Making a hard moment more bearable

Seven ways to get through when you cannot change what is happening.

Some situations cannot be fixed straight away. These skills do not change the situation. They change your experience of it enough to get through.

Imagery

Picture a calm, safe place in detail. Or picture yourself coping well and coming out the other side.

Meaning

Ask what matters to you in this. What do you want to stand for in how you handle it?

Prayer or reaching out

If you have a faith, pray. If not, open up to something bigger than the moment: nature, people you love, your own wiser self.

Relaxation

Loosen your body. A bath, a stretch, slow breathing, a hand on your chest.

One thing at a time

Put your whole attention on what you are doing this minute. Just this cup of tea. Just this step.

A brief break

Give yourself a short holiday from it. Twenty minutes with a book, a walk, a nap. Then come back.

Encouragement

Talk to yourself as a good coach would. "This is hard, and I am getting through it. I have done hard things before."

The ones I want to try

What I would say to encourage myself

A time I got through something very hard. What helped then?

Adapted from the IMPROVE skill in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), developed by Marsha Linehan.

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This handout supports your therapy. It does not replace professional advice.