

# EMERGENCY

## Calming Techniques

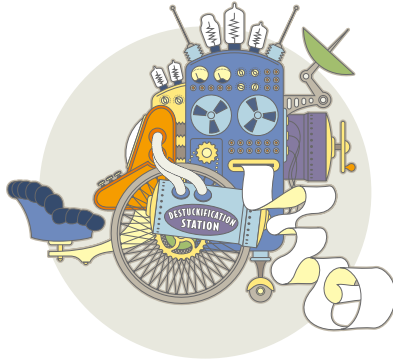
AND THE



## Art of Meeting Yourself Where You Are

***sampler package:*** two articles plus a teleclass transcript

WITH DESTUCKIFICATION EXPERT **HAVI BROOKS**



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## TELESEMINAR



The participants of this teleseminar are Havi Brooks, pictured at left with her assistant Selma, and various Audience Members who are collectively referred to as “AM”, in a clever time-saving abbreviation.

### **In which we are graciously welcomed to the Emergency Calming Techniques teleclass**

**HAVI:** Hi, welcome, everyone. Thanks for being here. This is Havi Brooks with the Fluent Self, and we are here talking about emergency calming techniques and smart, useful ways to stop a freak-out moment in its tracks. We have an hour together, maybe just a tad more if there are a ton of questions. Keep in mind that an hour is a good chunk of time to get some powerful work done. An hour is a gift – you’d be amazed what can happen in an hour. But no matter how much or how little time we get to spend together, I always like to start out with a body check-in.

### **In which we do a quick body “check-in” and get to connect to our intention for the class**

We do this body check-in work for a couple of reasons. We do it to tune in. We do it because the body stores a lot of information and so this can be a good way to get some answers. We do it to quiet some of the background noise, so we can be a little more receptive to the kind of positive patterns we want to establish.

And also – it’s a great way to come into the class. I know it’s tempting to multi-task and have a million things going on, or sometimes you can get into a state of physi-

cal discomfort especially if there is a phone smooshed between your ear and your shoulder. Or sometimes the theme we're discussing brings up some emotional discomfort which can trigger physical discomfort. So, as I always say, we don't want to be using our mind at the expense of the body; we want everything to be in harmony.

So... let's just go in and take a look... grounding your feet into the floor, consciously noticing how you are sitting, where any tension is located in your body, and bringing your attention to the breath.

If your body is hinting that it would like you to do something to help it feel more comfortable, then do it. Maybe this means releasing your shoulders, relaxing any tension in your jaw or forehead, sitting up straighter, just checking in. And if you're not getting a bunch of signals or information from the body, don't worry about it. This isn't something that comes intuitively to everyone. There's no right or wrong, just noticing and paying attention. And breathing.

Take a moment to smooth out the breath just a bit; your brain waves will always synchronize themselves to your breath. So if things are kind of busy or noisy in your head, breathing consciously and evening out the breath will clear away that chaos and give you some room to think.

Good. Bring your focus to what you'd like to receive or take away from this call. We have this time together and you know from experience that sometimes even a very short time can be enough to set off a chain of reactions, to plant seeds, or to make an internal or mental shift that can lead to all sorts of wonderful things. So ask yourself,

what would you like to take away from this time together? If you could get one thing out of this, what would it be? Taking a moment to get quiet and allow yourself to have this intention.

Very nice. And slowly coming back, bring your attention back...

Any reactions? How did that feel?

**AM:** Amazing.

**AM:** Lighter, like there's more atmosphere, more relaxed.

**AM:** The breath is really great.

**HAVI:** Ah, breathing. It's the best.

### **In which we define "stuckification" and have a good laugh at ourselves**

**HAVI:** Okay, now that we've settled into the body a little, we can interact with the mind. We're here to talk about specific things that we can do when we are dealing with what I like to call stuckification. I made this word up because there just wasn't a word in English that summed up what I was looking for. And by stuckification I basically mean all the things that come together to result in our feeling like everything is just terrible. That familiar, "here I am again" stuck place.

So "stuckification" might mean feeling stressed, frustrated, annoyed, sad, helpless, furious, irritated or cranky. It might be that we're dealing with a particularly challenging situation or a particularly challenging person, as the case may be. It might be that we have no idea at all what is triggering this stuck feeling, but here we are.

What's happening here is that our "stuff" is coming up. Right? Everyone has stuff? Everybody has stuff. Baggage, issues, the parts of our emotional make-up, our past, our experiences – all these hurts that come up as a reaction to whatever is currently going on in our lives. Something pushes your buttons and all of a sudden things are not going smoothly. It's not very enjoyable and maybe even really scary.

