

# Emotionally Healthy You



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# EMOTIONAL HEALING FOR THE HURTING HEART

Isn't it true that your emotions really take a knock when your heart is aching? Sometimes it feels like the day of healing is a million miles away. The difficult time you encountered in the past can take a while to be purged from your system.

It's definitely healthy to experience a range of emotions. However, it's unwise to have the negative ones consume your existence. You're better off working towards healing the hurt. That way, you can start to experience joy and happiness again.

***Emotional healing is possible if you work at repairing the source of the hurt. As you'll see, that may mean making some tough decisions:***

**1. Remove negative influences from your life.** If you're honest with yourself, you'll realize something important. **Some of the negative influences may very well be the people closest to you!** It's going to be a challenge separating from them. But your emotional health is more important than maintaining those relationships.

- Are any of your friends guilty of adding fuel to the fire? Can you identify times when they've encouraged you to avoid forgiving someone who offended you?
- You can very quickly identify people whose advice is riddled with negativity. Avoid allowing the years of friendship to cloud your judgment. You can almost guarantee continued misery if you keep them in your life.

**2. Accept responsibility for your actions.** It's pretty hard to look in the mirror, right? Deep down, you know your actions resulted in the hurt you feel. But it's difficult to accept the part you played.

- Confront your wrongdoings. Be courageous enough to accept responsibility for your actions.
- Inner peace can elude you if you try to cover up the role you played. Inner turmoil can feel just as unbearable as physical discomfort.
- In the same breath, be willing to forgive yourself so you can move on to better days ahead.

**3. . Live according to your moral compass.** You likely have a set of morals to live by. And while you know they exist, you may sometimes avoid them when making decisions. ***Abandoning morals is the easiest way to make missteps in life.***

- Go back to your roots. Take a hard look at what really matters to you. Start to embrace those morals one by one.
- Start to repair how you approach situations. If making a decision means abandoning your moral compass, take another route. Just like any other compass, your moral compass keeps you on track. It's the best way to avoid getting lost in the sea of emotional decision-making.

**4. Commit to daily renewal.** The road to emotional healing is long and winding. It's something that usually takes quite a bit of time to achieve. But it can be done! All you need to do is recommit to the cause every morning when you wake up.

- **Daily renewal is the best way to turn your healing into a habit.** When you go for days without that renewal, it's easy to slip back into the heartache. Be fair to yourself. Remember you deserve the healing.
- At the end of each positive day, celebrate your progress. Congratulate yourself for completing one more day of healing and positive living. You'll find your rest more soundly at night.

Achieving emotional healing isn't an automatic process. It takes time and a lot of attention. Now is the time to really take care of yourself. Focus on what you need and block out the noise around you. Use these tips to help you on your healing journey.

IT'S OK TO  
CRY

You might remember back when you were a kid how your mom always told you to stop crying. You've probably heard a parent at some time in your life tell his kids, "Stop that crying, it doesn't do any good" or "Stop crying or else I'll give you something to cry about!"

Seriously, if a child is crying, it's a clue he's already got something to cry about. Depending on the era you grew up in, your parents might have handled kids crying in some pretty creative ways. Frankly, crying is really no big deal. In fact, ***many experts believe crying has some usefulness to our lives.***

Did you know that crying has a scientific name? It's called "lacrimation." Most people haven't heard it. Even so, every person on earth has shed tears at some time in his life. Crying is one experience that every human being has shared.



## Why People Cry

Crying really doesn't hurt or damage a situation or people. *Crying is a healthy expression of emotions.* Particularly for children, experiencing feelings you don't understand can be pretty confusing. And those feelings of confusion and frustration can quite easily be expressed by crying.

Some people cry when they're sad or melancholy. Others cry when they're frustrated or angry. Still, there are those who cry when they're afraid. **Whatever the reason, emotionally healthy people do feel the need to cry occasionally.**

## **Do You Allow Yourself to Cry?**

If you've ever experienced feeling like you want to cry yet holding in your tears, you know how uncomfortable it can be. What were you experiencing at those times? It practically makes a person feel physically ill to withhold crying even though the emotions and body are sending signals that it's time to cry.

