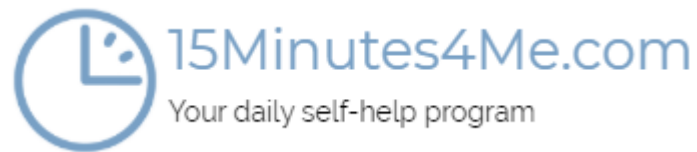


Sound of mind in fifteen minutes per day!



**Presents**

**in the series “15 Minutes 4 Me”**

# **Sound of mind in fifteen minutes per day!**

By

*Dr. Paul Koeck*



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*Dr. Paul Koeck*

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Published by Coachteam ® Publication, 15 Minutes 4 Me

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# Sound of mind in fifteen minutes!

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Dear Visitor,

15 Minutes 4 Me has grown from over 20 years of experiences as a doctor and therapist, specialized in guiding, preventing, and healing all kinds of stress, burnout, tension, anxiety, or depression.

Our mission is to share this experience in an affordable and democratic way with millions of people who suffer from the pressure, the expectations, and the rhythm of our modern society. We want to give people themselves the chance to help themselves to live in a happier way, in order to once again find their zest for life.

Nature has programmed our human body and brain in such a way that we naturally know how to live in a content, spirited, and happy way.

However, negative stress can disrupt this natural balance. Especially in the Western world in which we live.

That is why we developed a democratic program to help you to free yourself of all types of tension, and to once again get in touch with your natural ability: to live contently and happily, and to enjoy your life, family, and friends full of spirit.

All this in fifteen minutes per day: 15 Minutes 4 Me!

If you spend fifteen minutes every day in order to look back on your feelings, behavior, and thoughts in the “right way”, you will once again discover your zest for life, step by step.

This “right way” is our expertise. Two decades of research have taught us how people can break out of the vicious cycle and be happy once again.

Furthermore, modern technology allows you to do so from your living room, via the internet. All you need is the right support and your engagement to spend fifteen minutes of your time per day!



This support is what we, your partner, family, or friend, offer you via the online self-help program “15 Minutes 4 Me”. Your support in this process happens via this program. For eventual medical aspects, we of course refer you to your doctor.

In case you wish so, we even help our family, friends, or environment to support you in a professional way in your engagement via the program “15 Minutes 4 Me”. We help them to help you in a better way, if this is what you want.

If you are not a large fan of the internet, you can use our online self-help books as your guide to your personal happiness.

Read through this book at your own pace to find out how we can help you.

Paul Koeck, MD



# Your Stress Meter



## What does this stress meter measure?

This stress meter measures your **subjective feelings** or *tension, anxiety, or depression*. This thus is not a medical diagnosis. That is something which only your doctor can provide for you!

All that which is written in this book, goes for the average population. So the advice from your doctor is still necessary in order to know what your situation is! There is not a single online test or program which can replace the advice from your doctor or make it superfluous!



The test does help to screen whom finds themselves in a risk zone:

1. About 30% of the people who have a higher than normal score, finding medical examination that they do indeed receive a medical diagnosis. Those, we recommend to, while following this program, speak to their doctor every two to four weeks, so that he can also follow-up the evolution and, in case necessary, supplement with specific medical treatment methods.
2. So 70% of the people who have a higher than normal score have another type of increased stress which is not yet 'pathological'. In that case, it is recommended to preventively improve your scores in order to prevent a development to illness.

Except for a good screening method, the test is the ideal tool for following up if you are progressing or not. Research<sup>i</sup> has shown that the score on this stress meter, after following a guidance program, reduces by about 2/3 to 34% of the initial score at the start. That is why we – both within as outside of the program – offer you the opportunity to take this test again for free every month. This way you can see yourself if your efforts are helping you or not.

The stress meter thus is a good tool for you to follow-up your own progress. It is also a good tool to help your doctor set his diagnosis, and especially to follow-up your progress during your treatment program.

There are several reasons as to why the advice from your doctor is so important. I list some of them here:

1. First of all, there are types of stress which have a purely medical-biological cause and not a psychological one. Your doctor has been trained to see the difference for you and provide the correct treatment. This is something which not a single online test can do in his or her place. An example of this is an overactive thyroid gland, or rather a thyroid gland which secretes too little thyroid hormone.
2. Secondly, there are specific psychological disorders, such as an 'endogenous' depression<sup>ii</sup> or a 'bipolar' depression<sup>iii</sup> which are more biological than they are psychological in their nature, and which sometimes require some type of





medication in addition to a self-help program. This is something which only your doctor can decide.

3. Certain symptoms which are very common in stress, anxiety, or depression, can treacherously easily put us on the wrong track. They can indicate a completely different medical disorder which has nothing to do with stress.
4. The other way around, there also are symptoms which do not make one think of stress while they do in fact regard stress-bound problems. An example: in seniors, something which looks like dementia can sometimes be a depression rather than dementia. By then treating the depression, all symptoms of 'pseudo dementia' disappear.

### How to use this stress meter?

When your scores have all been in the green 'normal' zone for three months, you have the same score as the average healthy population does. In normal cases you then do not have to worry, unless your doctor thinks otherwise.

It is best to use this meter for three months, once a month, to get a global image of your tension situation. This is something which you can do through signing up for free for a monthly follow-up with this stress meter. Research in the Netherlands<sup>iv</sup>, Australia<sup>v</sup> and the UK<sup>vi</sup>, showed that over 80% of the population scores in the 'normal' green zone, and for anxiety this statistic even goes up to 94%. This means that only 6% to 20% of the population has a higher score than the green 'normal' zone.

