

# Breaking Promises to Yourself?

by *Lauren Mackler*

"I continually make promises to myself, but I never follow through."

Sound familiar?

Transforming self-defeating patterns into self-supporting behaviors that stick is one of the hardest things to do. Change is hard and we all slip up. The key is to getting yourself back on-course when you do.

When you find yourself falling back into old, limiting patterns, think of it as a process of course-correcting. Welcome the challenge—it means that you're taking charge of your life. Don't judge yourself. Instead, treat yourself with compassion.



Below are some common pitfalls to personal transformation and some ways to override them:

**Feeling overwhelmed.** Most likely, if you start to feel overwhelmed, it's because you're trying to make too many changes all at once. The best way to deal with this is to step back and look at your personal development goals. If you're taking on too much, it's time to reprioritize. Maybe you need to focus on one or two things instead of three. Or maybe one of your goals requires a lot of effort, so it's taking up all your energy. Identify the things that are most important to you right now in your life. If you need to, just focus on one goal at a time and don't move on to the next one until the first one is achieved.

**Feeling discouraged.** This often happens when you're listening to the inner critic—the inner voice that says: "You'll never make it." "It's hopeless." "This is too hard." "You're not moving fast enough." Whatever that voice is saying, you need to articulate a response, drawing from the part of you that longs for change and feels optimistic. Review your past accomplishments; remind yourself of what you're capable of doing and being. Instead of focusing on and feeding the old voice that drags you down, actively support the part of you that believes in you and your ability to create the life you want.

**Falling back into old patterns.** There are two ways to address this issue. First, be aware that you're more likely to slip up when you're trying to achieve change all by yourself. It may be that you don't

have an outer support system to help you maintain your focus and discipline and to give you the kind of outside encouragement everyone needs. Outer supports might include a trusted friend or family member, a coach or therapist, or a supportive group. To have a strong outer support system, you have to actively build and sustain it. That involves reaching out to people instead of keeping yourself isolated. Second, if you're falling back into old patterns, avoid situations that trigger your old behaviors. For example, if you habitually eat junk food when you're feeling isolated and lonely on weekends, schedule some weekend social activities to bypass the old trigger.

**Lack of energy.** Take good care of yourself. A lack of energy typically relates to a failure to sustain your inner support system, which provides the physical, emotional, and mental energy needed to achieve your goals. If you're eating poorly, neglecting your health, or living a high-stress lifestyle, you're depleting your inner resources. That will make it difficult to maintain the energy you need to participate fully and actively in your life.

**Lack of motivation.** If you don't have a loving and caring relationship with yourself, it's hard to feel motivated to take action and make good choices for yourself. Building and sustaining a healthy, loving relationship with yourself is absolutely crucial to personal transformation. Loving yourself compels you to make lifestyle choices that make you feel good and that will generate the new results that you want.

© 2011 Lauren Mackler



*Lauren Mackler is a world-renowned coach and author of the international bestseller [Solemate: Master the Art of Aloneness & Transform Your Life](#). Sign up for her free Live Boldly e-newsletter at [www.laurenmackler.com](http://www.laurenmackler.com).*