

Rise Up From Your Chair of Self-Condensation

“Take back your right to be yourself and get up from the chair of the defendant.” -Vadim Zeland, Reality Transurfing Book I

You vowed to exercise at least three times this week and you failed.

You set a goal to blog every day for a week straight and you missed a day.

You promised yourself you’d cut down on the sodas, refined sugar snacks, or whatever your personal vice happens to be and you stumbled a little.

You lost your cool again, said a few hurtful things you shouldn’t have said, and now you feel like a jerk.

Here’s a distinction that might be useful for you:

Remorse versus Self-condensation.

Remorse is when you feel bad for violating your moral code, for failing to live up to your standards of right and wrong. It’s when your conscience tells you “That wasn’t right.”

Self-condensation is when you respond to the sensation of guilt by berating, belittling, and beating yourself up.

“Yikes! I really dropped the ball this week. My behavior was unacceptable. I need to make some changes and step my game up.”

That’s remorse.

“I’m such an idiot. I always do stuff like this. I just feel so horrible.”

That’s self-condensation.

Notice a few key differences here:

1. Remorse focuses on the specific pattern of wrongdoing that needs to be fixed. Self-condensation focuses on personal identity. The former says, “What I did was wrong.” The latter says “I am a bad person.”
2. Remorse focuses on a specific time frame (ie. “this week”). Self-condensation focuses on permanent-sounding conditions like “always” or “never”. The former says “What I

said yesterday was wrong.” The latter says “I always put my foot in my mouth.”

3. Remorse focuses on what needs to be done in order to get back on track. Self-condemnation focuses on wallowing in the feeling of unworthiness and shame. The former says “I messed up. Therefore I’ll clean it up.” The latter says “I always mess up everything and it just feels so horrible to be this way.”
4. Remorse leads to constructive change. Self-condemnation traps you in a negative feedback loop where you feel bad for failing, wallow in feelings of shame, and keep on failing because you feel too unworthy to try again.

Here’s the ironic thing: Most people get stuck in self-condemnation because they believe it’s the morally right response to have towards failure. After all, what could be more irresponsible and disrespectful than walking around with an inspired countenance after you just let everyone down? A truly good person, it seems, would be one who punishes himself or herself after doing something wrong.

The logic makes sense, but it’s still flawed. For starters, being self-confident and inspired doesn’t have to take the form of rubbing your enthusiasm in someone else’s face. You can still feel inwardly motivated while also understanding and respecting the fact that the other party is upset.

Imagine walking into a funeral ceremony for a complete stranger. Your life is going well and you’re in a peaceful mood, but everyone at the funeral is sad. You’re not sad, but everyone else is. Do you run around giggling while trying to cheer everyone up? Do you engage in a bunch of happy-go-lucky chatter about how awesome your life is to everyone there? No. Because you have respect for the moment and what it means to others, you conduct yourself compassionately and considerately while remaining grounded in your own internal sense of well-being.

The same is true of remorse. You don’t have to put on an exaggerated display of guilt-ridden sadness just to establish the fact that you mean business. In fact, this kind of behavior usually has the opposite effect. When you engage in melodramatic performances of “whoa is me”, people might begin to wonder if you have the stability and resilience to handle the job of turning things around. Moreover, by making the whole issue center around how bad you feel, you cause valuable time, energy, and attention to be spent on comforting you. Do you know where else those resources could have gone? That’s right: towards creating and executing a concrete plan that would have made things better.

Instead of relying on dramatic declarations and theatrical gestures to prove to others that you really feel bad, carry yourself with confidence and dignity as you showcase your seriousness with action.

Avoid the mistake of equating moods with morality. You are never righteous or sinful

merely because of what you feel. Your integrity is determined by the responsibility you to take for making good things happen.

Have you failed recently? Go ahead and own it, but from now on start owning your commitment to winning as much as you own your confession to wrongdoing.