

Learning English podcasts ... from the
Hellenic American Union©

Level: Lower Intermediate
Lesson: 10

Title: "The Roots of Stress"

Summary:

Vanessa and Denise are talking about the roots of stress.

Vanessa & Denise are in the middle of a live show in a radio studio. Listen to their conversation and answer the question that follows about the main idea.

Vanessa: It's obvious that we all more or less feel stressed, but what are the **roots** of stress Denise?



Denise: Well, stress is typically **brought about** by a situation where we feel that there isn't much we can do about it . . .

Vanessa: Like when you go shopping and the store is crowded or when the washing machine breaks down.



Denise: Exactly! Even these little things can make somebody extremely stressed.

Vanessa: Oh **tell me about it!** I got so frustrated this morning when my motorcycle didn't start. I've still got a headache.



Denise: Ah, now you see headaches and tiredness are the most common symptoms of stress. And...

Vanessa: Sorry to interrupt, but are there any other symptoms besides tiredness and headaches?



Denise: Another thing is if you get angry easily. . .



Vanessa: Oh gosh! I do actually but I'm sure it's not because I'm **stressed out**.

Denise: Well, research has shown that if you get angry easily then you are probably suffering from stress.



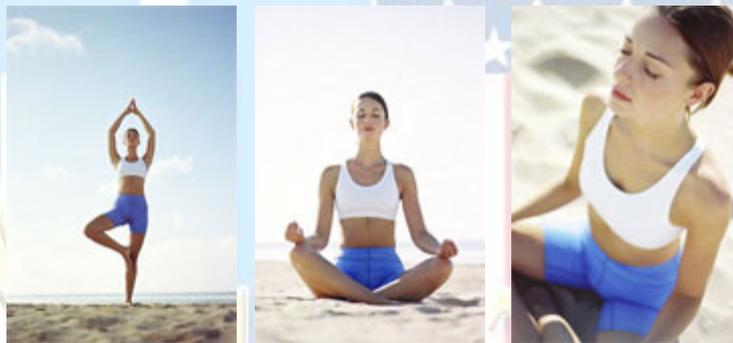
Vanessa: Oh, **this doesn't sound very promising!** And I thought it was an age thing - you know . . . nearing the 'big three - oh'

Denise: **Take it easy** Vanessa. Turning thirty is more of a challenge; and you know . . . stress coming from challenging situations can be very productive!



Vanessa: That's definitely **a nice twist** but unfortunately we've run out of time! Denise, thank you for joining us today.

Denise: My pleasure.



Now answer the following question. . . .

What are Vanessa and Denise talking about?

They're talking about the causes and symptoms of stress.

Now listen again to the dialogue in parts. After each part there will be 3 to 4 questions on the details...

Part 1

Vanessa: It's obvious that we all more or less feel stressed, but what are the **roots** of stress Denise?

Denise: Well, stress is typically **brought about** by a situation where we feel that there isn't much we can do about it . . .

Vanessa: Like when you go shopping and the store is crowded or when the washing machine breaks down.

Denise: Exactly! Even these little things can make somebody extremely stressed.

Vanessa: Oh **tell me about it!** I got so frustrated this morning when my motorcycle didn't start. I've still got a headache.

Denise: Ah, now you see headaches and tiredness are the most common symptoms of stress. And...

Now get ready to answer some questions

1. Vanessa asks: "what are the **roots** of stress Denise'? What does she mean by 'roots'?

'The roots' means the causes. So Vanessa is asking what the causes of stress are.

2. Denise says: "stress is typically **brought about** by a situation where we feel that there isn't much we can do about it . . ." What does 'brought about' mean?

'Brought about' means caused. So Denise is saying that the cause of stress is a situation where we feel that there isn't much we can do about it.

3. Vanessa says: "Oh **tell me about it!**" What does she mean?

We say 'tell me about it!' when we want to totally agree with what someone said. So Vanessa wants to show Denise that she gets stressed by little things too.

Now listen to the second part of the dialogue.

Part 2

Vanessa: Sorry to interrupt, but are there any other symptoms besides tiredness and headaches?

Denise: Another thing is if you get angry easily. . .

Vanessa: Oh gosh! I do actually but I'm sure it's not because I'm **stressed out**.

