



The ‘Let it Exist’ Approach for Praise Dysphoria

“Let It Exist” is a mindfulness-based method for handling praise or positive feedback. Instead of responding immediately or trying to redirect your feelings, you learn to *hold space* for the compliment—observing it neutrally, without judgment, until you feel ready to respond. This reduces pressure and helps you become comfortable with positive attention.

Why “Let It Exist” Can Work

- **Reduces Reactivity:** Pausing before response breaks the cycle of deflection or anxiety.
- **Builds Tolerance:** Repeatedly allowing praise to be present without resisting increases your capacity to receive it.
- **Encourages Self-Awareness:** You become more attuned to your internal sensations and thought patterns.
- **Creates Choice:** You decide *if* and *how* to respond rather than acting on autopilot.

Four-Step Guide

Step	Name	What to Do
1	Pause & Breathe	Stop what you’re doing and take 2–3 deep, steady breaths.
2	Notice the Feedback	Mentally “place” the compliment beside you; let it be an object.
3	Observe Internally	Scan your body and mind. Note sensations, emotions, and thoughts.
4	Decide Your Response	When you feel calm, choose how to reply, silently or out loud.

1. Pause & Breathe

- **Cue:** The instant you hear praise, silently say to yourself, “Pause.”
- **Action:** Inhale for 4 seconds, hold 2 seconds, exhale for 6 seconds. Repeat twice.
- **Why:** Breath anchors you in the present and interrupts the urge to deflect.



2. Notice the Feedback

- **Label** it neutrally: “Praise for X,” or simply “That was a compliment.”
- **Why:** Externalizing the feedback creates psychological distance so you’re not swept away by your internal reactions.

3. Observe Internally

- **Scan** head to toe: Where in your body do you feel tension, e.g., chest, throat, stomach?
- **Name** what you notice:
 - Thoughts: “I don’t deserve this,” “What if they’re wrong?”
 - Emotions: anxiety, relief, confusion.
 - Physical: racing heart, flush, tightness.
- **Hold** these observations *without* trying to change them. Just notice.
- **Why:** Mindful observation teaches you that thoughts and feelings are ephemeral—they can exist without dictating action.

4. Decide Your Response

Choose from one of three options when you feel ready:

1. **Immediate Acknowledgment**
 - If you feel calm, say “Thank you,” or use any script you prefer.
2. **Delayed Response**
 - If you’re still unsettled, **nod** or **smile** silently, then respond verbally later (e.g., in an email or follow-up chat).
3. **No Response**
 - In rare cases (e.g., in a group setting, you’re overwhelmed), it’s OK to simply *let the compliment exist* without any outward reply—your calm acceptance is the response.

Practice Exercises

1. **Mindful Listening Drill**
 - Partner exercise: Have a trusted person give you short, genuine compliments.
 - Practice *all four steps* each time—especially the breath and observation phases.
2. **Journal Reflections**
 - After receiving real-life praise, jot down:



- What you visualised in Step 2.
- What sensations or thoughts arose in Step 3.
- Which response you chose in Step 4 and why.

3. **Timed Breathing Reminder**

- Set a daily 2-minute alarm to pause and breathe, practising Step 1 even without praise. This builds the habit.