

The Impossible Game

Difficult thoughts and feelings often prevent us from doing what we actually care about. And when this inner resistance threatens to take over, you may want to play the Impossible Game.

The moment you notice an inner resistance to taking a useful action, the game begins. You can then decide to give in to your resistance, and remain in your comfort zone. Or, you can choose to challenge yourself and do the seemingly impossible.

This means you allow yourself to feel the discomfort, hear your negative self-talk, and take action anyway. You do exactly what your mind says you cannot do, thus doing the “impossible.” Here’s what this looks like in practice.

- You wake up early in the morning, feel drowsy, and just want to hit the “Snooze” button and go back to sleep. But instead, you play the Impossible Game and challenge yourself to get out of bed as fast as possible.
- You enjoy a hot shower, and already dread the moment you have to get out. So you play the Impossible Game, and challenge yourself to turn the shower all the way to cold.
- You are about to get lunch, and crave the chocolate chip muffin you have been eyeing ever since you entered the café. Instead of buying it, however, you challenge yourself to order an apple.
- You come home after a long day at work, and just want to unwind on your couch while watching Netflix. Instead, however, you challenge yourself to reading five pages from the book on your nightstand.

The opportunities to play are endless, and it starts the moment you notice an inner resistance to useful action.

By playing the *Impossible Game*, you exercise your acceptance muscles and you create healthy variation. You practice your skill to make room for difficult thoughts and feelings, while learning to take action anyway. Doing this bumps life out of the rut, out of well-grooved habits of resistance. And there you are one tiny step closer to being able to do what you want.

Think of it as training a broadly useful skill. Anything worth doing comes along with inner resistance—whether we talk about working, exercising, or caring for your relationships. By doing new things—doing the impossible—you learn to overcome the limitations of your own mind, and you increase the odds of acting more in line with your goals and values in the future. Evolving depends on variation and selecting what works, and what could be more unexpected than doing the impossible?

The more you play the game, the more you might feel empowered. While this is a great bonus, it's not the intended outcome. Keep your eye on doing the impossible, not anything that might or might not follow.

We don't play to feel better, but to learn to take action with difficult thoughts and feelings, if they are there. Like all good games, this game is best played playfully. Games are supposed to be fun! Don't let that Dictator Within turn it into something SERIOUS even if it might be useful. It's not a drudge. It's just a silly challenge.

Keep your participation voluntary. Only you get to decide whether you want to play or not. After a while, you might find yourself raising the bar by seeing, for example, how many impossible things you can do in a row or in a day.

Acceptance Tool

This is OK...but only if you want to and only if it still feels like a game. As soon as larger goals start to seem SERIOUS, cut it out and focus only on one impossible thing at a time again.

The Impossible Game is a daily challenge and a frequent reminder that you can go beyond your self-set boundaries whenever you make the choice. Hold it lightly. Pursue it passionately. Why not?

Ready to play?