



**Dealing with stressful,  
problematic and crisis situations  
in the economic and  
administrative industry**



# STRESS

## Stress

a set of related processes in the body and nervous system, constituting the general reaction of an individual to unusual, difficult, disruptive, threatening, unpleasant or harmful stimuli or situations, called stressors (Kocowski T, 1997).





My face when someone tells me stress balls are for squeezing, not for throwing at people who stress me out





# STRESS



## THE THEORY OF STRESS

H. Selye

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In academia, stress is associated with the creator of the first theory of stress in 1936, doctor H. Selye.

## DEFINITION

of the word stress

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He used the word stress, which he defined from the point of view of biology and physiology as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it".

## THREE CURRENTS

of psychological stress

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Selye's concept attracted interest and resulted in several theories of psychological stress. There are three trends in defining psychological stress.



# I. HESZEN-NIEJODEK (1999) PRESENTS STRESS AS:

## ■ **An external stimulus**

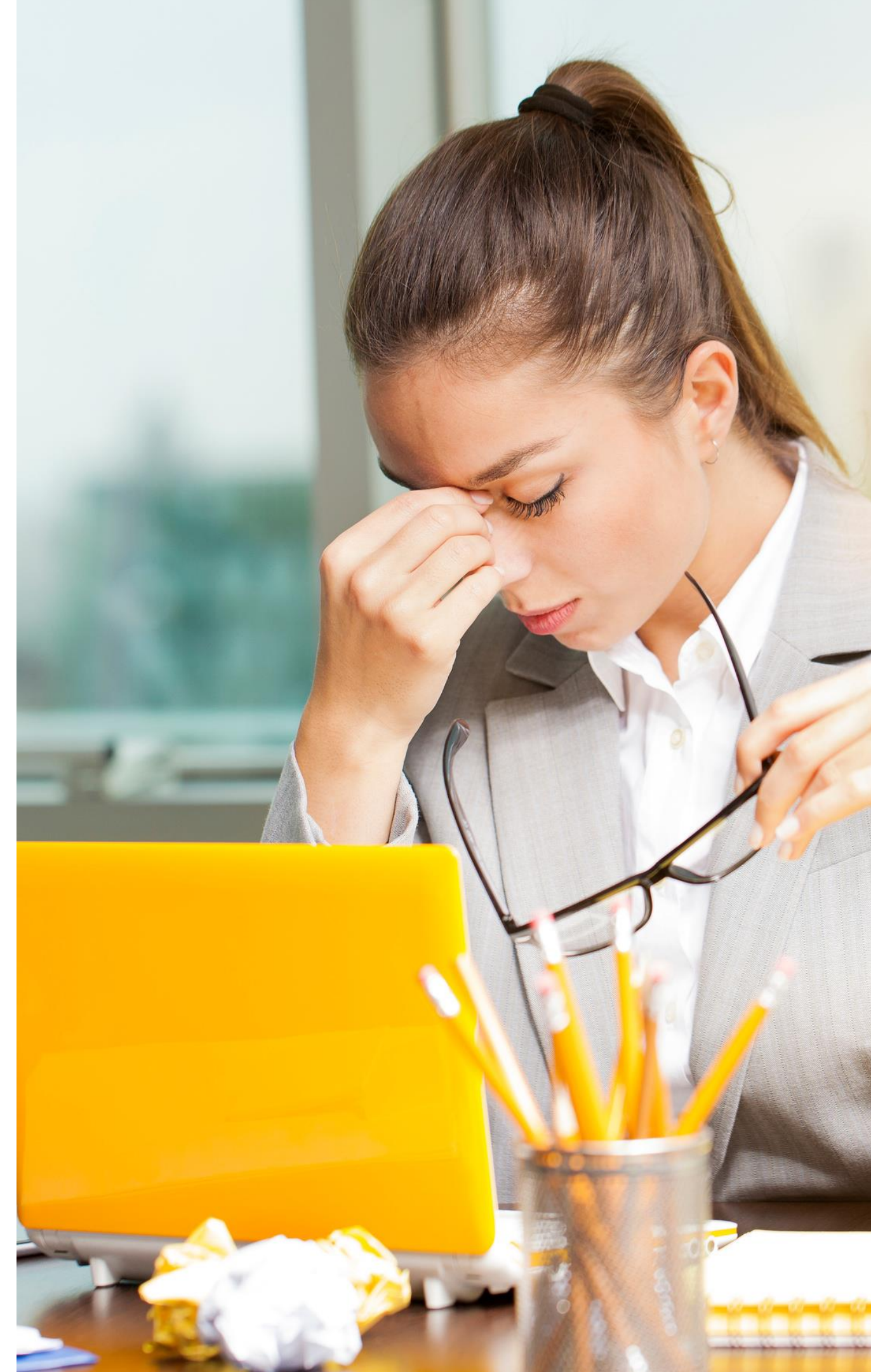
an external stimulus, situation, or event with specific characteristics

## ■ **Internal human reactions**

internal human reactions, especially emotional reactions, experienced internally in the form of a specific experience

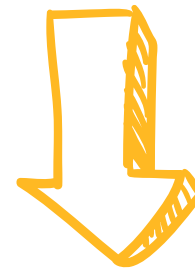
## ■ **Relationship**

relationship between external factors and human characteristics



# GENERAL ADAPTATION SYNDROME

set of all non-specific physiological changes (not directly related to the action and nature of the noxious stimulus) that are a response to stress



