

# Handling A Crisis

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A crisis can come in many different forms, and often at the most unexpected times. The death of a loved one, the loss of a job, even the end of a relationship are all potential crisis situations. When a crisis occurs, painful thoughts and feelings can grip you and leave you feeling uncertain about what to do next. It is important to stay focused at such times.

Using the S.T.O.P. technique below can help you to deal with a crisis, rather than be overwhelmed by it.

## S.T.O.P.

Try following these four steps the next time you find yourself in a crisis situation.

### **Slow your breathing**

Take a few deep breaths while concentrating on your breath flowing in and flowing out. Doing this will help anchor you to the present moment rather than allowing your mind to wander.

### **Take note**

Take note of what you are experiencing as well as what you are thinking and feeling. Notice how what you are doing is influenced by your thoughts and feelings, and how they can easily carry you away if you allow them to.

### **Open up**

Be open to your feelings. Don't allow them to guide your actions, but experience them rather than trying to bury or ignore them.

### **Pursue your values**

Respond to the crisis in a way that fits in with your values. Ask yourself, "What can I do in the face of this crisis that reflects what I value? Where do I stand on this?"

## Next Steps

Once you have done this, you can begin to ask useful question, such as:

- Do I need help, support, or advice? If so, what friends, neighbors, or relatives can I contact?
- Have I experienced anything like this before? If so, did I learn anything from that experience that would be useful now?
- Can I improve the situation in any way? Are there any small steps I can take immediately that could be helpful?
- Ask yourself, "If someone I loved was going through this, what advice would I give them?"