



5. Rewrite the Script

Certain kinds of undesirable thinking can get stuck in a loop, and the consequential misery can escalate quickly. How can you quell that? Of course, getting on with good things like diet, exercise, good sleep, engaging with artistic creativity, being with good people, and meditation all help. But here's another thing you can do, if you feel really stuck.

Clear a few minutes, find a quiet space, and have pen and paper ready. Ground yourself, settle yourself down a little.

Now, write down any cycling thoughts that are bringing you down. All those things your inner critic is nagging you with. You know the kind of thing: not good enough; not looking good enough; should be doing that, even though you're still busy working on this, so you feel miserable about both. 'Useless'. 'Hopeless at sticking to anything'. All the mean slurs, all the 'shoulds', 'mustn'ts', and 'can'ts'.

As you read back what you've written, notice what feelings come up. Let them in, they're meant to be here; they've shown up to help you work this out. If you need to cry, cry - although it's not mandatory, you might not be feeling that strongly. But if you want to rage, rage. Give your emotions space to have their say and pay attention to what they're signalling, because that's exactly what they are for. They can bring more clarity to the situation. Keep writing until you feel finished.

Now destroy that sheet of paper, very intently, along with your attachment to what's on it. You can screw it up tight and chuck it across the room, to put some distance between you and it. You can put it through a shredder. Tear it into teeny, tiny pieces. Burn it. Or anything else you fancy. Just as you do with physical stuff you no longer need, because it's not useful now and it's just cluttering up the place, you're chucking out the old and making space for the new. Have some fun with this waste disposal bit. ...

Now, turn your attention to what you do want to be thinking; how you do want be? How do you want to behave, and feel, and live? Who do you want to spend your time with, and where? What will you be doing, and wearing, and eating? Write these things down, making sure to put them in the present tense: "I am doing this, in this place, with these people," as if you're already doing them.

Repeat the process a few times of reading back and write in more detail if you like, to build a stronger picture. Your new statements might include, "I am finishing this task before I think about that one," framing it quite differently. You don't have to do these things, you want to do them, and you'll enjoy doing them more for it.

Knowing what you want is the first step to getting it.

Knowing how you want to be is the first step to achieving it.

You can adapt this easy practice to get the greatest benefit and suit your own preferences, and use it as often as you like and wherever you are.