

9 advanced tactics for analytical thinkers to skillfully manage big negative emotions

(especially toward others: judgment of a co-worker, anger at a neighbor, feeling left out, etc.)

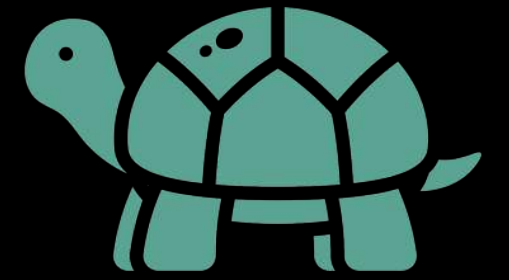
You'll feel **more in-control of your life**. And, with practice, you can even learn to **convert those negative feelings into positives ones** (in a legitimate, grounded way—not just fooling yourself with woo-woo).

1. Notice the feeling (before it can control you without you realizing it)



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- ▶ Practice noticing the first signs you're feeling something negative. For example:
 - A judgmental thought about someone
 - Resistance toward being around them
 - Tension in your body when thinking about them
 - ▶ Are you able to name the feeling(s)? Where are they in your body? How do you know you feel this way?
 - P.S. You might believe thoughts happen *first*, but it's typically emotions or body sensations
 - Quickly noticing emotions takes practice. At first, you'll lag (you'll only realize later what happened)

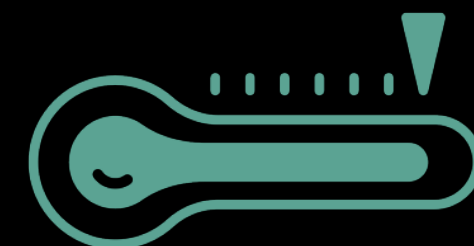
2. Slow things down (so you have more agency in how you respond)



- ▶ Your first reaction probably won't be best. So, create space. Signal your body to slow down (this engages the prefrontal cortex for better decision-making):
 - **Simplest:** A few deep breaths with longer out-breaths (this tells your heart to slow down)
 - **Box-breathing** (the Navy SEALs use this): Try breathing in for 4, holding for 4, breathing out for 4, holding for 4. Repeat a couple more times
- ▶ Feel your feet on the ground or butt on the seat—the key is to focus on the physical sensation, to switch awareness from mind to body (because the mind is where the catastrophizing happens)

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3. Check if you're within your personal tolerance level



- ▶ **The Window of Tolerance** is the optimal zone where we feel grounded, open, and emotionally regulated
- ▶ Inside the window, we're able to tolerate the stress of life. It's much harder outside it, on either side:
 - **Hyper-arousal** (anxiety, overwhelm, rage, etc.)
 - **Hypo-arousal** (depressed, numb, shame, etc.)
- ▶ **Check: Are you within your window of tolerance?** Is this feeling hard but manageable? Or do you feel completely freaked out or frozen—about to explode into hyper-arousal or collapse into hypo-arousal? Knowing this helps you choose the ideal strategy.

4a. Is this feeling overwhelming? If so, practice self-care



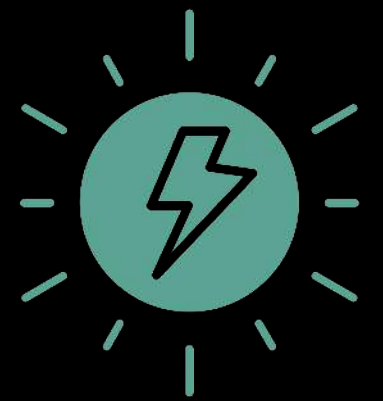
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- ▶ **Outside your window?** Stay safe, and take care of yourself:
 - Leave the room, relax muscles, go for a walk, call a friend
 - Find somewhere safe (e.g., a bathroom) to vent and/or visualize somewhere safe and peaceful
 - ▶ **Everyone's window of tolerance is different**, so try not to judge yourself if you feel more “easily” thrown off balance than other people seem to be
 - You've had your own unique challenges in life; plus, who knows what others are *actually* feeling inside

4b. Hard but manageable? Then practice curiosity



- ▶ Inside your window? Then be curious:
 - Your body and subconscious have wisdom, but they speak through emotions instead of verbal language
 - What message is your body trying to send you via your emotions? (It's ok if it's just a vague feeling without specific words)
 - What does your subconscious want your consciousness to be aware of? E.g., "*this person isn't safe,*" "*I'm lonely,*" "*I feel vulnerable,*" etc.
 - Can you try accepting this feeling instead of trying to push it away, make it wrong, or immediately fix it?

