

Reframing Stress using Emotional Intelligence: Manage Stress Before it Manages You

This exercise offers a simple way to bring down your stress level using the following scale.

THE PROBLEM PERCEPTION SCALE | Evaluate your perception of a given problem below.
Then decide the true urgency level of reacting:



Many of us jump to the right of the scale and begin a life-long habit of “catastrophizing” even small events. Instead, try to dial it down a little the next time you encounter a stressor and try to put it into the proper context.

This exercise correlates to the Emotional Intelligence skills of “self-awareness of feelings.” Try this to improve your overall well-being and reframe your emotional reactivity toward the left side of the scale:

1. Consider a recent problem you have encountered and place on the scale. Now consider how you reacted and decide if you reacted appropriately to the level of actual danger.
2. Consider an upcoming stressor you are facing and decide where it might fall if you had never seen this scale. Now place it on the scale where it truly belongs and reflect on the true threat or danger level of the stressor.
3. Many of our worst-imagined fears never happen. You can work on consciously assessing the real vs. imagined threat level that a stressor represents. Then you can be more accurate at assigning what level of reaction it warrants.
4. Becoming more aware of your reactions to problems you encounter will help you manage stress before it manages you!