In general, people – and by people I mean me, and my clients and everyone I know – people react to stuckification in different ways. Maybe you get really hyper. Maybe you scream and yell and throw furniture. Sound familiar? Maybe you crawl back into bed and hide. Maybe you shut off completely.

Or maybe you bulldoze through it and pretend it isn't happening. Never a good idea. That one will always come back to bite you on the behind.

Or maybe you go into what I call Distractor Mouse mode, where you become a distractor mouse and totally avoid both the situation and the feelings that are coming up in response to the situation. Right? You check your email a thousand times, flip through the catalogs in your recycling box, decide to research something random on the internet, like how to turn your old stereo into a butter churn. Maybe that's just me.

So even though I talk a lot about Emergency Calming Techniques, and freak-outs and meltdown moments, you're not always going to be dealing with that Scream Moment where you just have to pull out your hair and have a good old-fashioned temper tantrum. Sometimes it's more like a slow, steady build-up of stuck.

But either way, whether your particular pattern is a slow build-up or a moment of panic, I think we all know that these strategies are not working for us. So I'd like to go straight into stuff that does work for us.

Questions this far? We're all clear on stuck?

**AM:** [*laughs*] Yeah, sounds vaguely familiar.

**AM:** I think we might know what you're talking about.

**HAVI:** Oh, yes, stuck. We've all been there. Once or twice.

### **In which we say a few words about resistance to the process**

**HAVI:** I'd like to play a little today with the concept that I wrote about in the last newsletter: meeting yourself where you are. But first, before we even go there, let's talk a little about how much resistance we have to meeting ourselves where we are.

There is a huge fear. A fear that if we meet ourselves where we are, if we let ourselves be the way we are, if we let ourselves feel safe being who we are, if we rest into that safety, there's a fear that everything will go horribly wrong. There's a fear that with this kind of permission, we'll just end up doing nothing. Or worse. We'll end up eating burritos all day and watching TV until we turn into depressed slugs obsessing over weight issues, using what's left of our brain cells to mourn our wasted lives.

So first of all, we want to meet that fear. We want to acknowledge that fear. And we want to remind ourselves that this is really just our stuckification talking – our stuff.

And we want to be clear that meeting yourself where you are is not passive. It's not throwing up your hands and saying, "Oh well, whatever, I'm just going to let the world steamroll over me."

Instead, meeting yourself where you are is about taking a conscious, active step. It's not passive at all. It's consciously, actively noticing what's going on for you, acknowledging that and letting it be true – just a little, just for now – so that you can get through that fear to discover what your needs are – and what you can do to address them.

So that all makes sense logically, I hope, but emotionally it's still a challenge. It's hard, scary stuff. And because this is hard, scary stuff, we want to do it from a place of quiet. And that's where the emergency calm techniques come in.

### **In which we try out a powerful calming technique and space out a little**

With your permission, I'd like to try one together. So if everyone would play along, and take one hand up towards your face. We always start with a physical technique to ground it into the body. Take one hand towards your face, index and middle fingers together and press them into the center of the chin.



There's a nice acupressure spot there that can help us go a little deeper in this process. You don't want too much

pressure but it should be enough that you can feel your chin moving a little towards your chest, so that the neck can be really long and extended.

You can also try tapping lightly on this spot with your two fingers which is also very soothing. I would try both, pressing and tapping, and see which one feels best. If your hand gets tired, you can switch hands. If you don't need a hand for the phone, you might even want to try using both hands at the same time.

Close your eyes. Imagine that you can direct your breath into these points where the tips of your fingers meet the skin of your face. Notice how you're breathing here. Maybe you can soften the breath a little. If it feels good to breathe through the nose, breathe through the nose. Otherwise, just breathe in the way that is most comfortable for you.

Do a quick body scan to make sure that your shoulders aren't up by your ears. If you're noticing any tension anywhere – forehead, jaw, neck, shoulders, hips, feet – say hi to it, and then notice if that act of noticing was helpful in releasing. Take several deep breaths here, imagining that you can breathe through your fingertips into these pressure points on your face.

And still tapping or pressing, moving into self-talk. Here's where we start talking to ourselves, self-talk is the best way to respond to your doubts, fears and worries so you can practice meeting yourself where you are right now with compassion and patience.

Even though I have this fear, this is my fear, here it is, it's not the end of the world, I'm allowed to be afraid. Even

though I'm afraid that if I let myself be the way I am, everything will go horribly wrong, I know that the methods I'm using right now aren't working either.

This is my fear, this is my stuff, it does not define me, it's not who I am. This fear is just a temporary part of what's going on for me right now. It's not going to be around forever. It's just right now. And the better I get at noticing my stuff, acknowledging, witnessing, comforting... the easier it is for me to let it float away and drift off. My fear wants my attention. If I ignore it and tell it to shut up and leave me alone, I can't learn the lesson that will help me resolve this pattern.