Interestingly, contrary to what many people think when a person cries, it tends to last for just a few short minutes. Once the initial troubling feelings are expressed, they're released.

***The act of crying has a calming effect on the body*** as one's breathing often slows down. After shedding tears, you're then free to go on with your day.



## Crying and the Grief Process

It's natural to experience sad and lonely feelings related to the loss of someone or something important. During grieving, you might cry periodically over a few days, weeks, or months. Between crying episodes, you might feel fine. However, the grief eventually returns.

Grief has a way of washing over you in waves. But then, minutes later, you're feeling better. ***When grieving, sometimes a good cry is all you need to release troubling emotions for the moment.*** Over time, you'll feel less and less like crying.

## **Research on Crying**

Recent research reported on the Science Daily website indicates that two-thirds of people studied reported feeling a boost in their moods after crying. The study also deduced that people who have diagnosed mental health conditions of anxiety or other mood disorders might not feel better after crying. In summary, healthy people who cry feel better when they're finished crying.

**Consider crying a normal part of life that will occasionally happen.** Let go of your fears regarding crying.

However, in the event you or a person you know is crying practically daily for several hours each day or not feeling any better after a “good cry,” it’s probably time to check with your doctor to ensure you nip in the bud any conditions requiring attention.

Go ahead and let yourself cry if you feel like it - you’ll feel calmer afterward and be ready to confront your day with a renewed passion and motivation.



# HOW TO BANISH NEGATIVE THOUGHTS



Who doesn't have negative thoughts now and then? But what if you had a negative thought which was pervasive and constant? Would you know how to get rid of it? Fortunately, there are many methods available to get rid of incessant negative chatter in our heads.

**Here is an effective step-by-step process that will work if you use it regularly.** As our ongoing example in this process, we'll use the negative thought, "I'm too dumb to do anything right."

**1. Turn the thought into a mental image.** Imagine looking and acting completely silly. Create the most exaggerated image of yourself you can. Start by envisioning yourself in ridiculous clothes that don't match.

- Maybe you're also banging your head against the wall or doing other foolish things. You could also be shouting silly phrases that don't make any sense. The image should be clearly visible on your mental screen. Include sounds, smells, and physical sensations as well. Keep at this until the original thought brings up this new image.

**2. Choose an alternative thought.** For our example, a good replacement thought would be, "I'm so intelligent I can do anything." Choose something that is the opposite of the original negative thought. Select a phrase that feels right to you, through your whole body.

**3. ATurn the new, positive thought into a mental image.** You might imagine yourself dressed like Albert Einstein, shouting, "I'm brilliant. I can do anything." Again, make the image outrageous. Keep at it until the positive thought automatically brings up that image.

**4. Link the two images together.** Now, imagine a way to get from your negative image to your positive image. This is almost like you're the director of a movie; you want to find a way to connect the opening and the closing scenes.

- Perhaps in the first scene, you could imagine the image of the "dumb" version of yourself being struck by lightning and catching on fire. Then the new, Albert Einstein version of you rises from the ashes and goes into his "I'm brilliant. I can do anything" routine.
- Keep practicing until you run the entire scene in your mind quickly, with no hitches. This should take fewer than 2 seconds from start to finish.

**5. Test out your new mental connections.** When you think the original negative thought, the entire scene should flash through your mind. Your mental process should end with the moment where you're thinking, "I'm so brilliant. I can do anything." If you're not there yet, repeat Step 4 until you are.

Although this may seem silly to you, this is a common mnemonic technique. **The imagery must be outrageous. This makes your memory's work much easier.**

Also, play around with the perspective. Most people find it helpful to view everything in the third person as if they were spectators watching themselves in a movie. But you may prefer imagining things from a first-person perspective, in which everything happens to you, as it would in everyday life. **Try both perspectives to determine which works better for you.**

If you systematically deal with all your negative thoughts, you'll eventually find that you have very few left. Imagine how your life could change! What might you do that you've always been too afraid to try? Now you'll have the courage to do just that.