It is always a good idea to provide your doctor with a copy of your results for his or her medical file. This is something you can do by mailing your file to him or by printing it and taking it with you to your next appointment.



#### Green light

In case some participants in the green zone want to follow the program "15 Minutes 4 Me" for their personal development, we have made it so that they, too, can follow the program for their personal development with the goal of learning to think and act in an even more solution focused way, which can help them to develop more quickly as a human and as a professional. If this is something you are



considering, you simply click the field “*personal development*” after signing up, and then the program is tailored to your specific needs!

About 80 % of the population finds themselves in the green or ‘normal’ zone☺.



### Orange light

In case your score is higher than the green zone in one of the meters, in the zone “mild” or “moderate”, then the self-help program is usually enough to coach yourself back into the “green” zone again. We already mentioned that people can reduce their score to about 1/3rd of the starting value.

Of course, the advice from your doctor is recommended here, too. He or she can also support you during your journey of discovery!

About 15% of the population scores in the orange alarm zone, 7% in the darker orange.



### Red light

When one or several scores show to be “severe” or “extreme”, then help is definitely required. Then we recommend you to start the self-help program, while you immediately organize a meeting with a doctor so you can discuss with him or her if you, except for the self-help program, also need medical support or another type of guidance. In that case, it is recommended to see your doctor at least every other week in order to follow-up your evolution as closely as possible. You need to count on your results taking two to three weeks to start showing from this program, and sometimes, support in this transitional period is needed so that you do not give up before noticing the first improvements. Otherwise, you might become discouraged.

What you should definitely discuss with your doctor, are the following points:

1. In case you sometimes have dark or destructive thoughts, you should discuss these with a doctor and consider how you can protect yourself from these dark thoughts in difficult times.



2. In case you have depressed periods which alternate with extremely euphoric periods, you should speak with your doctor about whether this can point in the direction of a bipolar depression, which requires medication.
3. In case you are severely depressed and also have one of the following complaints, it can be so that you have an endogenous depression which is cured much more quickly when combined with antidepressant medication:
  - a. Little or no appetite
  - b. Little or no libido
  - c. Difficulties falling asleep (without medication)
4. In case you are addicted to a product (coffee, alcohol, smoking, medication, drugs, ...) or an act (internet, chat, gambling, ...), you should talk to them about how you want to handle this. Chances are that your stress will prove difficult to improve without dealing with your addiction, too. You can then discuss with your family and doctor whether you want to completely stop your usage, or opt for controlled usage. Soon, "15 Minutes 4 Me" will be expanded so that it can also help to guide you in the treatment of your addiction. You can follow on [www.15minutes4me.com](http://www.15minutes4me.com) when this expansion becomes active.

To follow the program in case of "red light", it thus is necessary to contact a doctor who takes on the responsibility to follow and support you during this process.

About 5% of the population scores in the red alarm zone, 2% in the dark red☹.



# Do you want to live without ... ?



## Is all stress the same?

Yes and no.

### Yes, to some extent!

Yes, because the underlying mechanism which leads to different stress-bound illnesses has a lot in common. We will further explain this.

### New insights in biology and genetics

Professor Robert Sapolsky from the famous Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, explains in his seminars how, even in certain genetically decided forms of depression and other stress bound illnesses, the, for example, depression gene is NOT what decides if you get ill. Even if you have the 'depression gene', you will only get a depression if you use your brain in such a way that you (unintentionally) put yourself under pressure. If you (unintentionally) allow the situation to overpower you.

The good news of this insight, is that we are not decided for through our biology. Even if we are more vulnerable than the average person, we can learn to use our



brain in such a way that we do not (or only less) end up in our vulnerable zone. So, even if we are unlucky with our body, we can influence ourselves! This is what the program “15 Minutes 4 Me” works with.

That is why we developed this program: to help you to handle the underlying stress which makes it so that we end up in the wrong zone. Some people completely manage to get out of the danger zone with the help of this program, and others to some extent. For one person it requires more effort than it does for the next. One person might find that the self-help program sufficed, while someone else might also require medical help. That is why we recommend that you speak to your doctor. The more deeply you enter the red zone, the larger chances are that you must combine medical help with self-help.

### No, partially not!

As the blue circles in the figure above show, stress occurs in several shapes such as burnout, anxiety, panic disorder, phobias, hyperventilation, addiction, insecurity, fatigue, and even depression. Your doctor will help you to set the correct diagnosis, or to set your mind at ease by stating that you do not have a medical problem, but rather experience normal tension.

Around the blue circles in the figure above, you see some of the tens of symptoms and complaints which can be caused by this.

As explained above, many of these complaints can be reduced or even gotten rid of by applying the right psychological principles to yourself.

The program “15 Minutes 4 Me” guides you in learning to apply those.

A few pages after this one we will go more into detail about what we mean with developing **new habits** by influencing what you **think, do, and feel**.



Sound of mind in fifteen minutes per day!



# Do you want to live with ... ?

---

Wil je **leven met** ...



## Living the way you want to

Negative stress develops when we no longer manage to live in the way we want to live<sup>vii</sup>.

## Love for yourself

We want to be satisfied and happy, live with a zest for life, energy, love, passion, harmony, and confidence. When we lose the feeling of freedom of living such a life, we become unhappy. When this unhappy feeling continues for too long, we end up in the vicious cycle of negative stress.



## Love for others

We do not only want fun for ourselves. Also for others.

Every one of us has a deeply rooted longing for being a good person for others. We want to be a good father, a good mother, a good colleague, a good friend, a good professional, ... We want to mean something for others.

We long for acknowledgement.

When we are no longer able to do so, when we lose our freedom of choice of molding out life in such a way that we “live the way we want to live”, then we get stuck in the vicious cycle of stress.





