



COE Cheat Sheet

STEP ONE: Make A Little Space.

Change doesn't happen – ever – by rejecting who or we are, or what we are feeling, or what we are experiencing. Your mind says, “Do something right now to change yourself!” So tell your mind, “Right now, I am noticing what I am saying to myself.” Now listen in on your inner running commentary.... Yes, right now. It's okay if you don't like what you are saying to yourself. That is what is happening for you right now – let it be there. Now do the same with your body. Just notice what your body feels like... even if you don't like it or you want it to feel differently. Now notice how you are feeling... like you were watching a movie of your moods, like clouds floating by... Now and only now, breath in and out of your belly, like it has a little mouth and little lungs all of its own.

STEP TWO: Name your desire.

What do you want? Not everything, just one small thing for right now. To feel more ease around your work? To stop checking email 50 times a day? To develop a better coping mechanism for dealing with your judgmental parents so you don't freak out and eat a gallon of Haagen Dazs every time you're in a room with them? To finish your dissertation? Whatever it is, state it here:

What I want is to _____

Look, I know you might not be sure this is what you want and there might be 50 other things you want and you might have wanted this thing for a long time and you may have tried to create it before and this time is different. Just choose one thing.

STEP THREE: What's the simplest step I can take towards this desire?

Name the smallest movement you could take towards realizing your goal. Is it to do ten jumping jacks each morning when you get up? Ask your friend Breanna if she'll go to your mom's for Sunday dinner with you? Whatever it is, make it grounded in fact, and concrete so an outside observer would be able to tell that you had completed it. Write it here:

The one simplest step I can take towards this desire is _____

If this whole process is freaking you out be because it is not hard enough or fast enough, let me say, sweetie, I get it. I'm with you! And there is a ream and half of research that this works and

I've seen it work thousands of times. So why not trust that one small step is, at least, a step in the right direction? Why not let yourself be human?

STEP FOUR: Add a time element.

When will you complete the simplest step above? Before 9 o'clock? Every Tuesday at noon? By the summer solstice? Or how many times will you do it if it's an on-going commitment. Every Wednesday? Friday nights? Five days a week before work?

Commit to a time. Or a frequency. Or a length of time – one week, one month, 5 times, etc. Small and specific please.

I will complete this small step by _____

I will do this small step ____ times over _____.

If you feel a tug of panic at adding a time element, that may be a sign you need to do lower your standards or it may be a sign you need more self-kindness around choosing. It's okay to choose.

STEP FIVE: Double-check that it can be completed by YOU on an ORDINARY day.

Are you planning on the perfect convergence of the sun and moon and Jupiter so you can complete this task in the time period specified or that amount of times you will do it? If so, revisit your step and timeline and build in room for being human– for alarm clocks that don't go off, for traffic on the I-90, for whining children, for feeling like poop.

STEP SIX: Declare You Are Satisfied – in Some Way that You Believe.

Once you complete your small step in the time period you've allotted, chances are that you WILL NOT feel satisfied. That's just the way your brain is or at least, has been trained – “Oh silly brain, you kept my ancestors alive on the veldt thousands of years ago. Thank you! But life has changed, nothing is going to eat me, and I want to know what it feels like to be satisfied.” You agreed that you'd get X done in Y time period. That was it. You did it!

Take a rest for a breath and tell yourself, “I did what I said I would do. It might not feel like enough but I did it and it's done.”

Repeat for the next step. You don't need to write the steps down each time but do if you start to get tangled. Keep it simple. Rinse and repeat, dear one, rinse and repeat!