

Your Stress Response Results

This quiz explores how your nervous system responds to stress, uncertainty, and pressure.

To help make sense of these patterns, we turn to the Five Elements of Chinese Medicine, a time-tested framework that maps how stress responses show up in the body, emotions, and behavior over time.

To make these patterns easier to recognize and relate to, each element is paired with an animal archetype. These animals are not traditional symbols, but archetypes I have chosen to illustrate the instinctive tendencies of each element under stress.

Your “Stress Animal” simply reflects your **predominant element** — the pattern your nervous system most often relies on when stressed.

These are not flaws.

They are intelligent survival strategies.

Most people see themselves in more than one pattern. That’s completely normal.

It’s not confusion, it is adaptability, a sign that your system has developed multiple ways to keep you safe.

Each pattern also aligns with a familiar nervous-system response — **fight, flight, freeze, or fawn** — as understood through modern neuroscience. The Five Elements offer a deeper, more compassionate lens to understand not just what you do under stress, but why it makes sense, and how balance can be restored.

Healing doesn’t mean getting rid of these patterns. It’s about recognizing it, honoring its wisdom, and learning how to support your system with greater awareness, compassion, and care.

Interpreting Your Results

While your quiz responses may highlight one primary archetype, many people recognize themselves in more than one, especially under different kinds of stress.

In truth, we all carry aspects of each element within us.

They form a dynamic, ever-changing map of life’s energies.

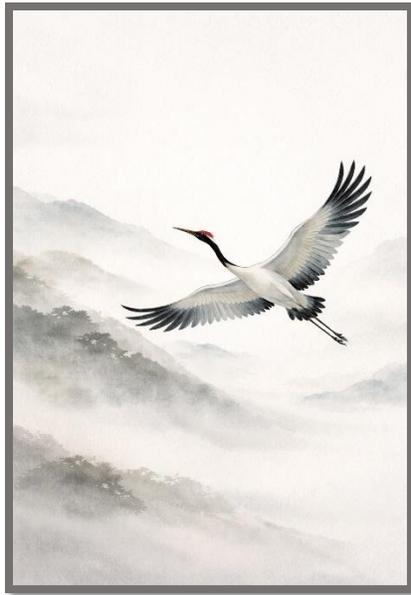
Depending on your life stage, environment, or internal state, you might relate more strongly to one pattern now and another later.

Begin by reading the description of the animal you scored highest in.
Then explore others that speak to you.
Let your body, not just your mind, guide what resonates.

These aren't fixed labels or diagnoses.
They're invitations into greater awareness —
to understand how your system seeks safety, and how to gently return to balance.

THE CRANE

Metal Element | The Alchemist



Transforming Loss & Grief to Acceptance & Inspiration

When something feels off, your nervous system looks for safety through understanding.

In neuroscience terms, this pattern is a form of **flight** into the mind — using thinking and analysis to create distance from overwhelm.

You analyze, reflect, and search for meaning:

Why do I feel this way? What's wrong? What am I missing? What needs to change?

This is a deeply intelligent response.

Out of Balance Metal

- Emotionally distant
- Critical of self and others, perfectionistic
- Need to be in control
- Disconnected from body and feelings
- A quiet sense of loss or grief that can't be "figured out"

The cost: mental fatigue and emotional distance from your experience

Balanced Metal

- Clear & discerning
- Disciplined and hard-working
- Seeker of meaning and inspiration
- Able to release and let go of what no longer serves
- Connected to breath, presence, and purpose

Restoring Balance

Crane energy restores balance not through more thinking, but through breath, presence, and gentle release.

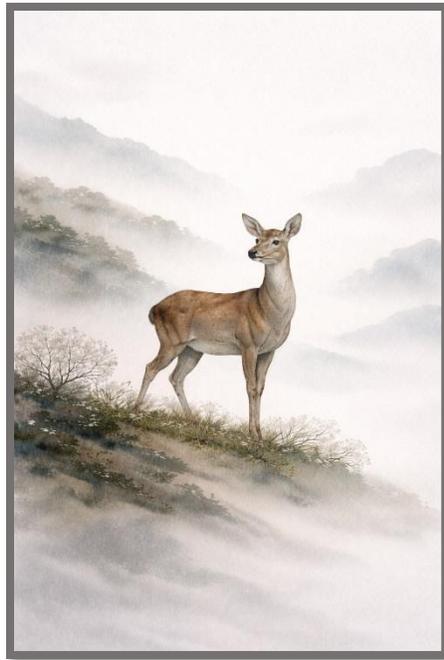
Supportive practices include:

- Slow, deep breathing
- Qi Gong focused on letting go
- Seeking awe and inspiration daily (sunset, nature, sky)
- Body scans to reconnect mind and body

**Your healing begins not by thinking harder —
but by softening into the breath and coming back to your body.**

THE DEER

Water Element | The Sage



Transforming Fear & Doubt to Courage & Trust

When life becomes demanding or uncertain, your nervous system looks for safety by **conserving energy**. You pull inward, become quieter, and slow everything down, assessing what's at stake and whether you have the reserves to meet what's coming.