# How to live without stress with zest for life?



## How does “15 Minutes 4 Me” help me with this?

We have already learned what it is that makes us unhappy. We also know that negative stress is the underlying mechanism in how we get stuck when this unhappy feeling is present for too long.

Now all that is left is to discover how we can once again have zest for life and happiness.

The program “15 Minutes 4 Me” will ask you concrete, specific, ‘therapeutic’ questions on a daily basis, which have the goal of letting you re-discover what it is that gives you specifically zest for life, and how you can invite this feeling back into your life.

It goes beyond insights. We also guide you in “**implementing**” these new solutions. We then motivate you to time and time again “**practice**” this, until these solutions have become a new, automated “**habit**”.



# How is a habit created?

---



Wanneer je je oplossing **30 dagen** dagelijks inoefent, wordt ze een **gewoonte**!

## The three building blocks of a habit

A habit is created every time when we keep calling forward the same thoughts, behaviors, and feelings again and again in our brain.

What you **think**, **do**, and **feel** decides your habit creation<sup>viii</sup>!

So if you change the way you think, do, and feel, you learn new habits, by practicing these new thoughts, actions, and feelings!

Brain research shows that it takes about 30 days to learn a new habit. Our brain needs 30 days to make new, permanent connections between different nerve cells.

That is why “15 Minutes 4 Me” will help you to practice useful thoughts, actions, and feelings for more than 30 days.

To prevent relapse in chronic or stubborn long-term habits, four to six months or repetition are recommended. That is the type which a “stem cell” needs to grow into a fully ripe, mature brain cell. That is the reason why we give people the choice to follow “15 Minutes 4 Me” for a long or a short period of time, depending on their own personal need. Many issues are solved in 3 weeks up to 3 months, but if you fear relapse, it is best to keep going for some more time.



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You do not need to make this choice in advance. You can choose, every month again, whether or when you want to stop or continue with the self-help program 15 Minutes 4 Me.



# Does stress keep you from living happily?



## Developing solution focused habits

The reason why we easily fall back into old habits, is because we, subconsciously, as ourselves the wrong questions, which cause us to go round and round in circles. Worrying thoughts are the best example of this. They focus our attention on “what we do not want” and on “what does not work”.

The solution focused questions in “15 Minutes 4 Me” will help you to focus your attention on more *useful ‘thoughts’*, namely “**what you do want**” and “**what you can do**”.

This gives motivation and hope. This creates new courage and energy for you. This energy will not only help you to ‘think’ in a more useful way, but also to try more useful ‘actions’. Step by step, you become more courageous and creative, and you learn to more realistically estimate what it is that works well for you. This in itself will give you a better ‘*feeling*’ about yourself.

Except for the tens of film clips with short exercises to learn to influence your thoughts and feelings, these solution focused questions will help you to develop **new**, ‘**desired**’ **habits**, step by step, day by day.



# How do you change a habit?

---



We helpen je ontdekken welke gedachten en handelingen je helpen om je beter te voelen!

Daarna oefenen we dit in tot het een nieuwe gewoonte is.

## Three keys to happiness: thinking, doing & feeling!

### Thinking:

Your **thoughts** about yourself influence what you **do** and **feel**. There even is a type of therapy which is entirely based on influencing your negative thought: the ‘*Cognitive Behavior Therapy*’ or “*CBT*”. Another type is “*RE(B)T*” or ‘*Rational Emotive (Behavior) Therapy*’ by Albert Ellis.

Both types of therapy are incorporated in “15 Minutes 4 Me”, as well as many other types of therapy which we integrated into this program.

During the development, we decided to not limit ourselves to one type of therapy. A good therapist adjusts their program to the personality of the participant.



This also goes for 15 Minutes 4 Me.

### Doing:

Solution focused questions in 15 Minutes 4 Me help you to think about what it is that you are doing. You learn to see a difference between two types of **actions**:

1. Actions which **do help** you to get closer to your goals
2. Actions which **do not help** you to get closer to your goals.

Because you can see this difference more clearly, it also becomes clearer what you want to do more of and what you want to less of.

These are things which we are often unaware of, until someone asks about it in the right way. That is what 15 Minutes 4 Me does every day for ten minutes to fifteen minutes: asking you about the things which do help you.

That is why you will spontaneously start doing these things more often! And this goes on until they have become a new habit!

### Feeling:

Every week, you learn a short exercise at the hand of a video to learn to influence your feelings, if you deem this necessary. We developed tens of short exercises. I will sum up a few of them below:

- anti-piekeroefening
- inslaapoefening
- anti perfectionisme training
- goed gevoel oefening
- pleziereiland oefening
- Mindful observeren
- Yoga ademhaling
- tevredenheidtraining
- ademhalingsmeditatie
- handenmeditatie
- piekeren op het toilet oefening
- slow motion techniek
- patroon doorbreking oefening
- linkerhand boodschappen

Most exercises are made in such a way that you can do them, every time a negative feeling comes up. You learn to turn this unpleasant feeling around within minutes to a pleasant feeling.



At the same time it is so that people who regularly practice bending their negative feelings into positive ones, will start to do this in a spontaneous, subconscious manner after a while, without needing the exercise in itself.

Of course, like with all new things in life, it is still so that “practice makes perfect” ... if you use your fifteen minutes well, you will have positive results, but you will have to practice.

15 Minutes 4 Me tries to make the journey as pleasant as possible, like a good guide on a hike or vacation. But still, you have to walk the path by yourself. You still have to do it yourself.

Luckily, we can reassure you in that most people are surprised about how simple and pleasant every step in itself is, once you know ‘how’.

