

5 Peace-of-Mind Hacks Everyone Should Know.

~ Vironika Tugaleva

It's been almost two and a half years since the fateful night that, instead of killing myself, I decided to change my relationship with myself and my mind.

Throughout my healing process, I haven't just overcome addiction, eating disorders and extreme self-hatred—I've overcome a much more dangerous and silent obstacle: being controlled by my untrained mind. Until I broke down, I believed every thought I ever had. When I thought, "I'm ugly," I just kept believing that. When I thought, "I'm irreparably broken," I just kept believing that. When I thought, "I should kill myself," I just kept on believing that. I couldn't believe it anymore without acting on it or changing my relationship with my mind. Thankfully, I did the latter.

From these years of self-discovery, I've learned a thing or two about how my mind works. From helping hundreds of people through the same process, I've learned a few hacks about how most people's minds work and how to access a peaceful, loving mindset in the midst of chaos, conflict and catastrophes. And now I'm here to share these with you. Honestly, these things should really be taught in school. Maybe one day, if we keep sharing them enough, they will be.

Mind Hack #1: Tell your thoughts "Thank You"

It's easy to say "don't believe your thoughts," but it's a whole other thing to actually stop believing them. So, instead of seeking to just "not believe," thank them instead. In order to do this, you'll need to ask yourself: "How is this ineffective thought process trying to help or protect me?" For example, if you're getting anxiety about money, the answer might be: "These anxious thoughts are trying to protect me from the feeling of helplessness associated in my head with poverty." Then, you can treat those thoughts like you'd treat a beloved, meddling relative at a reunion—thank them for caring, but don't take their advice.

Mind Hack #2: Tell your mind to go to bed

This one is by far my favorite. Imagine, for a moment, that your mind is a stressed out office worker with a giant To-Do pile that just keeps growing. It's stressing out because there's too much work and not enough time. Realize that this is actually an incredibly accurate metaphor. You're always giving your mind instructions: "Get me to this place," "Make this calculation," "Make this person like me," "Make this perfect," "Make everyone like me," "Make me perfect," "Make me right all the time," etc. Your mind will never say "No" to you. And it needs a break. So, tell it to take one.

Try this inner dialogue. Say, "*Dear mind, thank you for all your hard work today. You've helped me with this, that, and this. Now, you can go rest. Go to bed.*" This is an essential stress-buster, but beware—once you send your mind to bed, you'll want to relax the rest

of you as well! Otherwise, risk making lots and lots of silly mistakes. (Believe me, I've been there).

Mind Hack #3: Cure self-deceit with eye contact

If you find you're lying to yourself or sabotaging yourself frequently, it's time to open up the lines of communication. Self-deceit is a product of your mind having its own agenda for you, often a subconscious one. For example, you may say, consciously, that you want to lose weight and be healthy. However, subconsciously, you may have a belief system that says, "I don't have time to be healthy." As a result, you'll sabotage all of your own attempts to do what you say you want to do.

The cure? Go talk to yourself in the mirror. Ask yourself questions. **Make eye contact.** You cannot lie to yourself in the eye. You actually can't. Try it. You'll call your own bluff. Even if you have to stay and talk for an hour, stay and talk for an hour. Figure it out between you and you so you can stop getting in your own way.

Mind Hack #4: Journal until it's a conversation

This is absolutely essential in times of high emotion, especially anger. Let's say you're angry at your partner for something. If you don't have a good way to deal with your fury, you'll likely stray towards one of these two ineffective methods: explode or suppress. So, here's a third method that won't work with just anger, it'll work with any high emotional state that makes you feel like you're at the mercy of your thoughts and emotions.

Start writing. Just get all your thoughts out. Don't censor. Don't block. You'll start feeling better after a little while from just doing it. When you start to feel that relief, start having a conversation with those intense, emotion-producing thoughts. Ask them questions. Turning your furious monologue into a discussion is therapeutic because you'll learn to see both sides of an issue and you'll learn to self-soothe—which is an essential skill for mental health.

Mind Hack #5: Look out for thought allergies

Whenever you start to get into an emotional state that bothers you, ask yourself, "How am I thinking right now that's producing this emotional state?" Once you find the thoughts that trouble you, imagine that you're allergic to them, and that's why you have that serious emotional reaction. Just imagining your emotional response as an allergic one will allow you to be effortlessly self-aware. You'll not only keep away from the toxic thought, but you'll know exactly what's to blame if you start getting into that state again. This simple visualization will give you clarity on the causes of your emotions and an incredible depth of awareness about your everyday experience.

Now, over to you. Which of these peace of mind hacks will you start using today?