



Identifying Nourishing vs. Depleting Activities

The human body is amazing and often recognizes that it is undergoing stress before you do mentally and it will give you signs. For example, you may have a hard time concentrating or making decisions, feel angry, irritable or out of control, or experience headaches, muscle tension or low energy. Everybody responds to stress differently, and becoming aware of the signs your body gives is one of the steps in becoming stress resilient. Take time to reflect on what your body is signaling to you in times of stress.

1. Take a few minutes to write down on a piece of paper the activities you do in your daily life (i.e., a typical work day). It might be helpful to start by thinking of what you do first thing in the morning and then end your list with getting into bed.
2. Once you have completed your list, decide whether each activity nourishes or depletes you. Indicate this by putting an N or D next to each activity. You might find that some activities are not so clearly either/or. For those that are sometimes nourishing and sometimes depleting place a B. For those that are neither, or neutral, you may leave blank.

At this point you might notice that a lot of your daily activities are draining, and not so many are nourishing. You may be able to find a healthier balance by increasing your nourishing and energizing activities and considering what draining and depleting activities you can change.

3. For those depleting activities on your list that you feel you can change, ask yourself: What could I do differently? When? How? With Who? There are likely some depleting activities on your list that you find you cannot change or avoid. In this case, you might choose to change the meaning you give those activities.
4. For each depleting activity on your list you feel you cannot change or avoid, ask yourself:
 - a. Is the meaning I am giving this activity fact or opinion?
 - b. Is it really the voice of... (depression, anxiety, etc.) when I put meaning to it?
 - c. What is another way of looking at this?
 - d. Does this activity have a more meaningful purpose?