Even though I have all this resistance, tension, stress in my mind, my life and my body, I'm just going to notice that it's there and let it be there so I can let it slip away. I'm practicing helping myself release the stuck places. I'm getting better at noticing when I need attention, shelter, support. I am getting better at releasing. If there is anything I'm ready to let go of, let it go now."

I want to remind myself that I am bigger than my frustration, I am bigger than my fear, I am bigger than my hurt and my annoyance. These are just a temporary part of me and I am getting better at talking to them and moving through these emotions.

I am allowed to have these feelings. They don't define me or say anything about who I am. I'm a person, this is my stuff and I'm entitled, I'm allowed to have stuff. Even though I'm still working through these stuck places, I'm doing the best I can with the tools I have. I trust myself to get better at this process.

This is where I happen to be right now and I'm doing my best to recognize what's going on, and to meet myself right here with kindness, compassion and patience.

And if there is anything that can help me in this moment, asking for it. Ask yourself. Seriously. Anything you want. Ask for kindness. Ask for the ability to receive kindness from yourself and others, ask yourself for patience, trust, support and quiet. Ask yourself for the ability to receive all the help that you need. Ask yourself for the ability to notice when you need attention, kindness and compassion.

Now breathing into this spot where your fingers meet your chin, and then moving your fingers slightly away so they are only barely, barely touching, maybe only touching the tiniest bit. Maybe you can feel a faint vibration or a buzzing feeling. And move them the tiniest bit away again. And slowly, release your hands. Take a deep breath. Have a deep, happy yawn here, and when you're ready to come back, blink a few times, bring your attention back, take another breath here.

### **In which we learn about the value of practicing when you are already calm**

**HAVI:** Now that you're back, how about checking in with yourself again. Ask yourself, what are you feeling and where are you feeling it? Check in with the rest of us... how did that feel for you? What kind of experience was that? Any reactions?

**AM:** Wow, that was great... really, really relaxing.

**AM:** Mmmmm. Yes.

**AM:** It's so nice to have the guidance, and then I go back to, maybe this is me, I go back to those moments, right now it's really good, I want to learn to use that voice, like you said, that voice, that self-talk, talking to yourself. Do you recommend practicing it when you're calm, so that it becomes normal or familiar?

**HAVI:** Absolutely. That's a terrific question. I'm so glad you brought that up. I absolutely would.

**AM:** Mmm, yeah.

**HAVI:** Because I think what happens is, sort of a big mistake we make, we wait for the moment. And not just with these techniques, with any technique, whether it's Non-violent Communication or yoga or meditation or more cognitive tools or whatever it is. We wait until everything has gone horribly wrong. And then it's a lot more work to remember exactly how you do it... and to bring yourself into the moment. It's harder that way.

I would recommend practicing as often as possible and especially when you're not having a freak-out. Keeping in mind that it doesn't have to be a fifteen minute practice. It can be a one minute practice, very brief.

It might even just be "Right now I'm going to say something nice to myself." Or it might even be, "Right now I'm going to notice that I'm feeling uncomfortable. And I'm going to recognize that discomfort".

So it doesn't have to be, the way people tell you to say affirmations and repeat, "I am universal perfection, everything I do is perfect". That might not be good for you. That might not be what you need to hear right now. It

might be triggering resistance for you. What might be good for you might actually be something like, “Right now I’m feeling uncomfortable being kind to myself, that’s where I am. Here I am noticing my discomfort.”

Definitely... practicing when you’re not freaking out is really valuable.

**AM:** Yes, freaking out. That’s funny, I used to say “freak-out” all the time, I’m from Seattle originally, people don’t say that in the Midwest.

**HAVI:** Oh, really? What do people say in the Midwest?

**AM:** Hmmm, I can’t think of anything at the moment.

**HAVI:** Oh, come on, you said you’ve got teenagers at home. What do they say?

**AM:** There was a word my daughter used the other day, now you’ve got me on the spot. It will come to me.

**HAVI:** Okay, no worries. You’ll let me know if you think of something. In case I ever encounter a Midwesterner in freak-out mode. I’m teaching in Germany next week where I believe to flip out – “ausflippen” – is still okay to say.

**AM:** [*laughs*]

### **In which we learn more about the art of self-talk and how to do it right**

**HAVI:** So in terms of what we just did in the exercise, I don’t know if you noticed, but we did some work on a couple of different levels at the same time.

