

# Recognizing Good Stress



*From Jeff Kluever, director of programs and administration*

There are many, many things I don't like about social distancing, not the least of which are video meetings and calls. I don't even like doing video calls with my two nieces, mostly because they are far more interested in playing with the various filters that add cat ears to my head, than talking to me. But the same is true for work calls and meetings. I would much rather meet in person.

I'm a teacher. I'm at my best when I am with my audience, looking them in the eye, reading their body language, facilitating conversation and dialogue, and connecting on a personal level. I want to be in a room, with a group, doing the hard work together.

So you can understand why I say that transitioning some of my work from in-person delivery to online delivery in response to social distancing is, in the words of my 9-year-old niece, "not my favorite." Presentations that I could deliver with

relative ease in person are now posing significant challenges as I think about how to deliver them online. How do I demonstrate interactive activities online? How can I facilitate conversation when I can only see four heads on the screen? Whose dog is barking in the background and why doesn't that person know how to mute their mic? Changing to online delivery is causing me stress.

But – if I'm being honest, learning how to do online program delivery is actually good stress, not bad stress. Good stress is stress that challenges us, motivates us, takes us outside our comfort zone and asks us to do something new or different, which is exactly what is happening to me as I learn to do online workshops.

Let me be clear, good stress does not mean that I wanted that stress. I don't want to learn how to do good online training. I don't want to research which software programs give me the features needed to do my work. I would be much happier if I didn't have to think about online workshops at all. But, at the end of the day, this challenge, this stress is making me a better teacher. (If its possible to type something begrudgingly, I definitely typed "this stress is making me a better teacher" begrudgingly). Whatever the future holds, I will have new skills, new tools in my teaching toolkit because I had this stress in my life.

So here's the challenge:

1. Recognize what is good stress in your life.  
What challenge are you currently facing that is making you better (whether you like it or not)?
2. Focus on the positive outcome of overcoming that challenge, rather than wishing the stress away.  
What will you be able to do better or differently because of this good stress?
3. Hard as it may be, be grateful for the opportunity to get better.

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