

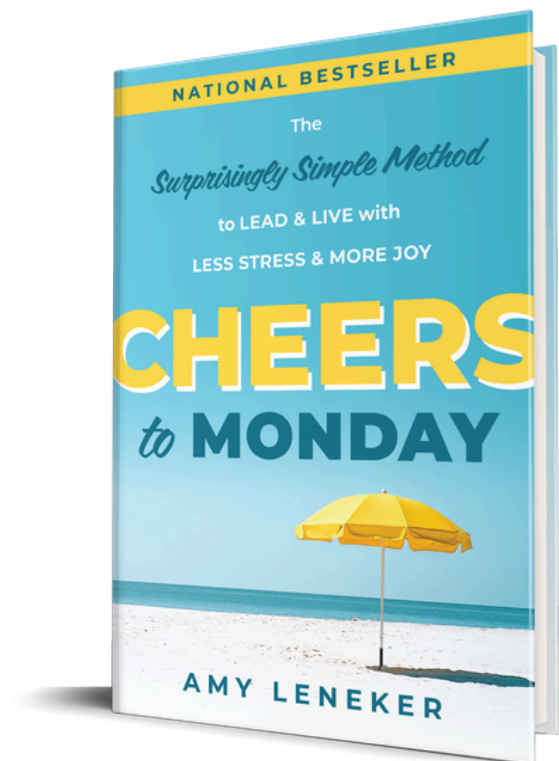
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LESS STRESS & MORE JOY

with amy leneker

HANDOUT FOR LEADERS, TEAMS, AND ORGANIZATIONS
TO IMPLEMENT THE UN-STRESSING METHOD™

Amy Leneker
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The Center for Joyful Work, LLC
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Notes & Doodles

Stress thrives
in isolation;
relief comes
through
connection.

amy leneker



Heeeeeellooooo friend,

It's not a secret that there's plenty of stress at work right now.

Work stress can feel overwhelming partly because we're often given the wrong advice.

We're told to manage our time better, set stronger boundaries, or just "take a break"—without ever stopping to ask what kind of stress we're actually dealing with. When we apply the wrong solution to the wrong problem, it causes more stress.

I wrote *Cheers to Monday* to change that.

You don't need a perfect schedule, a quieter inbox, or a stress-free job to begin. You just need a clearer understanding of what's happening—and a better next step.

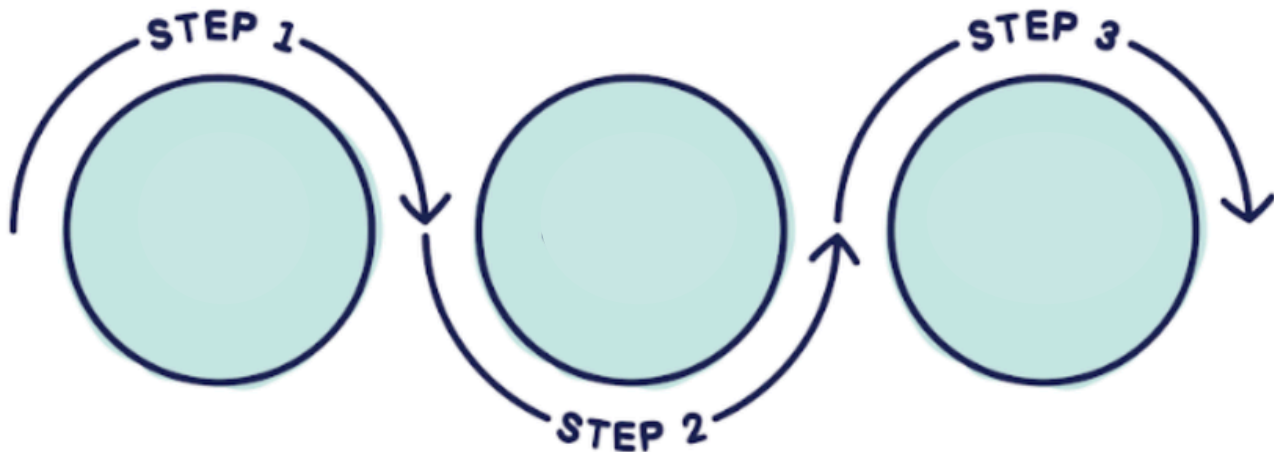
Let's get started!

