

Mastering Emotions

Duration: 15-20 minutes **Frequency:** As Needed **Level of Difficulty:** Moderate

Instructions: No one ever said navigating life as a millennial was easy. Coming of age in a time of financial uncertainty, high student debt, underemployment, family pressures, and romantic challenges have hit many millennials hard. Already struggling to make ends meet, many in this generation can hit rock bottom over seemingly insignificant (and, of course, significant) life events. It is the old adage of the straw that broke the camel's back. However, unlike the much-more-simplified era from which that wisdom originates, many millennials lack the support that once existed. Whether they are financially strapped or interpersonally isolated, millennials can blow off steam in ways that can be gravely hazardous to their well-being.

The next time you are feeling completely overwhelmed or blindsided by a life circumstance, remember your space of wise mind and how it can help you make healthier decisions in trying times. Tapping into your wise mind can prevent you from making mistakes you may regret later on.

Consider using the acronym **PLEASE MASTER** in helping you stay in a space of wise mind, where you can better protect yourself and reduce emotional vulnerability to hazards down the road. It may help to imagine yourself as the ultimate master of your own emotions and, in turn, your destiny.

PL: Treat **Physical** illness. As a result of insurance and financial restraints, millennials often avoid going to the doctor or getting a regular check-up in favor of using WebMD® to self-diagnose. Make sure your body is in tip-top shape, as this will also help you navigate life when the going gets tough.

E: Eat a balanced diet. As discussed earlier, minding our plate goes a long way in ensuring healthy, sustained energy levels. Instead of drowning your sorrows in cupcakes, remember to get your fill of fruits, veggies, and proteins. Peanut butter protein smoothie, anyone? Your body and emotions will thank you later.

A: Avoid mood-altering drugs. Pay attention to those wine nights, cocktail times, and happy hours that you might be hitting up a little too strongly.

S: Sleep enough. You learned some sleep hygiene hints in Tool #1, which involve turning off your screens, picking up a good book, and sliding into bed on the earlier side. Make some relaxing herbal tea, take some deep breaths, and relax. Your bed is your new best friend. (Just don't go overboard.)

E: Exercise. Take the time to incorporate 30 minutes of physical activity into your life three to four times a week. Small steps truly do count and make a difference. Look at some of the suggestions provided in Tool #3 to get you started.

Build **MASTERY**: Engage in activities that help you feel competent and confident. This might involve getting back into music, taking a cooking class, or learning a new language. Be open to new experiences, embrace diversity, and seek out connectedness with others. Whatever activities you chose, take the time participate in them with an attitude of mindfulness. You can refer back to the Behavioral Activation Coping Tools List for more ideas. Having a sense of mastery across a number of domains makes it easier to deal with challenging situations.

Finally, make a pledge to yourself on the ways you intend to **PLEASE MASTER** your emotions.

I, _____ on this date _____
(first name) (month, day, year)

intend to **PLEASE MASTER** my emotions in the coming weeks and months through the following actions:

Signature _____