In neuroscience terms, this reflects a **freeze response** — not a collapse, but a wise pause meant to protect you when demands feel too overwhelming.

You may find yourself asking:

Do I have enough in me for what's coming? Can I handle this?

This is a deeply intelligent response.

Water Out of Balance

- Feel deeply drained or depleted
- Difficulty following through on ideas and projects
- Doubt your capacity to cope
- Withdraw and isolate
- Paralyzed by fear, like a “deer in headlights”

The cost: living in a state of low-grade fear and exhaustion that makes everything feel heavier.

Water In Balance

- Trusting inner resources
- Determination aligned with a deeper purpose
- Adaptability, able to flow around obstacles with confidence
- Reflection and restoration
- Calm, tranquility, and inner steadiness

Restoring Balance

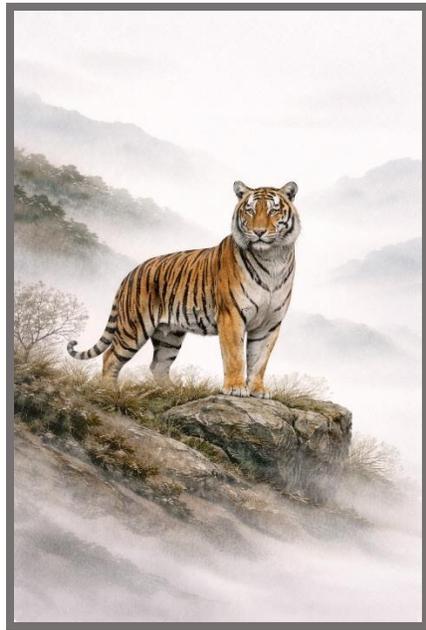
Supportive practices include:

- Gentle Qi Gong and slow, flowing movements
- Journaling to reconnect with inner wisdom
- Kidney breathing
- Prioritizing pauses and stillness

**Your healing begins not by pushing yourself —
but by allowing deep rest and trusting in your own wisdom and flow.**

THE TIGER

Wood Element | The Visionary



Transforming Frustration & Anger to Creativity & Vision

When your progress or freedom feels blocked, or when things feel out of control, your nervous system responds to stress through **action and movement**. You mobilize, push forward, and keep things moving.

In neuroscience terms, this reflects a **fight response** — activating energy to regain momentum, agency, and control.

You may find yourself thinking:

Why is this taking so long? What's in the way? What needs to move?

This is a deeply intelligent response.

Wood Out of Balance

- Frustration, irritability, anger, or resentment
- Impatience with yourself and others
- Constant sense of urgency; never enough time
- Difficulty pausing or resting
- Tension in neck, shoulders, jaw, and head

The cost: chronic tension and burnout from constantly pushing without recovery.

Wood In Balance

- Pioneering vision and direction
- Determination and motivation
- Decisiveness paired with flexibility
- Kindness and emotional steadiness
- Patient, purposeful, forward-moving energy

Restoring Balance

Tiger energy restores balance not by pushing harder, but by allowing energy to move freely and releasing pressure.

Supportive practices include:

- Belly breathing when feeling a sense of time pressure
- Shaking, stretching, and twisting movements to release tension
- Building tolerance for being still and “doing nothing”
- Connect with vision by imagining yourself living the life you are moving toward
- Attach lists, details, and organization (time crunches) to bigger vision

***Your healing begins not by forcing momentum —
but by allowing energy to move with ease towards vision***

THE MONKEY

Fire Element | The Connector



Transforming Excitability & Impatience to Authentic Joy & Love

When stress rises, your nervous system becomes “overheated” and looks for safety through movement, stimulation, and connection.

You stay busy, talk and think faster, and keep energy circulating to lift the mood or feel more alive

In neuroscience terms, this reflects a **flight response** — staying in motion to avoid slowing down into discomfort.

You may find yourself thinking:

What do I need to do to keep everyone happy? What if I am missing out? What if I open up and get hurt?