There was a physical aspect for grounding, that was using the fingers. We also used breath and paying attention to the body, that's more of an energy component. We used self-talk as a technique for the emotional side of things. There was also some mental reframing. It was subtle, I don't know if you picked up on it, but I used some cognitive ideas or concepts to help us shift some things around. And then when we asked ourselves for various things, that was an awareness technique.

So we were working on five different levels at the same time, and of course everyone responds differently to different things. For example Suzette just said that the self-talk was really helpful for her, that was the thing that stood out for her. Earlier someone else said that the breath was incredibly useful. Everyone has a favorite – that's one of the reasons that I used several techniques at the same time, so that no matter how your brain works or no matter how you work, there would be something that you personally could plug into, something that would be useful and helpful for you.

Any questions about that process or any reactions?

**AM:** Yeah, I'm wondering with the self-talk. Do you have any... I mean, that was really good. I'm wondering, when we do it on our own, how we can remember what to tell ourselves with the self-talk part?

**HAVI:** Yes, that's good. It's definitely practice. Let me give you a few things, a few different suggestions. One thing, you may have notice that I use "even though" statements a lot, I begin a lot of phrases with "even though". That's a little trick that helps your mind resolve dissonance or

resistance. You start out by saying, “Guess what? I’m not going to fight with you.” As soon as you say “even though”, you pretty much have to stop fighting with yourself. Instead of saying, “Gosh I’m so depressed” on the one hand, or you force yourself to repeat affirmations you don’t believe – “Everything is fine, everything is great, really, I mean it”, now that creates resistance. But when you say, “Even though I’m dealing with frustration, stress and tension, I’m just going to let it be there”, all of a sudden you aren’t in resistance. You’re not fighting with yourself. It opens up some space.

Another thing you can do is find the words – sometimes you can even come up with a phrase that you really like. For me, I like saying “it’s temporary”. It’s temporary. That’s a good reminder phrase for me and I use it a lot. You might have noticed that I use words like “allowing” and “entitled”. I’ll say, “Okay, you’re allowed to be feeling what you’re feeling, it’s not the end of the world, this feeling is temporary and allowing it to be there is going to help you let it go”.

Again, it’s not passive but active. You can find phrases that really work for you. You can just create one sentence, memorize it, and have it become your reminder. So even if you can’t come up with something brilliant and perfect to say, that sentence will help you plug in to that state of quiet and self-understanding. And if you’re using a physical technique at the same time, as you experienced, that will put you into this quiet, meditative, intuitive place where stuff will just come. I mean, everything I said just now came right off the top of my head. I was able to do this because I was in a state of quiet where I could access what needed to be said.

So part of it is just trusting yourself to be able to say the right thing when you need it, and part of it is practicing. So you might want to write down five or ten sentences that you find helpful. and practice using them. And also, the practice of asking for things, that's always good. Asking yourself for patience and understanding. The other thing is, I would ask you specifically about which part, which level, which aspect of that exercise was most helpful for you, what was your thing? What do you respond to most?

**AM:** Me? Sorry. Well, I think a big part of it was the physical part of the exercise because so often you can just go into the emotion of the thing, so I think just slowing down and getting into the body like we did, and then the other part for me was this mental and emotional self-talk which gets you to think constructively and not just be stuck in the feeling. The talking through really brings you into a different place of thinking constructively.

**HAVI:** Oh, that's true, it's nice, it's like you're using your brain to talk to your heart. And vice versa.

**AM:** Yes, yes, exactly.

**HAVI:** So I would recommend in this case coming up with a few words that you find helpful – or phrases or maybe even a sentence – that can work as a reminder or a trigger so you can have them ready to use. Because you're going to find yourself in situations; emotionally-charged situations where you're just on autopilot where stuff is coming up and it's so loud and saying whatever it always says about how terrible you are and how everything is horrible. So having a word or a phrase and a movement. It doesn't have to be complicated, You could just press on your chin as we did, there are really so many physical techniques.

But the idea is that you have something physical with the mental reminder phrase. A movement and a word, to remind yourself, “Oh right, I can slow down this process.”

And not to blame yourself at all, because a lot of times we go into blame, especially those of us who work with meditation or yoga or therapy or any of these different forms of self-work. Ironically, because we know so many techniques and have studied with so many different people and so on and so forth, we have more guilt than everyone else.

For everyone else – when their stuff comes up, there they are in their stuff. But when our stuff comes up, we have our stuff and we also have this added layer of guilt – “Oh, I should be able to know better, I should know how to fix this, I’ve studied meditation and all these techniques, I should know how to do this.” Should, should, should, should, should. We have extra layers of guilt that say, “If I know how to do meditation and this, that and the other, I should be able to take care of this.” And of course the guilt and self-recrimination just get in the way of the work.

