



**?I've had a terrible day, I'm just going to drown my sorrows in a glass of wine.?**

**?I had a fight with my husband/wife and it was awful. Ice cream would make it better though??**

**?I had an awful at work. I'm going treat myself to some pizza. With extra cheese. I deserve it!?**

If any of these sound like you, then you sound like me! If you read my column about changing my relationship with food, then you know I've spent the past 4+ years and -100lbs of weight loss changing the way I see food, and the way I eat it. But even today, I struggle with my emotional relationship with food.

My problem is, what do you DO with the emotions, situations and anxiety that exists in your life if you don't solve it or cure it or push it down with food? I've worked to develop a number of ?Coping Skills? for these situations, and I want to share them with you:

## **#1. EXERCISE!**

Exercise is the most underutilized antidepressant. Much like Elle Woods says in Legally Blonde, "Exercise gives you endorphins. Endorphins make you happy." I have found so much stress relief from exercising - be it spin class, biking outside on the rail trail or even running on the elliptical. Exercise helps me process my emotions, expend the excess energy and tension and it really does improve my mood! Want a free online resource? Check out this free [online beginner's guide to Zumba](#).

## **#2. JOURNALING!**

There is great value to writing down your feelings. It helps you to process the emotions and review them in a more objective manner. It's also great to have that record of your interactions and how you handled them, so you know what works and what doesn't work for next time. [Here are 30 free journaling prompts, in case you would like help getting started.](#)

## **#3. DANCE PARTY!**

Now, this could technically be considered exercise, but I like for dance parties to be their own category of coping skill because for me, it's less about the cardio part of dancing and more about moving to the music. Everyone has a song that just makes them tap their feet, sing along or, if you're me, shimmy up to your boyfriend while he's cooking dinner. The ladies of Grey's Anatomy have proven, dancing it out and being silly for a few minutes genuinely relieves our stress and enables us to handle difficult situations more clearly. My free go-to for music is always [www.pandora.com](http://www.pandora.com) because I can craft my own preferences with the thumbs up and thumbs down!

## **#4. MEDITATION!**

The flip side of a dance party, meditation, can also be a tremendously effective tool in dealing with your emotions. Meditation, either on a word, on a phrase or an idea, can help you relieve the anxious emotions and find mental clarity, before you dive into the French fries. There are a number of great free or inexpensive apps available [to help even beginners get started.](#)

## **#5. BRAIN TEASERS!**

My mom loves to relax after a long day and commute with sudoku. She says the focus on solving the puzzles helps relieve her stress and she enjoys the challenge. [Braingle](#) has more than 20,000 free puzzles and teasers on your desktop and [Lumosity](#) is a great, free app that allows you to focus on the things you like and that are important to you!

What about you? How do you manage your emotions WITHOUT turning to food or drinks?

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