

Skills for Regulating Emotions

Paying Attention to Positive Events

A common and unfortunate habit is to pay more attention to negative, rather than positive events and experiences.

We are often inclined to focus on one item of bad news among numerous other examples of good news, or a single criticism among multiple compliments.

When you find your attention singling out or honing in on the negative elements of an incident, make a conscious effort to stop. It may take some effort, but try to draw your attention back to the positive aspects instead.

One helpful way to practice your ability to refocus is by making time for a positive experience each day and consciously recognizing the positive aspects of it. Choose an example positive experience from the box to schedule into your day, and use the free space to brainstorm any more you come up with:

Taking a walk in nature	Catching up with a friend or relative
Listening to your favorite album or artist	Exploring the countryside or the city
Cooking and savoring your favorite food	Doing something kind for someone else
Curling up with a great book	Taking a long bath or going for a swim

Try to include one or more positive experiences into your daily routine and with regular practice, you will build up your ability to focus on the positive.

Fact-Checking

With hindsight, everybody can recall times when they have blown things out of proportion, perhaps reacted in a certain way or overemphasized one specific aspect of a situation. Fact checking is a technique that allows us to bring intense emotions back into proportion.

Use these three simple questions to fact-check your situation when you find yourself experiencing a negative feeling in the moment:

#1

What happened that gave rise to this emotion?

#2

What am I assuming about this experience, or what explanations am I giving myself in my head?

#3

Are my feelings proportionate to the reality of these circumstances? Or are they more related to my assumptions and interpretations?

P.L.E.A.S.E.

Our physical and mental states impact on each other – if you're physically unwell or unhealthy, you'll have a tougher time regulating your emotions. Use this P.L.E.A.S.E. acronym as a reminder of how taking care of your body will positively influence your mind.

PL

Treating Physical illness

E

Eating Healthy

A

Avoiding Mood Altering Drugs

S

Sleeping Well

E

Exercising

Opposite Behavior

Our behaviors are usually associated with feelings or emotions that we experience. For example:

- When we feel sad, we might become quiet or look for a way to be alone.
- If we are feeling annoyed, we might snap at someone or get aggressive.

The physical sensations we feel in response to our emotions can often drive our behaviors, and as such, doing the reverse can play a role in altering that emotion.

- If sad feelings generally cause you to retreat inside yourself, try calling a close friend to talk instead.
- If you usually snap at a colleague when you feel annoyed, try taking a deep breath and giving them a genuine compliment about something instead.

Use this space to list the most typical behavior you show in response to a few common negative emotions. In the far right column, describe the opposite behavior or name the action that you would like to try instead.

Emotion	Behavior	Opposite Behavior
Sad <i>e.g. Depressed, lonely, remorseful</i>		
Mad <i>e.g. Angry, hurt, hostile</i>		
Scared <i>e.g. Helpless, insecure, anxious</i>		