

Choosing an Alternative to an Urge

Emotion regulation | Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Evaluate an emotional urge and rehearse a safe alternative action.

An urge is a signal to act, and you can sometimes choose what happens next. Select a manageable urge such as sending an angry message, withdrawing from a safe person, or giving up on a routine task.

Understand the urge

Name the emotion, what the urge promises, and what might happen if you follow it. Ask whether the action fits the facts, your safety, and your longer term goal. Some urges protect you from real harm and should not be challenged automatically.

Try a small alternative

If the urge would make the situation worse, choose a different action for the next few minutes. You might draft without sending, request a break, make a brief supportive contact, or begin one task step. Review the result; changing an action does not require pretending the feeling disappeared.

My emotion, the urge, and what the urge promises

Likely short term and later effects of following it

A safe alternative that fits my goal

What happened when I tried it and what I learned