## THIS RESPONSE DEVELOPS THROUGH THREE STAGES:

**Alarm reaction**  
(shock phase, anti-shock phase)



**Resistance**  
(cope with stressor)



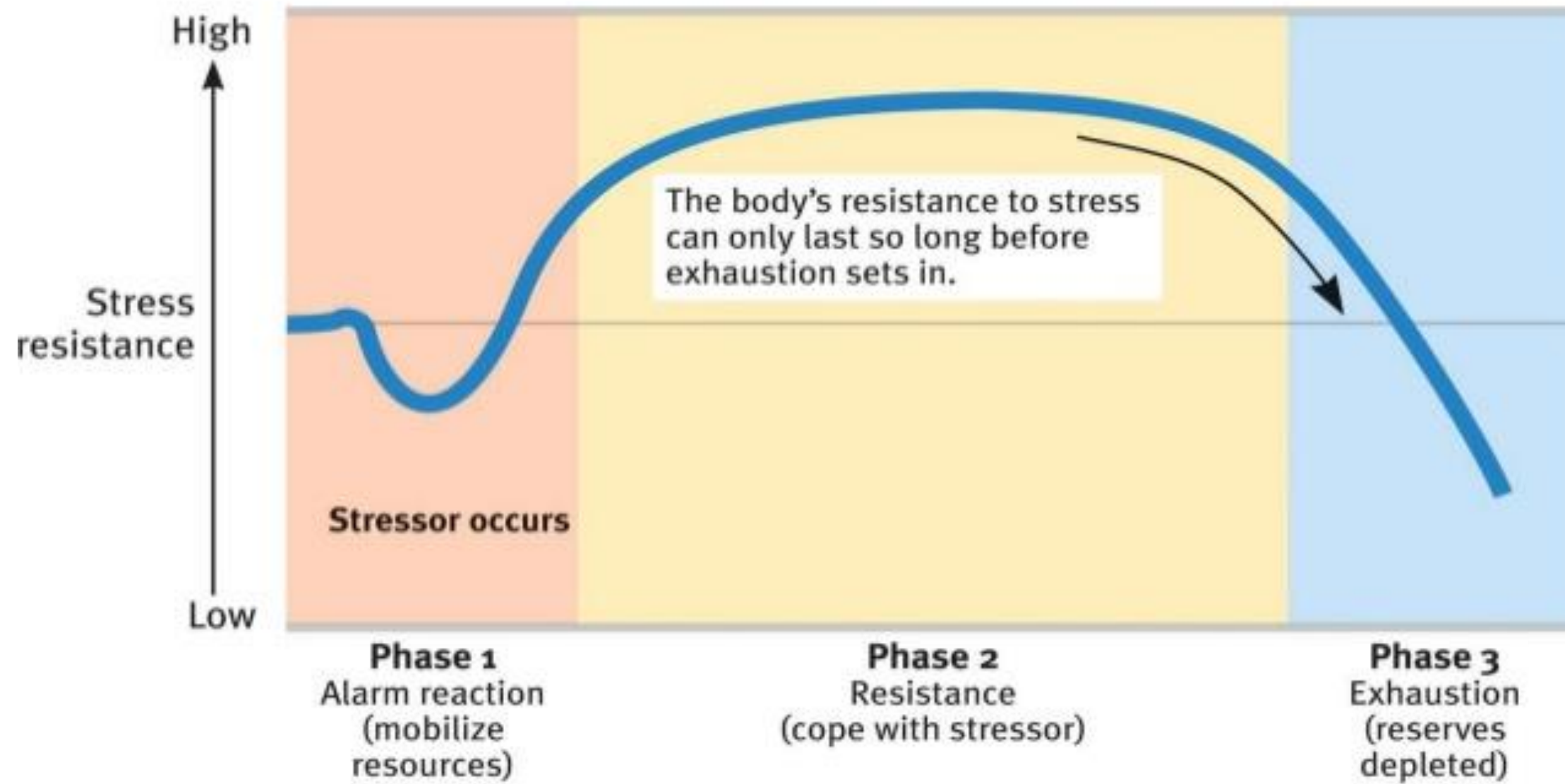
**Exhaustion stage**





# General Adaptation Syndrome [GAS] (Identified by Hans Selye):

Our stress response system defends, then fatigues.



# Three phases of stress

# SENSOR THE BODY'S REACTION

## ALARM

Mobilization to meet and resist stress



## STAGE OF IMMUNITY

Coping or resisting stress



## EXHAUSTION

If resistance does not eliminate the stressor, then the coping mechanism is exhausted





# Good and bad stress

**Selye distinguishes between good and bad stress.**

Distress (bad stress) - when stress is so severe or lasts so long that it causes disorganisation of activities;

Eustress (good stress) - acting despite temporary discomfort leads to personality development.

