

EDITING YOUR STORY

Writing things down can help you tune into your thoughts. It's especially useful when you are just beginning to use this method and listening to your thoughts is not yet automatic. Later on, continue to use it whenever you're so enmeshed in a situation that it's hard to step back and stop your mind from reeling. Whenever you are that stressed, take it as a sign that it's time to take a break, and do this exercise:

1. Sit down and write what is happening.

This is not to share – it's just for you. So, don't worry about complete sentences or paragraph structure, grammar, or presentation. Just spew forth and write down exactly what you are thinking. Don't edit yourself or judge what you're writing. This could be a paragraph, or it could be ten pages – it's whatever you need it to be; whatever you feel like getting out of your head and onto the page.

2. Get a highlighter, or just go through and underline every line that is stated as a fact.
3. Go through each of those "facts" and ask yourself: Do I know that for sure? (Is this really a fact, or is it just part of the story I'm telling myself?).

Separate the facts from your story as rigorously as if you were the editor of a newspaper. Edit out any judgment, anything you can't absolutely know to be true, anything that you couldn't prove with a source, any assumptions, any assignment of motive, and any premature conclusions.

4. On a separate page, write down the facts that have survived your rigorous questioning.

You will be left with the things you absolutely know to be true. This is your reality. Everything else is your story.

5. Discard, shred, burn, or otherwise drop your story. Focus on the facts – your reality.
6. Ask yourself: What is the very next thing I could do to add value?
7. Take that answer as your Simple Instructions.
8. Follow through with action.