Denise: Well, research has shown that if you get angry easily then you are probably suffering from stress.

Vanessa: Oh, **this doesn't sound very promising!** And I thought it was an age thing - you know . . . nearing the 'big three - oh'

Denise: **Take it easy** Vanessa. Turning thirty is more of a challenge; and you know . . . stress coming from challenging situations can be very productive!

Vanessa: That's definitely **a nice twist** but unfortunately we've run out of time! Denise, thank you for joining us today.

Denise: My pleasure.

Now answer some questions...

1. Vanessa says: "I'm sure it's not because I'm **stressed out**." What does "stressed out" mean?

Stressed out means nervous or worried. So here Vanessa is saying that she doesn't feel nervous or worried about anything.

2. Vanessa says: "**This doesn't sound very promising!**" What does she mean?

'This doesn't sound very promising' means something doesn't sound good or positive in the future. So Vanessa means that she is worried about how angry she gets.

3. Denise says: "**Take it easy**" What does 'Take it easy' mean?

'Take it easy' means relax, don't worry. So she is telling Vanessa not to worry about her age.

4. Vanessa says: "that's definitely **a nice twist**". What does a "nice twist" mean?

'A nice twist' means a nice change as at this point Denise starts talking about the positive elements of stress.

GLOSSARY

Break down (phrasal verb): to stop working (for a machine, car . . .)
e.g. I'm sorry I can't drive you to the station but my car broke down last night on my way home.

Bring something about (phrasal verb): to make something happen / cause
e.g. The fall in house prices brought about a boom in the property market.

Challenge (noun): an interesting / difficult task or situation that tests somebody's ability / skill / knowledge
e.g. *Finding a solution to this problem is one of the greatest challenges faced by scientists today.*

Crowded (adjective): full of something, with too many people
e.g. The bus is so crowded in the morning that you can barely move.

Frustrated (adjective): annoyed or discouraged because you cannot achieve what you want
e.g. I got so frustrated this morning I couldn't find my car keys; I was thirty minutes late at work because of that.

Join (verb): participate in something somebody does or go with them
e.g. 'Would you like to join me for lunch tomorrow?'

Run out of something (phrasal verb): to finish or use completely something
e.g. I've run out of cigarettes; can I take one of yours?

Tiredness (noun): the feeling that you need a rest
e.g. Tiredness is one of the reasons people don't go out that much anymore.

Turn (thirty) (verb): become (thirty)
e.g. I hope I'll have children by the time I turn forty!

Twist (noun): a change in the way in which something happens
e.g. There's an unexpected twist in the plot towards the end of the film.

Activity 1

Practice using the words in the glossary. Choose the most appropriate word to fill in the blanks.

1. He thinks of people who don't seem to like him as a _____; he likes finding ways to approach them.	A. bring about
2. The incident was the latest _____ in the continuing saga of fraud and high scandal in banks and stock broking firms.	B. broken down
3. I was overtaken by a sudden wave of _____.	C. challenge
4. I'm sorry I can't help you out but my printer has _____.	D. crowded
5. Hurry up! we're _____ time; we have got five minutes left only!	E. frustrated
6. I don't like going out on Saturdays; all pubs are so _____ and noisy.	F. joined
7. More than a million people _____ the peace demonstration.	G. running out of
8. He knew this matter would _____ a fight between the two members of the band; I wonder why he mentioned it.	H. tiredness
9. Driving in bad weather conditions makes me _____.	I. turn
10. What do you hope to have achieved by the time you _____ 65?	J. twist

Activity 2

Change the following sentences from active to passive.

1. His mum cleans his room every day.
2. We need better computer equipment at work.
3. People don't use the lifts in the metro a lot.
4. People treat skinheads as if they were criminals.
5. They paint their house once a year.



KEY TO ACTIVITIES

Activity 1. 1. c. 2. j. 3. h. 4. b. 5. g. 6. d. 7. f. 8. a. 9. e. 10. i.

Activity 2. 1. His room is cleaned every day by his mum. 2. Better computer equipment is needed at work 3. The lifts in the metro are not used a lot. 4. Skinheads are treated as if they are criminals. 5. Their house is painted once a year