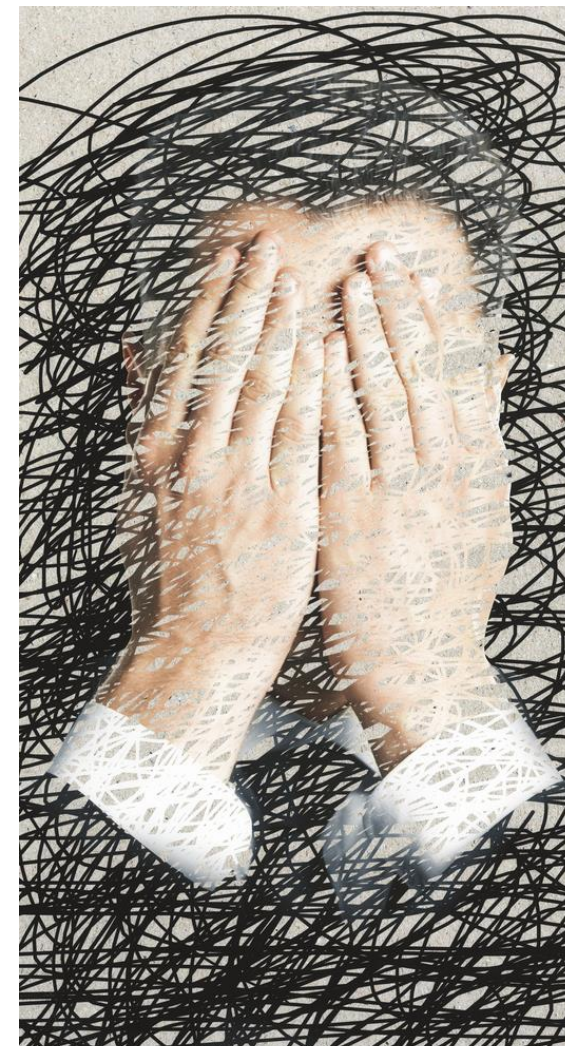
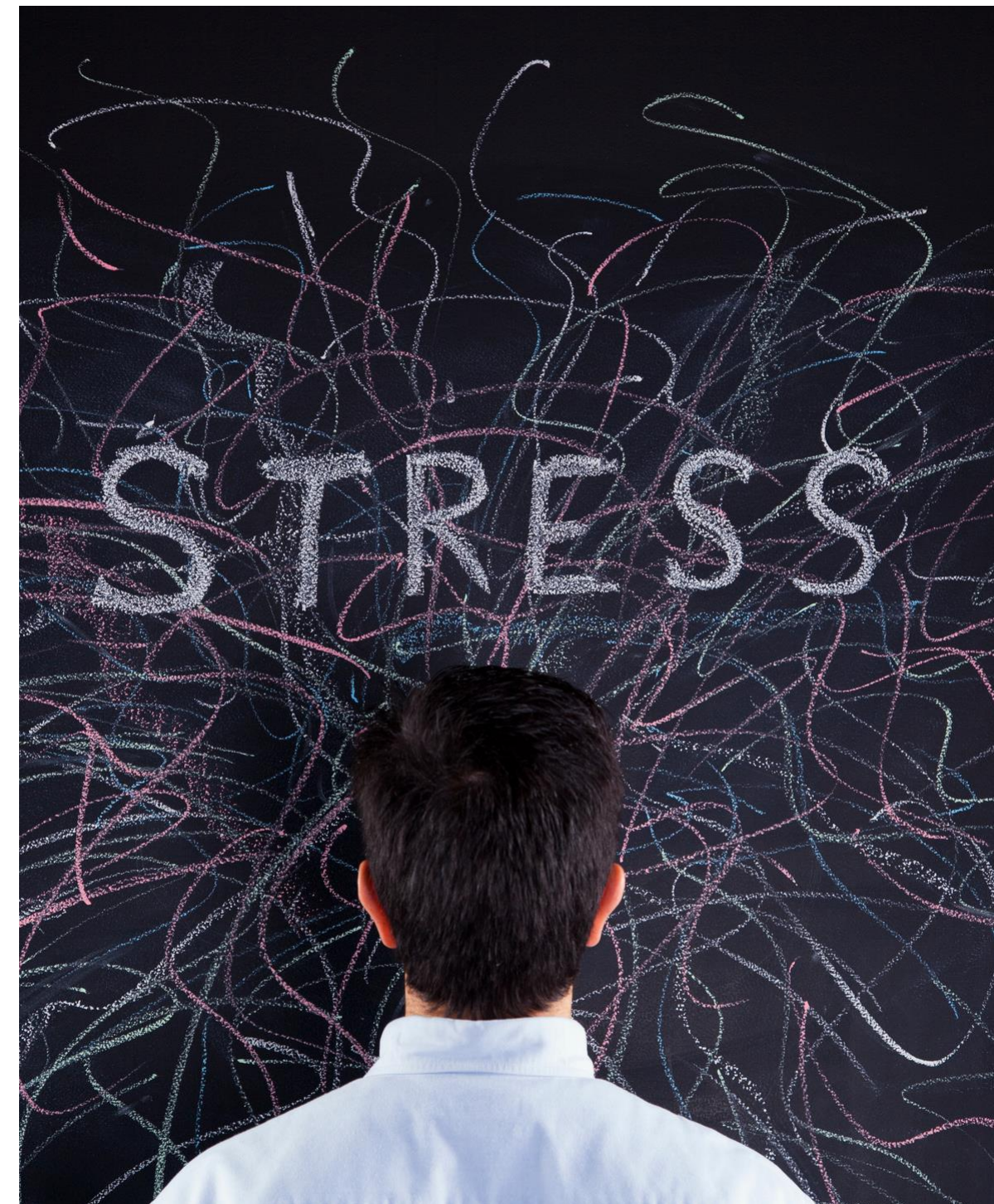
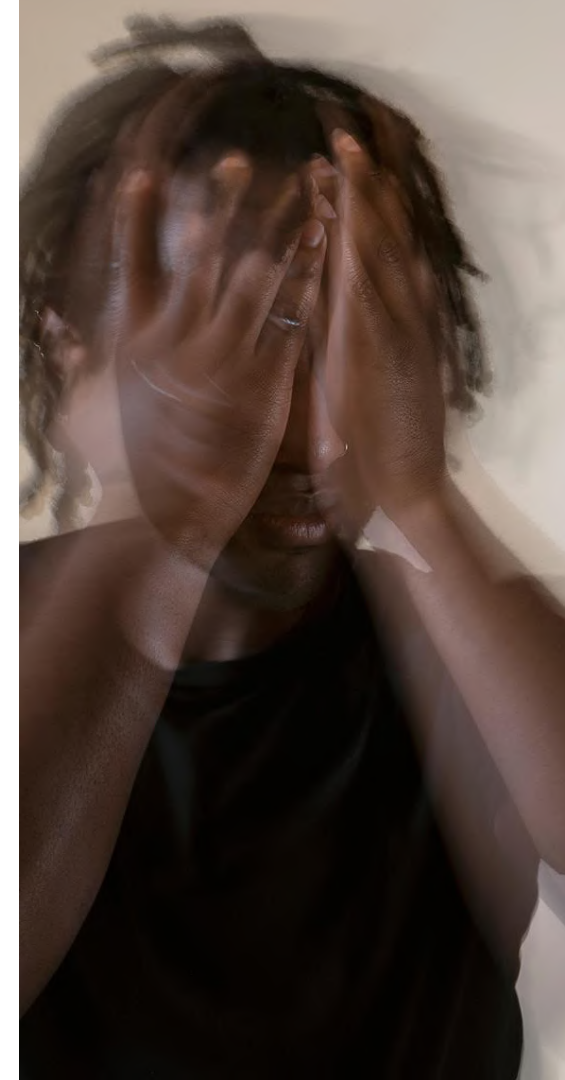