To less stress and more joy,

Amy Leneker

Amy@AmyLeneker.com

THE UN-STRESSING METHOD™



THE STRESS RULER

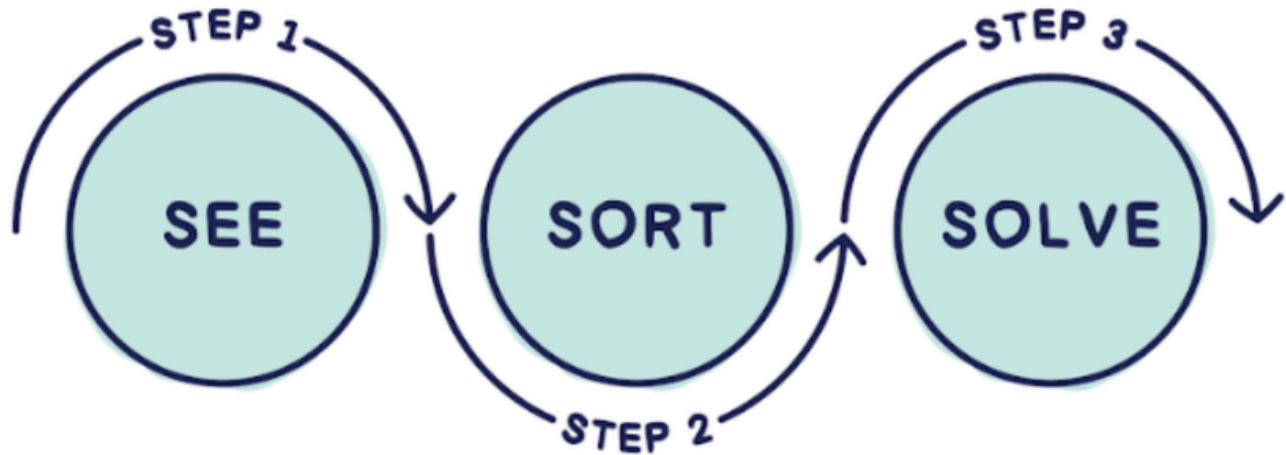
STRESS RULER

HOW CHALLENGING HAS YOUR STRESS BEEN?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

NOT AT ALL CHALLENGING A LITTLE CHALLENGING SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING VERY CHALLENGING EXTREMELY CHALLENGING

THE UN-STRESSING METHOD™



The Un-Stressing Method™ has three simple steps.

1. **See Stress Differently**

- a. Write down your work-related stressors. Use one sticky note per stressor.
- b. Ask two questions for each stressor: Is it important? Do I have control?
- c. Place each sticky note in the correct quadrant on The Un-Stressing Matrix™.

2. **Sort Stress Into Actionable Categories**

For each sticky note, write the number(s) for its stress type(s) in the corner.

3. **Solve Without Spinning**

Use The Un-Stressing Matrix™ to inform your next move.

- Is this important right now?
- Is this within my control?

5 TYPES OF WORK STRESS

Over 80% of working Americans report being affected by all five types of work stress included in the study. While Schedule Stress occurs most often, Sudden Stress was shown to have the greatest negative impact.

Stress Type	Description
1. Schedule	Stress from having too much to do and not enough time. Back-to-back meetings, endless commitments – you barely have a moment to breathe.
2. Suspense	Stress from waiting for what's uncertain or looming. The deadline, decision, or tough conversation isn't here yet, but the anticipation is already wearing on you.
3. Social	Stress from tension in relationships and team dynamics. You can feel it in the awkward silences and unresolved conflict.
4. Sudden	Stress that arrives unannounced and demands a response. An urgent request or a last-minute change throws your day off course.
5. System	Stress from structures, processes, and culture. Unclear expectations, power imbalances, inequity, and inefficient processes that create stress.

