



Change your focus, take back your power.

Lupus is a tricky disease. Flares are unpredictable. The symptoms come and go, and new ones appear seemingly at random. And some symptoms are hard to place. Is it lupus, or is it something else?

Many patients with lupus feel like their disease has "taken the wheel." You may sometimes feel like lupus is in control of:

- Your motivation
- Your comfort
- Your energy
- Your plans and dreams



Ready to get back in the driver's seat?

You can regain a sense of control by changing your focus with this simple exercise!

Step 1

Describe a familiar lupus-related situation that makes you feel like lupus is in control. Let's walk through this activity together using the example below.

Whom I was with: *My sister*

What was happening: *I was planning to go to dinner for my mother's birthday.*

What lupus was doing to me: *I was feeling really tired and in pain.*

What I did: *I forced myself to go but I had to leave early.*

How I felt: *I felt guilty, like I should have been able to "tough it out."*

Step 2

Look for the "hidden controls" and check the boxes next to the items you can control.

- ☐ **Whom I was with:** *My sister*
- ☐ **What was happening:** *I was planning to go to dinner for my mother's birthday.*
- ☐ **What lupus was doing to me:** *I was feeling really tired and in pain.*
- ☒ **What I did:** *I forced myself to go but I had to leave early.*
- ☒ **How I felt:** *I felt guilty, like I should have been able to "tough it out."*

In situations when it feels like lupus is in the driver's seat, the only areas you can control are **what you do** and **how you feel**.



Step 3

List your options! Think about as many different actions or reactions you might have had to the situation.

What I did: *I forced myself to go, but I had to leave early.*

Other things I could try:

- *Stayed home, but sent Mom texts throughout the dinner.*
- *Stayed home and wrote Mom a letter telling her how much she means to me.*
- *Rested, but came late for dessert.*

How I felt: *I felt guilty, like I should be able to "tough it out."*

Other ways I could feel:

- *Allowed myself a few minutes to feel sad, but then reflected on what I am grateful for: a warm house, a healthy mom, my dog.*
- *Stayed mad for a little bit, but then got mad at lupus. Refused to let it ruin my mood on top of ruining dinner. Watched a favorite DVD and felt better. I WON!*

Step 4

Now you try it! Pick any situation that made you feel like lupus was in control. Describe it using the guide below.

Whom I was with: _____

What was happening: _____

What lupus was doing to me: _____

What I did: _____

How I felt: _____

Now list your options. Think about as many different actions or reactions you might have had to the situation.

What I did: *(Fill in from your story)* _____

Other things I could try *(List two or three)*

• _____ • _____ • _____

How I felt: *(Fill in from your story)* _____

Other ways I could feel *(List two or three)*

• _____ • _____ • _____

✓ Make the most of this exercise

- It may take some practice to remember that you do have choices in these two areas—**what you do** and **how you feel**. This exercise is aimed at helping you identify more choices that you might not be aware of at first.
- The following pages are blank worksheets to guide you through this exercise anytime you need to. Be patient with yourself, and keep practicing! If you get stuck, talking to someone in your support network can help you to get clear on what's within your control.

Focusing on the areas where you do have choices puts YOU back in the driver's seat, not lupus.



You're in Control

Instructions: Describe. | Check what you **can** control. | List your options.

- ☐ Whom I was with: _____
- ☐ What was happening: _____
- ☐ What lupus was doing to me: _____
- ☐ What I did: _____
- ☐ How I felt: _____

Now let's focus on what you can control.

What I did: _____

Other things I could try:

How I felt: _____

Other ways I could feel:



You're in Control

Instructions: Describe. | Check what you **can** control. | List your options.

- ☐ Whom I was with: _____
- ☐ What was happening: _____
- ☐ What lupus was doing to me: _____
- ☐ What I did: _____
- ☐ How I felt: _____

Now let's focus on what you can control.

What I did: _____

Other things I could try:

How I felt: _____

Other ways I could feel:

→ Ready for more?

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