We try to build up the path in small steps, so that you can walk it one step at a time. It still requires courage and persistence, but it remains a reasonable and doable effort which can definitely be done.

Furthermore – like you will see further on – you can also ask forth help and support from a good friend, partner, or family member along your way.



# What are you aiming for?

---



Gewenste gewoonte



Pijnlijke gewoonte

Na 30 dagen dagelijks je gewenste gewoonte in te oefenen, wordt het steeds gemakkelijker!

## Psychology summarized

It sounds unlikely, but you can easily summarize the core of the human psychology with the three simple “**Laws of 15 Minutes 4 Me**”:

### The three laws of 15 Minutes 4 Me

#### 1st law of 15 Minutes 4 Me:

1. Content people do more of that which brings **enjoyment** ↗
2. Content people do less of that which causes **pain** ↘

#### 2nd law of 15 Minutes 4 Me:

1. Tense people do more of what *does not* help ↗ (e.g. *worrying*)
2. Tense people do less of what *does* help ↘ (e.g. *looking for creative solutions*)

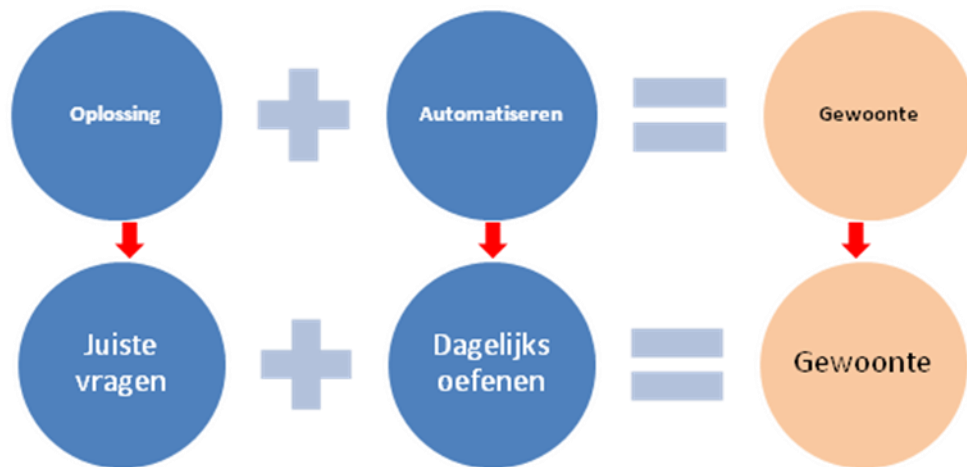
#### 3rd law of 15 Minutes 4 Me:

1. If people pay attention to what does help, they follow the **1st law**!
2. If people pay attention to what does not help, they follow the **2nd law**!





# How do we help you?



Wij stellen de juiste **vragen** waardoor je weer **oplossingen** ziet.  
Wij doen dit **dagelijks** waardoor het een **gewoonte** wordt.

## Your formula for success

When someone asks you the right questions, you will more easily find the right answers and **solutions**.

When someone asks you the right questions every day, you learn to ask yourself the right questions. This then becomes a **habit**.

When you ask yourself the right questions, you will find the right answers and solutions. If you practice this long enough, **solution focused thinking** becomes like a second nature for you.

That is why “15 Minutes 4 Me” is only useful for you if you decide to effectively follow the program every day, for barely fifteen minutes per day.<sup>1</sup>

If you really do do this every day, until you notice that **solution focused thinking** has **become your second nature**, you can relax and know that, under normal circumstances, you will no longer deeply relapse.

Of course there will still be difficult days, which is normal in any human life. But you will have learned to ask yourself the right questions. That is why you will find new,

<sup>1</sup> On many days, your time investment is even less than fifteen minutes, rather around 10 minutes.



creative solutions which you – while you are reading this – right now might be unable or find difficult to imagine.

After about three weeks you will notice that your mind starts to think more clearly. Your ability to focus and to make decisions will increased. Your confidence will have grown. You will more easily see the options and solutions from which you can choose, and it will be easier for you to choose, because you will doubt less.

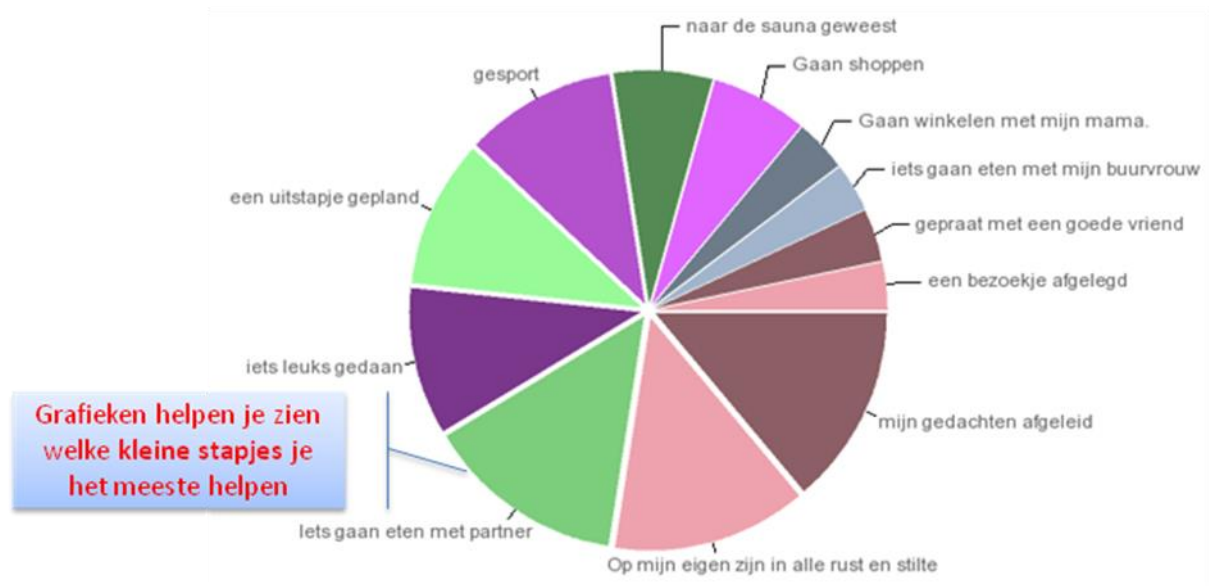
This is because your brain needs about three weeks to clear up after a period of tension, burnout, anxiety, or depression. After three weeks of daily solution focused questions, you will notice that your brain once again does its work in the way it used to.