In the physiological sense, good and bad stress do not differ from each other when it comes to stimulating (activating) the body to fight it.

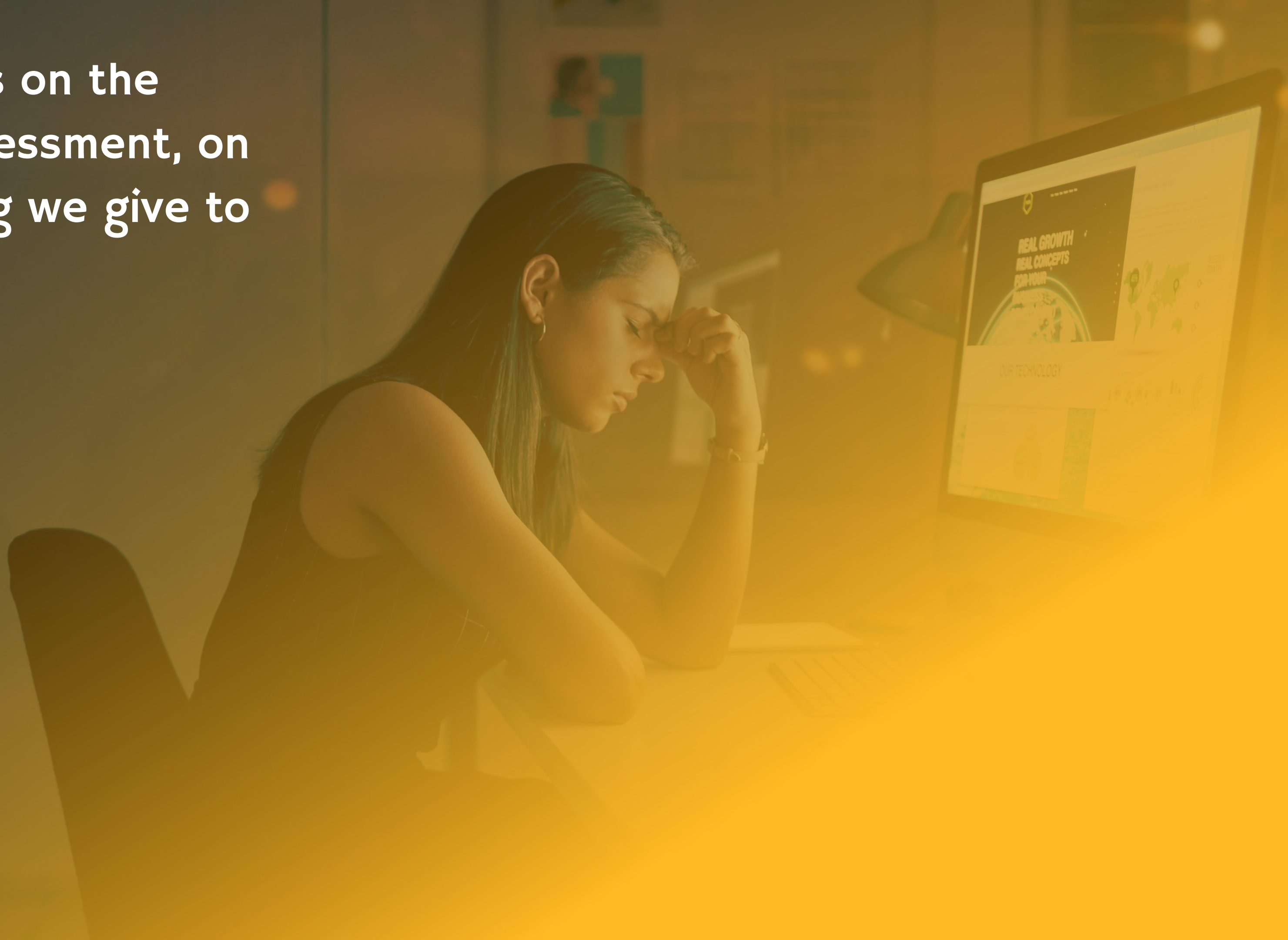
However, in the psychological sense, there is a difference:

