

# **I Hate Adulting**

A Quick Guide to Feeling Better

*Eight Simple Practices*

**Volume 1: Recentering**

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Volume 1: Recentering

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This book is intended for general informational and motivational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional mental health care, medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Please consult a qualified professional for guidance specific to your circumstances.

Second Edition.

## A Gentle Note

This guide was written to offer a little steadiness on hard days. But some days ask for more support than any book can give, and that's alright. If you're struggling, please know that help is available, and reaching out is a sign of strength, not a step backward.

### **In the United States**

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text 988, available 24/7

Crisis Text Line — text HOME to 741741, available 24/7

### **In the United Kingdom**

Samaritans — call 116 123, free and available 24/7

Shout — text SHOUT to 85258, available 24/7

*Wherever you are, please don't hesitate to reach out to a trusted person in your life, or a local emergency service, if you ever feel unsafe. You are worth the support.*

# **Table of Contents**

Introduction

Practice #1: Keep Things Simple

Practice #2: Do Not Take Things Personally

Practice #3: Stay Active, Then Rest

Practice #4: Do Not Dwell

Practice #5: Do Not Wait

Supplementary Practices

Closing Remarks

About the Author

## Introduction

In theory, adulthood is often described as a transition marked by independence, achievement, and self-sufficiency. In reality, many people find it to be a period defined instead by uncertainty, fatigue, and a quiet sense that something is wrong or missing. That gap between what was expected and what is actually experienced can be disorienting, and it's completely common to feel this way.

There is little formal guidance for managing this gap. Childhood and early adulthood are often framed as gentle, forgiving stretches of growth, where mistakes are expected and encouragement comes easily. Full adulthood can feel more abrupt: sustained responsibility, compounding stress, and, for many, a disorientation that wasn't there before. Over time, this can settle into a low-grade anxiety that quietly builds.

This guide doesn't promise to resolve that feeling entirely, few things do. What it offers instead is a small set of practices, five core and three supplementary, meant to bring a little more clarity and steadiness to the harder days. Think of them less as rules and more as gentle observations, gathered from what has genuinely helped people navigating similar seasons of life.

Each practice describes a familiar situation, offers a way to move through it, explains why that approach tends to help, and closes with a short takeaway to carry with you.

Ultimately, the path forward is yours to shape. These practices are simply meant to walk alongside you as you do.

## Practice #1: Keep Things Simple

### Situation

A moment of confrontation, an important question, or a high-stakes decision arises, and it can feel like a lot all at once.

### Recommended Approach

1. Pause before responding. There's no rush.
2. Step away briefly if you can. A short walk or a quiet moment alone is often enough.
3. Let your thoughts drift, even briefly, to something unrelated.
4. Breathe, slowly and deliberately.
5. Then, when you're ready, proceed.

### Guiding Principle

Try to keep your language simple and clear. Say only what's needed — the exact answer to the exact question — and leave the rest for another time.

### Rationale

Extra words or unnecessary elaboration tend to complicate things rather than settle them. The more that's said beyond what's needed, the more there is to untangle later. This holds true in professional settings just as much as personal ones.

### Takeaway

*Fewer words tend to mean less complication, and a little more peace.*

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## Practice #2: Do Not Take Things Personally

### Situation

You're spoken to in a way that feels dismissive or condescending, and it stings, even if you don't show it.

### Recommended Approach

1. Try to stay steady, even if it's hard in the moment.
2. Let your expression stay neutral rather than visibly reactive.
3. A calm, polite acknowledgment is enough. Staying composed doesn't mean you agree.
4. Close gently — "I'll look into that" works well professionally, or "We can talk about this more later" in a personal moment.
5. Give yourself permission to step away. There's no prize for staying in a stressful moment longer than you need to.

### Rationale

Criticism from others rarely captures the full picture of who you are. More often than not, it says more about the person delivering it than about you. Meeting it with more of the same rarely helps. Your energy is worth spending elsewhere.

### Takeaway

*Staying steady tends to protect your sense of self better than pushing back does.*

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## Practice #3: Stay Active, Then Rest

### **Situation**

A worry keeps circling, quietly taking up space in your mind.