Excerpt adapted from *Cheers to Monday: The Surprisingly Simple Method to Lead and Live with Less Stress and More Joy* by Amy Leneker. Published by Wiley. Copyright 2026. Note: The first four types align with Dr. Karl Albrecht's work from 1979 with four categories of stress in workplaces: time, anticipatory, encounter, and situational stress.

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Stress Type

Strategies to Consider

1. Schedule

- Conduct a calendar audit to identify unnecessary meetings.
- Align your time with what actually matters instead of letting urgency set the agenda.
- Adjust meeting default times to provide a 10-minute buffer.

2. Suspense

- Identify the ambiguity or missing information.
- Seek information if available.
- Focus on what you can control.

3. Social

- Address the issue.
- Begin the conversation with curiosity, not judgment.
- Agree on next steps moving forward.

4. Sudden

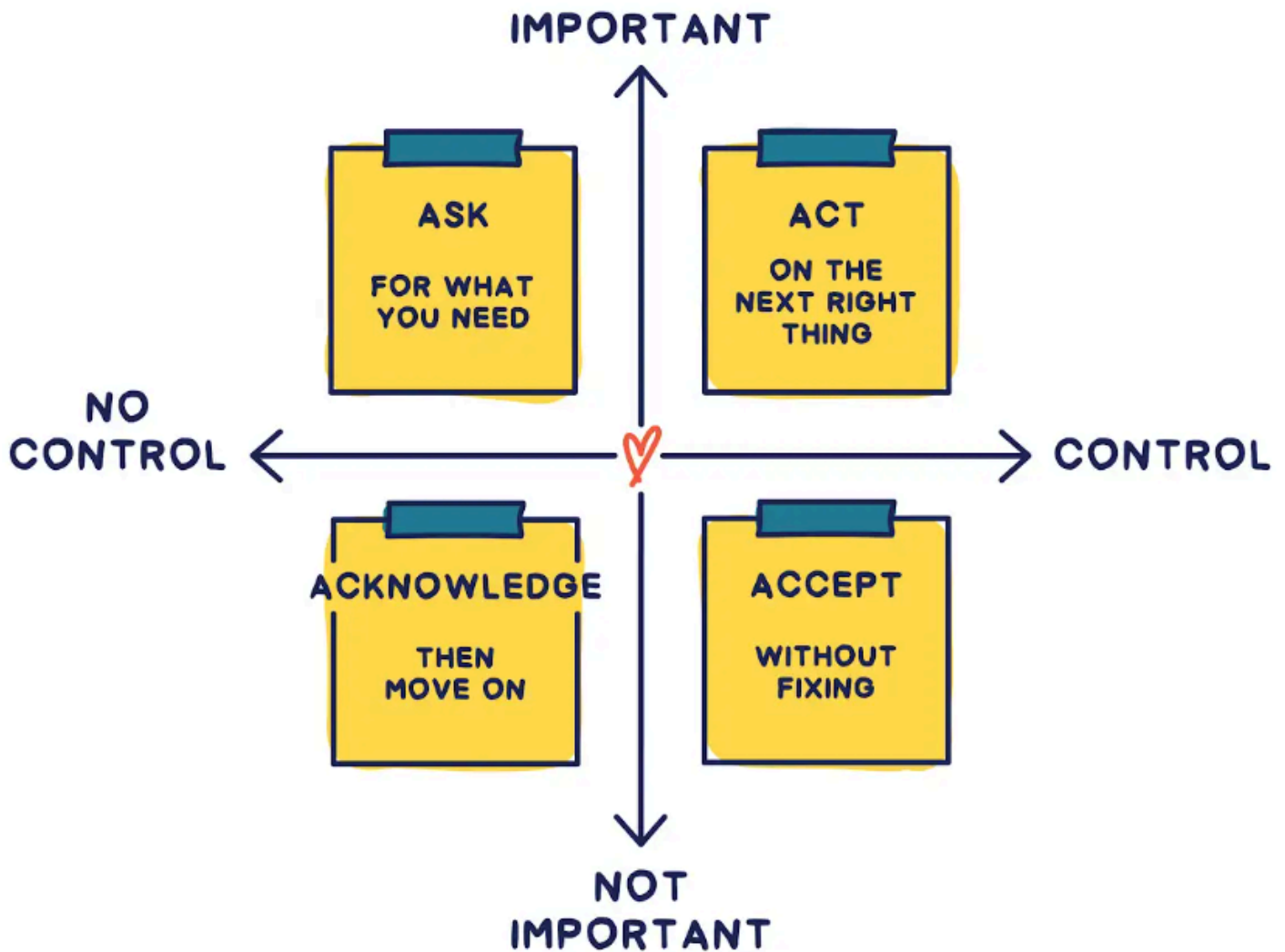
- Pause to ensure you're responding, not reacting.
- Conduct a brief after-action review once the moment passes to name what happened, what was learned, and what you'd do differently next time.
- Contain the disruption by deciding what this moment actually requires - and what it doesn't.