After some more weeks have passed, you will have learned to recognize ‘looming relapse’ early on: before it becomes too difficult to keep track of yourself.

That is the reason why we invite you to, yourself, choose how long you want to follow the program. Some find that a few weeks are enough, while others prefer several months. You can make this decision at any time, so you do not need to think about this right now. It is only good to know that you have this freedom of choice at any time.



## Which solutions do participants find?



### Good solutions are small simple things

Look at the pie chart above for a moment. These are the solutions which a participant found during their first days on “15 Minutes 4 Me”.

This is what we see time and time again: when you ask people the right questions, they come up with simple, normal solutions.

Happiness is found in the little things in life. They are no spectacular techniques which get us out of our burnout, tension, depression, hyperventilation, or anxieties. No, they are the little, simple things in life.

Of course, techniques are sometimes needed for people to get started on re-discovering these little things. After that, they are no longer needed!



15 Minutes 4 Me asks you again and again which solutions work for you, and groups or gathers them in graphs and images. The advantage of this is that you can see yourself which solutions help you most.

The secret of any good guidance, coaching, or therapy, is “**reflection**”. During twenty years of research<sup>ix</sup>, about what helped our participants most, the same main theme came forward every time:

***“You have taught me to reflect on my own behavior!”***

And usually, after a short silence, they add something along the lines of:

*“Before this program I did not realize that I had an impact on my own thinking, doing, and feeling. Now, I know that I can choose myself what I think, do, and feel, and that I can do this by first reflecting on the impact which I have on myself and others. And once I know this, I can easily change my behavior so that I reach my goals in a better way.”*

Above, we wrote that people find happiness in life in simple human things such as being a content person, being a good mother or father, a good colleague, neighbor, a good friend, partner, ...

Overview graphs of online participants prove time and time again how true this human wisdom is. And if it happens – as a matter of exception – that a medical tool (such as medication, for example) comes up in the list of solutions, we often see that the relative ‘portion’ of this tool in this pie chart reduce more and more after several weeks, and melts away like snow on a sunny day.



# Who helps you on your way?



## Your social support

‘But’, some say ... ‘a computer program cannot help you, can it? Do you not need conversation?’

This is exactly what the secret of “15 Minutes 4 Me” is!

## Yourself

You can help yourself without the help from any others, in case you choose this.

If you do not like to talk or you feel insecure in putting what you are thinking into words, then you can start with self-help *without* involving others.

You can keep it like this, or – as many people do – ask for the support of others after a few weeks when you feel surer, or just talk about it sometimes.

Anything is allowed, nothing is forced!

Some participants told me afterwards:

*“Paul, this is great, it feels as if I talk to you personally for fifteen minutes every day.”*



## Your family or friends

During the course of this program you can also invite a good friend, a colleague, your partner, or a family member or other person you trust to support you.

You will, in the self-help program 15 Minutes 4 Me find a page where you can invite someone via e-mail: your 'buddy'!

This person will then receive an e-mail to ask them to support you during your learning process. This support process is something which we guide in three different ways:

1. We give your supporting figure some tips and explanation about how you can best help someone, and what is not helpful for someone like you. This is something which we do because we notice that many people do want to help a loved one or friend, but have no idea as of how to do so. That is why they have a completely wrong approach, and give 'advice' in such a way that the person they try to help feels misunderstood and less helped. Learning certain basic rules makes it so that someone who means well suddenly understands how he or she can, first off, learn to understand you, and then support or help you in a better way. For example, we teach to talk to each other about which time of help *is* appreciated, and which type *is not*. This way, more **understanding** and fewer misunderstandings are created.
2. We ask this person solution focused questions about what things they already see you doing well. You can then read these answers on your program page. By reading which '*small steps*' others already notice in you, your confidence in that what you are doing is good, increases. This gives you more courage to keep going. It takes some effort to keep going with these little steps, one step at a time. So you can read what your "buddy" writes about you, but of course not the other way around. Everything you write remains private, for your eyes only! And because we only ask solution focused question to this person, you do not risk that this person will give you negative feedback, which could undermine your courage. *(This way we avoid that people – with the best intentions – give you the wrong type of feedback: Feedback which does not help you, or feedback which even halts you!)*



3. We encourage you and your “buddy” to, together, discuss how you would like to receive support and help and how you would not. As you will choose a buddy with good intentions, they will be willing to help you in the right way, as soon as they understand what is important to you. Because they understand this partially from you, and are partially guided by the guidelines from “15 Minutes 4 Me, - and thereby enjoy our expert experience – this process is likely to come along as it should.

### Your doctor

You can also decide to talk to your doctor or another healthcare provider and to ask for their support. In case you want, you can send the monthly report, which we prepare and mail to you, to your doctor or healthcare provider. You can also print it out and take it with you to your appointment. We of course recommend this option for the reasons which we already mentioned above. However, if you have clear reasons to – of course while you, yourself are responsible for this – not do so, we will not take this option from you either.

