

Don't Self-Identify As Something You Don't Respect

"Sorry for being a flake!" "I'm such a klutz!" "I'm a coward." "I'm such a liar."

When you find ourselves in the middle of doing something you don't respect, it's all too easy to identify **as a person** with things you don't respect: flakiness, klutziness, cowardice, dishonesty. You might even go so far as to label yourself.

Stop doing this.

First of all, while this may seem like a roundabout way of apologizing for your faults, it's actually a way you're deflecting responsibility for your actions. If flakiness, klutziness, cowardice, or dishonesty are just part of your nature, there's nothing to apologize for. The reality is, however, that you do have a choice to act differently.

Secondly, by labelling yourself, you're just going to dig your faults deeper into your identity. You may think you're just punishing yourself with these labels, but you're also making future improvements harder. If all you hear from yourself (and eventually, others **will** start echoing the things you tell yourself) is that you are a failure, it will become harder and harder for you to muster the courage to change. To change, you need to believe that you are capable, that you aren't doomed to failure, and that you won't be castigated if we do make mistakes along the way. Your self-labelling will make you believe the opposite.

Thirdly, hold up your ideals instead of your faults. Your personality and your self-conception will always be in front of you. If you tell yourself over and over again that you are a klutz or a flake, you will become a klutz or a flake. But if you remind yourself instead that you have the potential to be the kind of person who acts gracefully and is reliable, you'll be more likely to be that ideal person.