

—Processing Pain—

All of us are invited to experience pain at regular intervals in our lives. We often turn to food, alcohol, shopping, work, or something else to ignore the pain we feel. These temporary distractions only prevent the process that needs to happen to let it go.

THE STEPS

1. Something happens to trigger your pain. You can hardly make sense of it, and it's sometimes tormenting.
2. Emotional Pain vibrates in your body caused by thoughts – sometimes feels excruciating.
3. You make a choice to avoid it, resist it, react to it, or process it.
 - **AVOIDANCE**: When you choose to avoid your pain and pretend it isn't there, you are, in essence, lying to yourself. This never works long term. It festers. The more you avoid it, the more you have to avoid it.
 - **RESISTANCE**: Yell at people around you. Blame and rail at the universe. Argue within justice that "it's not fair". Embellish it.
 - **REACT**: Act out or fight against it. You might yell at the person you believe caused your pain or give them the silent treatment, talk behind their back, etc. This may help with the pain temporarily as it releases the vibration slightly. When we react from negative emotion, we almost always get a negative result. Ultimately, the fight against the emotion is a losing battle, and anxiety speeds up the vibration of the already painful emotion, creating even more intensity.

Lastly, you can make a choice to **PROCESS this pain**. Processing pain is really another way of saying "I choose to feel it." As humans, we are reluctant to feel pain on purpose. **Feeling pain isn't always bad**. When we allow ourselves to feel our pain all the way through, we see that **1) it's manageable** and **2) it can do no long-term harm**.

How can we do this? →



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1. **Allow** the feeling to be in your body even though you can't make sense of it in your mind yet.
2. **Observe** without judgment. Say in your mind something like "I am processing pain" over and over as you feel the pain. Don't try to fix it.
3. **Notice** any desire to react, resist, and avoid. Say the desire out loud in your mind or write it down. Don't act on it—just acknowledge it. Say "That won't help" or "That's not worth it" every time you notice the desire. Say "This is pain." "This is part of my journey."
4. **Describe** it. Is it heavy? Light? Big? Small? Fast? Slow? Does it rob you of your breath?
5. **Write** your thoughts as they come to your mind. It may take minutes, hours, days, or weeks; that's ok. WRITE THEM DOWN as they appear. Don't try to change them. Give yourself permission to write whatever comes to your mind without judgment.
This could feel overwhelming. Allow yourself to be overwhelmed while functioning.
6. **Own it.** Own your pain. It's yours. You may not want to process it. You may react, overeat, fight, rebel, resist and retaliate, and that's ok. **There's no deadline for processing pain. It will wait.**
Begin where you are. When you're ready you can say something like "I accept myself for who I am. I am not this experience. I am good. I can learn through this."
7. **Invite yourself** to let the thoughts go. Give yourself time to release the pain. In order to release the pain, it helps to acknowledge that you are holding it.
8. **Repeat as necessary.** If you repeat this process and allow it to take as long as it takes, you will notice that often, time really does make it easier. With time, your perspective may change. You may notice one day that you can release your grip on the pain. You can allow it to go.

You can stop reacting, resisting, avoiding, and eventually you can stop processing the pain because you no longer have it.