So that’s when you want to meet yourself where you are and say, “Hey, this is where I am. I’m having this difficult moment, this hard time, it doesn’t say anything about me, but that’s where I am right now, and I can’t be somewhere else. This is it, and I’m going to do what I can to acknowledge that and practice being where I am so I can let it pass.”

And once you get to that kind of logical thinking, the physical techniques are going to work better, it will be easier to breathe slowly, easier to come up with a smart, believable thing to say to yourself. And that’s the most important thing, that it’s believable.

Not “Just get over it already!” or “I am happy, happy, happy!” or anything like that. You don’t want to lie to yourself because that will create more resistance. Keeping in mind that it will vary from day to day. One day you might be able to say, “Even though I’m feeling horrible right now, I can love and accept myself anyway.” And the next day it might not be true for you anymore. You might not be able to say it that day. You might want to say something like, “Even though I can’t like myself anyway right now, even though I can’t give myself compassion and understanding, I’m working on it, I’m doing my best, paying attention to what’s going on for me, that’s the work and I’m going to try to be satisfied with that.”

Or you might want to try saying something like, “Okay, even though I can’t say anything nice to myself right now, I’m not impressed. Oh well. So I can’t say anything nice right now. That’s where I am.”

The more believable it is, the more powerful it will be for you. Does that make sense?

**AM:** Yes, yes.

**HAVI:** Any other questions about this aspect of the work, or anything else you want to ask? Or anything you’d like to work on right now, to play with or practice with?

### **In which we learn about using calming techniques to treat past experiences**

**AM:** When you’re in the middle of something that maybe happened a few days ago, hours ago, years ago. So it’s not a present thing, but it’s revisiting you, or you might want

to revisit it so you are prepared, you can see how you've grown? Is that a question?

**HAVI:** You mean, how do you do it? How do you go about it? Can you work on old stuff? Is that what you're asking?

**AM:** Yes, when you bring up that stuff... will these techniques work for that?

**HAVI:** Yes, it works great. The way I would do it, when I work with people I always like to do this work very carefully. It's always good to do a calming technique first, something physical to help you to get into that quiet place first. You want to remind yourself beforehand that you're in charge of the whole process, maybe even write it down if you like to do journaling. You want to be able to say to yourself as a reminder: "I don't have to stay there. I can go in and come back out whenever I need to." This is a reminder that you are in control of the situation.

You want to feel safe. This is really important. You don't have want to start out revisiting horribly traumatic experiences; you want to choose something that is work-able. Think small. Start small. Do it in little chunks, and always come out if you find yourself getting worked up.

A great way to do it is to go back into the past experience as you are now. In other words, you picture the memory of where you were when it was happening, and then you can imagine that you are there now, whether it's actually now five minutes later or twenty years later, you've kind of jumped in there and you're standing there watching it and you can freeze it, stop the scene whenever you want and talk to the people in the situation. You can actually

communicate with the you from five minutes ago or twenty years ago. You are in control of this scene.

You can actually freeze the action at any moment and say to yourself, “Hey, I see that you are really feeling hurt right now, I can tell you’re having a hard time, and I just want you to know that I really love you and I am sorry you’re hurting, this is temporary, it’s not going to last forever, and even though you are feeling this hurt, pain and distress right now, you are allowed to have it, and we’re going to work through this.”

So you are actually talking through this situation with what you know now. It’s as if you are talking to yourself from now. You don’t have to go back and relive it personally – instead it’s almost as if you’ve sent yourself into the past as a third party to meet yourself where you are. Because if you couldn’t meet yourself where you were then, the you from now can meet yourself where you were then, with more affection and compassion.

The other way to do this work on past experiences is through meditation where you sink into the memories. In this case you return to the situation armed with these phrases, this physical sensation and this energy sensation. It’s a little like time-machine healing. You go back in, talk to the hurt, experience the calm and release the pain trapped in the memory, which helps you alter your patterns in the present. Again, this kind of work is very powerful, so this isn’t something I would necessarily try alone at first. If you have a coach or a therapist or a good friend who can guide you through it, that might be better. But if you are already used to doing a lot of work on yourself and you know you can handle it, these techniques are very useful.

Some of my clients specifically use the audio recordings for that as well, as a way to go and review a past situation, and let the audio do the calming and clearing work, so they don't have to think about what to say.

How is that working for you? Does that answer your question?

**AM:** Yes, thank you. That's great.

### **In which we talk about ways to use calming techniques when dealing with other people**

**HAVI:** That was a terrific question. Anything else people are wondering about?

**AM:** I'd like to add on to that last question. If you need to re-visit an old memory or a freak-out moment with someone else – something that involved another person. Do you have any added tips for doing that in a safe place?

