



People who have should and must thinking will often tell themselves things such as:

- I should always be in control.
- I should be happy.
- Life should be fair.
- I must be successful.
- I must never make mistakes.

We all make mistakes in life. Try not to think that failing at **something** means you are a failure. Accept that it is okay to fail and make mistakes. Look at what you can learn from the experience that can help you to grow.

Accept who you are and the way things are:

- People will let me down at times.
- Life is not always fair.
- I will make mistakes.

Here are things you can do to adjust your thinking:

- Observe others. Are they perfect? Do they make mistakes?
- Stop predicting the future. If things are not going well now, it does not mean they will never improve.
- When I am feeling “low”, I may not be at my best. I will try not to take on too much during that time or make big decisions.
- Instead of using the word “should” I will use the word “prefer”. *“I would have preferred not to have made that mistake”.*
- Remind yourself about your successes.
- I can expect some mistakes. I will prepare how to handle the situation when I make a mistake.

Write out a situation where you made a mistake (or where you fear you might make a mistake).

List ways that you could handle the situation differently.

Adapted from: How to Deal with Should and Must Thinking (H.A.Westra & R.A. Young 1998) by: Susan Charlton RN, BScN & Elizabeth Emberly RN, BScN (CDMHP, 2003)

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