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REFUSE TO LET  
ANGER GET  
THE BEST OF  
YOU—LEARN  
HOW TO COPE  
NOW

All of us are entitled to our feelings. Sometimes, we feel sad. Other times, we're elated and ready for the next phase of life. However, we're all bound to experience feelings of frustration, annoyance, and even anger.

**Negative feelings can be overwhelming and make you feel like you're out of control.** But, you can avoid letting your anger take over and get the best of you.



**Cope with your anger by putting these strategies into action:**

**1. Accept the fact that you'll feel anger from time to time.** Our emotions are what differentiates us from other mammals. Anger is a normal human emotion that all of us experience, regardless of our age or psychological make-up. It's okay to feel angry, but what you do with it is what counts.

- Realize that you'll feel anger occasionally and give yourself permission to do so.

**2. If you're angry often, explore your deeper feelings.** If you find yourself angry when your co-worker is late, your spouse doesn't automatically sense your needs, or your child gets a D on their report card, something else is likely the true source of your anger.

- Anger that occurs often across a variety of situations can mean you're angry about something else.
- Reflect on what's truly bugging you. Is it something that happened a long time ago?
- When you identify what's consistently making your anger boil over, you can then do something about it.

**3. Figure out how to resolve the source of your anger.** Read a self-help book or keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings related to the anger-triggering event. Either way, make the decision to say goodbye to the old hurts and emotional pain they are causing.

- If you're unable to resolve it alone, seek guidance from a mental health professional.

**4. Get to know yourself.** Learn to recognize how you feel when you're about to get angry. When you identify those negative feelings creeping up, you can have a plan to do something to stop them.

**5. Remove yourself from any anger-igniting situations.** If you start to feel angry, take action immediately. **Consider just leaving the situation that's troubling you.**

- **Exiting the area can instantly dissolve negative emotions.**

**6. Recognize healthy and appropriate ways to express anger.** Deciding to verbalize that you're starting to feel angry or asking to change the topic of discussion shows that you're taking positive steps toward the way you handle your anger. Writing down what you think and feel when angry can also help you better understand and even dissipate such feelings.

**7. Inform your loved ones that you're working on ways to better express your anger.** Tell others how they can help you when you say that you're feeling angry.

- Still, let them know that you're the one responsible for your feelings and that you have a plan for better understanding and coping with your anger.

**8. Acknowledge that you have the power to control yourself.** Tell yourself that you have altered things about yourself before and can do it again. **Reflecting on your prior achievements can greatly boost your confidence.**

- What you believe about yourself is true. Ensure that your thoughts are positive and encouraging.

Anger can be destructive and damaging to all of your relationships. **Decide to cope skillfully with your anger, rather than allowing it to get the best of you.** When you apply these strategies, you'll begin to feel more confident about managing troublesome feelings.

DO YOU HAVE  
A  
VICTIM  
MENTALITY?

Everyone can claim to be a victim of something. Whether it's a bad childhood, a mean boss, or a nasty divorce, anyone can potentially adopt a victim mentality. **Being a victim is a choice.** A more productive choice is assuming the role of a survivor.

Why would someone choose to be a victim? It might not make sense on the surface, but there are several perks to taking on the role of a victim.



# *Making your boundaries clear to others:*

01

**It's always someone else's fault.** When you're a victim, you don't have to accept responsibility for anything. Life seems easier when it's always someone else's fault. There's so little you can do.

02

**Some people feel sorry for you.** Being a victim can result in a lot of attention being thrown in your direction. Attention can be nice. Who wouldn't want attention and sympathy?

03

**Others expect less from you.** After all, the world has mistreated you, and you can't fend for yourself. You're either not a capable person, or the odds are so stacked against you that little can be expected of you. **Lower expectations are easier to deal with than high expectations.**

04

**Others give you what you want.** With all the attention and sympathy you receive, some people are eager to help you out. You might be on the receiving end of money, favors, and other advantages. It's manipulative, but it can be effective.

05

**Be honest about what you need from others.** What you need is another type of boundary. It's the minimum you're willing to tolerate in order to maintain the relationship. It's a minimum boundary instead of a maximum boundary.

No one can deny that being a victim doesn't have its advantages. However, there are disadvantages to being a victim, too.

