



How to Become Emotionally Agile

In her book *Emotional Agility*, author Susan David warns that ignoring stress, bottling it up, or brooding over it can be counterproductive and even damaging to your wellbeing.

Being emotionally agile means “being flexible with your thoughts and feelings so you can respond optimally to everyday situations.” Being agile, which is thought to be the key to wellbeing and success, is not at all about positive thinking. It is about learning to accept all of your emotions as is.¹

Here are some of the author’s suggestions for how to become emotionally agile:

Live in the moment. The only moment that exists is right now. Getting stuck in the past or dreaming about the future only intensifies emotions, and it often distracts you from what needs your attention now.

Accept where you are. Before you can change anything, you must first accept where you are right now. Fighting against the reality of what is prevents you from taking action. Acceptance is critical for emotional agility.

Aim for beingwhelmed. David recommends aiming for a state of “whelm,” rather than underwhelm or overwhelm. This is similar to what author and researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi refers to as “flow,” which is a state in which we feel challenged, but not too challenged.

Have courage. David writes that “courage is not an absence of fear; courage is fear walking.” Courage is about accepting your fears and moving forward in spite of them.



Building emotional agility makes you more resilient, enabling you to move through life’s heavy moments with ease and grace when they appear.

1. David, S. A. (2016). *Emotional agility: Get unstuck, embrace change, and thrive in work and life*. New York: Avery.



Therapy: How to Make the Most of Each Session

Working with a therapist can be life changing. Not only is it an effective way to improve your emotional wellbeing, but research has also shown that therapy can produce positive and permanent biological changes in your brain.²

Therapists are mental health experts who have specialized training to help you sort out and find meaning in your experiences.

Here is how to make the most of your therapy sessions:

Buffer time. Schedule your appointments at a time when you will not be rushed, and give yourself a few minutes before and after each session to gather your mind and emotions. Clearing space before and after each appointment will help you get the most out of each session.³

Be honest. Be open and honest with your therapist when it comes to your feelings and current life circumstances. Minimizing or suppressing what you are experiencing will only limit the progress you can make.

Take notes. Therapy can stir up a lot of emotions, which means you may need more time to process what you discuss during your session. Taking notes allows you to revisit your discussion later when you are calm and more objective.

Ask questions. Ask questions when you do not understand something your therapist asks or says during your session. Speaking up and asking for clarification will help you get what you need from each meeting.

Do the work. At the end of each session, you and your therapist will likely outline some next steps. These steps will be based on your readiness, abilities, and needs. Be honest about what is realistic to ensure you can follow through.



Therapy is an empowering experience that helps you navigate some of life's most challenging circumstances. Like most things, what you get out of therapy is directly proportional to what you put into it.

2. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org>

3. <https://psychcentral.com/>



Chronic Complaining and Your Health

Complaining, or the expression of dissatisfaction, is natural. Everyone vents from time to time. If you are a chronic complainer though, it may be having a negative impact on your health.

Chronic complainers fixate on what is not going well rather than what is. They are quick to point out the downsides of situations and often resist solutions and suggestions.

Will Bowen, the author of *A Complaint-Free World*, points out that complaining can have a negative effect on your wellbeing. The book is geared toward helping you recognize your complaining tendencies so you can change your habits. Bowen also reminds readers that complaining about other people's complaining is also a form of complaining.⁴

"If complaining made people feel better, then the biggest complainers would be the happiest people."

Will Bowen

There are many reasons people complain. Complaining can be a short-term coping strategy that offers temporary relief from intense emotions. It can also foster bonding and friendship. Complaining with a trusted person tends to highlight shared experiences, which can strengthen relationships.

There are some drawbacks to complaining. Complaining can be contagious. Have you ever noticed how quickly attitudes and beliefs can grow among groups? Complaining can have negative consequences within teams and organizations.

Research has shown that chronic complaining leads to a decrease in mood. In general, complainers are unhappier than those who engage in complaining only frequently.

According to Bowen, the opposite of complaining is gratitude. The next time you are tempted to complain about something, try offering a solution or expressing gratitude instead.⁵



4. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/significant-results/201706/the-three-types-complaining>
5. <https://www.semanticscholar.org>

Balsamic Chicken Veggie Bake

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- ½ cup avocado or olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon brown or Dijon mustard (optional)
- 3 tablespoons fresh basil, finely chopped + additional for topping (could also use a mix of fresh thyme and basil)
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1¼ lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast, tenders or thighs (if large, cut in half)
- 3 small heads of broccoli, chopped into pieces (about 4-5 cups total)
- 3-4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into skinny sticks (see note below)**
- 2 cups button mushrooms, halved or quartered if large
- 1 small red onion, diced into larger chunks
- 1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes

Instructions

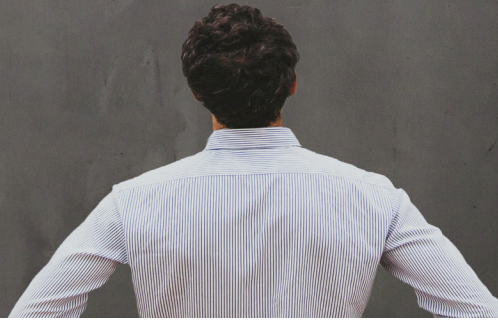
1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Line a sheet pan (a rimmed baking sheet) with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, combine the balsamic vinegar, oil, garlic, basil, mustard, salt and pepper. Whisk to make the sauce.
3. Place chicken in zip-top bag or glass container. Pour about half of the balsamic sauce over the chicken. Toss chicken to coat and marinate in the fridge while you prep the remaining ingredients. Note: You can marinate the chicken up to 24 hours ahead.
4. Next, chop the broccoli, carrots, mushrooms, and onion. Note: For more tender carrot pieces, cut the carrots into skinny sticks.
5. Place all vegetables, except for the tomatoes, on the prepared sheet pan. Pour the remaining balsamic sauce over the vegetables and toss to incorporate, making sure all the pieces are coated. Use your hands to really massage the sauce into the broccoli florets.
6. Move the vegetables around to make space for the chicken. Place the marinated chicken on pan. Discard any remaining marinade used for chicken.
7. Place the sheet pan in the oven and bake for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, add the tomatoes to the pan and toss the vegetables around so they won't burn. Return the sheet pan to the oven.
8. Bake for an additional 5-10 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. This will depend on the thickness of the chicken. To make sure chicken is done, use a meat thermometer. Once thermometer reaches 165 degrees F when inserted in the thickest part of the chicken, remove the sheet pan from the oven.
9. Top with additional chopped fresh basil. Serve and enjoy!

Prep Time	Cook Time	Servings
20 minutes	25 minutes	4



Nutrition Facts

Calories	353
Fat	15 g
Sodium:	325 mg
Carbohydrate	13 g
Fiber	4 g
Sugar	7 g
Protein	29 g



Complaint Journal

How often do you complain? Keep track of your complaints by keeping a complaint journal. Record each complaint, along with what led up to it and how you responded. Then, use the information to make any adjustments.

Employer Completion Form

☐

I successfully completed the Complaint Journal Wellbeing Activity by:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Emotional Agility

Become emotionally agile:

ACCEPT WHERE YOU ARE

Accept where you are so you can focus your efforts on moving forward.

AIM FOR BEING WHELMED

Aiming for a state of “whelm,” rather than underwhelm or overwhelm, will help you find more balance.

HAVE COURAGE

Courage is being fearful about doing something and doing it anyway.

Your Wellbeing Activity

Complaint Journal

Record your complaints, along with what led up to them and how you responded.

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