You are a free human being, responsible for your own choices.



# Which steps will you take?

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Wij stellen je in elke fase de juiste vragen om je volgende stap te zetten en te lukken!

## From solving to relapse free

Research about what works in therapy shows that the following five factors determine the success:

### 1. What do I want?

By formulating what you want (after getting rid of your stress), you state a positive goal rather than a negative one. Having positive goals increases your motivation and energy to reach them. Your attention is once again focused on your goal. That means that this becomes clearer in your mind, and you will find it easier to work toward it.

### 2. What can I do?

This question looks for your existing talents. By paying attention to those, you start to discover how you can creatively use your existing talents in order to realize your goal from the previous step. This helps you to not put any negative energy in your flaws. By seeing what you are able to do, you learn to discover new opportunities and solutions, instead of constantly losing energy with issues which do not work.





### 3. Which small steps to take first?

This question helps you to divide up your large goals into smaller, doable steps. Small steps help you to regularly have 'mini successes'. These successes motivate you to, with more energy, courage and hope, continue your journey. They increase your self-confidence, and your believe in yourself, as well as your hope for a solution!

### 4. How to keep going?

In this phase you will discover which tools (support from others, motivation, insights, knowledge, talents, ... ) you can use to keep going with more difficult things until they prove their success. Oftentimes we give up too easily because of a lack of self-confidence, or hopelessness. Now that "15 Minutes 4 Me" has helped you to better see which **solutions** help you move forward, it is valuable to keep going with this and to **keep moving forward**. (Sometimes we already lost the courage before starting because we have continued on with the wrong solutions for too long, which we then generalize to believing that it never is good to keep going. Holding on to the **right** solutions, on the other hand, is a good thing! This difference between right and wrong solutions will be easier for you to see!)

### 5. How to prevent relapse?

This is a very important step which is left out by many people, with all consequences thereof.

For problems which have not been present for so long, relapse prevention is not always needed. Then it often is enough to follow the program for a relatively short period of time, until you feel better.

For chronic problems which have been present for years, the issue is that the old, non-desirable habit has nested itself deep into the brain.

Through the solution focused questions in "15 Minutes 4 Me, you will learn to develop new *desirable habits* after a few weeks. The old habit is not removed from the brain because of this. You can never really get rid of an old habit! This has been scientifically proven.

However, you now do have the **choice** between the old and the *new* habit: from now on, you can choose between these two options at any time.



The challenge now is to **practice long enough** in order to choose the new desired habit out of the two habits ... until this choice for the new *desired habit* in itself has become a new habit.

In short:

First of all, you develop the **ability to choose** between a desirable and a non-desirable habit via ***solution focused questions***.

Secondly, you ***practice*** choosing the good habit until this in itself has become a habit, too: **the habit of choosing the correct habit!**

During this process of learning to choose the desired habit, it is normal that you come close to the border of relapse some times. I call this a “*near relapse*”. If you have caught and corrected this “near relapse” a few times, avoiding relapse also becomes a habit, and relapse becomes more and more unlikely. People with a long-term chronic issue who stop treatment before having properly learned relapse prevention, effectively threaten to relapse instead of correcting a “near relapse” or even a “mini relapse”.

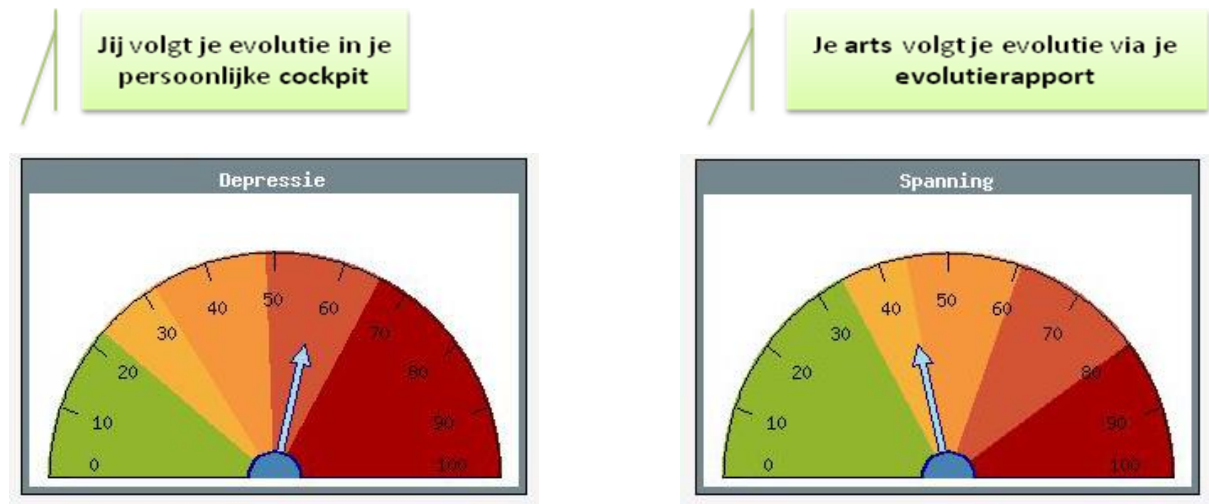
**Relapse prevention** is practiced during the program “15 Minutes 4 Me” **until you can do it!**

### **1bis. What do I want?**

Now, your real **life joy** begins: you have made your desired habit a habit. Now you can really start to mold life so that you can “**live the way you want to live**”!



