

Feeling guilty at work steals our energy and our self-belief. There are 4 types of guilt we can experience:

1. Natural - *you feel bad because you have done something wrong*
2. Chronic - *as a result of prolonged exposure to stress*
3. Collective - *when a group feels shared responsibility for an issue*
4. Survivor - *when your win is someone else's loss.*

When do you feel the most guilt at work?



What are your 'shoulds'?

eg. I should have responded to those emails sooner



What to do when guilt gets in your way

Swap your story

From guilt to **gratitude**

👉 Sounds like: *I feel bad I've not done more prep for tomorrow's meeting*
Swap: *1 thing I feel good about is...*

From what you have done wrong to **what you have done right**

👉 Sounds like: *I shouldn't have been so stubborn about my perspective*
Swap: *1 strength I brought to the situation was ...*

From what didn't work well to **what will you do differently next time**

👉 Sounds like: *I wish I checked my data before I presented it*
Swap: *1 thing I have learnt from today is...*

From **sorry** to **thank you**

👉 Sounds like: *Sorry I'm late*
Swap: *Thank you for waiting.*

Consider your circles of control, influence, concern

First, list everything you feel guilty about. Then, decide which category (control, influence or concern) they belong to and answer a coach yourself question.

Control

What's 1 thing I could do differently?



Influence

Who could I have a conversation with to change my perspective?



Concern

How could I learn to let go of things I can't control?



Carry out 3 small actions for 3 different types of guilt

If you have 'to-do-list' guilt

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1. Tick off the most important task on your to-do list
 2. Write down one action that you achieved that you didn't anticipate
 3. Identify one person who you've helped today.

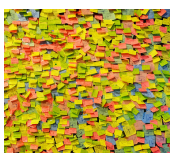
If you have 'boundary' guilt

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1. Set and share boundaries
 2. Ask for support to stick to them
 3. Signal issues quickly.

If you have 'missed deadline' guilt

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1. Flag it fast
 2. Acknowledge and apologise (*but don't over apologise*)
 3. Let others know in your team know what's next and keep them updated as you go.

Recommended resources



You're Never Going to Be "Caught Up" at Work. Stop Feeling Guilty About It



Dr. Bill Mitchell shares how to make sure guilt doesn't get in our way on episode [#252](#) of *Squiggly Careers*.