**HAVI:** Yes, for one thing I would definitely incorporate the freeze option. Where you know you can freeze the scene at any time. Sometimes I even like to “mute” the other person. You know, in my mind, when I'm revisiting the memory, I'll say sort of say something to the other person like, “Okay, we'll deal with your issues in a minute, but I'm just turning you off for now because I need to deal with my old self and own stuff.

So you want to go into this situation feeling like you have a lot of power over this memory. You can stop it, you can freeze it, you can mute one person and so on. If you feel like it's too much for you and you won't be able to do this here, choose a different memory. Start small, as I said before. Choose things that aren't huge for you.

Again, the principle is meeting yourself where you are. You don't want to force it. A lot of times people think, "Oh, I have to face my issues. I have to face my fears." And you really don't. You really don't. There is no need to do that. Why torture yourself? Why abuse yourself? There is no reason to revisit painful situations just to experience the pain again. There is no absolutely reason for that.

You can release pain without having to re-experience it. You are only going in there, into the memory, as a healer to work through some of that old stuck stuff. So choose something where you feel like you can do the work safely. And have some sort of sign or symbol or ritual for when it's time to come out. A good way to do it is to think of five things that separate you, five differentiators, what are five things that are different between me and this other person.

And do the opposite when you start out. When you go into the memory with this other person, think of five things you have in common with this person. This is if you want to work through the situation, if you're dealing with someone where you just don't understand their motivation, or you don't get where they are coming from, and you have so much hurt and so much fear and so much anger that you can't meet them where they are.

What happens is that you can't listen and you can't pay attention to their stuff because you really need to deal with your own stuff. You just can't meet them where they are right now. Deal with your own stuff. Give yourself that love and attention. Take care of yourself, and when you feel more calm with yourself, think of five things that you and this person have in common.

For example, I'll give you an example from my own life. Sometimes when I work with different organizations, places where I do workshops or lecture, sometimes they don't get back to you or return calls. And I find myself thinking, "Oh, people are irresponsible, people are flakes, people are unprofessional." So I stop and say, "Okay, what are at least five things I share with this woman who hasn't called me back, where is our common ground? We both run our own businesses, we both are crazy-busy with a million things, we both have worries about how other people interact with us, we are both in helping professions, we care about people, I bet she is also really passionate about what she does." And so on.

As soon as I have done that, I realize that I'm not angry, because it's all just a misunderstanding. And sometimes just that work, clearing the misunderstanding in the head, just the work that I've done in my head is enough. That's the crazy part – I'll just get an email and it will all have sorted itself out all by itself.

But the important thing is that you make this connection where you can have empathy with this person. You don't have to forgive, you don't have to let go of your anger, because like I said, you're meeting yourself where you are. If you've got anger you're allowed to have it. If you have annoyance you're allowed to have it. You're not fighting with these things. But once you've allowed them to be there, you can create that kind of understanding where you can think, "Okay, we have these thing in common and a misunderstanding or a miscommunication has come up that I'm willing to work through."

And then it's a little less tangled, a little less fraught with emotional energy and there's a lot more room for communication – real communication – to take place. How does that sound?

Does that answer your question?

**AM:** Yeah. Yes, thank you.

### **In which our hour comes to a close and we absorb what we have learned**

**HAVI:** Well, like I said, this process does take some learning and take some practice. Once you can do this work and get in the habit of calming yourself down and quieting this chaos, everything works. Everything works. You get more stuff done and you get it done faster. You stop worrying about why you're distracting yourself. You stop saying, "Why am I sitting here watching TV and staring at my belly button?" Instead, you step out of it. Because you are regularly meeting yourself where you are.

This is very counter-intuitive. You know, we're not trained to be able to do that, to meet ourselves where we are. We're trained to criticize and berate ourselves. "How come I'm annoyed?" and "I wish I weren't frustrated!" and "Get over it already!" and "What's wrong with you?"

You really want to be able to turn around and say, "Okay, here I am" and then apply the techniques. Something physical, something mental, something emotional, a combination of techniques that together allow you to dissolve it. Something to ground and calm and say, "All right, I'm not perfect. I don't have to be perfect. This is what's going

on for me right now, this is just where I am. And even though that's not okay for me right now, I'm just going to practice seeing what it would feel like to letting it be okay for me right now." That is probably the most valuable and underrated skill that I can think of. Worth working on.

So let's do just close by doing a quick body check again. Tune in and see if you can remember where you were at the start of our class and if there is any difference. If you return to your intention or you return to your body, noticing what has moved or changed as we have worked through these different ideas and themes. Taking some time to let it sink in and grow, giving yourself time to absorb all of this information, and knowing of course that you can always send me an email. If you have a question about any of things things I'm always happy to help out and give some ideas.

