

Frustrated in a meeting? Feeling socially awkward? Received hard feedback?

Here's how to train yourself so uncomfortable feelings won't control you.



Current (how you likely do it today):	Future (what's possible if you train yourself):
1. Unconscious discomfort: You feel defensive (or some other uncomfortable feeling), but you might not realize what's happening until later.	1. Conscious discomfort: You notice some physical signals that you're becoming defensive (e.g., your jaw or shoulders tightening, heaviness in your chest).
2. Your threat response controls you: Your subconscious perceives a threat, so your system engages the "fight-flight-freeze-fawn" response to protect you. The more primitive, animal part of your brain takes over, so you lose some of your logical self.	2. You manage your threat response: Your subconscious begins engaging the "fight-flight-freeze-fawn" response, but you notice this happening. To retain control, you immediately slow things down by taking some deep breaths & feeling your feet on floor or butt on seat.
3. Internally, you go away: Your brain starts creating stories about all the bad things that might happen (or what other people are "probably" thinking, etc.). You focus on the future or the "what-if" instead of what's actually happening right now.	3. Internally, you stay here: You name to yourself <i>"oh, I'm feeling activated right now."</i> You bring yourself back to the present moment by focusing on your 5 senses using one of the techniques in the gray box to the right.
4. Externally, you engage the threat: You either fight (prove them wrong or insult them), flight (try to escape or change the subject), freeze (feel unable to respond or lose your train of thought), or fawn (say whatever it takes to make them like you or forgive you).	4. Externally, you slow things down: You don't respond immediately. You buy time by saying <i>"thank you, this is a lot to take in,"</i> or <i>"could we slow down for a moment?"</i> or <i>"I appreciate you sharing this, and I'd love to continue this conversation tomorrow when I'll have a bit more bandwidth."</i>
5. Later, you feel regret: You feel bad about how the conversation went. You replay the conversation & beat yourself up.	5. Later, you keep doing the work: You practice self-compassion & self-care. You stay with your feelings vs. repressing them.

✗ The core problem:

Your problem is *not* that the feelings are uncomfortable.

The problem is the stories you create *about* those feelings:

"They obviously don't like me.
It'll be like this forever. Etc."

✓ The core solution:

Catch your mind in the act, then **redirect it to your body.**

When it creates stories, **refocus your attention on what's happening right here, right now.**

Change won't happen overnight.

But if you practice, you'll become much better at keeping your logical, empathetic mind online rather than letting your animal brain control you.

How to train yourself:

Pick one of the senses below, and focus purely on the physical sensation for 30-60 seconds at a time.

You *will* get distracted. That's normal. You haven't failed.

The training here is *noticing when you've been distracted, then gently redirecting your focus* back to the bodily sensation, again and again.

Train yourself as often as you can throughout the day. **By practicing in lower-stress situations, you'll build the muscle for more difficult ones.**

👉 **Touch:** Gently rub two fingers together. Focus on the texture, the pressure, the temperature, etc.

👁️ **Sight:** Examine something purely on the visual level. Try to ignore the meaning behind it. Just focus on the colors, the textures, the shapes.

👂 **Hearing:** Listen to all the sounds around you. Focus on the sounds that are closer, then the ones that are farther away.