

**Study Guide**  
**CREATIVE STRESS** by  
**James O’Dea**



4th Week: Engaging Positive Energy  
August 29, 2010 (or your group’s start date)

You should have read chapters 5 and 6 in *Creative Stress* for this week.

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

*We open to the Abundance of God which is everywhere present, all powerful, and unconditionally loving. It is everything and everywhere.*

*We know that God’s Life is our life right now and always.*

*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. Specifically, we claim the release of ways of being that no longer serve us, replacing the old beliefs with the clarity of mighty Truth.*

*We give thanks that this is and will be our experience together and apart.*

*We let this be and release our prayer to the Creative Law of God. Amen.*

Read through all of this study guide before you begin. There are some very rich exercises from the second assigned chapter. Negotiate with your group what you will cover in this meeting together, if you think you will not be able to get through all of the study guide. Also, you are free to assign this study guide to two meetings instead of one group meeting.

The Lists that Bring One to Beauty – I have to include the glorious quote from Rumi that opens the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter: “*May the beauty of what you love, be the work that you do.*” Any comments from anyone in the group? Onto the three lists:

The second half of page 103 is a list of bodily sensations that tell you that you are engaging with positive energy. Add your own to the list. I suggest you write them in your journal or in the front pages of your book, so you can refer to your positive energy indicators any time you need to.

The second list, which begins on page 104, is a list of situations that engender these positive bodily feelings. Add your own to this list and record them in a similar way.

The third list (p. 105) is a list of instances of realizing positive energy in the midst of adversity, challenge, and testing. Record your own and then share your findings with your group. How does it feel to contemplate what you wrote?

Recognizing Challenges as Initiations – After the Stress Test on pages 107 and 108 in which, once again, James O’Dea is inviting us into our own engagement with creative stress, he writes at the bottom of page 110, “The progression from immature to mature is marked by initiations which serve to teach us about what is real, substantial, and valuable.” Speak of some of your own initiations that you have been through which prove this statement. Can you identify a challenge that you are in right now, which could be reframed into an initiation? Share your thoughts with your group.

Tell Your Story – In doing this exercise, remind your group what you committed to about holding confidentiality and safety for all. Then, beginning on page 116, notice that James O’Dea gives us a big, big list of kinds of stories that we might call our own. Have someone from your group read over this list out loud. At the bottom of page 117 are some directions from the author about using the list and telling your own story. This is a deep assignment; be as courageous and open as you can be. Remember, that which you do not share marks where there is a “swamp of negative stress stored up.”

Using archetypes – Think, write, and share yourselves through the suggested exercise about our personal helpers, which begins on the bottom of page 121. The chapter ends with these inspiring words, “Let’s tell each other the stories of those who become our greatest teachers and templates of higher consciousness....”

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 our challenges be great doorways into an initiation which leaves us mature, wise, harmless, and helpful. So be it now.”

Homework – Read chapters 7 and 8 in *Creative Stress* for next week.