Taking the time to figure out or decide on – whatever it is you have taken from this class, something you have learned or picked up, even a hint of an idea you'd like to work on, something you'd like to play with, or think about or start incorporating into your life. And then making that commitment to yourself, to practice, even if it's something tiny, even if it's just one idea or one concept or something you want to think about, making that commitment to yourself. Sealing it in.

And yawning. Because it always feels really good to yawn. Especially if you're on the east coast and it's almost bedtime. Yawning is a great release.

**AM:** Haarlawarlawarrrawarramffflghaaamph

**HAVI:** Haarlawarlawarrrawarramffflghaaamph

Good. Good yawning. Any questions, reactions, themes for next time?

Alright. Thank you. Thanks for being here today and taking this time for yourselves. And like I said, feel free to email me whenever you'd like if you have any questions. And I hope you all have a wonderful, wonderful evening.

**AM:** Thank you!

**HAVI:** Of course. Thank you. Take care, everyone and good night!

**AM:** Good night. ■

Want more on the theme of Emergency Calming Techniques?  
Enjoy these two bonus articles below...

### BONUS ARTICLE #1:

## EXPERT ADVICE YOU CAN FEEL FREE TO IGNORE

### Gee, thanks for the paradigm shift

Hanging out in the waiting room of my doctor's office the other day, I meant to catch up on some work. Instead, I got distracted by a handout called "The Top Ten Ways to Calm Down and Get Rid of Stress". Or something like that. I don't remember the exact wording, but it was definitely ten and definitely calm.

My first thought was, Neat! Right up my alley. Especially since I spend a great deal of my time talking people down when they're having a "moment", and teaching them little tricks so they can do it to themselves. I'm always curious as to what else is out there, and like to keep my eyes open in the hopes of picking up a new angle.

Well, I can't tell you now off the top of my head what any of the ten were, just that they were all equally useless. Things like, "Don't worry about things you can't control" and "Focus on the positive". Ugh. Nothing sets off my inner sarcastic smart-alec like inane bits of inadequate wisdom.

### What's the problem?

You know a piece of advice isn't working when the only possible response is rolling your eyes. As in, "How on earth am

I supposed to do that?” Or, “If I were able to instantly stop worrying about things I can’t control, I wouldn’t need a top ten list, would I?” It’s hard to imagine anyone saying, “Oh, what a relief. Thank you, I’ll just focus on the positive then. I can’t believe I hadn’t thought of that myself.”

I know, it’s well-meant. And I appreciate the intention. Intention is awesome. Yet intention is only part of calming down. To be specific, it’s one of five parts. And each of these parts is more effective in conjunction with the others.

### **The five puzzle pieces**

A lot goes into quieting the thoughts and calming the mind. One piece of it is intention – the energy behind the desire to tune into yourself and get quiet. Call this important bit the awareness piece.

Another piece is the cognitive angle. A choice bit of advice (*not* for the commonsensically-challenged) or a good way to reframe the situation. This is the mental piece.

There’s also meeting yourself where you’re at with a healthy dose of kindness and compassion, and then talking through your “stuff”. That’s the emotional piece.

And of course you want to do something with your body. First of all, just to help you get focused and grounded, but also because of all the “fairy dust” you can access through using pressure points to stimulate nerve endings. Using your body helps you talk to the brain. That’s the physical piece.

Then there’s all the stuff you can do that isn’t visible, like conscious breathing techniques that help the brainwaves synch up to the breathwaves, or using perception or visualization techniques to enter a state of calm. That’s the energy piece.

## Putting it all together

It sounds like a lot, but that's the way it works best.

Try it:

Starting with the physical piece, plant your feet on the floor and sit up straight. Take your index and middle fingers together, and press gently but firmly right on the filtrum (the spot right under your nose and above your mouth). Keep it there as you move through the rest of the steps.

Moving to the energy piece: let your breathing slow and become more conscious. Do a quick body scan and find out if there's any tension in the shoulders, neck or jaw you can let go of.

Now the emotional piece. "Even though there is stress in my life, and I have plenty of reasons to be freaking out right now, I'm allowed to be stressed. I want to remind myself that I'm human, I have stress like everyone else, and that I'm doing the best I can. This temporary moment of stress does not define me. I am getting better at noticing when I need support and kindness."

Onward to the mental piece: "What would it feel like to be able to let go of some of this stress? Is it possible that there is something my stress is trying to tell me? Do I need to slow down? Do I need some more people on my team? I'm willing to use this moment to learn something useful about myself."

