

Study Guide
CREATIVE STRESS by
James O’Dea



3rd Week: Leading from Our Authentic Self
August 22, 2010 (or your group’s start date)

You should have read chapters 3 and 4 in *Creative Stress* for this week.

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

We open to the powerful Life of God which is present everywhere; it is all-powerful and unconditionally loving. This is the only life there is.

We know that this One Life is our life right now. We are It.

We know that we live within divine Principles of Life which are always working. We claim complete understanding and mastery of these principles for the good of all.

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.

Take a few moments and have people share what has been going on in their lives as a result of this book study. Take a moment and think what you will say first, so that the sharing can be brief and meaningful.

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.

Are You Stuck in a False Positive? – At the beginning of Chapter 3, O’Dea describes how we do not want to be complainers because of social pressure. He makes a case that our very survival seems to depend on us being positive. As Religious Scientists, this certainly rings true, doesn’t it? On page 59 he asks, “The question is *how thick is the layer of veneer* before you get to those feelings which you don’t care to share; and do you yourself even stay in touch with that place?” Answer that question with your group. How does it feel to “go there?”

The Sweet Spot of Deepest Intelligence – On page 64, O’Dea asks us to feel where we draw our “integrity and insight energy.” Have one of your group read, beginning at the bottom of page 63 through the bold section on page 64 and then discuss how and where the emergence of inspiration and insight is for you.

Putting the Above Two Exercises Together – On page 65 O’Dea writes, “When negative stress is pulling you in conflicting directions, learn to let your response be authored from your center: not some outer fringe of your more manic, depressed, naïve, fearful, or controlling self.” Explore your understanding of this sentence with your group and give an example of when you have done that. This skill is recognizing and then rising above one’s own trigger points, a talent that is described in the rest of the chapter.

A New and Consistent Approach to Stress – Chapter 4 introduces us to a way of life that has us continually mining the depths of our beliefs and reactions, and dealing with our ego in an ongoing way. On page 88 O’Dea writes, “As we learn to recognize the contrast between higher mind and conditioned mind, we see that one is blunt, and the other is subtle. One is mostly uni-directional and mechanistic: *’What is the easiest, fastest, least painful way for me to get it?’* The other is more nuanced, more dimensional and more expansive: *’What do I long for and value most, what am I willing to undergo to find it?’* Identify each kind of movement within you and share an example of each with your group.

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 and each interaction 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 5 and 6 in *Creative Stress* for next week.