

## How to Help Myself When Life Happens

Something happens. Something doesn't happen. I feel intense feelings about something that is being said or not said, being done or not done. I can even sense these feelings in my body. Human brains and bodies prefer stability! I did my very best with my old ways to return to a stable range but they aren't working as well as I need them to. Help! Let me try a new way.

**Engage in self-kindness.**



**Ask myself:  
"How can I help myself?"**

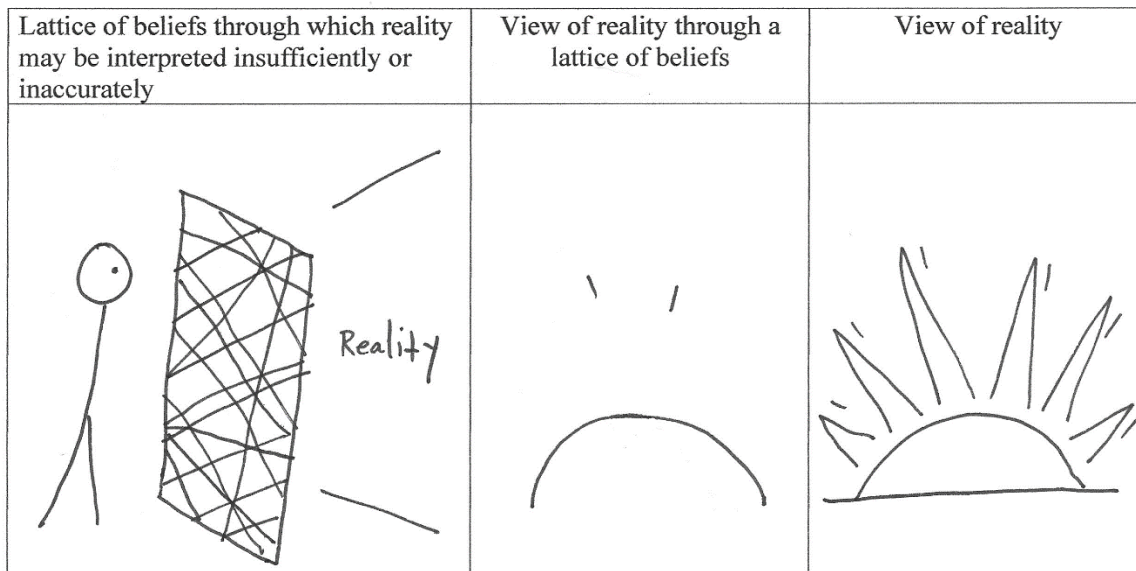


**Ask myself:  
"What are the facts?"**

("Although I may be feeling \_\_\_\_\_ and thinking \_\_\_\_\_, what is really going on here?")



**Ask myself:  
"What are the beliefs I am holding about the way I, others, or the world are or should be that are keeping me from seeing reality as it is?"**



**Remove the beliefs  
so reality is revealed.**

(Return over and over again to **self-kindness**. The dismantling of a lattice of beliefs—ultimately providing relief and freedom and the opportunity to derive reality-based strategies—can include disorientation, alarm, and grief.)



**Begin with the end in mind.  
Derive a skillful, reality-based  
strategy to arrive there.**

Anne defines a **lattice of beliefs** as a complex network of beliefs, views, customs, rules, doctrines, and/or myths acquired for understandable, adaptive reasons through which one filters and interprets objective reality. Beliefs obscure one's view and may cause false and inaccurate conclusions about what is happening or not happening.

How can I help myself dismantle a lattice of beliefs?

- 1) *Cultivate the practice of becoming aware of an intense feelings state and help myself with it every single time.* I can help myself override and replace the automaticity of judgment and fevered action with the automaticity of awareness and deliberate decisions.
- 2) *Replace judgment based on beliefs with discernment based on facts.* Do the best I can to identify and loosen beliefs, then lift them away so reality is revealed. Assume complexity. I may never understand some things. If in doubt, assume fear is beneath it all. Accept that opposites, maddeningly, may both be true. I may consciously decide to keep a handful of beliefs that I know are not factual and do not apply in all individual cases, but I may deem them helpful. (Examples: "Humans are valuable as individuals and as members of groups," "Humans have human rights," and one of Anne's personal favs: "People can negotiate anything as long as they keep talking." That is an ardent, hopeful belief, not a fact.)
- 3) *Challenge the belief that I shouldn't feel what I feel.* The fact is that the human ability to feel is part of why *Homo sapiens* continues to survive as a species. *My feelings are data* that I need to take into account. Ask myself: "What am I thinking that would result in these feelings?", i.e. "Am I scaring myself to death with my thoughts?!"
- 4) *Help myself through the disorientation and grief* that come from discovering that a belief I have held is hurting me rather than helping me.
- 5) *Help myself through the feelings of outrage and the sense of injustice* I experience when I discover a belief I hold strongly is an illusion and not a fact. Help myself understand that I probably want to keep the belief because it gives me some sense of safety, power, control, and personal value.
- 6) *Help myself use skills to handle belief-free experiences of feeling unsafe, not powerful, not in control, and not valuable.* I can become aware of what I need and provide them for myself.
- 7) *Help myself through the existential pain and disorientation of the possibility that things happen randomly and without meaning.*
- 8) *Help myself through the process of feeling terror, panic, fear, worry, then matter-of-fact acknowledgement and acceptance of realizing that I might be safe enough right now but, however deeply I might wish otherwise, the fact is that no human is ever 100% safe all the time.*
- 9) *Help myself orient to my new, belief-aware life by appreciating the wonder of my own consciousness, the treasures of my own strengths and preferences, and the precious values and priorities I can use to guide my time here.*
- 10) Contribute to my own stability through *self-care* practices, especially the "big three": enough sleep, nourishment, and exercise.
- 11) ~~Judge myself and ask: "What's the matter with me that I didn't see all these beliefs before now?!"~~ Return over and over again to self-kindness. "Oh, of course I would have these beliefs. Given my nationality, my culture, my community, my family, my time in history, it makes perfect sense. Okay. Now that I've dismantled the lattice I can see objective reality as it is—with *the understanding* that the 100+ billion neurons in my brain will naturally be limited in fully and accurately discerning reality (which is why Anne keeps urging/nagging me to run decisions by others before making them, not because I can't be trusted or am somehow broken or flawed, but because *I am human* and am working with the power of *only one brain*. I deprive myself of the rich synergy of many brains!). Let me head bravely into this new vista of real possibilities."
- 12) If I find myself stuck, unable to move forward, I can imagine I have glued back onto the lattice a belief about how I, others, and the world are or should be. I can start with self-kindness and go through the process of identifying, examining, and removing beliefs that cause me problems. *I can help myself with this.*