

# A Quick Guide to Twenty Stress Reduction Practices

From YOUR LIFE AFTER TRAUMA (by Michele Rosenthal)

1. **Change your Physiology in Two Minutes:** Inhale through your nose; exhale through your lips as if they were wrapped around a straw.
2. **Breathwork:** Inhale (4 counts) + hold (4 counts) + exhale (6 counts) + hold (2 counts). Repeat cycle eight to ten times.
3. **Naturally Produce Oxytocin:** Give yourself a long, comforting hug (try for two minutes).
4. **Ninety-Second Rule:** The chemicals connected to any emotion naturally subside in ninety seconds *if you shift your attention to a different thought*. Count to ninety, sing, imagine your most favorite place, laugh, call a friend, or do any other activity that distracts your focus and allow your mind's chemicals to reset.
5. **Interrupt Negative Responses:** Follow these five steps: (1) Pause. (2) Step back. (3) Ask (empowering questions). (4) Assess (your choices). (5) Act (on a decision).
6. **Relabel and Redirect:** Observe, identify, and name your behaviour or response; engage in a replacement activity.
7. **Meditation:** Choose any of the options to train your brain; focused attention, open monitoring, automatic self-transcending.
8. **Mindfulness:** Remember to be present, acknowledge and allow what you feel and experience, and suspend judgment.
9. **Take in the Good:** Consciously experience a good feeling by absorbing it into your body and letting it expand for twenty to thirty seconds.
10. **Practice Gratitude:** Seek things to be grateful for; take a moment to reflect on and embrace the feeling of gratitude and what about you allows you to connect with it.
11. **Wheel of Awareness:** Imagine yourself as the peaceful hub of a wheel while the spokes attend to your thoughts and feelings.
12. **Power Position:** Sit on the edge of your seat, feet a foot apart, palms down on your thighs, hips rolled forward, shoulders back and down.
13. **Progressive Relaxation:** Starting with the top of your head, focus your attention on each body part, deliberately relaxing it as you move down to your toes.
14. **Refocus Your Intention:** Fill in the blanks with what you want, why it's important to you, and what you will gain by having it: "I want \_\_\_ because \_\_\_ so that \_\_\_."
15. **Shift to "I Can Handle It!" Thinking:** Replace fear by giving yourself three reasons you will be able to handle approaching the thing you're afraid of.
16. **Fact-Versus-Fiction Thinking:** Ask yourself the following questions: *How true is this thought? How do I know it's true (what's the proof)? Would everyone else believe this is true? What are other possible interpretations of this moment?*
17. **Clarify Your Thinking:** Dismantle assumptions, interpretations, limiting beliefs, and the negative commentary of your inner voice by identifying how to be present in the moment and find alternative details, narratives, and responses that lead to empowered actions.
18. **Slow Down:** Find a way to reduce the speed of your thoughts, emotions, reactions, and physical actions.
19. **Recalibrate Balance:** Identify where you're skewing more one way than another and choose an action to create a new balance in your experience.
20. **The Sedona Method:** Become very present with the uncomfortable feeling. Ask yourself: (1) *Can I welcome this feeling as best I can?* (2) *Could I let this feeling go?* (3) *Would I let this feeling go?* (4) *When?* When you feel ready, answer, "Now". Repeat the sequence until you feel completely emptied of the feeling.