### **Recommended Approach**

1. Give yourself permission to truly rest. Sleep matters more than it gets credit for.
2. Wake a little earlier if you can, gently, without rushing into the day. Give yourself a few quiet minutes before anything else asks for your attention.
3. Take your time getting ready, or give yourself the whole day off if that's what you need.
4. Choose a meal or drink that feels comforting.
5. Make room for one activity you know lifts your mood, even briefly.

### **Rationale**

Perspective tends to soften after some rest and a little distance from the problem. Your time and energy are limited. It's worth spending them on what genuinely supports you. A rested body and an unhurried mind tend to make gentler choices.

### **Takeaway**

*Rest isn't a detour from clarity. It's often the way there.*

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## Practice #4: Do Not Dwell

### **Situation**

You find yourself circling back to old decisions or unfinished moments, turning them over again.

### **Recommended Approach**

1. Notice the urge to revisit them, and gently let it pass.
2. Turn your attention toward something new, even something small.
3. Keep moving forward, one small step at a time.
4. When you're ready, try making a list of things you've accomplished — big or small — from as far back as you can remember to now.
5. Beside each one, note a happiness score from 1 to 10 (1 for quiet satisfaction, 5 for real pride, 10 for pure joy).
6. See how close you can get your total to 100, and let yourself feel proud of what you find. Personal and professional moments count equally.

### **Rationale**

Replaying the "what ifs" rarely offers real insight, and it tends to hold us back from the present. What's already happened can't be changed, and revisiting it too often can slow down growth more than support it. It's worth pausing, every so often, to remember everything you've already done.

**Takeaway**

*As gently as possible, allow yourself the peace of letting go of what's already passed, take pride in what you've built, and leave room for what's next.*

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## Practice #5: Do Not Wait. Act Now

**Situation**

You're wondering whether now is really the right time to take a step toward something that matters to you.

**Recommended Approach**

1. In most cases, it's alright to move forward without waiting.
2. Remember that the present is the only moment you're truly guaranteed.
3. Notice how the spark you feel in a moment of inspiration can carry you further than you expect.
4. Trust yourself. You know your own rhythm better than anyone else could.
5. Be kind to yourself here, in the moment. You are your own best support.

**Rationale**

It's common to put off things that matter — travel, reconciliation, a career change, a personal project — in the hope that a better moment will come along. Often, it doesn't arrive the way we imagined; circumstances shift, or time simply runs shorter than expected. A well-considered intention, acted on now, tends to serve you better than one left waiting.

**Takeaway**

*Right now is the only moment you can be certain of, so it's worth treating it kindly and mindfully.*

## Supplementary Practices

### **Bonus Practice #1 — Don't Forget to Smile at Yourself**

A small, genuine smile, even one just for yourself, can quietly shift the whole tone of a hard moment.

### **Bonus Practice #2 — Maintain a Forward Focus**

What you need is usually just ahead of you, not behind. It's alright to keep looking forward.

### **Bonus Practice #3 — Recognize Your Own Value**

When we make time to recognize our worth and space to care for our own well-being, inner growth and sustainable peace tend to follow.

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## Closing Remarks

There's a common, quiet belief that by a certain age — often thirty — a person should have reached certain life markers or achievements: career stability, financial security, a settled sense of purpose, a personal life that feels put-together. This belief isn't especially accurate. Reaching those markers doesn't guarantee peace, and not reaching them by a certain due date doesn't mean anything has gone wrong.

Growth continues well past any one milestone. Setbacks and recoveries happen again and again throughout adulthood, and each one adds something to who you're becoming. If there's one thing worth holding onto here, it's this: *Try not to place limits on what's still possible for you.*

These practices aren't offered as a fix, or as therapeutic advice. They are just small starting points for anyone hoping to feel a little steadier, a little more centered, and a little more uplifted in their everyday life.

In *Volume Two: Releasing*, we focus our efforts on decompressing internal thoughts and emotions that may develop in direct response to some of the situations presented in volume one.

## About the Author

Quiana Lenise writes about the small, steady practices that make adulthood feel a little more manageable. She believes that growth doesn't have to be loud to be real, and that a gentle nudge in the right direction can go a long way.

You can read ongoing notes to help make the day brighter and steadier on her blog at **<https://smallnotestobreathe.pagecord.com>**

*This is Volume 1 in an ongoing series. Thank you for reading.*