

Practice

Principle One | Lesson Five



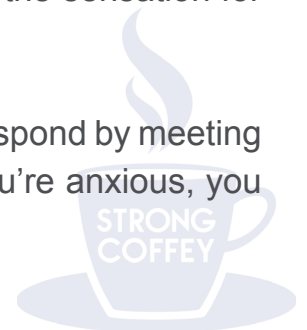
Welcome back. What's it going to look like to Play the PART in real life? First, let's do it around Monkey Brains (MBs). What does Playing the PART look like in this situation? Let's say that you've decided to cut Monkey Brains (MBs) out of your life because they leave you feeling uncomfortable and disconnected and weak and blah. You're walking along and, all of a sudden, you spot a vending machine. You think, "Oh, I want that."

If that, whatever that is, is a cheap pleasure that keeps you from enjoying Deep Pleasure, if it robs you of the chance to feel genuinely peaceful or comfortable in your own skin or empowered, than that is an obvious Prompt. Maybe you're walking past the vending machine and you hear, "Oh please, who do you think you're kidding? You're too weak. Just get one." Remember the lashing in reaction to shame? Here it is.

The beast wants you to believe that you're not capable of making stronger choices, but the truth is the only thing that stands between you and the life that you want and a body you feel good in are choices like this one. From here on out, you're going to work on recognizing that fraud thought for what it is, a Prompt, a chance to make a stronger choice. There you go. You've got your Prompt. You've recognized it. You've paused. It's the drive to sabotage yourself, or it's the beast, or it's shame, or it's the fraud thought.

You place a hand somewhere on your body to signal, "I'm here for you, and I'm going to take care of you." This is what you need, and it's what you've always needed. You Ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" Notice the sensations in your body, and label them if it helps, but keep it brief. Three words. I feel blank. I feel hungry. I feel tired, I feel bored. I feel anxious. Then, Accept whatever it is that you find by just being with the sensation for a breath or two or three.

Having Accepted - owning what's true for you in this moment - you can Respond by meeting whatever your needs are with Care. If you're thirsty, you can drink. If you're anxious, you can calm yourself. If you're scared, you can soothe yourself.



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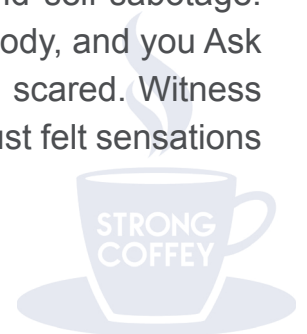
What the most caring response is going to be in that moment is completely dependent on you. With time and with practice, you will get better and better at knowing what the most caring response is for you in the moment. Afterwards, you can talk about the Deep Pleasure that resulted when you took care of yourself in that moment. You can thank you for showing up for you and not eating something that would leave you in more pain on the other side.

If walking past a vending machine wasn't already on your list of Prompts, you're going to add it. Now that you know that's a challenging moment for you, you can plan ahead. When that situation comes up again, it's going to be less of an issue. Over time and with practice, vending machines become a non-issue.

I'll give you another example. Playing the PART around exercise. Let's say you've committed to go on a walk first thing in the morning because you know it'll make you feel better to do that.

You wake up on day one, and you do not want to go. That self-sabotaging thought, that's your Prompt, or maybe the beast is saying, "Nah, it's not important. Forget it." That idea, any idea that doing something caring for yourself isn't important and that, therefore, your health and your happiness aren't important, that's an idea based in shame. Any shame-based or self-harming or unskillful thoughts like that are a Prompt.

As a self-saboteur, you're a master of making a resolution and then saying, "Nah, screw it." This isn't insanity. It's what happens when you default to shame and self-sabotage. What do you do? You recognize the Prompt. You place a hand on your body, and you Ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" Say it out loud if it helps. I am tired. I am scared. Witness whatever that felt sensation is because, remember, emotions are really just felt sensations in the body.



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Witness the felt sensation for a couple of breaths. This is acceptance, acceptance of the self, acceptance of your truth. Now, you're able to Respond in the most Caring way that you can in that moment in a way that cultivates Deep Pleasure maybe by centering yourself in some way and then following through on your plan, because following through is going to make you feel accomplished and empowered and peaceful.

You've invested in taking better care of yourself, and that means that you're going to Respond in the most Caring way that you can. Later on, when somebody asks you how you're doing, you're going to check your reflex to minimize the walk that you went on or to roll your eyes at yourself or your commitments. If you're feeling spry, you might even say, "Oh, I'm great. I went for a walk this morning, and I felt great ever since."

If the desire to pass on your commitment to exercise in the morning isn't already on your list of Prompts, you're going to add it. Then you can think about the variables that you can control to make it easier to make a strong and caring choice tomorrow when you wake up, like maybe getting to bed earlier tonight. Another example, meditation. I love meditation. Let's say that you realize that a regular meditation practice would make you a calmer, happier person, so you commit to meditate once a day for 20 minutes or even five.

When you sit on your little Zen cushion in the sunshine with all of your accouterments, and your little timer, you try to focus, but at some point the beast takes the mic and says, "You don't meditate. Who do you think you're kidding?" It says, "This isn't you, and it's never going to be you. Give it up." It occurs to you then really that it'd be a better idea to grab some snacks and watch TV. Now, that would be relaxing, right? There's your Prompt, the self-sabotaging, double whammy hybrid of lashing in in avoidance of reactions to shame.