# How do you measure your progress?



## Your Stress Meter

The stress meter which you just did, is also built into the self-help program “15 Minutes 4 Me”. Every month you measure your progress, and we prepare a report for your doctor, specialist, therapist, or care provider.

You are then free to choose if you want to share this with him or her. You receive this report per e-mail so that you can forward it. You can also print it out and take it with you to your appointment.

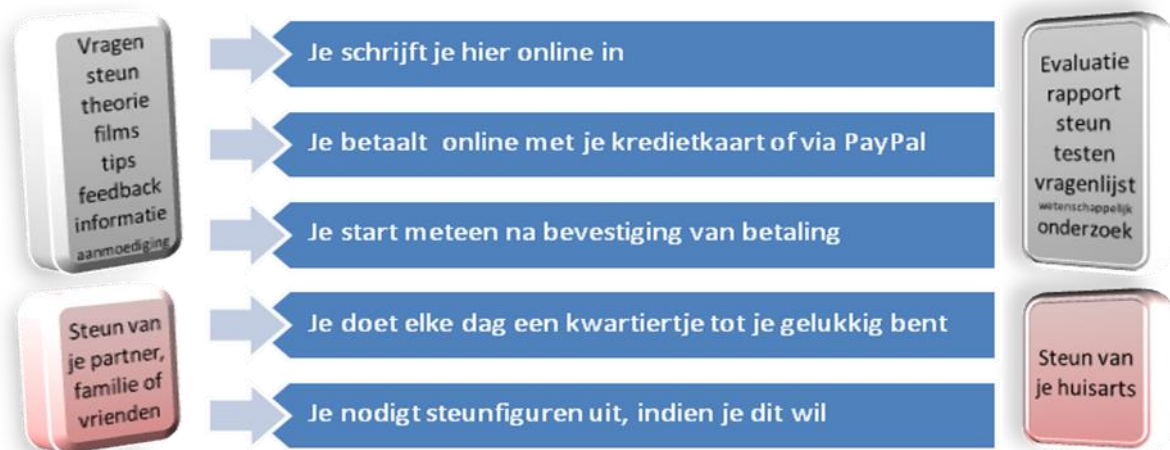
You thus remain the boss over your data.

You see your evolution graphically, and the colors show if you are in the green zone again yet, or if you still have somewhat of a way to go!

A freely accessible, shorter version of this stress meter can be found on [www.15minutes4me.com](http://www.15minutes4me.com).



# How do you start?



## Ready to start day and night: 24/7

We summarize it for you:

1. You sign up **online**, regardless of time of day, 24/7
2. You **pay** via credit card or PayPal or eventually through a wire transfer.
  - a. In case you pay via credit card or PayPal, you can get started as soon as the financial transaction has been confirmed. This usually only takes a few minutes, as long as your account is not empty, of course.
  - b. If you pay via wire transfer, this can take several days because this transaction is not automated.
3. You **start** immediately after confirmation of payment.
4. Every day, you receive an **e-mail** which invites you to work on yourself for another fifteen minutes.
  - a. Sometimes you receive a video with an exercise or a short piece of theory.



5. Every day you receive solution focused questions.

If you want to, you can invite a “**buddy**” or supporting figure to help or support you. You can start this process yourself, whenever you want to. Your “buddy” or supportive figure gets an e-mail once a week, with some explanation regarding how he or she can support you, followed by some short solution focused questions about you. You thus preferably pick someone who knows you well enough or sees you often, even though this is not an absolute necessity.

6. Every month you get a short **report** for your doctor, so that you can ask him or her to support or guide you during your journey. This also gives you the opportunity to ask him to check any possible medical causes, if you have not done so already.
7. Furthermore, there are countless other **techniques** such as video clips, exercises, encouragement, graphs, questions, tests, feedback, ...
8. Once you have gained enough insights and solutions, you take a module in **relapse prevention** so that you learn how to prevent relapse and avoid looming relapse before it is too late. If the problem has been present for several years, then it might sometimes be necessary to keep following the program until you have managed to overcome one or several “*near relapse*” moments yourself during the guidance by the self-help program “15 Minutes 4 Me”.



# The Online Self-Help Program “15 Minutes 4 Me”

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The main issue with stress is that your brain confuses it with worrying negative thoughts, and that you get sucked into a negative vicious cycle which you can gain no control over.

As a result thereof, many people do not keep to their good intentions after reading a book with useful insights and techniques.

And then, everything will have been for nothing. Even worse: you feel even more poorly, because you feel like you should know what to do now, but you do not have the courage to do it. To avoid this risk, we made an online self-help program on [www.15minutes4me.com](http://www.15minutes4me.com). This program takes you by the hand. Step by step, it takes you through the journey toward your solutions.

Every day, you receive an e-mail. You click the link which invites you to work on yourself for fifteen minutes. Most days, it even takes only 5 to 10 minutes, so that you even have part of your fifteen minutes left to do something nice for yourself.

You then end up at your work page where you receive several questions which help you to look at your problem in a different way, so that you start to see solutions.

In between, you receive tens of small exercises, videos with relaxation techniques, or videos with a short piece of theory.

You test your improvement and get a report which you can show to your doctor or care provider so that they can follow you up, in case you want them to.

You can also invite a friend, family member, or partner into the program to support you<sup>2</sup> in this process. This person will on the one hand give you some online feedback, and on the other hand receive tips about how to support you even better. Oftentimes, those who love us and want to help us do not know how to support us in the right way. This program helps them with this, if you want it to.

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<sup>2</sup> This support by partner, family, or friends of course is optional: you decide if you want to invite them or not.



You find this program on [www.15minutes4me.com](http://www.15minutes4me.com).