- bad stress (distress) is understood as bringing suffering and disintegration,
- while good stress (eustress) is understood by Selye as a factor motivating to action despite difficulties and leading to the development of one's own personality and life achievements.





It all depends on the  
cognitive assessment, on  
what meaning we give to  
stress.





**BODY**

**MIND**

Headaches  
Frequent infections  
Muscular tension  
Fatigue  
Skin irritations  
Breathlessness

Worrying  
Muddled thinking  
Inability to concentrate  
Nightmares  
Indecisions  
Negativity  
Hasty decisions

**STRESS**

Loss of confidence  
More fussy  
Irritability  
Depression  
Anger  
Anxiousness  
Apprehension

Accident prone  
Over- / under-eating  
Loss of sex drive  
Drinking more  
Sleeplessness  
Restlessness  
Smoking more

**EMOTIONS**

**BEHAVIOUR**





# Stress

- **a specific relationship between the person and the environment**

which is assessed by the person as burdening or exceeding their resources and threatening their well-being (transactional approach, Lazarus).

- **response to an environment**

where there is a threat of sheer loss of strength, actual loss of strength, or lack of strength due to exploitation (resource conservation theory, Hobfoll).



# Alternative concept of stress

## SCALE OF 43 LIFE EVENTS

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Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe announced an alternative concept of stress, based on the concept of stressor. Holmes and Rahe developed a scale of 43 life events, which volunteers ranked according to how much adjustment each event requires.



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Researchers studied the relative strength of stressful situations by assigning an appropriate conventional value of stress units to the stimulus on a scale of 0 to 100. This is how the popular Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) questionnaire was created.



# Holmes i Rahe stress scale

1. Death of a Spouse (100)
2. Divorce (73)
3. Marital Separation (65)
4. Being in prison (63)
5. Death of a close family member (63)
6. Bodily Injury or Disease (53)
7. Marriage (50)
8. Work dismissal (47)
9. Reconciling with a quarreling spouse (45)
10. Retirement (45)
11. Illness in the family (44)
12. Pregnancy (40)
13. Sexual problems (39)
14. The Growth of the Family (39)
15. Starting a New Career (39)
16. Changes in financial income (38)
17. The Death of a Close Friend (37)
18. Change of profession (36)
19. Increased marital conflicts (35)



# Coping

## Definition

- Folkman and Lazarus (1988, cited in: Heszen, Søk, 2007) define coping as "a cognitive and behavioral attempt to meet specific external and/or internal requirements, assessed as exhausting or exceeding the individual's resources."
- In this view, coping is a series of deliberate efforts made as a result of a specific assessment of the situation. Continuation of these efforts for some time and their changeability determine the processual nature of coping.





# Lazarus

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At the same time, Lazarus (1993, after: Heszen, Şek, 2007) emphasises that coping is context-related and, to be effective, it must change over time, regardless of the type of stressful conditions (Lazarus, 1993, in: Heszen, Şek, 2007).





# Assessment of the situation

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The assessment of the situation on which coping is based does not have to be realistic (Lazarus, Folkman, 1984, cited in: Heszen, Sęk, 2007), and the goal of the individual's activity is conscious, thanks to which defense mechanisms can also be considered forms of coping.





# Coping functions

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE GOALS OF COPING, THE AUTHORS OF THE CONCEPT DISTINGUISH ITS TWO FUNCTIONS:

- INSTRUMENTAL (TASK-ORIENTED, PROBLEM-ORIENTED)
- THE FUNCTION OF SELF-REGULATION OF EMOTIONS.

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The first one consists in improving the unfavorable relation of requirements to possibilities

