

Excuse Me, Your Stress Is Showing!

Developed by Susie Weller (509) 255-6676 www.susieweller.com

Does your head hurt from handling one stress after another? Tension shapes the way you think and behave. People overwhelmed by daily frustrations have less capacity to adapt and respect other's brain styles.

Your brain style is your innate preference for how you think, communicate and make decisions. It's part of who you are. Similar to being right- or left-handed, each of us has a dominant brain style. There are four basic brain types: logical, relational, explorer and practical.



Thinking in your natural brain preference(s) requires a minimal mental effort. However, your brain requires **100% more energy** to think in the non-dominant or diagonally opposite style. No wonder you feel exhausted on certain days and energized by others!

10 Ways to Tell If You're Suffering from Brain Over-load

1. **Pay attention to your energy level.** Do you feel excited or drained by your daily activities?
2. **Notice your attention span.** Are you focused or easily distracted?
3. **Watch how often you take a break.** Can you keep going or do you have to regularly stop to get a snack, smoke a cigarette or pursue other forms of distraction?
4. **Track your sense of time.** Does the day fly by or drag slowly?
5. **Observe your mood.** Are you generally calm or increasingly more irritable?
6. **Reflect on changes in your eating habits.** Are you eating more or less?
7. **Review your relationships.** Are stresses from work affecting your family life?
8. **Examine your use of free time.** Do you enjoy doing things with others, or are you feeling so exhausted you're doing more solitary things, like watching TV?

9. **Monitor your level of exercise.** Do you have the energy to enjoy the activities you like, or are you becoming more sedentary?
10. **Reflect on your overall level of satisfaction with your life.** Are you happy or depressed?

Positive answers reinforce that you're experiencing being in the "flow" of your dominant brain style. Negative answers may indicate that changes are needed. Competently completing certain tasks is not the same as enjoying a natural preference. As a result, you may be draining your energy at work and not balancing it with other activities that enliven you.

Each Brain Style Copes Uniquely with Stress and Change

Most people go through predictable phases when adapting to a significant change. Although the stages are similar, each brain style expresses it differently. The six stages are:

1. **Fear & Denial:** won't accept adjustments are needed, protects and defends the status quo
2. **Resistance & Doubt:** struggles with loss by asking lots of questions
3. **Confusion & Anxiety:** productivity & the capacity to adapt decrease with more stress
4. **Growth & Awareness:** becomes more hopeful and sees creative possibilities and choices
5. **Trust and Exploration:** productivity increases due to anticipating new benefits
6. **Focus and Integration:** welcomes and celebrates change as part of daily living

Stages 1-3: Initial Brain Style Reactions to Change

Logical	Explorer
Resists & argues about it Feels uncomfortable with the unknown Denies or minimizes necessary changes	Seeks avenues of escape or distraction Thinks about "jumping ship" and leaving Fears it will constrict their options
Practical	Relational
Tries to "fix" the situation Worries & anticipates all of the problems Wants to preserve tradition & routines	Reacts emotionally: cries, blames or complains Tunes out before hearing all the facts Remains stuck in the feelings

Between Stages Three and Four is a “Choice Point.” It’s like a Grand Canyon gap between fear and hope. To cross over to the other side we must first face the Valley of Frustration. There’s always a risk of becoming stuck in old ways and be unable to celebrate change.

Stages 4-6: Each Brain Style Moves from Accepting to Celebrating Change

Logical	Explorer
Gradually reconsiders original view Re-frames the problem to be a “win” Accepts and champions the change	Begins exploring acceptable options Finds specific solutions Celebrates the change
Practical	Relational
Seeks validation & practical information Focuses on what needs to be done Takes action to implement the change	Finds ways to comfort and nurture Gathers support to make the change liveable Appreciates the change

Calming techniques soothe the brain and make it easier to shift to the next stage. Like schools that practice a fire drill ahead of time, develop more comfort with relaxing strategies **BEFORE** you’re too stressed. Brain’s learn best when they’re at ease-- not when they’re under pressure.

Susie Weller, M.A is a coach, national speaker, and passionate teacher. If you’d like to receive a **FREE** copy of “**30 Tips to Soothe Each Brain Style from Head to Toe,**” visit www.susieweller.com and email your request or call Susie at (509) 255-6676.