

7 Things I Learned the Hard Way (So You Don't Have To)

Honest lessons from 20+ years of therapy,
psych wards, and figuring it out.

A free guide from **Fixing Feelings**

fixingfeelings.com

Before we start:

This isn't a list of motivational quotes. I'm not going to tell you to manifest your best life or journal your way to happiness. Some of that works. Most of it skips the hard part.

I've spent over twenty years in therapy. I've been in inpatient psych care. I've sat across from more counselors, psychiatrists, and social workers than I can count. Some of them helped. A lot of them didn't.

What actually changed my life wasn't a technique. It was learning a few uncomfortable truths that nobody warned me about.

Here are seven of them.

1

Healing isn't linear, and nobody tells you that.

You'll have a great week. Then you'll have a Tuesday that feels like year one all over again. That's not failure. That's the actual process. The people who quit are usually the ones who expected a straight line up.

"Bad days don't erase good progress. They're part of it."

2

Most advice is for people who are already okay.

"Just exercise more." "Try gratitude journaling." "Set boundaries." Cool. That's great if you're functioning. But if you can barely get out of bed, those tips feel like someone handing you a gym membership while your house is on fire. You need someone who gets the difference.

"You're not broken for not responding to surface-level advice."

3

Talking about it isn't enough. Feeling it is.

I spent years intellectualizing my trauma. I could explain my childhood like a case study. Sounded great in sessions. Changed nothing. The shift happened when I stopped narrating and started actually sitting with the feelings I'd been running from.

"Understanding why you hurt is step one. Letting yourself hurt is step two."

4

The right person matters more than the right method.

CBT, DBT, EMDR, somatic, psychodynamic. I've tried all of them. What actually made the difference was finding someone who listened without judging, called me on my bullshit without shaming me, and made me feel like a human being in the room. The method was secondary.

"Find the person first. The approach will follow."

5

You're allowed to fire your therapist.

I stayed with bad-fit therapists for months because I thought I was supposed to push through discomfort. There's a difference between productive discomfort and wasting your time with someone who doesn't get you. If it's not working after a real try, move on. Your healing is too important to be polite about.

"Loyalty to a bad fit is not a virtue."

6

Isolation feels safe, but it's a trap.

When you've been hurt by people, pulling away makes perfect sense. It's smart, even. For a while. But long-term isolation rewires your brain to see connection as threat, and that's when things get dangerous. You don't need a hundred friends. You need one honest person.

"Protection becomes prison if you never open the door."

7

You deserve help that actually helps.

Not performative empathy from someone reading a script. Not a checklist of coping skills printed off a website. Not someone who nods and watches the clock. You deserve someone who's been in the dark and found their way out, and will sit with you while you find yours.

"Don't settle for help that doesn't feel like help."

Ready to talk to someone who gets it?

Fixing Feelings is life coaching built on lived experience.

No judgment. No scripts. Just honest conversation
with someone who's been there.

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Sometimes you just need someone to listen.