

## Coping Mechanisms vs Coping Skills

You work hard. Everyone wants your attention.  
What do you reach for when you're tired, depleted?  
Is what you are doing helping or hurting.

### How do you even know if you are falling into an unhelpful a Coping Mechanism or building a Coping Skill?

#### Rules of thumb....

##### Coping Mechanism

- Readily Available
- Quick Fix
- Fun
- Perpetual
- Reactive
- Existing

##### Coping Skills

- Hard Won
- Take Time
- Satisfying
- Sustaining
- Responsive
- Thriving

##### Coping Mechanism

- Fries Your Nervous System
- Drains Your Reserves
- Leaves You Less Able to Cope

##### Coping Skills

- Repairs Your Nervous System
- Builds Your Reserves
- Expands Your Range

##### Coping Mechanism

- Substance Abuse
- Addictions
- Toys/Spending
- Food
- Sex
- Distraction

##### Coping Skills

- Healthy Food
- Exercise
- Experiences
- Friendship/Support
- Communication
- Contemplation Practice

#### Step One: Notice your habits

*What leaves you with a hangover? What do you do when you say "I deserve this," quietly to yourself? Do you feel filled or worse than you did?*

#### Step Two: What can you subtract?

*Start small. Is it the soda? The late-night ice cream? Binge-watching? Doom scrolling? What small draining habit can you let go of?*

#### Step Three: What can you add?

*A one-minute meditation? Deep breathing? More water? A walk? Berries?*

#### This isn't supposed to be easy.

*The snooze button is easy, getting up is not. Netflix is easy, getting out the paints is not. A cookie is easy.... You get it.*

#### Start small. Get Help. Love Yourself