

How To Tolerate The Intolerable

QUESTION:

How do I endure what feels unbearable without breaking apart or losing myself completely?

ANSWER:

There are times in life when leaving isn't an immediate option whether financially, emotionally, or logistically. During those times, tolerating the intolerable becomes less about surrendering to pain and more about creating inner strategies to keep yourself whole while you plan for freedom.

It's about making the unbearable tolerable for now as you build strength, find micro-moments of peace, and preserve your selfhood until change can happen.

1. Acknowledge What Is Intolerable

The first step is honesty. Too often, we minimize, rationalize, or deny what hurts us in order to survive. But the truth is this: if it feels intolerable, it is. You don't need someone else's confirmation. Naming the intolerable brings clarity. Although clarity doesn't always change the external circumstances immediately, it anchors you in reality instead of gaslighting yourself into false acceptance.

2. Build Micro-Sanctuaries

When the intolerable surrounds you, you need small safe spaces to breathe. These micro-sanctuaries can be as simple as a daily walk, journaling before bed, a ritual bath, or even listening to music with headphones. These moments won't erase the pain, but they will ease it giving your nervous system pockets of recovery. Your sanctuary is the reminder: I exist outside of what is happening to me.

3. Separate What You Can Control from What You Can't

Tolerating the intolerable often means facing powerlessness. The key is to divide your focus. What can you influence? Your thoughts, your breathing, your choices in how you respond. What can't you control? Another person's behaviour, decisions, or the chaos they create. Strength grows when you stop pouring energy into the uncontrollable and instead invest in the areas that are still yours.

4. Anchor Yourself in Daily Rituals

The intolerable often makes time feel heavy and endless. Rituals give you a rhythm to hold onto. Morning grounding, evening reflection, setting a small daily goal – these rituals give you back a sense of agency. Even if the world around you is unsafe or unpredictable, your rituals

whisper: I still belong to myself. I still get to choose how I show up today.

5. Remember This Is Temporary

The intolerable lies to you, telling you this is forever. But it isn't. Even if you can't see the exit yet, you are moving toward it with every act of resilience. Remind yourself daily: I will not always be stuck in this place whether that is physical, mental or emotional. Everything changes just like the seasons.

Time itself is an ally – circumstances shift, strength accumulates, doors open. You won't be trapped forever in what feels endless now.

6. Preserve Your Selfhood for the Day You're Free

The greatest danger of tolerating the intolerable is losing yourself to it. Refuse that. Hold onto your dreams, write down your vision for the future, keep your sense of humour alive, nurture your creativity even in tiny doses. These things are seeds. When freedom comes, you'll already have a garden waiting to bloom because you tended it in your darkest season.

Affirmation:

I can endure this season without losing myself. What feels intolerable now will not last forever.

Journal Prompts:

1. What truth am I afraid to admit about what feels intolerable?
2. What micro-sanctuary can I create for myself this week?
3. Where am I trying to control what is outside of my power?
4. What rituals can I build to remind myself that I belong to me?
5. What vision for the future can I hold onto as proof this is temporary?

Visualisation:

Imagine yourself inside a storm – wind, rain, thunder raging around you. In the middle of the chaos, you stand holding an umbrella of light. The storm still exists, but under this umbrella is calm, warmth, and clarity. With each breath, the umbrella strengthens, glowing brighter. You realise the storm cannot destroy you; it can only surround you. You walk forward, knowing the light is yours until the storm passes.

Conclusion:

Tolerating the intolerable doesn't mean approving of it or resigning yourself to it. It means preserving your strength, creating moments of peace, and staying intact while you

prepare for a different life. This is survival wisdom, not surrender.

Final Thought:

The intolerable may surround you, but it cannot erase you.
You will outlast it.