We all have weaknesses, and all know hardship. But it’s difficult, even on a good day, to admit we are struggling, to ask for help or to apologize when we are out of line.

After a year and a half of overwhelming stress caused by a global pandemic, many of us have become even more familiar with feeling vulnerable and have grown adept at avoiding difficult conversations. We may blow up to let off steam, for instance, and not take responsibility for the harm our actions cause. Or we may sulk when people close to us fail at guessing our needs. When setting clear boundaries is in order, many of us may say “yes” to everything only to end up resenting everyone—including ourselves—for having too much on our plates.

Often, the best way to break these cycles is to admit our difficulties to others. That step can be excruciating and frightening, but keeping problems to ourselves can create even more long-term complications. After all, unacknowledged feelings and frustrations rarely stay under the rug. That is why it is important to figure out how to openly articulate one’s feelings or thoughts even when that form of expression leaves us feeling exposed or uncomfortable.

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