

Tending the Mind (inspired by The Work of Byron Katie)

Note that if you don't need the instructions or wish to print out more worksheets without the explanation, the worksheet starts on p. 4.

Generate a list of thoughts for inquiry using an overarching thought followed by “and that means that ...”:

I'm too tired to do this well and that means that ...

- I'll disappoint my boss.
- I'll lose the client's trust.
- My work will be sloppy.
- Something important will fall through the cracks.
- I'll lose my job.
- I'll lie awake again worrying about my job.

Once you have a list of thoughts, if you do nothing else, simply remind yourself they're just thoughts. And because they're thoughts, that means they're not absolutely true. You can also tell yourself, *No wonder I feel as I do—who wouldn't feel bad with this set of thoughts?*

If and when you can or wish to, you can process the thoughts using the two methods below. I recommend using both with each thought you take on.

Method #1: Process the thought with a turnaround.

Write down the direct opposite of the thought, changing as few words as possible. Make a positive statement negative and a negative, positive.

Example of a simple turnaround (positive statement becomes negative, and vice versa):

I'll disappoint my boss becomes *I won't disappoint my boss.*

I won't be able to function becomes *I will be able to function.*

Then find several (at least 3) examples of how the new thought (the turnaround) could actually be true.

The reasons could be general things you know about life, things you've observed in yourself or others, very recent specific evidence that the turnaround thought is in clear evidence in your reality—whatever you see. Be concrete in your examples.

Example of finding the ways the new thought could be true:

I won't disappoint my boss.

- You can mess things up and not categorically disappoint your boss.
- She knows I typically do good work.
- She knows I'm not currently at my best because I've communicated clearly about that and can again.
- She values my contribution to the company over time and won't be quick to take one bad product or even a bad patch to devalue what I offer.
- She just expressed valuing my work the other day, when I was also not at my best.

Method #2: Process the thought with *So what?*

Here, you consider that the original thought might be true, or partially true, or sometimes true, or that someone might see it as true, or that there may be times when it simply *feels* really true to you, and you could very well land there again.

Start here: Ask yourself some judicious questions to consider the possibility that there's no problem. Here are some good questions:

- Am I equipped to deal with that?
- Could it benefit my growth if this were true/if this happened?
- Could I get through that?
- So what?

Note that you don't have to ask all of those questions, and could come up with others entirely—I'm just going to demonstrate a few angles to approach it. All you're trying to do is find that there's no problem (or, the *So what?* of it).

Example using *I'll disappoint my boss*:

Am I equipped to deal with that? Yes, I don't like to disappoint anyone, never mind someone I work with, so I can welcome myself to the human race. I can say, This is what disappointing your boss feels like. It won't kill or even harm me to sit with that discomfort and calm myself.

Could it benefit my growth if this happened? Yes. All of the above. I can see the value of teaching myself that I really am okay when someone's disappointed in me and that it doesn't mean I'm worthless or unsafe or a bad person. It doesn't even mean I've done anything wrong.

Could I get through that? Yep. I could mind the pain body and tend the mind and carry on as all people do when things go less than perfectly in life—which does happen to all human beings.

So what? People disappoint bosses. It's okay. I can deal. I can walk myself through and beyond discomfort. It'll be temporary; also, the less I dwell on it, the more quickly it'll blow over.

That's it!

You can process one, a few, or every thought on your list using both or one of these methods.

Having met your thoughts and perhaps gotten a little closer to truth, see if you can feel into any sense of freedom or expansion. **If you're still hurting emotionally despite the mental exploration, see if you can get okay with that without thinking, *It didn't work*.** If you're just trying to meet your thoughts in a clear, let's-get-real way, it worked: you got more real. Byron Katie says to do The Work with no motive except for the love of truth.

As for your feelings, they'll do what they do. This is why I emphasize the need to work separately with the pain body and simply **tune in to where the emotions have landed in your body. Give those areas kind awareness and breath** (the only balm you can apply from within). After, before, and sometimes while you meet your thoughts, mind the pain body.

And then **attend to the present moment**, the task at hand. Wherever you can, as Abraham-Hicks says, **reach for a better-feeling thought**.

Just scooch. It's okay if you don't get there right now. Do use this process to scooch in the direction of looking at the whole truth, not just the stressful slice you've got your focus on. Aim roughly the right way, and life will direct and redirect you to get to where you need to go.

The worksheet itself follows.

Take one thought above and recopy it here:

**Method #1. Turn it around by writing down the opposite of the thought
(keep language as close to the same as possible, but if it's positive, make it negative;
if it's negative, make it positive):**

Write down at least 3 examples of how this new thought (the turnaround) could be true:

Method #2. Now take the thought at the top of the page and answer any or all of these questions to get to the most solid sense of *So what?* (or, *There's no problem*) that you're currently capable of.

- **Am I equipped to deal with that?**
- **Could it benefit my growth if this were true/if this happened?**
- **Could I get through that?**
- **So what?**