5. System

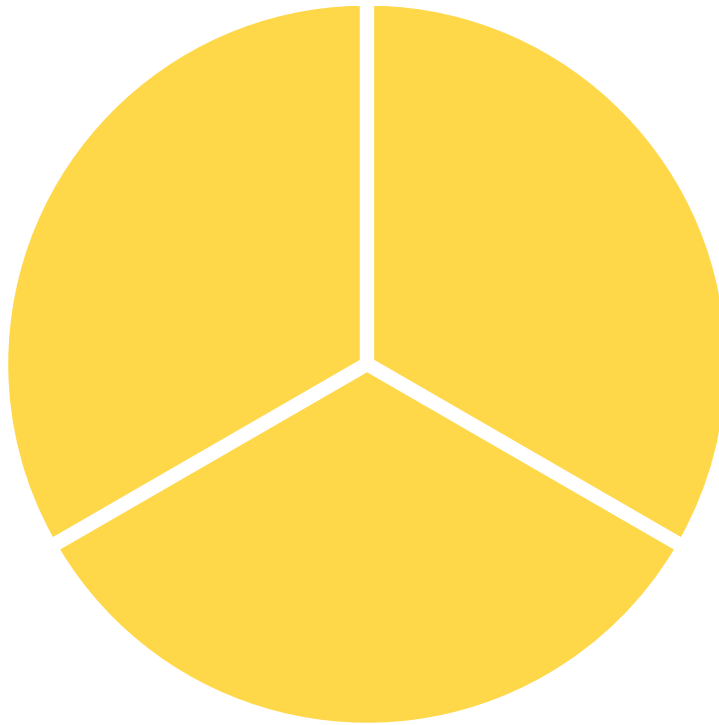
- Identify how systems are making work harder, not easier.
- Interrupt the cycle of fixing around broken systems instead of fixing the systems themselves.
- Protect energy by setting boundaries where the system has failed to set them for you.

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THE UN-STRESSING METHOD™ MATRIX



JOY



Source: *The State of Stress and Joy at Work*, 2026 by Amy Leneker. www.AmyLeneker.com/research

Workplace Situations That Prevent Joy Once a Week or More



Source: *The State of Stress and Joy at Work*, 2026 by Amy Leneker. www.AmyLeneker.com/research

THE R.I.G.H.T QUESTIONS

R – Reframe from Threat to Challenge

How can I see this as a challenge to grow through, not a threat to avoid?

I – Identify Your Role

What's my role in this stressor – and what isn't?

G – Ground Yourself in Values

How can I act in alignment with my values and the organization's values?

