



## **Feel Better Fast—Even When Everything Sucks**

23 Ways to Reset After an Upset  
Creative Solutions For Creative People

### *Body Basics That We Sometimes Overlook*

#### **1. Eat good food**

What are you eating? Freshen your diet, and you will freshen your perspective. Inflammation is not just a word—it's something that happens in your body, and thus to your emotions. If you are having a rough time, see if you can consider food as medicine. Most of us consider food as "comfort." But what we call comfort food actually defeats our chance at a good feeling. Notice if you are over-indulging in so-called goodies, and give your body a break. On the other hand—sometimes, "opposite truths" are equally valid, and you just need to BREAK your discipline. Be a REAL person, and have some truffle fries and a cosmo with your BFF. After all, you're an artist, not a robot.

#### **2. Get some sleep**

Are you getting enough Z's? Many of your cares and worries are literally "put to bed" by a good night's rest.

#### **3. Spend time alone**

Know thyself—and LIKE thyself. It's important to have alone time. Put it on the calendar. If you are hitting a stall or a skid—creatively or in business—perhaps you have been "cheating on yourself" with other people, and neglecting #1. So make a date with YOURSELF... and keep it.

#### **4. Spend time with loved ones**

Be with people who nourish you. Don't run after the "cool kids." Have real, true friends—people who can celebrate you when it's going really well, and who can give you a judgment-free space for a little pity-party when it's inclement.

## **5. Spend time in nature**

Yes... fresh air, grass and trees—especially for city dwellers. You need to remember Mother Nature. She will offer you flowers, and visit you with butterflies, or impress you with some ocean and stars.

## **6. Get some exercise**

Choose something you enjoy doing with your body—walk, run, spin, lift, swim, etc. It actually changes your brain, as well as your body.

## **7. Take a shower or a bath**

Wash away the bad feelings—literally. Water is a nice way to “start fresh” and to rinse off what’s irritating you. A shower is good when you’re in a hurry and want to refresh. A bath is good when you want to calm down, let go, and feel soothed and comforted.

### *Mood-Altering Experiences That Are Fun—and Legal*

## **8. Listen to music**

Play a favorite song to match—or to change—your mood. Whether you want to wallow in something deep and blue, or to shake off and shout out your dark side, music is a fast and powerful way to shift gears. You can just LISTEN to a favorite song, or you can SING along—and your brain will THANK you. Different tunes for different moods. We all know this intuitively, but now neuroscience supports the experience that music is GOOD for you.

## **9. Make some art**

They give finger-paints to kindergarteners because it’s fun and expressive. It’s also good for the brain. And calming. Try grabbing some crayons and an adult coloring book. There are some great ones out there. I love *Mer World Problems*. And there are also some great mandala books.

## **10. Dance**

Feeling stuck? Dancing can free you right up. Try putting on the album *Drumsex* by Brent Lewis. Or to move to whatever moves you. Dancing elevates mood, shifts stuck energy, and releases endorphins—the feel-good chemical. Do it until you are breathless. Then notice what else changes.

## **11. Watch a movie**

Whether you want to escape to another universe or to dive deep into a story, FILMS (and, of course, good TV) allow you to explore someone else’s dream, and to let go into their journey. For some people, pure escapism is just as pleasurable as art-house cinema or lasting-quality story-forms are. I myself do NOT feel better after watching *The Real Housewives of Dallas*, but I have friends who swear by it.

## **12. Meditate**

A daily habit of meditation will change your world—for the way better. Even if you can't manage it all the time, it will still help you after an upset. Meditating in GROUPS is even more powerful—so finding one will make your own journey easier. But you can also use recordings, apps, or just your own breath and twenty minutes to make a significant change in your perspective.

## **13. See a comedy show**

Laughter is the best medicine. Comedians transmute shit-states into gold, and allow us to realize that we are not alone in our suffering. On the contrary, it's the stuff of hilarity. Let yourself laugh at someone else's transmuted pain soup. It's delicious.

## **14. Go to a playground**

Consider being a kid again. Get on a swing. Feel yourself defy gravity. Go down a slide. Hang upside down from the monkey bars. Feel the rush of blood to your face. Or go with a friend and get on the seesaw.

## **15. Read**

Travel into another world, and escape your own life for a little bit. Go to a magic kingdom, or solve a crime with Sherlock Holmes. Or if you prefer, read a book that will teach you something, or enliven your thinking.

*Hard Love Ways to Reset—for Those of You Who Hate Positivity*

## **16. Stop complaining**

It's not useful. Your friends don't like it. And if you're honest, neither do you. It's a form of spiritual flatulence—nice to have a release sometimes, but don't mistake it for something pleasant. The act of complaining wires the brain to seek bad experiences to talk about. So unless you're a comedian—and can keep a lighter perspective on your life—better to break the habit of griping than to become an expert at it.

## **17. Help someone else**

This is one of the FASTEST ways to feel better. Most of the time, when we are upset, it is because we are comparing ourselves to an ideal standard or an imaginary potential we have not yet achieved. We have an IDEA that something should be different or better. Then we lose our awareness of gratitude. But helping someone else, especially someone in bad or dire circumstances, reminds us of our own good fortune, and also allows us to create something better. You can help someone you know, or you can help a total stranger. Either choice will give you a boost. And will also make life kinder and more livable for someone else.

### **18. Take action**

Many people forget that action is THE way to get past fear, upset, doubt, etc. I once heard a preacher say, “Yea, though you walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, KEEP WALKING. Do not stop and look around. Do not contact a realtor, and buy a condo in Shitsville.

### **19. Do something you have been avoiding**

Or if that is too much, take the absolutely smallest action in that direction. Doing the absolutely smallest thing is a HUGE step toward feeling better.

### **20. Focus on excellence**

Mediocrity is just not as satisfying. Being “meh” breeds complacency, or a vague dissatisfaction with yourself. Don’t just “get by.” Commit yourself to excellence in what you care about—your art. Work harder and more deeply on getting GREAT. It will reward you in many ways; refocusing you on what matters, improving what you are capable of, and enhancing the experience of others when they encounter your art.

### **21. Say no to what is bothering you**

Upset usually results from being spread too thin, and from losing focus on what matters to you. Say no to people, activities and situations that do not bring you joy. Life is too short. “No” is the new “yes.” It will free you up.

### **22. Say yes to something new**

Have you made your circles too small? Are you staying in the backyard when you should be going to the mountaintop? Think of something you have always wanted to do—big or small. Visit a place? Learn a language? Go to *Burning Man*? Whatever it is that you’ve been too afraid to do—why not do it now? Whatever your answer to that is, question it. It’s just an excuse. It’s just a story you made up—one you always tell yourself... and others. Write a different ending right now—one where you LIKE what happens. Then say YES to that.

### **23. Dream bigger—or dream to scale**

Here’s the problem. A bad mental state often comes about when you work really hard for something you don’t actually want, but think you can get. There are two solutions to this. (1) Go for what you really want, realizing that the PURSUIT of the dream—NOT its attainment—is what makes you who you are. We are all the result of trying for something. (2) But if dreaming BIG is what’s bumming you out—because it’s depressing to consider not attaining what you aim for— then dream BETTER. Meaning: Pursue something you can actually make happen. Dream to SCALE. This might mean that you create a ONE-minute movie—a tiny piece of perfect that you love—rather than worrying about producing that Sundance winner you had in mind.