

Pain: A Practice in Coexistence

A few things left behind by someone who was once stuck.

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Before You Read

This is not a course. Not therapy. Not me.

It's something I wrote for myself during a particular stretch of time. It does not represent who I am now. It does not claim to be true. It may not be helpful to you.

I went through something. Then I left a few things behind.

If you're in a similar kind of darkness, maybe one of these things can help you find a switch.

A few things to know straight away:

- I am not present in this document. There is no community. No customer support.
- If what you need is a full support system, this cannot provide it.
- It is simply words one person wrote down. They have travelled from someone who was also once stuck, and have now reached you.
- One day, this document may stop being shared. Not because anything went wrong. Just because the moment it belongs to has passed.

If any of that makes you hesitate, please stop reading here.

If you find it isn't enough, delete it.

If you delete it and still feel terrible, go and talk to someone.

How to Use This (and How Not To)

This document was written by someone learning to observe his own mind. It was not written to observe anyone else's.

So:

1. Do not use it to judge other people.
Every method you see here is for facing your own pain. It is not for analysing someone else. "That feeling is just a thought"—say this to yourself, never to another person. It is not a weapon.
2. Do not use it to avoid real-world action.
If your pain comes from a relationship that is hurting you, or from an environment that is unjust, these methods can only help steady you for a while. They are not a reason to endure forever. The clarity they buy you is meant for making decisions—not for giving up on them.
3. Do not use it to dismiss legitimate emotions.
Someone hurt you—anger is legitimate. You lost someone important—grief is legitimate. Do not use any method in here to stop yourself from mourning. Mourning is not internal friction. Mourning is healing.
4. Do not use it to make demands of others.
Every sentence in here was something a person said to himself. You have no right to take it and lay it on someone else. Everyone's hell is different. The map in your hands is not a verdict on anyone else.

If one day you see someone delete this section, and then use the remaining words to tell you "your pain is your own fault"—the thing that person is doing contradicts every reason this document was written down in the first place.

I cannot stop every misuse. But you can know: that was never my intent.

A Note

What follows is something one person wrote to himself during ten days of being trapped inside a single thought.

Later he found his way out. He gathered these scattered, fragmentary notes and put them into this document.

This wasn't done to "help people." It was done because: if someone had pressed these things into his hands back then, he might have taken fewer wrong turns.

Now you're holding it.

The word "you" in here was simply the habit he used when he wrote to himself. It does not mean you. You don't need to take it personally.

No need to reply. This is essentially something found, handed on.

The Blue Card

I tried one thing: drinking a glass of water. Just one mouthful.
Nothing else.

It didn't make anything better. But it turned "I can't do anything at all" into "at least I drank a mouthful of water."

I made a note of this step.

The Black Card: When There's No One

Perhaps you've already tried. You haven't found anyone you can talk to. Or you found someone, but they couldn't hold what you gave them. Or you don't dare reach out, because you feel you shouldn't bother anyone again.

Right now, you're reading this card.

Here is what you can still do when there is no one:

1. Say this aloud, to yourself: "It's really hard right now. No one is here. But I heard myself say that out loud."
The part of you that heard those words is your first witness.
2. -
3. -

This is a preview.

The full version includes: a note, four action cards (Blue / Yellow / Red / Gray), a black card, a foldout for the worst moments, a few blank pages, and a thin sheet: "What Happened Later."

If it feels like it might help, you can get the full version (\$20) at keegou.com

If it doesn't, just delete it.