

Managing Emotions & Resistances

Understanding and working with difficult emotions

*Emotions are not problems to be solved — they are signals to be heard.
Resistance is not a character flaw — it is intelligence trying to protect something. This guide helps you work with both, not against them.*

— UNDERSTANDING RESISTANCE

Resistance — that feeling of 'I know I should but I just can't' — is always protective. Some part of you believes moving forward is more dangerous than staying still. This belief was usually formed when you were younger. Instead of fighting resistance, get curious: 'What is this protecting me from?' 'What would be lost if I changed?' 'What does this part need to feel safe enough to let go?'

— THE EMOTIONAL REGULATION TOOLKIT

Name It to Tame It

Simply naming an emotion activates the prefrontal cortex and reduces limbic intensity. 'I notice there is overwhelm here.' The slight distance matters.

Opposite Action (DBT)

When an emotion drives behaviour that doesn't serve you, do the opposite of what it urges. Shame urges hiding — so reach out. Anxiety urges avoidance — so approach gently.

TIPP Skills (DBT)

Temperature (cold water on face), Intense exercise, Paced breathing, Progressive muscle relaxation. Quickly reduces high-intensity emotional activation.

Emotion Surfing

Imagine the emotion as a wave. Notice where it is in your body — its texture, temperature, intensity. Watch it rise, peak, and fall. Most emotions, when met with openness rather than resistance, pass within 90 seconds at peak intensity.

The GRACE Model

Gather attention. Recall intention. Attune to self. Consider what's needed. Engage with ease.

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WORKING WITH SPECIFIC EMOTIONS

- **ANGER:** Move it through the body first. Then speak it. Anger is almost always grief or fear underneath.
- **SADNESS:** Let it come. Sadness that is allowed to move through you releases; sadness that is suppressed calcifies.
- **ANXIETY:** Get specific — what exactly are you afraid of? Anxiety lives in vagueness. Name the specific fear and it becomes workable.
- **SHAME:** Needs compassion and connection to heal — never isolation. Share it with one trusted person.

The feeling that is most uncomfortable is most often the one asking the most loudly for your attention. Not to be fixed — to be witnessed.