



Reclaiming Grace When Mistakes Feel Heavy

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While it can be used as a tool to supplement an existing therapeutic relationship with a licensed mental health professional (LMHC, LCSW, LMFT, LPC, or a Licensed Psychologist), this resource should NOT be used as a substitute for therapy.

If you find that this resource brings up feelings and thoughts that are challenging to deal with on your own or with a trusted person, I encourage you to seek therapy to continue your healing journey.

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Introduction

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Have you ever looked back on your life and felt like one mistake outweighed all the good you've ever done? Maybe it was something small that happened this week at work—an honest misstep that felt so heavy it made you question your own capabilities, despite all the evidence that you are more than capable.

Or maybe it was something bigger, a mistake with lasting consequences. You've taken accountability, offered forgiveness and committed to correcting the behavior, and now you find yourself carrying the weight of that label, struggling to move forward because others—and sometimes your own mind—keeps defining you by that one choice.

To be clear, we're not for dodging responsibilities around here. What I am speaking to, is when after we've taken accountability and changed our behavior, we still allow the mistakes to keep us from believing we are capable or worthy of anything but goodness.

What you're experiencing is often connected to something called **negativity bias**—our brain's tendency to focus more on mistakes, setbacks, and painful experiences than on our potential for good things, successes or positive moments. This bias can make a single misstep feel louder, heavier, and more defining than all the good that surrounds it. This is, in part, due to evolution and survival as humans, as well as existing in a society that reveres perfectionism and self-criticism, as well as punishment, over praise.

The following exercise is a gentle invitation to shift that perspective. Use it in the moments when the negative feels louder than the good, and when you need space to remember that you are more than your mistakes.

Soulfull Note to Self:

You are not required to be perfect to be worthy. Every time you extend yourself grace, you are breaking generational chains and practicing a freedom this world cannot take away.

Catch the Thought

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Pause. Breathe.

Notice when your mind or spirit says, “One mistake erases all the good I’ve done.”

Truth: This often isn’t just your inner critic yelling at you. Sometimes, it’s also a survival reflex. Sometimes, we learn (from family, culture, society, religion, etc.) that our missteps mean punishment, not compassion. To protect ourselves, we sometimes replay these negative messages in our minds as a means to “brace ourselves” for the expected impact based on societal standards, expectations and past traumas.

In the spaces below, write down three lies your mind tells you about your mistakes. For example: *Lie - I am a bad person because of my mistake.*

1

2

3

Gently ask yourself:

- Have I taken accountability, sought and been extended forgiveness and changed my behavior consistently and intentionally?
- What went right, even if it feels small?
- Would I call my loved one a failure for this?
- Does this mistake really erase the fullness of who I am—or is that what others want me to believe?

TRUTH

Truth: Accountability, forgiveness and changed behavior affirms your worthiness to receive redemption.

Choose a Compassionate Response VOL. 1

For every lie you wrote down on Page 2, reframe that message into an affirming truth. For example: “If I was extended forgiveness after taking accountability for my mistake(s), I can allow myself to believe I am worthy of this grace.” or, “I am a human being who is not defined by my mistakes,” or “I am lovable and deserving of love.” Write these truths in the spaces below.

1

2

3

Truth: What this country withholds, we restore for each other.
Black grace is communal, ancestral, and divine.

- *Reflect and write about the ways society influences how you view yourself and others when making mistakes.*
- *How does this influence affect your relationship with, and opinion of yourself?*
- *How does this impact your relationships with, and opinions of others (i.e., family, friends, coworkers, employees, students, leadership, public figures, etc.)?*

[illegible]

Speak life over yourself:

- ☐ “I am not my mistake.”
- ☐ “Even if the world withholds grace, I can still give it to myself.”
- ☐ “My humanity is not up for debate.”

Practice 3 to 1

For every one mistake you dwell on, name three ways you showed up with strength, love, or brilliance. Write them. Say them. Feel them in your bones.

Truth:

Self-compassion is not weakness—it's required to live a healthy life.

notes

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A large white rectangular area containing 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

About THE CREATOR

I'm a Midwestern girl raised in a home adorned in Black art, music, literature, and culture. From Faith Ringgold on the walls, to Toni Morrison on the shelves, and old-school R&B spinning through the house, my upbringing instilled a deep pride in my heritage, and a love for storytelling, creativity, and community that still guides me today.



My academic path took a few turns—Nursing, and then Psychology at Fisk University, a master's in Sociology, and ultimately a second master's in Counselor Education—each step clarifying my calling to become a therapist. Through personal experiences, faith, and growth, I felt led toward soul-centered, culturally grounded mental health work.

When I'm not in session, I'm creating, coloring, crocheting, listening to music, podcasts or audiobooks, or watching historical and sociocultural documentaries and classic Black sitcoms. I'm a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., a wife to my best friend, a mama to one radiant daughter, a dog mom, and a caregiver in the sandwich generation—held up by strong women, deep friendships, and a whole lot of love.