

Willingness & Avoidance

Trying not to feel something is exhausting, and it usually shrinks your life to the size of what you can avoid. Willingness is the opposite move: letting the feeling be there while you go on living. This is a practice, not a personality trait.

1 What I'm working hard not to feel

Name the feeling, the memory, the sensation or the thought you keep at arm's length.

WHAT I AVOID FEELING

2 The strategies I use

All of these are understandable. Tick the ones you recognise.

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| ☐ Distraction (scrolling, TV, busywork) | ☐ Overthinking or planning it away |
| ☐ Staying constantly productive | ☐ Numbing (food, drink, substances) |
| ☐ Withdrawing from people | ☐ Reassurance-seeking |
| ☐ Perfectionism or over-preparing | ☐ Anger or picking a fight |

3 What avoidance costs

Short-term relief, long-term price. Be specific and be gentle.

WHAT IT GIVES ME IN THE MOMENT

WHAT IT TAKES FROM ME OVER TIME

4 Turn toward it, briefly

Set a timer for two minutes. Let the feeling be there without fixing it. Then write what you noticed.

WHERE I FELT IT IN MY BODY

WHAT IT WAS ACTUALLY LIKE

5 Willingness has a purpose

Nobody accepts pain for its own sake. What do you want badly enough to make room for this feeling?

I'M WILLING TO FEEL THIS IN THE SERVICE OF...

How willing am I to make room for this feeling today?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Not at all

Completely

6 What opens up

If this feeling were allowed to ride along, what would you do that you're not doing now?

Willingness isn't wanting the feeling. It's wanting your life more than you want the fight.

Take it further

Worksheets are a starting point, not a substitute for therapy. If you'd like support working through this, book your first appointment at [estefaniagiltherapy.com](https://www.estefaniagiltherapy.com).

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