached and asked to speak with him.

Man: I beg of you sir, please grant me a moment of your time, as I have traveled many miles to talk with you. I have heard you are wise about matters of personal happiness and that you have helped many people achieve this state.

Asan: Please proceed. I will gladly offer you my assistance.

Man: Can you to tell me, then, why I suffer so greatly? I Have plenty of money, but I do not feel good inside. I have a wonderful wife and family, but we argue all the time and I don't feel loved or appreciated. I have many strong slaves and a prosperous business, but I do not feel like arising in the morning. I am in good health, I have no aches or pains, but I do not feel happy and I don't understand why.

Asan: The answer is this--you are unhappy because you don't see life correctly.

Man: But this can't be so, for I do see life correctly. I see You standing before me. I see the trees. I see the river. I see people playing in the river. I see birds in the sky.

Asan: Yes, but you only see what is easily seen. You do not see what is important to be seen.

Man: But I see what most other people see. Doesn't this prove I see life correctly?

Asan: No. It only proves that you see what most other People see. To be happy, you must first understand that you don't really see.

Man: But I assure you, sir, I do see life correctly. Is that not a tree over there? Does not the river run? Are there not birds in the sky this very moment?

Asan: Ah, now I can answer your original question more completely. You suffer first because you do not see. You suffer second because you do not see that you do not see. And you suffer third because you are certain that what you do see is the truth about life.

Man: But I still don't understand.

Asan: This only means you don't want to understand. Suffering is the price you pay for holding on to your certainty. Therefore, it must be more important to you to be right than to be happy.

Man: But I disagree. I do not want to be right. I would Much rather be happy and free of my suffering.

Asan: I see.

Man: Will you help me then?

Asan: I am truly sorry, but I cannot help a man as certain as you. Perhaps another time, after you've suffered a little more, you will remember the secrets I have offered you today. Until then, I suggest you continue to enjoy the trees, enjoy the birds, and play in rivers with other people who see things as you do.