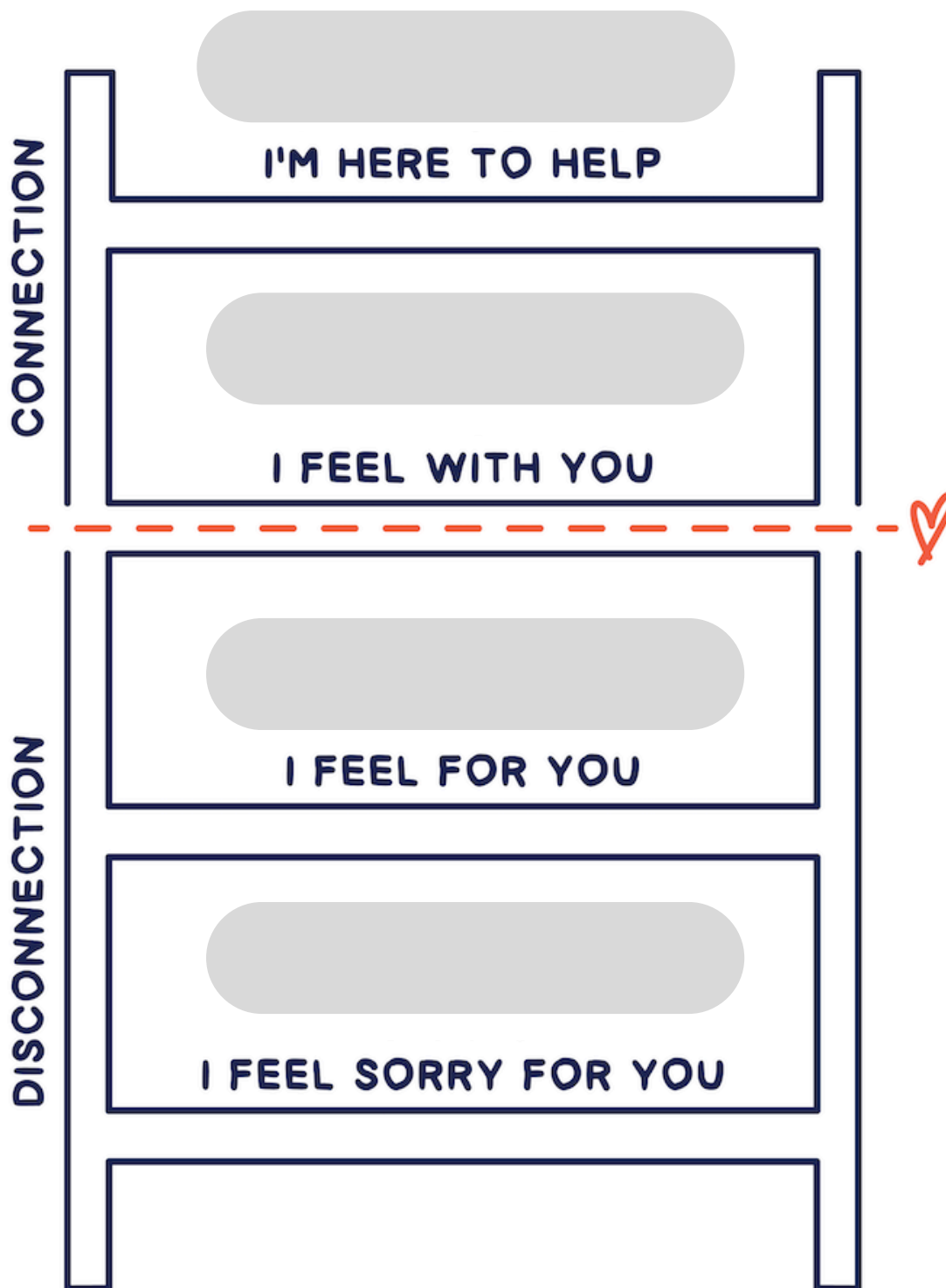
H – Hold Yourself Accountable

What am I committing to do, and by when?

T – Take Aligned Action

What aligned action can I take right now?

LADDER OF CONNECTION



Source: Cheers to Monday, Amy Leneker (Wiley, 2026)
Research from Harvard Business Review, Rasmus Hougaard, Jacqueline Carter and Marissa Afton, Dec. 2021

COMMITMENT

I commit to...



KEEP IN TOUCH

with amy leneker

Podcast

[Less Stress, More Joy](#) with Amy Leneker

Newsletter

Get a letter from Amy every Monday

www.AmyLeneker.com

Research

Download Amy's National Workforce Research Study,
The State of Stress and Joy at Work, 2026

www.AmyLeneker.com/research

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