



From Stress to Momentum

FRAMEWORK

A step-by-step framework to turn stress into strength
and take aligned action.

What Is Stress, Really?

Most people treat stress as the enemy. Something to suppress, survive, or escape. But stress is not the problem — your relationship with it is. At its core, stress is a signal: your body and mind telling you that something important is at stake and that you have the capacity to respond.

Research by psychologist Kelly McGonigal shows that stress only becomes harmful when you believe it's harmful. People who reframe stress as energising and meaningful — as a sign they care — have dramatically better health outcomes, performance, and resilience than those who try to avoid it. The goal is not to eliminate stress. The goal is to transform it into forward motion.

“Stress is not the opposite of strength. It is the raw material of it.”

The From Stress to Momentum Framework gives you a repeatable, six-phase process to do exactly that. Each phase builds on the last — moving you from a dysregulated stress state through clarity, alignment, and into confident, values-driven action. Use it whenever you feel stuck, overwhelmed, or frozen by the weight of what's in front of you.

PHASE	NAME	CORE QUESTION
1 — Signal	Hear the Stress	What is this actually about?
2 — Stop	Interrupt the Loop	How do I reset my state right now?
3 — Shift	Reframe the Narrative	What story serves me better?
4 — Align	Reconnect to Purpose	What do I actually want here?
5 — Act	Choose One Action	What's my one next move?
6 — Momentum	Stack Forward Motion	What's the step after that?

The Six Phases

Work through each phase in sequence. In a full session this takes 15–20 minutes; in a fast reset, phases 1–3 alone will shift your state.

PHASE 1 — SIGN

1

Hear What Stress Is Telling You

Stress is data, not damage.

Pause. Place a hand on your chest. Ask: "What is this stress actually about?"
Name it precisely — not just 'stressed', but 'afraid of failing', 'overwhelmed by X'.
Write it down in one sentence. Naming it moves it from the body to the mind.
Science: Affect labeling reduces amygdala activation and restores prefrontal control.



PHASE 2 — STO

2

Interrupt the Stress Loop

You can't think your way out of a state. You have to move out of it.

Box breathe: Inhale 4 counts → Hold 4 → Exhale 4 → Hold 4. Repeat 3x.
Or: stand up, shake your hands, roll your shoulders — 60 seconds of movement.
This is a physiological interrupt, not avoidance. You're resetting, not running.
Science: Box breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system within 90 seconds.



PHASE 3 — SHIF

3

Reframe the Narrative

The story you tell about stress determines what it does to you.

Replace: "This is too much" → "This matters, and I can handle what matters."
Replace: "I'm failing" → "I'm being stretched, and stretching builds strength."
Replace: "I don't know how" → "I know the next step, and that's enough."
Science: Cognitive reappraisal rewires stress response from threat to challenge state.



PHASE 4 — ALIG

4

Reconnect to What Matters

Action without alignment is just noise.

Ask: "What do I actually want to be true on the other side of this?"

Ask: "What would the version of me I'm becoming do right now?"

Write one sentence: My intention for this moment is: _____

Science: Values affirmation restores executive function and reduces stress reactivity.



PHASE 5 — ACT

5

Choose One Aligned Action

Momentum starts with a single, clear move.

Ask: "What is the ONE thing I can do in the next 10 minutes that moves me forward?"

Make it specific, small, and completable. Vague actions create no momentum.

Do it before you negotiate with yourself. Act first, analyse later.

Science: Implementation intentions (if-then plans) increase follow-through by up to 300%.



PHASE 6 — MOMEN

6

Stack Forward Motion

You don't need a plan. You need a next step — and then the next.

After completing your action, pause and acknowledge: "I did that. I'm moving."

Ask: "What's the very next aligned step?" Stack one action onto the last.

Repeat the cycle as many times as needed. Momentum compounds.

Science: Task completion triggers dopamine release, reinforcing forward action loops.

Using the Framework in Real Life

This framework is not a one-time fix — it is a repeatable operating system for navigating stress with clarity and intention. The more you use it, the faster each phase becomes, until the entire sequence can run in minutes through sheer repetition and muscle memory.

You will not always complete all six phases perfectly. Some days you'll loop back. Some days Phase 2 will take longer than expected. That is not failure — that is the work. What matters is that you keep returning to the process, trusting that each pass through it builds the neural pathways of resilience.

USE IT WHEN...	AND EXPECT...
You feel frozen or overwhelmed	Clarity within 3–5 minutes
A difficult conversation or decision looms	Grounded, values-led response
Stress is spiralling into avoidance	One concrete action to restart momentum
You're stuck in your head and not moving	A physiological shift and forward step
Daily practice (morning or evening)	Resilience that compounds over time

FROM STRESS TO MOMENTUM — QUICK REFERENCE

Phase 1 — Signal Hear what stress is telling you

Phase 2 — Stop Interrupt the stress loop

Phase 3 — Shift Reframe the narrative

Phase 4 — Align Reconnect to what matters

Phase 5 — Act Choose one aligned action

Phase 6 — Momentum Stack forward motion

*“The sky doesn’t become less vast because clouds are passing through.”
Neither do you. Keep moving.*



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