This is a deeply intelligent response.

Fire Out of Balance

- Restlessness, anxiety, impatience, or agitation
- Scattered thoughts and rapid speech
- Lots of new ideas and beginnings, but difficult to follow through
- Being the life of the party and maintaining mostly superficial relationships
- Difficulty slowing down or sleeping
- Alternatively, may be “burned out” - flat, aloof, indifferent, shy

The cost: nervous system exhaustion and burnout from constant activation without true rest or meaningful connection

Fire In Balance

- Magnetic energy, joy, enthusiasm, optimism, and vitality
- Warmth, compassion, and open-heartedness
- Inspires, leads, and energizes others
- Deep, authentic connections with others
- Inner calm that “burns steadily” rather than burning brightly and burning out
- Clear thoughts and speech; speaking from the heart

Restoring Balance

Monkey energy restores balance not by doing more, but by slowing down and realizing one can be quiet without being alone or missing out.

Supportive practices include:

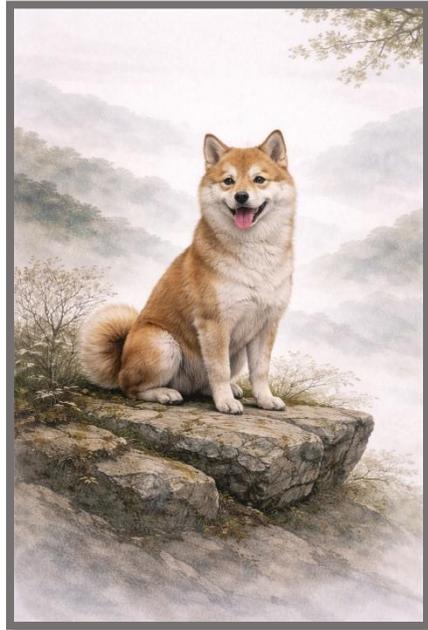
- Compassion-based or loving-kindness meditation
- Cooling breaths with longer exhales

- Qi gong and other gentle, rhythmic movements (rather than fast-paced activity)
- Reducing stimulation before bed (screens, conversation, noise)
- Periods of rest and solitude to restore equilibrium

**Your healing begins not by seeking more excitement —
but by allowing yourself to move and connect with full-hearted authenticity and intention
rather than scattered restlessness and distraction.**

THE DOG

Earth Element | The Nurturer



Transforming Worry & Over-Responsibility to Empathy & Integrity

When stress builds, your nervous system looks for safety through **holding and carrying**.

You attune to what others need, track what must be done, and try to keep everything from falling apart. Your attention moves outward, toward responsibilities, relationships, and potential problems — often at the expense of your own needs.

In neuroscience terms, this reflects a **fawn response** — maintaining safety and connection by taking responsibility, smoothing things over, and putting yourself last.

You may find yourself thinking:

If I don't take care of this nobody will... they need me to take care of this... what if?

This is a deeply intelligent response.

Earth Out of Balance

- Persistent worry and rumination
- Feeling weighed down by sense of responsibility for others
- Feeling unsupported, unappreciated and not enough
- Difficulty setting boundaries and saying no
- Over-planning
- Ignoring own needs while focusing on others
- Feeling physically heavy, sluggish, or foggy
- Digestive issues, comfort cravings, or gut tension

The cost: chronic mental and emotional burden that leaves you exhausted, indecisive, and unable to fully rest.

Earth In Balance

- Grounded presence and emotional steadiness
- Able to digest information and keep what is nourishing and let go of rest
- Ability to care for others *without abandoning self*

- Feeling nourished, supported, and “at home” in body
- A deep sense of belonging and “enoughness”

Restoring Balance

Dog energy restores balance not by carrying more, but by learning to receive, ground, and put things down.

Supportive practices include:

- Walk barefoot on grass or soil to ground energy and feel supported
- Morning box or belly breathing practice to ground mind & nervous system
- Mindful eating
- Touch, warmth, and comfort (blankets, warmth, hand over heart)
- Practicing saying no as a full sentence

**Your healing begins not by carrying more of the world —
but by allowing yourself to be supported, nourished, and grounded in your own center.**

If your results resonated and you'd like support restoring balance in 2026, you're invited to **Burnout to Balance** — a 7-week small-group journey for women to retrain stress patterns through breath, movement, and nervous-system regulation using the Five Elements.

We begin February 3rd. Hope to see you there!

Learn more here: jodieskillicorn.com/group-coaching