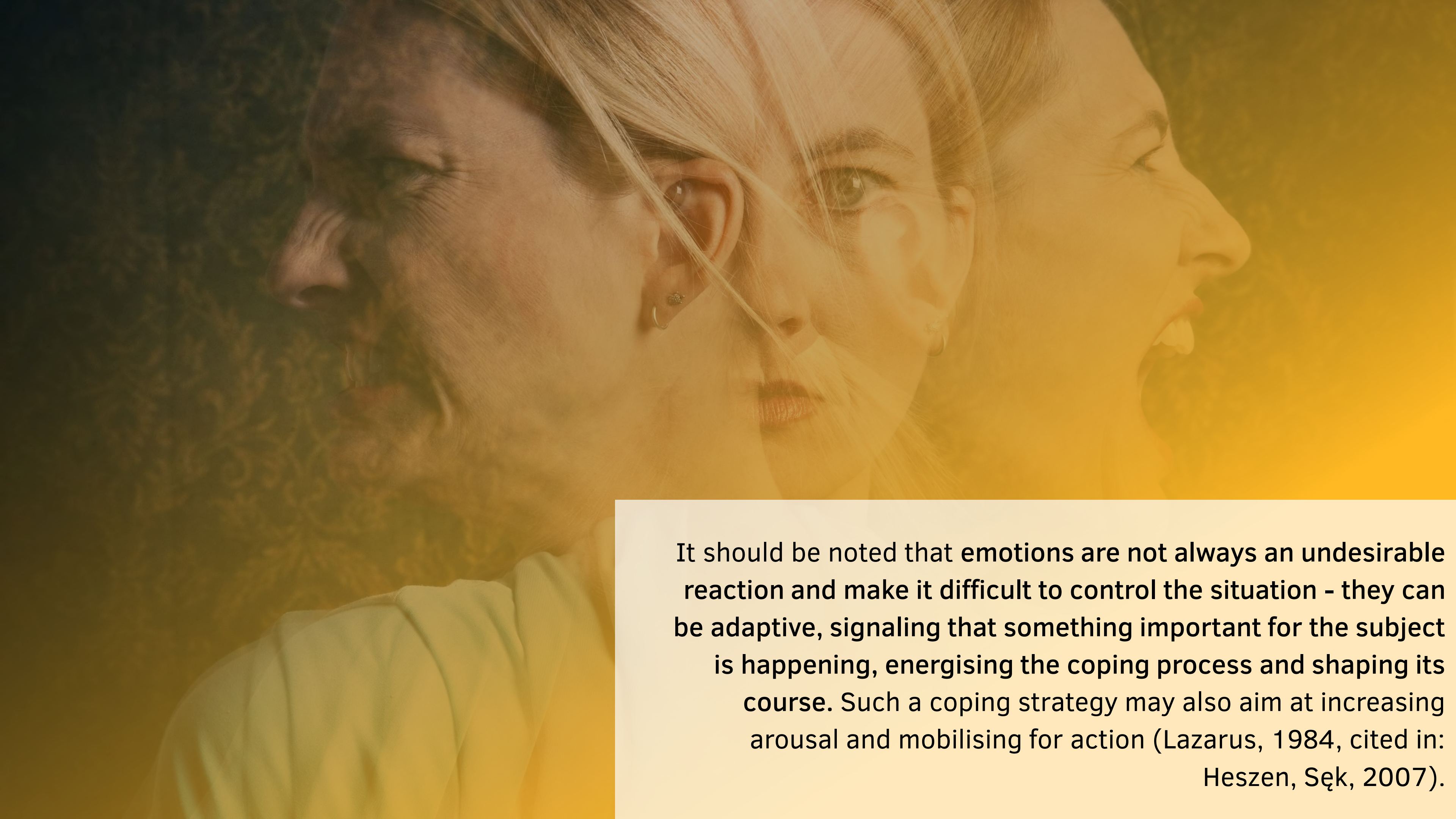


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The second - on reducing unpleasant tension and alleviating negative emotional states.







**It should be noted that emotions are not always an undesirable reaction and make it difficult to control the situation - they can be adaptive, signaling that something important for the subject is happening, energising the coping process and shaping its course. Such a coping strategy may also aim at increasing arousal and mobilising for action (Lazarus, 1984, cited in: Heszen, Sęk, 2007).**



# Hobfoll's theory of conservation of resources (COR)

- According to Hobfoll (1989, cited in: Strelau, Jaworowska, Wrześniewski, Szczepaniak, 2009), **coping aimed at removing stress can be considered from the point of view of the process of allocating resources in terms of profit and loss.**

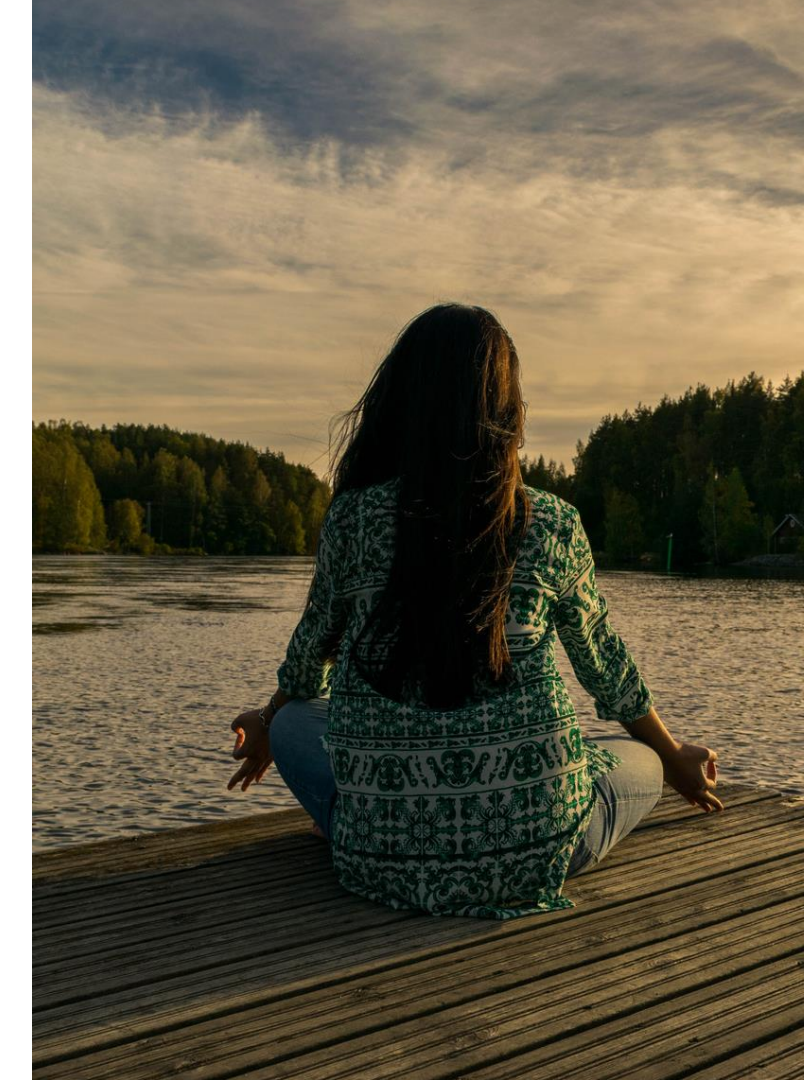
The benefits consist in obtaining or retaining resources, while the costs consist of disposing, losing or using them.





