



The Voice in My Head

I am a failure

Kirsty Pratley, Infection Preventionist, Mayo Hospital

What comes next is a transcript of what is constantly playing in the background of Kirsty's days and nights. The failure thoughts take no effort at all. They bubble up constantly. It's the cheering up thoughts that take a lot of energy so Kirsty has to work hard at keeping herself cheered up. There is something for all of us in the conversation with herself that follows. She's like the soul whisperer.

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A Q2 wellbeing recovery program. It's been quite a year!





Work (Cue the Failure Buzzer sound effect)

A. I failed to initiate a culture change in masking. I did not have adequate leadership skills.

B. I failed to complete a work assignment. I had to hand over the reins. I did not have adequate organizational perspective.

C. I failed to communicate effectively and made a bad decision that affected others. I was too scared to make a better decision.

D. I continue to fail to be as present and mindful in work as I should be. No matter what I am working on, I am always thinking about all of the other things that need doing.

Take heart, now (Cue the Right Answer sound effect)

A. *The culture change problem was not dependent on you alone. Culture is culture, after all, and it takes a long time to accomplish—COVID did not give us any time to adjust.*

B. *Three months previous to that work assignment we had merged with NLH. Of course you didn't have the necessary organizational perspective yet!*

C. *The fear that affected your decision is deep-seated and you have been working on it for a long time. You are making slow, incremental progress.*

D. *There is way too much for everyone in healthcare right now. You are not alone in this feeling. Try to allow it since you know that coworkers you admire and respect feel the same way.*

Home (Cue the Failure Buzzer sound effect)

E. I failed to end up with the control and happiness in life that I planned.

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F. I am failing to provide the people I love with the help they need so that they would not make decisions that make me feel so desperate and sad.

G. I am failing to be present and mindful as I should be when spending time with valuable people in my life.

H. I am failing to get my work done, even at home. There is not time enough to do it all. Every day I am working on something but think I should be working on something else. I can't even think too far ahead without panicking.

Take heart, now (Cue the Right Answer sound effect)

E. Yes, that's true. But you are alive in it. And I love you, I really do.

F. Just keep offering all of the resources you have, and the best thing, which of course, is love. You have lots of that. Tons. Overflowing. Push it out there no matter what. The people you love enjoy being loved by you.

G. If you are aware that you are not being present and mindful, then you actually ARE being present and mindful. When you realized it, just pull yourself back to it. That. Is. Enough.

H. Yes, and, remember? You love spring work! Think of all of those squats you are going to do when picking up sticks! The muscle you will build sawing up those tree limbs. Haha! Also you know you can get help—but you like to do this stuff yourself. Maybe you could think about getting...a tiny bit of help..

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The World (Cue the Failure Buzzer sound effect)

I. I have failed to be a servant to others. COVID has kept me firmly in work; I have not suffered financially the way others have. I should suffer as others do.

J. I fail in my effort to understand others with different beliefs. I should be able to RELATE somehow. Why can't I be more accepting!?

K. I am failing in generosity. It takes too much time and effort. Time on the phone to keep in touch takes energy away.

Take heart, now (Cue the Right Answer sound effect)

***I.** My dearest girl, this is something very old for you, and goes way, way back—it's probably in your genes. This is a necessary component of your character. It is part of what makes you beautiful inside. Look at yourself right in this second. You are suffering. It's enough.*

***J.** I'll bet you can find something in common with them. The love of chocolate chip cookies can be shared as closely and warmly as religious, philosophical, or political commitment. Just remind yourself about that scene in Poisonwood when the wife was handing out fried chicken to the people.*

***K** Remember that one time you set the timer when talking to B...? It worked, and she wasn't offended. You can try that some more.*

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