Straight to the awareness piece – ask yourself for the qualities that would be most useful for you right now. Or affirm that you are open to receiving the help, strength and support that you need.

Feel just a tiny bit better? Good. ■

**BONUS ARTICLE #2:****THE STEP EVERYONE SKIPS ON THE WAY TO CALM (INCLUDING ME)****Step 1 on the way to calming the heck down  
(the one everyone skips)**

Whenever you're flipping out or just having a bit of a "moment", the tendency is to jump in right away and search for the way out. And when you don't find it, you feel more annoyed, more frustrated, more helpless. It happens even to those of us who have been working on these issues for years.

You want to *fix* the situation so you can feel better. And maybe part of you also feels guilty about the fact that you're even having a freak-out. Or angry about not being in control. And that's when all the shoulds start showing up:

"I should be able to handle this. It's not even such a big deal."

"I should know better."

"I should be able to just snap out of this already. What's *wrong* with me?!"

And it's all because you've skipped the most important step, which is meeting yourself where you are.

Meeting yourself where you are means that you stop and say to yourself:

"You know what? Where I am, right now, is in this freak-out moment. The freak-out is temporary, of course, and it doesn't

define me, but it's happening. This is what is going on for me right now. I'm allowed to be here."

When you've recognized and acknowledged that you are in the middle of the meltdown, take a second to be there. Remind yourself that you are allowed to be feeling whatever it is you're feeling.

You don't have to fix anything yet.

### **Grumble, stooopid paradox, grumble grumble**

I know, it's pretty counter-intuitive. And probably kind of annoying, given that you understandably want to get *out* of the moment as soon as possible.

However, consciously acknowledging what's going on without trying to bulldoze through it is the key to being able to let it go. If you skip this step, it's just too easy to start fighting with yourself and forcing things on yourself. You're in a state of resistance. And when you're in resistance, techniques and advice are seeds that just can't grow.

I teach all kinds of calming techniques that you've probably never heard of: bits of acupressure magic, little-known yoga secrets, unconventional cognitive tools, advanced self-talk techniques, plus a whole set of very powerful perception and meditation exercises. And with every single technique, it's vital to start with the concept of meeting yourself where you are.

None of these techniques works in a vacuum. In fact, every one of them is based on the idea that we're not trying to *change* the situation; it's about helping you *be* in the situation. Once you're there, you can use the techniques to their full effect and enjoy the results.

## **Don't make me stop and smell any roses, goshdarnit!**

A lot of times when we get stuck and try to cheer ourselves up, we fall back on the same useless, irritating phrases that other people use on us (they do mean well, but somehow don't remember that this kind of thing doesn't actually work).

Why do these phrases get on my nerves?

“Oh, don't cry.”

“It's not that bad, don't feel bad.”

“Come on, you need to pull yourself together and snap out of it.”

“You're bigger than that.”

“You know, in ten years you won't even remember this.”

“Look on the bright side.”

You probably felt it as you read them; all of these phrases create resistance.

And they do this because they don't meet you where you're at right now. They're trying to yank you right past your “stuck”... but “stuck” doesn't work that way. If you are feeling sad, frustrated, hurt, fearful, upset, angry or resentful, these emotions are trying to tell you something. Instead of finding out what that thing is so you can give yourself comfort, these phrases act to suppress them. Your feelings are being told that they don't have a right to exist.

It's not until you give your feelings acknowledgment and legitimacy that you're ready to move forward – to use helpful techniques, to interact with good advice, to take positive action.

The real work is getting there. Sure, silver linings abound, but you have to experience the cloud first. When life gives you lemons, you're allowed to feel sad, frustrated and annoyed before you decide to squeeze them on your salad, plant the seeds in your yard, or ask your friend's mother for her iced tea recipe. Before you ask "what can I do with what these cards I've been dealt?", feel what you are feeling. Once you allow yourself to be where you are, you'll be able to start taking steps towards someplace better. ■

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Awesome. Come hang out with me and Selma on the blog – [www.fluentself.com/blog](http://www.fluentself.com/blog)

### WANNA PRACTICE SOME EMERGENCY CALMING TECHNIQUES?

Let me invite you to be my guest for the next Habits Detective open teleseminar where we'll be breaking out the fairy dust. In addition to practicing some techniques, we're also going to be talking about what to do when stress kicks in, how to deal, and the one thing to remember when you're "having a moment".

There's no cost to join in, but I do need you to save your place by registering here: [www.fluentself.com/teleclass](http://www.fluentself.com/teleclass)



**Thanks for reading.**

Hope to hang out with you on the next teleseminar!  
Stay well and be in touch.

Warm wishes,

– *Havi (and Selma the duck)*

