

Study Guide
CREATIVE STRESS by
James O’Dea



2nd Week: Understanding the Basics
August 15, 2010 (or your group’s start date)

You should have read the Introduction and the first two chapters in *Creative Stress* for this week.

Opening – Someone say an opening prayer or read this one.

We become aware of the powerful Life of God which is present everywhere in Its peace and abundance. This is the only life there is.
We know that this One Life lives within each of us right now and always. We are It.
We know that our Word is creative and so we call forth the experiences of joy and Oneness. (The one praying invites other qualities to be named that the participants want to experience. These are spoken into the room.)
We give thanks that this and greater is and will be our experience together.
We let this be and release our prayer to the Creative Law of God. Amen.

Any new people introduce themselves to the group and the original members of the group briefly introduce themselves to the new folks. Remind each other once again about how important confidentiality is in order for this experience to be completely safe for everyone and so that sharing can go deep. The host gives any important information about their home, such as parking suggestions, whether tea is available, where the bathrooms are, and so forth. Make sure that you make nametags for yourselves if there are folks who do not know each other well.

Assist the new people in establishing their intentions for the book study, which they share with the group. Have them write down their intentions in a notebook or in the front the book with today’s date.

Looking at the Three non-Productive Ways of Encountering Stress and the Three Productive Ways – Beginning on page 11, O’Dea explains three non-productive ways of dealing with stress: Ignore, Send a Decoy, and Attack. Look over these ways of ineffective response and then look back over your life. When did you do one of these and what was the result? Share this you’re your group. Now look at the empowering ways to encounter stress beginning on page 18. When did you act in these ways and what happened? If you have a more illustrative example of someone else who acted wisely and courageously in the face of stress and if you think it would not break a confidence, share that example with your group.

Learning to Face Stress, Your Teacher – Choose one of the following quotes and expound on it from your personal experience with your group:

“One of the functions of stress is to help you see that you are not in alignment with yourself.” P. 35

“It is phenomenally hard for us to de-condition ourselves from the end-goal reward of the right answer and appreciate the significance of approximate answers, genuine mistakes or differences in perception.” P. 36

“The obstacle is your teacher. Face your teacher.” P. 38

“Stress hangs around when we try to lie to it...” P. 41

“Disappointment brings stress to our door and bitter disappointment delivers intense stress in an express package.” P. 44

“Admitting doubt is a dimension of the authentic journey of faith.” P. 49

Identify Your Stress Profile – Beginning on page 42, O’Dea outlines ways to get into your particular approach to stress. After reviewing this section, share your stress profile with your group. How does it feel to share so deeply?

Closing – Each person complete this statement, “I am glad I came to this book study today because_____.”

Someone close with a prayer or all people read the following together: “May the flow of Divine Love and Wisdom move through each heart until we meet again. May we all feel safe and supported as new revelations from our soul reveal themselves. So be it now.”

Homework – Read chapters 3 and 4 in *Creative Stress* for next week.