

Bonus Scripts
for
Getting Unstuck

The Science of Stuck

Breaking Through
Inertia to Find
Your Path Forward



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The Science of Stuck

Breaking Through Inertia to Find Your Path Forward

Whether you are new to the wellness world or are a seasoned self-help enthusiast, it can be useful to have a set of scripts for sticky situations. When we are under stress, the part of our brains responsible for executive functioning tends to become inaccessible. Rather than using logic and reason, we find that we end up reacting to triggers rather than responding to stressors.

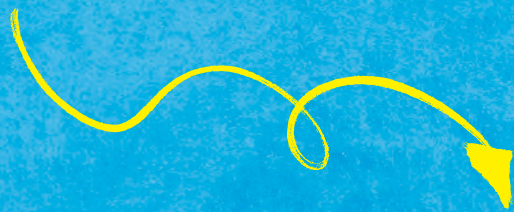


One solution?

Keep a cheat sheet nearby so when you feel yourself going higher than a five on an emotional activation scale of 1-10, you have words right at your fingertips that can help you maintain control and focus.

5 Bonus Scripts for Getting Unstuck:

- [How to Apologize](#)
- [How to Confront Skillfully](#)
- [Inner Monologue vs. Inner Dialogue](#)
- [How to Halt an Anxiety Episode](#)
- [How to Help Your Kids Through a Crisis](#)



SCRIPT 1

How to Apologize

How often do you feel better when someone says the following:

- I'm sorry **if** you took that the wrong way.
- I'm sorry that **you** feel that way.
- I'm sorry **if** I did anything to make you upset.
- I'm sorry that **you** are so sensitive.

Apologies are intended to repair relationships, but they can often end up unintentionally causing more harm. A better way to apologize is to use a format called The Four O's:

1. OWN what you did.

"I admit that I _____ (insert the thing that you did)."

2. OBSERVE the impact using an empathy statement.

"I imagine that you must have felt _____ (insert how you think they may have felt)."

3. OUTLINE a plan to not do the thing again.

"In the future, I will try to avoid this by _____."

4. OFFER to listen.

"Is there anything else you'd like me to know about how this situation impacted you?"

SCRIPT 2

How to Confront Skillfully

No one likes being asked “why” questions during conflict. Asking “why” questions of your children, friends, partner, or colleague implies from the start that *you* are right and *they* are wrong. The word “why” is also loaded with shame and immediately sets the conversation up for failure. The climate of the conversation shifts from collaborative to defensive. Instead of asking “Why did you do that?” you can try this:

**“I noticed you did _____. This bothered me because _____.
Are you willing to have a discussion about this?”**

Speaking from the vantage point of **OBSERVER** rather than **ACCUSER** makes it more likely that the person to whom you are speaking can listen to you without their logical brain leaving the building. Using this format is also helpful because consent is baked into the format. Confrontation is difficult enough without the person you are confronting feeling ambushed by the conversation. Prefacing any confrontation with “Are you willing to discuss this?” can immediately slow a conversational downward spiral.

SCRIPT 3

Inner Monologue vs. Inner Dialogue

Having psychological space between our triggers and our responses is a key to manage everything from trauma healing to stress management. One of the tools to create psychological space is to turn your inner **MONOLOGUE** into an inner **DIALOGUE**. What does this mean? When we use the word “I,” we can often get flooded. This may sound like:

- I am overwhelmed.
- I am lazy.
- I am crazy.
- I am unmotivated.
- I’m having a meltdown.
- I’m such a procrastinator.

When you talk to the inner parts of yourself as if you were having a conversation with someone you love (using second or third person language) then it is easier to maintain your sense of choice. One way to have an inner dialogue is to journal supportive questions and encouragement to yourself with your dominant hand and then reply with your non-dominant hand. Continue the conversation as long as you need. And yes, this will feel very awkward and strange at first. You can also use these prompts for talking to yourself or to a supportive friend using your name instead of using the word “I.” This may help regulate an overactivated nervous system:

“Britt, I noticed you just said . . .”

“There’s a part inside of me who wants to stay on the couch. She’s worried that _____.”

“Hi Britt, I know you are incredibly stressed out right now. This makes a lot of sense. I’m here to make sure we stay safe.”

“Wow. Britt is feeling incredibly overwhelmed right now.”

The goal with this script is to translate the voice of the relentless inner **CRITIC** into a compassionate inner **PARENT**.

SCRIPT 4

How to Halt an Anxiety Episode

If your nervous system is in a state of overwhelm, it is **not** helpful to speak in metaphorical terms. Metaphorical terms may sound like this:

- I'm drowning in emails.
- I'm buried with all the things on my list.
- I'm at my wits end.
- I'm losing it.
- I'm feeling crushed by my workload.

Naming the problem as specifically as possible may help your brain find its way to solutions and shift out of survival mode. While metaphors, myths, and stories are wonderful healing medicines, like any medication, it is important that they are used in the right dose for the right problem at the right time. When you are experiencing anxiety, crisis, overwhelm, stuckness, or stress, speaking in metaphor is the *last* thing we want to do. While your feelings are always valid, it can be more helpful to turn an abstract and overwhelming statement into something concrete and manageable.

Instead of: I'm buried.

Try: **"I have to figure out the kids' school pick up schedule. I have to get a work project done by Tuesday. I have to make my car payment by Saturday. I have to get a checkup by the last day of the month."**

Turning abstract statements into concrete tasks can help our brains shift from surviving a threat to negotiating a problem. Concretization is one of the most easy-to-implement and under-utilized interventions for anxiety.

SCRIPT 5

How to Help Your Kids Through a Crisis

Whether it is explaining the coronavirus and the pandemic to children, helping them understand the death of a loved one, or explaining why bad things happen, it can be helpful to have a toolbox for communicating with your child.

Stay calm and take care of yourself: Children look to the adults around them for safety cues. The best thing you can do for a child during a crisis is to do your best to take care of yourself—and to let your child know you are an adult and can take care of yourself. You don't have to hide your emotions or feel bad for crying in front of your child, but it can be helpful to say, **“I know you see that I am upset. And you're right—I am feeling very big feelings right now. But this isn't your fault, and I have grown-up people to help me. I am still here for you.”**

Give them age-appropriate information: In the absence of information, children will create worst-case scenarios that feature themselves as the villain or the person to blame. While it is not helpful to overload children with details, giving them age-appropriate and factual information can help manage their fear response. If you don't have any answers or information for your child, you can also say something like, **“I know you don't like the virus. I don't have the answer for when this will all be over, but I am here for you and will do everything I can to keep us safe.”**

Give them choices: Choices help our brains access a sense of safety. Giving children choices (no matter how small or seemingly insignificant) can help *them* feel less powerless. This may include choices about what to wear, what to eat, or how to pick activities to fill the day.

Empower them to help others: Not every family has the ability to give financial resources. For families that can, giving children a small budget and letting them choose an organization to support is incredibly empowering. Allowing children to make choices about helping others can help them feel less chaotic. If giving financial resources isn't possible, discuss ways your child can help others either now or in the future if the current situation isn't conducive to helping other people. And if your family is in a situation where help is needed, work together with your children to create a list of available resources. You can say things like, **“I know it's really scary now that dad is in the hospital. Let's make a list of people who we know can help us if the weather starts to get really bad.”**

Keep a schedule: Waking up, getting dressed, eating meals, and keeping a schedule can help keep children in a rhythm of safety and structure. While it is counterintuitive to maintain boundaries and schedules during a crisis, it is often the case that scheduling can alleviate anxiety rather than amplifying it.