

Strategy #18: Surfing Your Stress

All emotions come and go like waves. Some waves are more intense than others, but in the end, each one will pass. Stress flows the same way. You may have moments of intense stress or moments of mild stress; both moments will pass.

And just like a wave in the ocean, it is easier to ride the wave than to fight it. Using this strategy will give you a chance to sit with your stress and see that it will pass, allowing you to respond in a clear and rational manner.

How to practice this strategy

When you notice you are stressed, ask yourself the following questions:

- What do I feel in my body?
- Do I have tension, nausea, or upset stomach?
- Do I feel hot or cold anywhere?
- Where does this sensation begin and end in my body?
- Am I fidgeting or pacing or doing any other repetitive motion?
- How is my breathing: shallow or deep, smooth or jagged?
- How does my heart rate feel?
- What else do I feel in my body?
- Are the sensations changing in intensity as time passes?
- What does my mind want to focus on? Does my mind want to focus on how bad it is or will be? How it can be solved?
- Can I keep returning my focus to the body sensations?
- So this is what stress is like. How long until it passes?

Remember, some waves will be more intense and last longer than others, but they all will pass.

Begin this practice as soon as you notice your stress warning signs.