

Tips for Forgiving Yourself

1. Focus on what you learned rather than what you did wrong.
2. Your “mistakes” do NOT define you. Acknowledge your feelings. State: “I feel guilty” rather than “I am guilty.”
3. Apologize to yourself and anyone else you may have hurt.
4. Acknowledge you are human. You are doing the best you can. Perfection does not exist.
5. Be patient with yourself.

Coping Strategy: T.I.P.

Temperature

Intensity

Progressive Relaxation

Use temperature to help you deal with extreme emotions. Fill a bowl with ice water and dunk your face into it. After the initial shock of the cold water, it will bring you back to base line, calming your emotions.

Validating Yourself

Self-validation is a way to recognize, accept and honor your own internal experience without making any judgements or criticisms.

Ways to validate yourself:

1. Embrace your strengths and successes
2. Be with positive people
3. Use positive affirmations
4. Live in the moment
5. Forgive your mistakes
6. Practice self-love/-compassion
7. Reflect on your feelings
8. Be your genuine self.

Self Care Tips

1. Reflect: What brings you joy? What are you grateful for today?
2. Pamper yourself regularly.
3. Listen to your body. What does it need?
4. Take care of your body: Are you exercising regularly? Are you staying hydrated?
5. Sleep: Are you resting enough?
6. Journal your thoughts.
7. Get creative: Find a new hobby or reintroduce an old passion.

Mindfulness Tips

1. Practice breathing techniques
2. Check in with your emotions without judgement
3. Practice a guided imagery exercise
4. Spend time outdoors
5. Use your senses to observe an object
6. Practice gratitude through journaling
7. Draw, color or doodle
8. Listen to music without distractions
9. Practice yoga or stretch throughout the day
10. Use positive affirmations
11. Focus on the HERE and NOW.

Building a better relationship with yourself

1. **What is your self-critic saying?**
Talk back and shift those negative beliefs to positive ones.
2. **Practice self-compassion:** Treat and talk to yourself with the same kindness you would a friend.
3. **Forgive yourself:** We are HUMAN.
4. Reflect on your abilities and remember your past successes.
5. **Meet a challenge**, don't shy away. You can handle it.
6. **Optimism:** Look forward to a HOPEFUL future.

Coping Strategy: MOVE

Set an hourly alarm on your watch or phone to cue your body to move. Stretch at your desk or stand in your office.

You can take the stairs to another floor in your office building to refill your water or use the bathroom. If you are able to, go outside for a walk. Aim for 5-10 minutes every hour, if allowed at work. How did you feel after moving?

Try to do this regularly for max benefit.

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is composed of self-kindness, connectedness, and mindfulness - Dr. Kristin Neff

1. Practice using kinder words — Watch your internal dialogue. What stories are you telling yourself? Would you say this to a friend?
2. Give yourself permission to rest, recharge and do NOTHING.
3. Take care of the basics for yourself — eating, exercise, sleep & hygiene.
4. Practice gratitude and affirmations.

Challenging negative thoughts

- * **Write** down the negative thought you are having. **Crumble** it into a tight ball and throw it away. **Picture** your negative thought leaving your mind.
- * **Write** down a more reasonable reframed thought.
- * **Challenge** and refute the negative thought. **Replace** the negative thought with a positive and healthy one.
- * **Stop and recognize** your thinking is not quite right at the moment. What is your body saying? What about your emotions?
- * Use **Socratic questioning** of the thought to help you evaluate it from a different perspective. Ask: "What evidence supports this belief? How would ___ view this situation?"

Thought stopping strategies

Notice the thought. Is it a worst-case scenario?

Say: **"STOP"** in your mind. Use distraction by thinking of something else. Imagine a red stop sign if you can't think of a distractor.

Challenge the thought. Is the thought an exaggeration? Distortion of reality? Overgeneralization? etc.

Reroute: Move away from the thought. Use a distractor like listening to music, calling someone to talk about their day, etc.

Anxious mind? Calm it.

- * Thoughts are **NOT** Facts. Tell yourself - this is just your opinion. These are just guesses. Is this thought **helpful**?
- * **Observe** your thoughts, **no need to react** to them. "This is just a feeling/thought. It will pass, eventually."
- * **Label** your thought for what it is (e.g., worry, self-criticism, invalidation, etc.).
- * What am I experiencing in this very moment? Are you watching a show? Are you cooking? Studying? **Focus on the present** activity.
- * Find **a new way** to look at the current situation: Will this thought / "problem" be a problem in 2 months, 1 year, 5 years from now?
- * **Stuck** in a thought loop - rumination. Think about something else. Interrupt that circle of thought with something else (e.g., your favorite song, listing your favorite movies, etc.).

Grounding

Grounding exercises are a way to detach from the current experience when it is overwhelming and/or painful. It provides a few moments of distraction by giving you something else to focus on and lower your "fight-flight" response to a more manageable level.