# Coping

Taking into account the definition of stress as an imbalance between demands and possibilities, coping can be assigned a regulatory function, which consists in maintaining harmony between demands and possibilities or reducing discrepancies between them.





# Coping

## PROCESS, STRATEGY OR STYLE OF COPING

Coping is described with one of three concepts - it is recognised as a process, strategy or style of coping with stress.

## THREEFOLD STATUS

In the concept of Lazarus (1966), coping has a threefold status.

## CHANGE OVER TIME

It can change over time, which makes it a process, it can also run in a way typical for different situations - then we talk about typical ways of coping for different situations, i.e. coping strategies.

## TRAIT

Finally, it can be seen as a trait, a generalised tendency to certain behaviours manifested in situations consistent with this tendency.





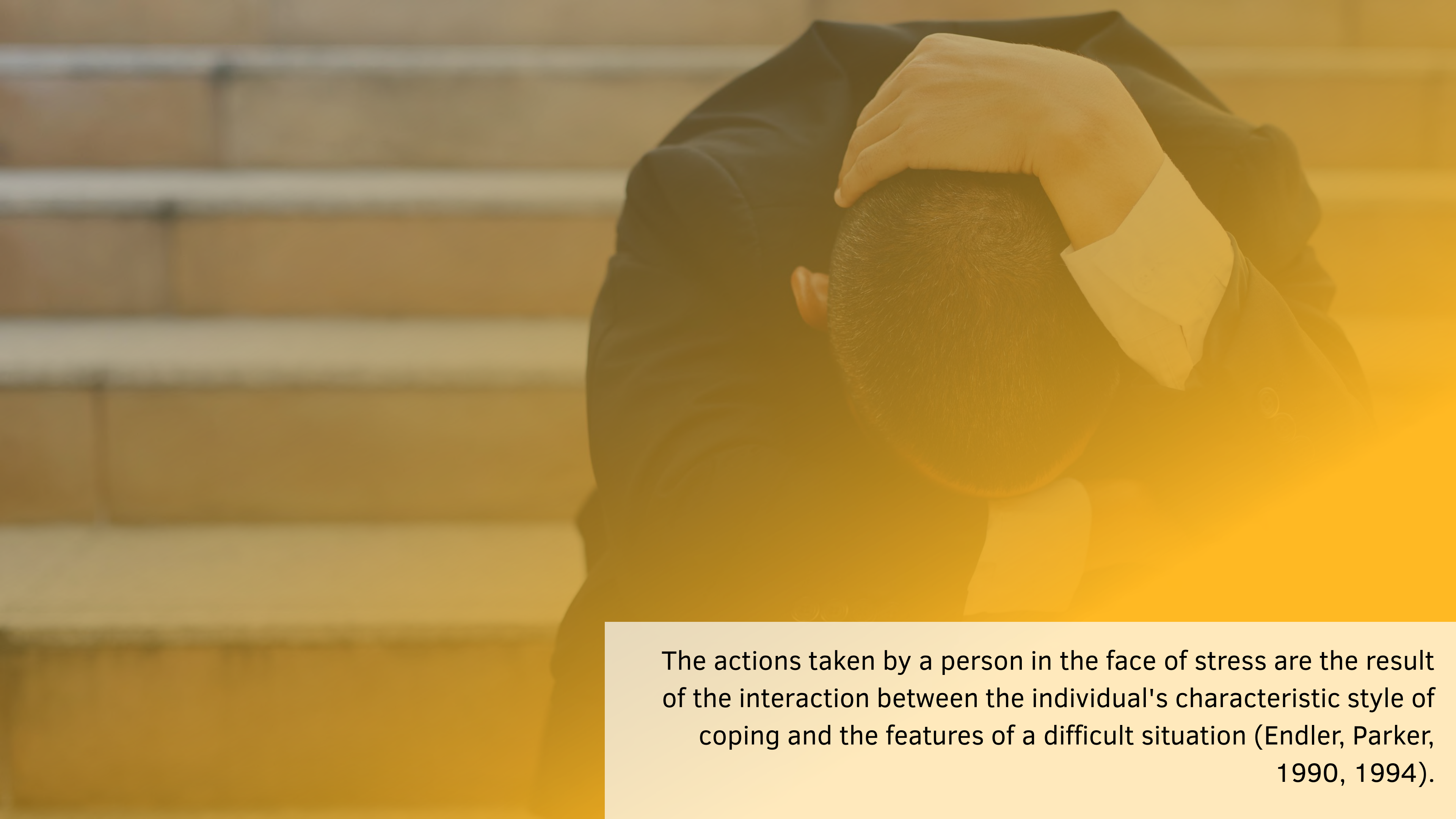
Juxtaposing these three terms with regard to coping with stress, one can say that **style** is a relatively permanent and individual predisposition to cope with stressful situations in a specific way

**Strategy** is defined actions and reactions that a person takes in a specific situation, and the process of coping is a series of strategies that change over time.

