

When You're at War with Yourself

When what you feel keeps meeting what you think you should feel.

Being tired, anxious, sad, or overwhelmed can be difficult enough without also believing we shouldn't feel that way.

We might need rest but question whether we've done enough to deserve it or try to relax only to become frustrated when our minds won't slow down.

And in the middle of it all, we can end up fighting ourselves for having a difficult time in the first place.

These questions aren't here to ask you to stop fighting yourself or to change how you feel. They're here to help you notice how you might be fighting yourself when things are already difficult.

1. When do I find myself wishing I felt differently?

You might think of moments when you're tired but believe you should have more energy, anxious when you think you should be calm, or sad when you feel you should be happy.

2. What do I tell myself I should or shouldn't be feeling?

You might notice the words you use with yourself in those moments. It could be "I shouldn't be this tired," "I should be able to handle this," or something completely different.

3. Is there something I keep trying to do the “right” way?

It could be resting, meditating, working, parenting, exercising, being present, or something completely different. You might notice whether trying to get it right makes it harder to find what works for you.

4. What does fighting myself add to what I'm already going through?

You might notice that an already difficult experience becomes a little heavier. Tiredness might come with guilt, anxiety with frustration, or a busy mind with the feeling that you are doing something wrong. Or it may look completely different to you.

5. What if I didn't need to change what I'm feeling right now?

This doesn't mean you have to like it or want it to stay. You might simply notice what happens when you give yourself a moment without asking yourself to feel or be any differently.

There is no right way to answer these questions.

You don't have to make peace with everything you notice.

Simply noticing is enough.