



DEALING WITH A BAD EXAM

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"Candidates, you have five minutes remaining until the end of the examination," blares the speaker. Your heartbeat suddenly increases exponentially. Your mind goes blank, known answers are forgotten and your brain turns into a mushy mess of fat and tissue that seems to have lost its intellectual prowess. Your pen is scribbling away words that don't make any sense and before you can actually finish the paper, the speaker announces that the time is over.

The invigilator comes to collect your papers and your heart sinks. You look around and see the smiling faces of your peers and hear them say how great their exams were. You can only do so much to keep the tears from rolling down your cheeks in front of everyone as you dash down the stairs and rush home to the comfort of your room, only to let yourself drown in the disappointment.

Exams are not only meant to test our academic knowledge, but also how well we can perform under pressure. However, mishaps can happen at any given moment and even exams we spent weeks preparing for can go worse than expected. Ill-health, sleep deprivation or simply the stress of the examination can render our minds blank. Easy questions start becoming extremely difficult and we end our exam on a very low note. This feeling of disappointment not only impacts us during the examination, but lingers to affect us even afterwards. It is especially worrisome if more exams are to follow because one would not be able to give their best if they are still upset about previous exams. Therefore, it is

important that you deal with a bad exam and this is what I suggest.

Most often, it is just one or two parts of the exam that we think was not up to the mark. Even though it isn't easy, try not to go over your notes to compare your answers and certainly do not match your answers with your friends. Sometimes, even if your answer may be correct, just because your friends got a different answer can drop your confidence and make you doubt yourself.



Take some time to relax. Maybe take a day off from studying, if possible, and watch your favourite movies and play some video games. Take out your favourite book and read your favourite parts while sipping on some steaming hot chocolate. This is also the perfect opportunity to try out the face masks that you've been saving up and have the ultimate pamper day. Just let your mind and body relax so that you can jumpstart it later.

However, it is not always possible to take an entire day off to relax, particularly if you have another exam the next day. In that case, in order to de-stress, you may take a hot shower to relax your tense muscles and follow it up with a power nap of 30-40 minutes. It can really do wonders to clear up your mind for some last minute revision and prepare you for your next exam. Also, try to get at least eight hours of sleep the night before the next exam so that your mind is well

rested and you can think clearly during the exam.

Think about what went wrong during the exam and try to correct it. Remember that if you feel that the question paper is hard, then it is hard for every person taking that exam. So, don't stress out. Write what you know and tackle whatever seems new with the knowledge that you already have.

Food plays a very big role during the exam period. You should not forget to

have food while scrambling for revision and especially carbohydrates and fats are required to power you through this stressful time and give your brain some much-needed energy. Staying hydrated is essential as it is often dehydration that causes one to feel nauseous and unwell and this eventually leads to a bad exam.

Remember to drink enough water every day. In addition, you can also drink saline to provide your body with all the necessary electrolytes, and fresh fruit juice to rejuvenate yourself. Indulge in your favourite dishes and have some of your favourite desserts. And if you're feeling especially down, have some chocolate as it is proven to release serotonin and dopamine, which are "feel good" hormones and will uplift your spirits in no time!

Think about it. It's just one exam of one subject. If you think of how small it is compared to the grand scale of the journey of life, it will be easier to cope with the bad exam. Do recognise that it is the invaluable knowledge that you have gained from studying the subject that matters in the long run. Understand that more often than not, the exams really aren't as bad as we think they were and results are often better than expected. So, just wait till results day to decide if your future is really as dark as your nightmares. As clichéd as it is, remember that it is the darkest before dawn and the sun is still going to rise and life will go on.

Dealing with a bad exam can be difficult but it will definitely be easier if you realise that a piece of paper cannot determine your future. Try not to dwell on the past and prepare for what is ahead. Best of luck for your next examinations!