

Just recently, I was deeply disappointed over a missed opportunity and I want to share today some of the things I used to help me stop kicking myself, having imposter syndrome (I'm not good enough) or even thinking that I'm just not cut out for this opportunity.

What I've found is overcoming or triumphing over disappointment involves a blend of cognitive strategies, emotional regulation, and practical actions.

So I looked at the science—what's going to make a difference, how can I get past this? Here's what I found:

Step 1: Acknowledge Your Feelings

What to Do: Allow yourself to feel disappointed without judgment. Suppressing your emotions can lead to prolonged distress—it's okay to cry!

Science Behind It: Emotional acceptance is a component of psychological flexibility, which research links to better mental health outcomes. Studies suggest that accepting emotions as they are, rather than denying them, leads to lower emotional distress (Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2001).

Step 2: Reframe the Situation

What to Do: Shift your perspective on the event that caused disappointment. Look for any possible positive outcomes or lessons learned and how you can shift.

Science Behind It: Cognitive reframing is a key technique in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) that helps to change the emotional response by altering the meaning attached to the event. Research shows that reframing can decrease emotional and physiological stress responses (Clinical Psychology Review, 2003).

Step 3: Set Realistic Expectations

What to Do: Review and adjust your expectations. Ensure they are realistic and attainable—look at the evidence in your life to make these adjustments.

Science Behind It: Unrealistic expectations can often lead to disappointments. Setting achievable goals is associated with higher satisfaction and motivation, according to goal-setting theory (American Psychologist, 2006).

Step 4: Develop a Plan

What to Do: Create a plan to address the source of your disappointment or to meet your goals in a different way.

What CAN you do?

Science Behind It: Proactive coping, which involves planning and goal-setting, can mitigate the effects of psychological stress and is linked to improved problem-solving (Personality and Individual Differences, 2002).

Step 5: Engage in Problem-Solving

What to Do: Identify specific steps you can take to overcome the disappointment. This could involve acquiring new skills, seeking advice, or adjusting your approach.

Science Behind It: Active problem-solving helps to reduce the impact of stress on your emotional well-being and can lead to more effective coping strategies in handling future disappointments (Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1987).

Step 6: Seek Support

What to Do: Talk to friends, family, or professionals who can offer support and advice. Study up if necessary!

Science Behind It: Social support is crucial for psychological resilience, reducing the impact of stress and enhancing overall well-being. Research has shown that social support can buffer against negative emotional responses to stress (Health Psychology, 2001).

Step 7: Practice Self-compassion

What to Do: Be kind to yourself. Recognize that experiencing disappointment is a part of life and does not reflect your worth or capabilities. Say it over and over again, write it out in your journal!

Science Behind It: Self-compassion has been linked to greater emotional resilience, lower levels of anxiety and depression, and a better recovery from stressful events (Psychological Science, 2007).

Step 8: Look to the Future

What to Do: Focus on future opportunities rather than dwelling on the disappointment. Set new goals and visualize achieving them. Vision board reset!

Science Behind It: A future-oriented mindset can enhance motivation and confidence, contributing to better mental

health and achievement outcomes. This approach uses principles from positive psychology, emphasizing growth and potential (Journal of Positive Psychology, 2012).

By following these steps, not only can you better manage the feelings of disappointment, but you can also use the experience as a catalyst for personal growth and enhanced problem-solving abilities—that's my thought anyway, hope it helps you, too!