## The Author

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Paul Koeck, MD, studied medicine, philosophy, and sports medicine at the KUL. After his management education at the VLERICK School for Management, he followed different courses in the System Coaching, short solution focused therapy, and Ericksonian Hypnotherapy in Europe and the United States.

First, he established himself as a doctor in Antwerp, and soon his focus went to the phenomenon that is coaching. He became intrigued by the question how people and systems can break out of the vicious cycle of negative stress and inefficiency. Soon, the understanding grew that efficient therapeutic strategies can also be applied in the business world, not only for solving problems, but also for developing strategic competence. Supported by the founders of the Systematic therapy in the United States and by the positive feedback to his seminars on international scientific congresses, he developed his own model. Soon, this model evolved to a general model for change management, which is taught at different universities.

Paul Koeck is general manager and founder of the Coachteam® and of the Center for Stress Guidance. He is specialized as *trainer, coach, and* consultant in the guidance for change processes in companies, organizations, teams, and individuals.

He gave seminars at different international scientific congresses and at different universities regarding his model *SFM, Stress Management and Solution Focused Coaching & Leadership*.

Coachteam® grew to become an international company which guides Leaders in Organizations, Teams, and Companies worldwide in developing their solution focused Leadership and Coaching, and building up a solution focused company culture.

Also, the initiatives of a personal coaching are launched toward the individual person. The third pillar of this is solution focused psychotherapy.



## 15 Minutes 4 Me

As a fourth pillar, Coachteam® developed a groundbreaking solution focused online self-help program via the internet to guide people in solving stress, burnout, depression, anxiety, hyperventilation, and addictions to, among others, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, or eating addictions.

*How can I contact the author?*

[www.15minutes4me.com](http://www.15minutes4me.com) for online self-help and self-help books

[www.coachteam.com](http://www.coachteam.com) for company coaching and leadership

[www.paulkoeck.com](http://www.paulkoeck.com) is the personal blog by Paul Koeck, MD





# Books

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## *Books by Dr. Paul Koeck*

- **Solving stress in 10 steps.** A practical manual with a step-by-step plan, so that you can solve your stress in fifteen minutes per day!
- **How do I get stress?** Explanation and solutions by a doctor.
- **Sound of mind in fifteen minutes per day.**
- **How do I help my loved one or lover?** Guide with conversational skills for dummies who are worried about a loved one whom they want to help, but do not know how to.

## *Online self-help program*

- **15 Minutes 4 Me.** Online self-help program which guides you for fifteen minutes per day to help you get rid of negative feelings or stress.



# References

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<sup>i</sup> Study by Ewin De Beurs, Sonja van Zweden, Carolien Hamming in TBV 18 / nr. 3 / March 2010/ P. 106

<sup>ii</sup> An endogenous depression is a biological form of depression where the causes are not so much psychological but rather biological: for example, caused by a disorder in the neurotransmitters in the brain. Some endogenous depressions can even be purely caused by hormonal changes in your body such as in a postnatal depression or even as a side effect of medication.

<sup>iii</sup> A 'bipolar' or 'manic' depression is a genetically hereditary biological disorder which, in most cases, has to be treated with Lithium, sometimes combined with antidepressants. Online self-help is only a tool in this case, to teach you to keep your balance. More important for those people is to take the proper medication after discussing this with their doctor.

<sup>iv</sup> Study by Ewin De Beurs, Sonja van Zweden, Carolien Hamming in TBV 18 / nr. 3 / March 2010/ P. 103- 109

<sup>v</sup> Manual for the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales, Second Edition, 1995, by S.H. Lovibond and P.F. Lovibond, Psychology Foundation Monograph

<sup>vi</sup> Study by John R. Crawford and Julie D. Henry, Department of Psychology, King's College, University of Aberdeen, UK in the British Journal of Clinical Psychology (2003), 42, 111-131

<sup>vii</sup> This idea is inspired by the famous book of Holocaust survivor and Vienna psychiatrist Dr. Viktor Frankl "Man's search for Meaning". It was then developed and given more depth in a concrete way by my friend, colleague, and co-developer, the psychiatrist Luc Isebaert, MD, in his book "Kurzzeittherapie – eine Praktische Handbuch. Die Gesundheitsorientierte Kognitive Therapie", 2005, Thieme Verlag, P. 2-6

<sup>viii</sup> This concepts finds its first roots in the book "the rethorics" by the Greek philosopher Aristotle, and was medically-psychologically developed further in the book mentioned above by my colleague Luc Isebaert, P. 6-16.

<sup>ix</sup> Before we brought out this program in this online self-help program "15 Minutes 4 Me", it had proven its efficiency already for several decades in our own medical practice, both ambulant as well as connected to hospital. Over the years, it was developed, improved, tweaked, and detailed thanks to the feedback of our patients. We thank them for their feedback and input!





MijneKwartier.be  
Uw dagelijks zelfhulpprogramma

The online therapeutic **self-help program** “15Minutes4Me.com” helps **patients** and their **family members** to prevent or cure **burnout**, as well as other stress-bound problems such as **depression, anxiety, stress, fatigue, exhaustion, addiction, panic, and phobia**.

Every day you follow fifteen minutes of online self-care in order to learn to reduce stress and other complaints according to the model of the cognitive solution focused therapy.

You can invite your partner or a family member as a “buddy” or supporting figure, and this person will be guided online via psycho-education in how to support or help you in a better way.

Every week, an evolution report is delivered with graphs which you, in case you want to, discuss with your doctor or care provider.

From a clinical study on 546 participants, a reduction by half of the stress scores is shown after 2 to 3 weeks on average.

15Minutes4Me.com also offers a **free stress test** for the patient or family.

[Doe nu de gratis zelftest →](#)

