

the SPOON THEORY

The "spoon theory" was originally coined by Christie Miserandino on her blog *But You Don't Look Sick*, where she talks about living with a chronic illness. The Spoon Theory provides a tangible example of how someone with an illness often has to expend energy on daily tasks - for example, tasks that might take someone without an illness only one spoon can take someone battling an illness two or three spoons. This theory is often applied to mental illnesses, as well, and it captures the physical toll that these illnesses can take on someone.

Minus a Spoon, Plus a Spoon

The central idea behind Spoon Theory is that someone with an illness has a limited number of spoons each day, and once they run out, they often can't muster the energy to do anything else that day. Whereas some people without illnesses can have an unlimited supply of spoons, those with illnesses must treat their energy - or spoons - as a type of currency: tasks can cost one or more spoons or replenish the spoon supply.

**To help understand The Spoon Theory and how it applies to mental illness,
we've given you fifteen spoons to get you through the day.**

Pick & choose the tasks that you'd like to complete today.
Try to stick within your allotment of 15 spoons for the day.

- ☐ Woke up after the first alarm (costs 2 spoons)
- ☐ Brushed your teeth
- ☐ Got to work on time
- ☐ Ate breakfast
- ☐ Made it through a meeting
- ☐ Answered all your work email (costs 2 spoons)
- ☐ Ate lunch
- ☐ Talked on the phone with a family member
- ☐ Had a one-on-one with your manager
- ☐ Went on a date (costs 2 spoons)
- ☐ Sent a difficult email (costs 2 spoons)
- ☐ Had a difficult conversation (costs 3 spoons)
- ☐ Contributed to a departmental meeting
- ☐ Exercised (costs 2 spoons)
- ☐ Took your meds and/or vitamins
- ☐ Cleaned up your home (costs 3 spoons)
- ☐ Spent time with your significant other/spouse
- ☐ Did laundry (costs 2 spoons)
- ☐ Fed the pet
- ☐ Walked the pet/went for a walk
- ☐ Wrote the first draft of a paper/project (costs 3 spoons)
- ☐ Scheduled a doctor's appointment
- ☐ Took a shower (costs 2 spoons)
- ☐ Ate dinner
- ☐ Went to bed on time (costs 2 spoons)

Pick & choose the spoons to put in your 'spoon bank' for when you might need them. Remember, some of these examples might not replenish you. Add your own to the bottom!

- ☐ Took a nap
- ☐ Read a book
- ☐ Made something (painting, crafting, blog post, etc.)
- ☐ Spent quality time with significant other/spouse
- ☐ Took the dog for a walk
- ☐ Got coffee/tea from your favorite barista
- ☐ Exercised
- ☐ Wrote a letter of recommendation
- ☐ Had a meaningful conversation with a family member
- ☐ Watched your favorite TV show
- ☐ Had your favorite snack/drink
- ☐ Reflected on the day
- ☐ Find a reason to be grateful and say it outloud
- ☐ Meditated/prayed
- ☐ Planned an outing with friends
- ☐ Talked to your therapist/psychologist
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

**Did you have enough spoons to get through the day?
What were some of the tasks that you had to choose between?
How did it feel to have a limited amount of spoons?**

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