

30 Simple Strategies to Deal with Negative Emotions

Short-term strategies

The following techniques will help you manage negative emotions as they arise. Try them out, and keep the ones that work for you.

A. Change your emotional state

#1—Distract yourself: An emotion is only as strong as you allow it to be. Whenever you experience a negative feeling, instead of focusing on it, get busy right away. If you're angry about something, cross something off your to-do list. If possible, do something that requires your full attention.

#2—Interrupt: Do something silly or unusual to break the pattern. Shout, do a silly dance or speak with a strange voice.

#3—Move: Stand up, go for a walk, do push-ups, dance, or use a power posture. By changing your physiology, you can change the way you feel.

#4—Listen to music: Listening to your favorite music may shift your emotional state.

#5—Shout: Talk to yourself with a loud and authoritarian voice and give yourself a pep talk. Use your voice and words to change your emotions.

B. Take action

#6—Do it anyway: Leave your feeling alone and do what you have to do. Mature adults do what they have to do whether they feel like it or not.

#7—Do something about it: Your behavior indirectly changes your feelings. Ask yourself, "What action can I take in today to change the way I feel?" Then, go do it.

C. Become aware of your emotions

#8—Write it down: Take a pen and paper and write down what you worry about, why, and what you can do about it. Be as specific as possible.

#9—Write down what happened: Take a piece of paper and write down what exactly happened to generate the negative emotion. Don't write down your interpretation of it or the drama you created around it. Write down the raw facts. Now ask yourself, in the grand scheme of your life, is it really that big a deal?

#10—Talk: Have a discussion with a friend. You may be overreacting, making things worse than they are. Sometimes, all you need is a different perspective.

#11—Remember a time when you felt good about yourself: This can help you get back in that state and gain a new perspective. Ask yourself the following questions, "How did it feel?" "What was I thinking at the time?" "What was my outlook on life at the time?"

#12—Let your emotion go: Ask yourself, "Can I let that emotion go?" Then, allow yourself to release it.

#13—Allow your emotions to be: Stop trying to resist your emotions or to change them. Allow them to be what they are.

#14—Embrace your emotion: Stay with your emotions. Look at them as closely as possible while doing your best to remain detached. Become curious about them. What are they exactly at their core?

D. Just relax

#15—Rest: Take a nap or a break. When you're tired, you're more likely to experience negative emotions than when you are properly rested.

#16—Breathe: Breathe slowly to relax. The way you breathe affects your emotional state. Use breathing techniques to calm you down, or to give you more energy.

#17—Relax: Take a few minutes to relax your muscles. Start by relaxing your jaw, the tension around your eyes and the muscles on your face. Your body affects your emotions. As you relax your body, your mind also relaxes.

#18—Bless your problems: Thank your problems. Understand they are here for a reason and will serve you in some way.

Long-term strategies

The following techniques will help you manage your negative emotions long-term.

A. Analyze your negative emotions

#19—Identify the story behind your emotions: Take a pen and paper, and write down all the reasons why you have these emotions in the first place. What assumptions do you hold? How did you interpret what's happening to you? Now, see if you can let go of this particular story.

#20—Write down your emotions in a journal: Take a few minutes each day to write down how you felt. Look for recurrent patterns. Then, use affirmations, visualization, or a relevant exercise to help you overcome these emotions.

#21—Practice mindfulness: Observe your emotions throughout the day. Meditation will help you do this. Another way is simply to engage in an activity while being fully present. As you're doing this, observe what's going on in your mind.

B. Move away from negativity

#22—Change environment: If you're surrounded by negativity, change your environment. Move to a different place, or reduce the time you spend with negative friends.

#23—Remove counterproductive activities: Remove or reduce the time you spend on any activity not having a positive impact on your life. This could be reducing the time you spend watching TV or surfing the internet.

C. Condition your mind

#24—Create daily rituals: This will help you to experience more positive emotions. Meditate, exercise, repeat affirmations, create a gratitude journal, and so on. (The best time to deposit positive thoughts in your mind is right before going to sleep and first thing in the morning.)

#25—Exercise: Exercise regularly. Exercise improves your mood and is good for your emotional and physical health.

D. Increase your energy

The less energy you have, the more likely you are to experience negative emotions.

#26—Improve your sleep: Make sure you get enough sleep. If possible, go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.

#27—Eat healthier food: As the saying goes, “You are what you eat.” Junk food will negatively impact your energy levels, so take steps to improve your diet.

#28—Rest: Take regular naps, or take a few minutes to relax

#29—Breathe: Learn to breathe properly.

E. Ask for help

#30—Consult a professional: if you have deep emotional issues such as extreme low self-esteem or depression, it might be wise to consult a professional.