***Consider these challenges that come with being a victim:***

- 1. Many people don't respect you.** You can't fool everyone, and many people have been through worse. For every one that pities you, there are several that aren't impressed in the least. Playing small is hard to hide. Most people can spot your act from a mile away.
- 2. You don't respect yourself.** Down deep, you know you're being pitiful. **You know you're capable of more, but you've given up.** You've chosen to manipulate your way through life and indirectly asked others to carry your burden.
- 3. You give up control of your life.** You can't assertively manage your life and simultaneously be a victim. A lack of control is a significant contributor to unhappiness and depression.
- 4. You destroy your self-esteem.** Without self-respect, it's challenging to have a healthy level of self esteem. You might think you're being clever, but you're harming yourself a little more each day.
- 5. Others don't trust you.** Those with a victim mentality aren't reliable. They're too good at avoiding things they don't want to do. Others quickly learn that you're not reliable or trustworthy. This makes it hard to maintain friendships.
- 6. You have to avoid success. Success would ruin your victim status.** You have to keep a low profile or others will instantly expect more from you.

The downside to being a victim is considerable. **You slowly feel worse about yourself while control over your life slips away.** Others resent the way you approach life, and few people will trust you.

It's not easy to give up being a victim. There are benefits to living this way, but over time, the person that suffers the most is you.

A victim mentality hurts you more than it helps. Life is challenging, but **it can be rewarding to face those challenges head-on** and to deal with life on your own terms. Give up being a victim and take responsibility for your life. Show yourself and the world that you're a survivor!

# MASTERING THE ART OF SELF-TALK

Each one of us engages in self-talk. Do you find yourself saying things like, “Urgh, I’m late again,” or “It would be just like me to mess up this presentation?”

Wouldn’t you rather hear things like, “I did a fantastic job on that project,” or “My clothes are fitting better now that I’m exercising more?”

Mastering the art of self-talk means you speak truthfully and positively to yourself. When you are skilled at this, you’ll feel empowered and encouraged. As a consequence, your days will be happier, you’ll work harder to achieve your goals, and you’ll feel better about yourself.

The power of your self-talk is all-encompassing. **Your self-talk influences what you believe about yourself and how you’ll behave in the future.**



**Try these techniques to help you master this life-affirming art:**

**1. Keep it real.** When you're honest, you'll feel more comfortable with yourself. If you know you could have done better on a work project, acknowledge it to yourself. Part of making progress and improving in life is being genuine with yourself about what you're doing. You can do this without being brutal.

**2. Avoid self-criticism.** Although being honest with yourself is important, do it in a helpful and informative way. Instead of saying, "I messed up," acknowledge your decision to perform to a higher standard. Tell yourself how you'll respond in the future.

**3. Be positive.** Talking to yourself in negative or self-deprecating ways is self-sabotage. If you hear the same things over and over, you start to believe them. Make sure what you say to yourself is positive.

**4. Focus on your strengths.** As you listen to your inner voice throughout your day, you'll notice that you inadvertently make comments about yourself. Saying "Why did I do that? That was dumb," isn't very conducive to moving forward and doing your best.

- Instead, if you recognize your strengths in the situation, you're compelled to move ahead and tackle the next task with gusto. You might tell yourself, "At least I thought the situation through and believed I was doing the right thing. Next time, I'll do things differently."

**5. Be nice to yourself.** When you're talking to yourself, are you kind? Do you take care with your own feelings? When you show a caring attitude toward yourself, you'll also perform better.

## ***Substitutions in Your Self-Talk Using These Suggestions***

- Instead of saying: “Nothing I do ever turns out right,” try, “I am focusing on how I can succeed when I do this particular task.”
- Rather than thinking: “I should have gotten up early to exercise this morning,” say, “Now I’m going to do my exercise DVD” or, “I’ll walk this evening right after work.”
- If you were going to say, “There’s nothing really special about me,” change it to, “Everybody has strong points and mine are...”

Do you see how what you say to yourself influences what you believe and the choices you make in life? ***To ensure that your self-talk is empowering and encouraging, practice the tips above.*** You have the power to create the life you want by mastering this crucial art.



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