

How to S.T.O.P. and Practise Self-Compassion

S Literally tell yourself to **stop**.

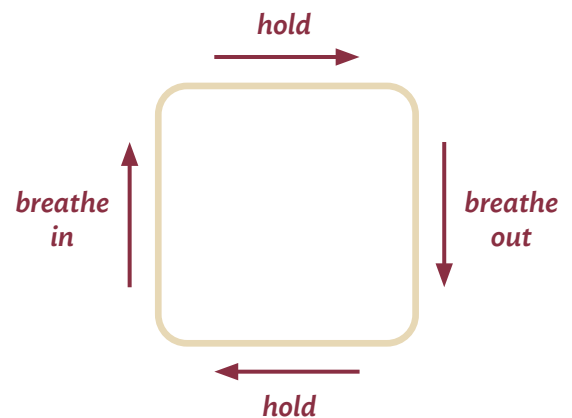
Say to yourself, *“This is not helping me.”*

Some people find it helpful to say out loud, *“I am not in trauma time anymore. This is connected to the trauma memory and the intensity of my feelings are not related to today.”*

T **Take** a breath. Or a few breaths.

Breathing out longer than breathing in can calm down our nervous system.

You may also try **box breathing**: Breathe in for 6 seconds, hold for 6 seconds, out for 6 seconds, hold for 6 seconds. (You can also do this for 4 or 8 seconds – whatever works for you.)



O **Observe** what's going on.

Begin to notice what's going on inside of your body:

- Heart rate
- Thoughts (don't judge – simply notice)
- Emotions (don't try to change them)

As you do this, you may notice a brief escalation of emotion, but then they often settle on their own.

The part of the brain that does internal observing is directly connected to the emotional centre (amygdala) of the brain, so when we notice – without judgment – it soothes our emotions.

P Get ***perspective*** and ***practise*** what works.

Now that your emotions are calm and you can think more clearly, return your focus to what's going on outside of yourself and seek God's perspective about it. Ask yourself:

- What do I want?
- How do I want to show up in this situation with integrity?

This can allow you to respond in a healthy way rather than reacting.

If you notice the external world is not safe, there are mature ways to calmly step away and get safe until the other person is safe for you again.

When you step away, you can also go back to the video 3 worksheet "Is Unresolved Trauma Part of My Story?" to explore these emotional triggers.

If you are finding it difficult to go through this process alone, seek out a trusted other to work through this with – a friend, pastor or counsellor, especially someone who is trained in trauma therapy.

NEED HELP?

Call our care team to book a free, one-time phone consultation with one of our registered Christian counsellors. Call **1.800.661.9800** weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Pacific time, or visit **FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Counselling** to learn more.

What are any negative or limiting beliefs I am telling myself?

Is it difficult to receive God's positive words to me?

Do I consider myself the exception to God's grace or forgiveness in some areas?

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