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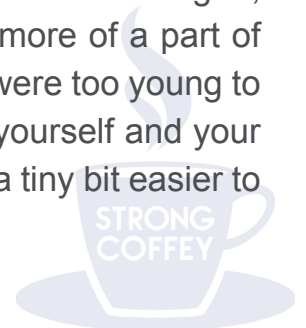


This is the classic one-two punch, the moment when you can see your beast in all its glory. You're trying to love and care for yourself, and no sooner do you start, then the beast bubbles up and starts rolling its eyes and making you feel stupid and foolish and defeated. Then to really drive it home, it encourages you to numb out and hide behind a cheap distraction. You're trying to do something that's going to bring you Deep Pleasure, and the fact that you're not already great at it kicks up shame.

Play the PART. Pause for the Prompt. Place a hand somewhere on your body, wherever feels right. Ask, "What am I feeling?" Then Accept whatever it is that you find. Then choose the most caring response that you're capable of in that moment. You know that part of meditation is noticing discomfort and watching it without judgment, so you might choose to do exactly that. Maybe as soon as you stop fighting the discomfort, you notice that it shifts and changes and dissolves.

Later, when you're posting in the Klatch or talking to one of your trusted support people, you might tell her all about your meditation experience and not focus so much on the struggle, but on the learning and the growth and the progress and how good you felt when you were done. If trying to meditate wasn't already on your list of Prompts, you add it. You remember how the beast got quieter once you stopped fighting or running from your emotions. The next time you meditate, that memory will make it easier to sit with that discomfort and watch it change and resolve.

Shame feeds on itself, so does the beast. Every time you react to the beast in one of the four ways that hurt you by withdrawing, avoiding your feelings, lashing out or lashing in, you make it stronger. Those shame-based thoughts and ideas feel like more of a part of you instead of what they actually are, lies that you were given when you were too young to say no. Care feeds on itself too. Every time you Respond with Care for yourself and your body by Playing the PART, P-A-R-T, you disempower shame, and it gets a tiny bit easier to Respond with Care the next time.



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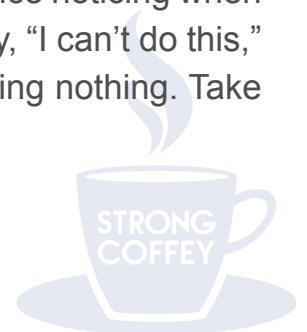


Don't be surprised if you feel insecure when you talk about making Strong Choices because the beast is going to be there whipping out every trick to try to sabotage you. What do you do? Well, you can recognize that practicing strong, loving self-talk is a Prompt in and of itself, so you Ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" Then Accept what's true for you, maybe that you're afraid. Then you Respond in the most Caring way that you can in that moment.

When I'm afraid, I sometimes like to soothe myself with words. I like to say, "It's okay." I like to say, "It's forgiven." I like to say, "It's over. It's in the past." These are some of my most used caring responses. I soothe my fear, my anxiety and my anger, and that makes it possible for me to follow through and to keep my commitments and to treat myself with as much care as I can in that moment.

I was so sick, so unhappy, so unhealthy but the solution to be motivated by care instead of shame presented itself. What did I do? I made a career out of talking about it, and supporting women who are just like me to help them heal like I did. I slid back for years. I'm a self-abusing addict to the marrow of my bones. I'm a hedonist. I'm a pleasure seeker, but I wanted Deep Pleasure. I figured out what that meant, SPACE: Self-regard, Peace, Accomplishment, Connection and physical Comfort, and Empowerment, and I figured out how to get it by Playing the PART and talking intentionally about how good it felt to take care of myself.

I talked about it with my friends. I talked about it with my kids. I talked about it with my personal training clients. Today, I get to talk about it in the Klatch. Words are powerful. What you say about yourself and your choices has immense power. Practice noticing when you're going to speak from a place of shame or fear. If you're going to say, "I can't do this," or "This sucks," when that happens – when that thought arises – try saying nothing. Take a breath.



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These feelings, all negative sensations, they have a beginning and a middle and an end. Just like a wave, cravings follow the same pattern. They have a beginning and a middle and an end. If you sit and notice them instead of acting on them, you'll watch them shift and change and dissolve. The desire to talk down about yourself will pass whether or not you do. The desire to consume Monkey Brains (MBs) will pass whether or not you do. Any time you struggle, simply Play the PART.

Every time you Play, it will get easier. Until caring for and taking good care of yourself feels completely natural, you're just going to Play the PART. The more consistently you Play, the healthier you get, the happier you feel, and the more taking good care of yourself becomes your default. You're going to become mindful of unhealthy and self-sabotaging Prompts. You're going to Ask yourself what you're feeling – not what you're thinking, but what you're feeling – and you're going to radically Accept those feelings as they are.

You're going to Respond to your needs and to the moment in the most Caring way that you can. Finally, you're going to practice Talking about how you stepped up and took good care of yourself in the context of a safe and understanding support network, like The Klatch. The result of this work is that you will feel truly connected to yourself. You will feel genuine, deep love for yourself and your body, not just as something you say to yourself in the mirror.

Playing the PART is how we who default to shame and self-sabotage actually come to care about and take better care of ourselves and our bodies. Until taking better care of yourself becomes your default, you simply Play the PART. Playing the PART is your greatest protection from, and your healthiest response to, feelings of shame. Playing the PART is the first step to getting happily grounded in healthier habits.

It's the first step to you enjoying deep, delicious, long lasting pleasure. Playing the PART is about taking genuinely good care of you. Playing the PART is about honoring your truth and your needs in service to taking great care of your body. I am so excited to hear what you learn about yourself and what choices you make and what Deep Pleasure results when you Play the PART.

You're doing great. Keep going.

