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Ever hear someone ask that question? Are you asking that question? If you are, it's time to stop and realize something.

Stress is a choice. Some of you will dispute this notion. You will think it's people and events in your lives that stress you out--managers, colleagues, customers, the boss, traffic, weather, market conditions, or a tragic or sorrowful incident--but it isn't true.

Yes, bad things happen every day. The economy sinks, businesses struggle, the stock market tumbles, jobs are lost, people don't follow through with what they say, deadlines are missed, projects fail, good people leave, accidents happen, or major changes become necessary. Life is full of these. But still, at some point in time, stress is a choice, because whatever the trigger event, we always choose our own response.

Why is this happening to me?

You can choose to react angrily. You can choose to hide your emotions and keep quiet. You can choose to let a traumatic experience to overwhelm your mind for a long time. You can choose to worry and worry and worry. (I once saw the following sign on someone's desk that said “I've had many problems, some of which came true!”) You can choose from a lot of things. None of these choices are necessarily bad choices initially but they will invite the consequence of stress if you don't learn to manage the emotion associated with them.

Over the years, I've noticed that different people have different reactions to the same situation. One person will have a total meltdown while another appears to not be bothered--so it seems. This observation literally proves that stress is a choice.

If you keep asking yourself the

question: “Why is this happening to me?” you will feel as if you have no control over your emotions and events and will become “stressed out.” Even in cases where you actually are a victim and your feelings seem justified, the “Why me?” state of mind only adds to your stress.

Let's face it. You can't totally control what happens in the world around you so you have to look inward for strength and wisdom to make the best of most situations. Negligence, carelessness, laziness, a bad attitude, or lack of emotional intelligence or common sense can set you off or put you over the edge.

Don't let the happenings of the world get to you. They will happen no matter what, regardless what you think or feel. Choose to let your thoughts override their effects either immediately or in due time. You can do it. Start today!

~ The End ~