5. Move that energy in your body



- ▶ **Remind yourself that all feelings are impermanent.**
This one too will change. And, you can help it along
- ▶ **Imagine the emotion as energy surging through your body. Now, ask: How does your body want to move to process that energy?** Maybe you want to...
 - Do some yoga poses, push-ups, dance, run
 - Push as hard as you can against the wall, scream into a pillow, or stomp your feet
 - Go for a hike and smash a branch against a rock
- ▶ **Maybe there's no safe place to be alone right now and you just want to squeeze your fists under the table**

6. Give your child-self compassion



- ▶ This might sound like a waste of time, or too fluffy for you, but it's crucially important
- ▶ **Why? Because, it's not your logical adult self who's struggling here.** It's a younger part of you that's been activated (this isn't woo-woo; it's an actual neural network in your brain that was frozen in place)
 - Even if it seems irrational, picture your child-self who feels so scared, abandoned, angry, etc.
 - Now, how would you talk to a child? *"Shut up, what you want isn't important! Just suck it up"?*
 - No, you'd offer it reassurance: *"It's ok to feel what you feel. You're safe, I'm here with you. I'm going to help you get your needs met"*

7. Do a *metta* (loving-kindness) meditation



- ▶ Slow down, get comfortable. Close your eyes. Scan your body, find where you're clenching or holding tension. Gently release
- ▶ Picture someone or something who is easy to love—an animal, a baby, an innocent child, etc. Really visualize them
- ▶ Imagine a warm, gooey bubble of protection around the two of you, and a cord connecting your bodies that transmits love back and forth between the two of you
- ▶ Focus on how *you* deserve love too from this creature. **You are lovable. You deserve compassion. You're trying your best.**
- ▶ Now, can you invite someone else you trust into the bubble? Remind yourself: **You're all in this together. You're all trying your best.** You're all made of the exact same types of atoms
- ▶ Spend at least a few minutes here (continued on next slide)

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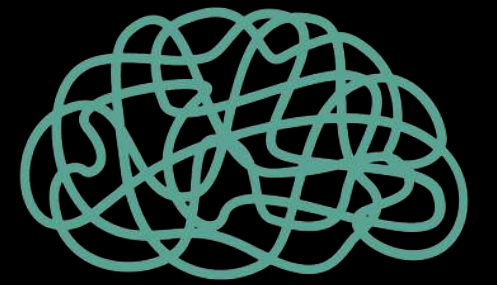
7. Do a *metta* meditation (cont'd)



- ▶ **Can you extend the bubble further?** Take your time; don't force it. See if you can invite in an acquaintance, or even a stranger. Are they trying their best too? Are you all in this together?
- ▶ Now, slowly, see if you can expand your bubble until it's pressed right up against the person you have the negative feelings toward. You don't have to let them in yet. But check: **How do you feel about them now? Have you softened at all?**
- ▶ Could they be trying their best too? **Picture them as a wounded child version of themselves.** Are you able to welcome them into your bubble? Or perhaps into a separate outer bubble?
- ▶ As you practice more, you'll be able to extend your bubble further—perhaps to include the entire world. And when you encounter someone difficult, **try to be curious:** What if they're trying their best? Could this just be a misunderstanding?

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8. Now, correct cognitive errors



- ▶ Remind yourself that there are **dozens of cognitive biases** that commonly affect our brains
- ▶ Which seems more trustworthy: the negative thoughts you've had toward this person, or how you felt in the safe bubble of interconnected love?
- ▶ Could it be that some of your thoughts about this person were not accurate? Do you have conclusive objective proof that they're all true? Could you reframe how you've been thinking about them?
- ▶ Try to play devil's advocate and imagine alternative explanations. E.g., what if they seem angry at you but it's because they have an extremely stressful job? It can also be helpful to **talk this out with a friend.**

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9. For anger specifically, remember:

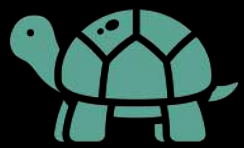
- ▶ Anger is a useful signal. It could mean:
 - Something is pushing against an **important value** of yours, or a **boundary** of yours has been crossed
 - Your **childhood wounding** is being triggered
 - You have an **important need** here that isn't being met. Could you make a request?
- ▶ Anger is energy that needs to be let out, like a pot of boiling water with a lid on
 - The trick is just to let it out in a healthy way—not at a person, but toward an object or the ground:
 - E.g., press against the wall, stomp your feet, squeeze your fist, scream into a pillow, etc.

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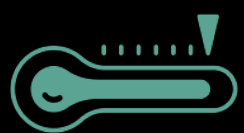
Summary



1. **Notice the feeling** (before it can control you without you realizing it)



2. **Slow things down** (so you have more agency in how you respond)



3. Check if you're within your **personal tolerance level**



4. Overwhelming? Practice **self-care**. Not? Lean into **curiosity**



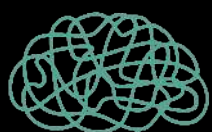
5. **Move** that energy in your body



6. Give your child-self **compassion**



7. Do a metta (**loving-kindness**) meditation



8. Now, correct **cognitive errors**



9. Remember anger is a **useful signal**

Want help?



Thanks for reading.

As you can see, this is hard work to do alone. Deeply ingrained patterns are holding you back from feeling as much happiness and fulfillment as you'd like (and deserve).

I spent so much of my life completely stuck in my head. I thought the solution to feeling bad was to strategize and fix it through cognitive tactics. Eventually, I learned why that never actually worked, and how much I was missing.

I don't have all the answers, but I've managed to completely transform my relationship with my body and feelings. And I've been able to help a lot of other people do the same.

Find out more at www.MichaelCaloz.com.