

I know what I need to do to feel better; why can't I make myself do it?

If you find yourself unable to make changes you want to make in your life, you may be “in resistance.” This means that some part of you, probably a very young part, is afraid it will be too painful. This terrified, young part of you is trying to protect you from pain, and it does this by setting up defenses. Actually, defenses can be a good thing, allowing us to survive really painful events. The problem arises when we use these defenses to “protect” ourselves from something that may look scary, but is actually good for us, like those things you know you need to do. Ironically, forcing oneself to do something we are afraid of often backfires, causing us to dig deeper into our defenses. The way to succeed in making positive changes is to learn about and work compassionately with your fears and defenses, instead of against them. Working with a therapist can be helpful, because often we cannot see our own defenses and fears (see “blind spots” in # 4, above).

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