



## Episode 9: Get Back on Track With These 2 Quick Tips

Welcome to *In the Right Direction* podcast, where we believe you get to choose what's on your plate, you can manage the overwhelm, and that change is possible. I'm your host, Deb Elbaum, and I'm here to share insights and strategies to increase your happiness one baby step at a time. Let's dive in.

Hi everyone, it's Deb. Today, I want to start with a question. Have you ever gotten angry with someone, like really frustrated, and notice that you held on to those feelings in your body for way too long, and it took hours or even days before your body was able to calm down? If you can recall one of those times, think back. When you were consumed with anger, how did your body feel? And what was your thinking like?

We are all human. We experience many different emotions, and sometimes we get angry, or we feel beaten down, or we worry. That's normal. What's harmful, though, is when we hold on to those feelings in our body and our brain for too long because either we don't know how to calm down our body and brain or we don't choose to do something to calm down our body and brain. Staying in the embodiment of stress and anger has a real cost. It negatively impacts our health, our thinking, our problem solving, and our relationships. I know for me, when I let myself marinate in angry feelings for too long, those feelings preoccupy my thoughts. They keep me from enjoying the moment or seeing the good around me. When we hold resentment and frustration in our body, it hurts only us.

So, what can we do to move past these feelings of anger worry or hurt more quickly? Because it's not in our control what other people say and do, and they're going to do things and say things that trigger us. What is in our control is to recognize when we feel this way and make a choice. We can choose to reset our body and brain. Think about a computer. You know how sometimes computers just freeze? They stop working, and what do you do? If you're like me, you bang on the keyboard for a bit, and when that doesn't work, you hit the power button or you hit Control-Alt-Delete, and then you reboot the computer so it can work effectively again.

Just like rebooting a computer, there are tools you can use to reset your body and mind to discharge the negative emotions so that you can feel calmer and centered more quickly. The good news is that these tools to reset and refocus your body and brain are always with you, always available, and best of all, they're free. What do you think they are? If you said breathing and moving your body, you are correct. A special type of breathing called deep belly breathing and moving your body are powerful tools that can help you return to center a bit more quickly so that the negative emotions don't last as long, are not as intense, and don't do as much damage.

Here's an example from a client. At the start of a recent coaching session, I asked my client how she was doing. She said she felt beaten down and discouraged. Her inner critic was overactive, telling her that because she didn't do her coaching homework, she was no good. And looking at her, I could see the

defeat in her body language. Feeling defeated is not the place to start coaching because in the place of defeat, our brain is incapable of problem solving or seeing possibility. A reset was needed.

I asked my client to stretch her arms out as wide as they would go on either side of her. I asked her to make sure her chest was open, her chin was up, and I asked her to take a few breaths. As my client held this empowered body position, I asked if she still felt defeated. She said, "No, I don't. I don't feel discouraged when I hold my body this way. I feel ready, and I feel open." With that one intentional body position change, my client reset those inner critic feelings of discouragement and shifted her thinking. Within 60 seconds, she was able to get back on track for our coaching. Holding on to negative feelings do not serve us, and yet we often feel powerless to them. I want you to know that you have power. You can use your breath and body to release emotions that are not serving you, to get back on track.

Let's first talk about the tool of deep belly breathing. So, most of the breathing we do is unconscious. We're not aware of how we're breathing, and when we get stressed, our sympathetic nervous system is activated, and there's a certain way that our body breathes. This type of breathing, associated with our fight, flight, or freeze response, is very shallow and rapid and involves only our upper chest. We only move our upper chest and our shoulders. To reset your brain and body, you need to consciously breathe in a different way with deep belly breathing. This type of breathing is associated with the parasympathetic nervous system, our rest-and-digest nervous system.

Here's how to do it. First, tune into your body and find your breath. Next, imagine pushing your breath all the way down to your belly button. Then try taking breaths, moving only your belly. Keep your chest and shoulders completely still. When you inhale, your belly will go all the way out and get really big. When you exhale, pull your belly all the way back in and expel all the air out of your lungs. You can try it if you'd like. Inhale, let your belly all the way out; let it get big. Exhale, pull your belly all the way back in and let all the air out of your lungs.

As you breathe this way, you might notice a few things. First, you might notice that it can be hard. Absolutely, because it's a new way of breathing and it takes focus, and that's a good thing because it might take the focus away from those thoughts running around in your brain. Second, you might notice that when you breathe this way, it allows other parts of your body to loosen up. When I do deep belly breathing, I always notice that my shoulders and my neck feel a little bit looser. Loosening up your body is helpful because so many of us hold tension in our shoulders, in our neck or our jaw.

Deep belly breathing is one tool to reset your brain and body, to calm your thoughts down and start letting go of anger and other negative emotions. The other big reset tool is your body. Moving your body can also help let go of negative feelings and reboot your thinking. That's because when we get angry or worried, our body freezes. We literally stop moving. We tense up; we constrict. We bring those negative feelings inside us and hold on to them. This does not serve us. It keeps us stuck and replaying those thoughts and emotions in our brain.

So, what can you do instead? You can move your body. You can stand up. You can walk around. You can jump up and down. You can power pose or dance or run or stretch or do yoga. The possibilities are endless. The key is to keep the energy flowing, so the negative feelings can flow through you and out of

you more quickly before they do as much damage. By choosing to actively move your body, you're releasing negativity, so it doesn't take up space in your body. You're making room for productive, more positive ways of thinking. Just like my client did when she did her wide-open arm stretch. Moving your body moves the negative emotions so they don't last as long, are not as intense, and don't do as much damage to your thinking and behavior.

Now you might be saying, "I get it, Deb. But what if there's a good reason that I'm angry? What if the other person was completely wrong and horrible? Why should I try to let it go? Don't I deserve to feel resentful?" Here's the thing. I get it, believe me I do, and what I know is that holding on to those feelings in your body do not hurt the other person. They hurt only you. They hurt your health, your thinking, your relationships. You use the tools of breathing and moving, not to forgive them or excuse the situation, rather you choose to use them for the sake of you, to benefit your health, your thinking, and your energy. Because releasing negative emotions helps you think more clearly, problem solve more creatively, and show up more intentionally.

Let's bring this to you. In the next few weeks, I invite you to practice these tools of deep belly breathing and moving your body. When you feel stressed, take a few deep belly breaths. When your inner critic gets really loud, get up, leave the room, walk, run, stretch, jump, or dance it out. Because you get to take care of your body and brain. You have agency, and you can choose to feel and think differently.

If you found today's podcast helpful, please subscribe and share it with a friend. Thanks so much and thank you for being part of my community.

Until next time!