

## Life... In a setback

**Situation:**

I'm in a setback and I don't like it at all. I was doing so well and now some of the old symptoms are back.

**Symptoms:**

Yesterday morning I didn't feel like getting out of bed. It seemed like I didn't get any sleep. I was tired and felt drained. Didn't feel like facing the day. It's been about two weeks since I've felt this way again and I'm worried about it. I can't face going to the hospital again.

Even though my doctor adjusted my medication, it doesn't seem to be working. I still feel dull and lifeless. And I was doing so well for a few months – going to work, seeing friends, going to the gym twice a week. Now everything is such an effort and I know that I'm getting into an avoidance pattern. I'd love to just stay home today, curl up in a little ball and pull the covers up over my head. What's the use practicing if this is where I end up.

**Solution:**

I call this a rerun, because I've worked on it before. Move the muscles, move the muscles, move the muscles. So I got out of bed, fixed the covers and took a shower. While I was fixing my cereal, I thought back to what our Taking Charge instructor told one of the other students when he was in a setback: Setbacks are average, everybody has them. That's a secure thought. I'm not the first person, or the last, to go step sideways on the path of wellness. I like that picture – stepping sideways. Before I would think that I was sliding straight down, and fast.

You never go back as far as you were. That's a secure thought.

Endorse for all you do. Rather than concentrating on how I'm feeling, I could be telling myself "good job" for getting out of bed, taking a shower, getting dressed. And I could look back at yesterday and the day before, and applaud all the different things I did those days too. I had to change my focus, and the only way to change my focus was to change my thoughts.

My medication may not be working as fast as I expected. The doctor did say it would be a few weeks and it's only been two. If I want, I can call the office and explain how I'm feeling.

I don't want to have to go back to the hospital, but if I do, it won't be the end of the world. It might be distressing, but it won't be dangerous. I may not want to go, but it might work out that way, and might be the best thing for me.

What's the use of practicing? That was a fear thought. Discouragement. Actually I know that practicing my mental fitness tools does work. I've made a lot of progress. The key

thing here is for me not to compare myself to other people. I need to only compare me, to how I used to be.

Setback time is back to basics time. I don't want to practice so hard again, but I've promised myself that my mental health comes first.

***In the past:***

In the past when I started feeling this way, I would stay home. I'd spend my days in bed or on the couch with the TV going. I'd go through eating binges, or I wouldn't eat at all. I wouldn't answer the phone. If I did pick up the mail I wouldn't open it. I didn't want to face the bills. I wouldn't even open cards that friends sent to me. I didn't care that other people cared. I didn't care that they were trying to be thoughtful and kind.

There was a time when I would spend the entire day in my sweats and wear them to bed. It would get so bad that I wouldn't take a shower or comb my hair. I didn't feel like doing anything, so I didn't. Now I command my muscles – move! And I do move. I may not be feeling great right now, but I am functioning.

I'm proud of the progress I've made. Nobody's done it for me. It was my efforts – me changing consciously changing my thoughts and me deliberately moving my muscles. Just moving muscles isn't enough. I have to check my thoughts and replace them.

I remind myself that I'm going "through" a setback, I 'm not "stuck" in one.