Body scan and stretch exercise

- * Take a moment and **scan** your body for signs of tension. Practice nonjudgment as you scan. Is your neck tight? Shoulders? Chest? Just take a moment to **simply notice**.
- * **Breathe and visualize** the breath going into the tension while you roll your neck, now drop down with the next breath to your shoulders, and to all areas that are tense.
- * You can also **stretch** these areas as you visualize the stretch and breath alleviating the tension.
- * Spend a few minutes systematically stretching and inviting relaxation. Repeat as needed.

Feeling stressed, distressed or in a panic?

Stop those thoughts immediately with **naming categories**.

List **10+ items** for each category:

- * Favorite TV shows
- * Favorite movies
- * Famous celebrities
- * Fruits and vegetables
- * Books you have read
- * Care brands
- * Cities around the world
- * Sports teams
- * Types of flowers, trees, other plants
- * Zoo animals

Catastrophizing

- * Notice you are catastrophizing. Identify your fear(s). Ask **why it is stressing** you.
- * Question your thoughts. **Are they facts or assumptions?**
- * Focus on the **PRESENT**, not future “what ifs.”
- * Force yourself to think of the GOOD that can happen.
- * **Uncertainty**: Create a roadmap to help you navigate.
- * Use **“If...then...”** statements.
- * Talk to others to help you gain perspective. They can be your **reality check**.
- * Take **care** of your body.
- * Be **kind** to yourself. Remember there is only so much we can control. Most experiences unfold in their own way.

Visualization

In times of stress or when your thoughts are going a mile a minute, use these strategies to calm your mind.

- * Notice the weight of your hair against your head or on your shoulders.
- * Picture a person you love while imagining words of kindness from them.
- * Listen to your surroundings. Close your eyes and attempt to identify each sound.
- * Create a mental image of your favorite place. Describe the small details as you picture it in your mind’s eye.
- * Clench your hands into fists. Imagine all the nervous energy in your body traveling to your clenched hands. Now unclench and feel that negative energy being released from you.

What do you gain? What do you lose?

Most problem behaviors have short-term benefits, which is why we fall into them. These behaviors provide us with some positive relief temporarily. They pull us away from pain. Once we find something that works, we automatically use it in other painful situations.

Write down pros/cons to this behavior. What is the short-term and long-term cost of partaking in this behavior? Are there any benefits to continue using this behavior to deal with your problems?

When you see the cons outweigh the pros, you can find the motivation to make the change you want to meet your needs effectively.

Chunking

Feeling overwhelmed by a task or a group of tasks? Try using the chunking method to break up the task(s) into smaller parts.

For example, if you have to cook dinner for a big group of people, try cooking one item at a time instead of several things at once.

Deep Breathing

4-4-6

- Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Breathe out through your mouth for 6 seconds.

Signs of Emotional Flooding

Emotional flooding is when your body is feeling overstimulated by too many physical and emotional sensations. Here are some symptoms to help you figure out if you're feeling flooded.

- Increased heart rate
- Shallow breathing
- Difficulty focusing
- Desire to escape the situation
- Muscle tension
- Negative self-talk

Sleep Hygiene Tips

- Minimize blue light exposure by shutting off the television, computer or phone at least one hour before bed.
- Stay away from caffeinated and sugary beverages, such as coffee, tea and soda, in the latter half of the day.
- Avoid overly stimulating activities before bed, such as exercise, reading a tense book, or arguing with a friend or family member.
- Use your bed for sleep and sex only.
- Avoid naps that are over an hour long or later in the day.

Chunking

Feeling overwhelmed by a task or a group of tasks? Try using the chunking method to break up the task(s) into smaller parts.

For example, if you have to cook dinner for a big group of people, try cooking one item at a time instead of several things at once.

Deep Breathing

4-4-6

- Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Breathe out through your mouth for 6 seconds.

Signs of Emotional Flooding

Emotional flooding is when your body is feeling overstimulated by too many physical and emotional sensations. Here are some symptoms to help you figure out if you're feeling flooded.

- Increased heart rate
- Shallow breathing
- Difficulty focusing
- Desire to escape the situation
- Muscle tension
- Negative self-talk

Sleep Hygiene Tips

- Minimize blue light exposure by shutting off the television, computer or phone at least one hour before bed.
- Stay away from caffeinated and sugary beverages, such as coffee, tea and soda, in the latter half of the day.
- Avoid overly stimulating activities before bed, such as exercise, reading a tense book, or arguing with a friend or family member.
- Use your bed for sleep and sex only.
- Avoid naps that are over an hour long or later in the day.

The 4 Stress Responses

1. **Fight:** When your body feels in danger and you feel like you can win the fight, your brain sends signals to prepare you for a fight (e.g., clenched jaw, anger, knotted stomach).
2. **Flight:** If your body believes you're in danger and you don't believe you can overcome that danger, your body prepares you to run away from it (i.e., muscle tension, increased heart rate, trembling limbs).
3. **Freeze:** When your body doesn't feel like you can fight or run, you freeze (e.g., feelings of dread, pale skin, pounding heart, decreased heart rate).
4. **Fawn:** Only used after the other responses are unsuccessful (i.e., overly agreeable and helpful).