**Thus, strategies are specific to the situation, and styles are specific to the subject.**







The actions taken by a person in the face of stress are the result of the interaction between the individual's characteristic style of coping and the features of a difficult situation (Endler, Parker, 1990, 1994).



# Researchers distinguish three styles of coping :



## TASK-FOCUSED

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defining the way of coping with stress by undertaking tasks and planning a solution to the problem



## FOCUSED ON EMOTIONS

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characteristic of people who, in difficult situations, focus on themselves and their emotional experiences and are prone to wishful thinking and fantasising in order to reduce emotional tension



## AVOIDANCE FOCUSED

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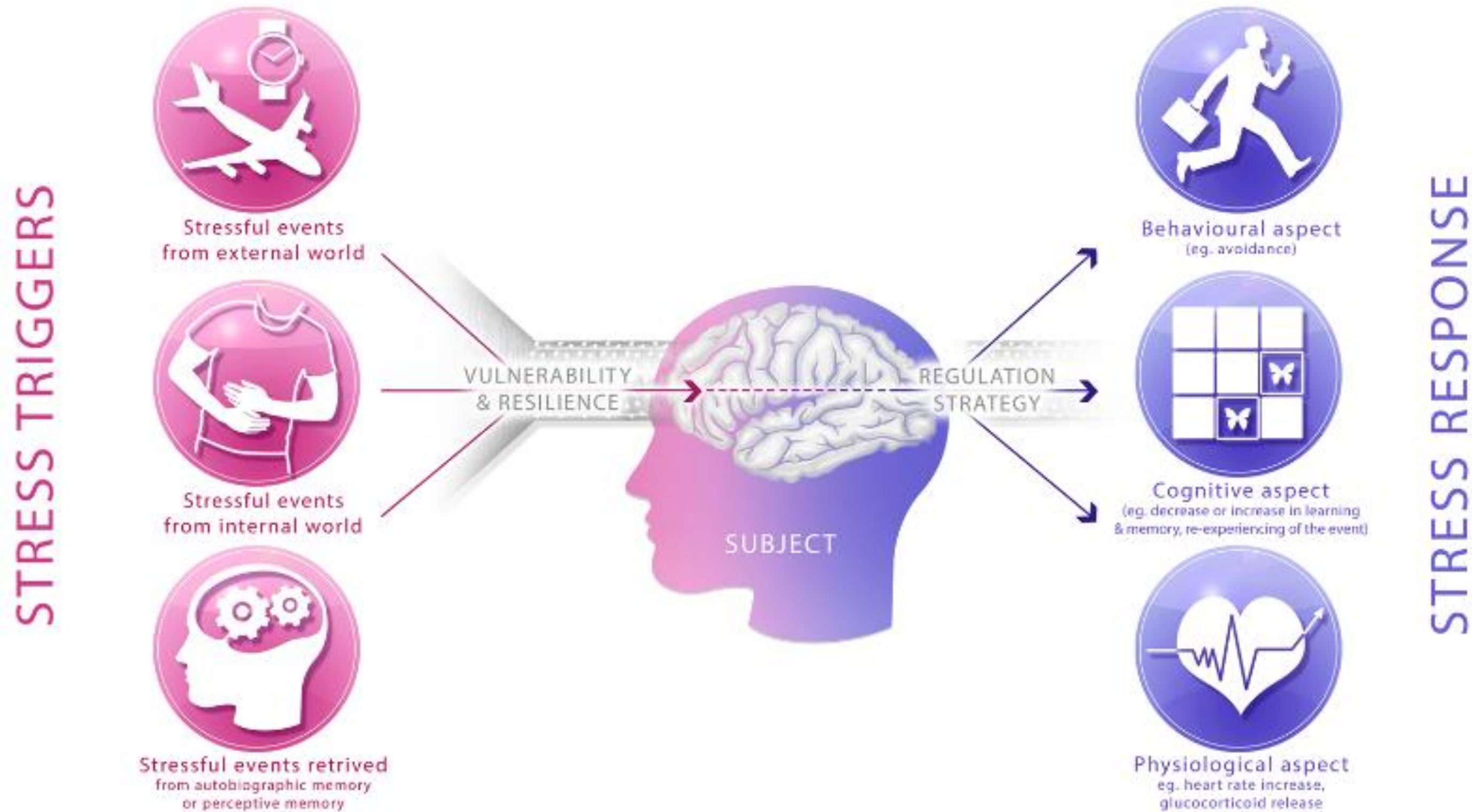
avoiding thinking and experiencing a stressful situation.

**It can take two forms:**

**Engaging in substitute activities and seeking social contacts.**



# HOW TO COPE WITH STRESS ?





# Thank you for your attention