

Self help matters.

Helping you to find your solutions

Learning from Mistakes

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In most cases, we make a mistake because of our choices, perhaps because of inadequate information and/or a misguided intention behind the choice. We either make a mistake innocently (we believed we had made the correct choice) or we do so knowing it to be an error.

Most of us would argue we make mistakes because we are ill-informed or ill-advised and do so honestly and without intent.

But we often think “we should have known better” and this feeds the frustration behind having made a mistake.

Top Tips

Learning. We don't like to make mistakes but it's human nature. We need to remember that we learn from them, and often painfully so.

Admission. The start of learning is to first admit you have made a mistake. Denial simply locks you into a frozen state of inaction, even if it's a self-protective mechanism.

Take responsibility. Put your hands up and say, "I have made a mistake, it is my responsibility." It takes courage to own up, confidence to stand firm and commitment to do something about it. If you have impacted someone else, be determined to put things right.

Severity. How important or impactful was your mistake? Was it an unthinking, silly error (you left the milk out of the refrigerator) or more significant (you committed a crime)? The consequence determines the severity.

Consequences. A decisive response may help to shore up the impact. What new intelligence can you muster to "right" any "wrong"?

Avoidable. Could you have avoided the mistake? Why? This is part of the learning process.

Reasoning. Understand how and why you made the decision. In hindsight, perhaps with new and better-informed information, would you have made a different choice? If yes, then perhaps there is some appreciation that you acted in good faith.

Saving face. You deserve respect and appreciation for the courage it takes to own up to your mistakes.

Permission. We learn from mistakes, even if it is painful. But in order to learn and move on, you need to give yourself permission to be able to make a mistake.

Prevention. What can you do to ensure this mistake doesn't happen again?

Tough decisions. Sometimes you'll have to make tough decisions, where you have no clear, positive options, and where you might be cornered either way. Life can be full of these scenarios.

Don't try. You might say, "I'll try not to do that again." But the "try" suggests a lack of effort or commitment. Repeat your conviction without using the word "try"!

Emotions. You might not be able to change the mistake or the consequence, but you can change how you feel about it. Accept it's happened, move on and learn. Don't beat yourself up continuously.

Better. Appreciate the personal and unique opportunity the mistake has given you to learn, develop and improve. Lucky you!

Resources

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

Want to know how to feel happier, more confident & worry less right now? Would you like to learn new ways of dealing with what life throws at you?



Opening Hours: Online

<https://littf.com/>

THE MIX

Provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 via online, social and mobile.



Opening Hours: Online

www.themix.org.uk

MINDFULNESS FOR STUDENTS

Helping you to stay calm, focused & better manage the pressures of student life.



Opening Hours: Online

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/>

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN SERVICES & SUPPORT

A range of support resources for everyone at University



www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support

BIG WHITE WALL

Online community of people who are anxious, feeling low or not coping who support and help by sharing what's troubling them. This is a free, online, moderated service and confidential.



Opening Hours: Online

www.bigwhitewall.com

If you are experiencing a crisis - please contact any of the following

- **Emergency Services** - telephone 999 (Free) 24 hours
- **Samaritans** - telephone 116 123 (Free) 24 hours
- **Breathing Space** - telephone 0800 83 8587 (Free) Mon-Thu 6pm-2am, Fri-Sun 6pm-6am
- **Nightline** - telephone 01224 272829 (local rate) term-time only, between 20.00-08.00
- **NHS 24** - telephone 111 (Free) 24 hours

For other support resources, please see - www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling