

## Oops Plan

Everybody, everywhere makes mistakes. Often we don't feel that good about it when we make mistakes and we try to do other things to cover up the fact that we just made a mistake. If you think this is happening to you, read through the following steps and see if you are using any of these strategies. Sometimes it can help you realize that the mistake wasn't that bad. Each of these strategies have their own time and place, but they can get in the way of your mistakes. Mistakes are a great way to learn things.

1. **Denial** - "No, I didn't do it. It didn't happen."

Denial is good for protecting yourself for a little while when you are in really bad shape. For example, if my mom died, I might deny that it happened for awhile and then about a week later, I'd find myself calling her. Then the denial would go away and I could begin to think about it. Denial can help you get through some rough times, but it isn't good for little problems. Other people know that there has been a problem and they want you to know it too.

2. **Ignore** - "I know it happened, but I'm pretending like it didn't."

Ignoring a problem doesn't work so well for some of the same reasons that denial doesn't work very well. It's not bad to ignore whining or problems that will go away if you don't pay them attention to them, but if you are busy ignoring a problem, you aren't assuming responsibility for it.

3. **Lie** - "I know it happened, but I'm not telling you."

We lie when we feel backed against a wall and in trouble. It seems like a good idea at the time because we think it will keep us out of trouble. The problem is, it usually makes the trouble worse and then people don't trust us as much in the future.

4. **Blame** - "I know it happened, but it's your fault."

This seems like a good idea because we don't have to take responsibility for our mistake. That's just what is wrong with it. If you don't take responsibility for your mistake, you can't fix it. Also, the people that you blame for your mistake aren't too happy about it and, sometimes, they learn to blame you for their problems. In the end, nobody is fixing the original mistake.

5. **Guilt** - "I know it happened, I did it, and I feel bad."

Guilt is a little better than some of the other strategies because you own the mistake and you are attaching some feelings to the problem. However, there is one problem with guilt. It usually doesn't involve doing something about the mistake. Also, people who are guilty seem to like to get together and share their guilt. They even like to have guilt competitions where they try to be guiltier than the next guy is. If you spend all your time feeling bad about the problem, you don't spend time solving it or learning from it.

6. **Remorse** - "I know it happened. I did it. I feel bad. I want to do something about it."

Remorse is even better than guilt because now you can own your mistake and try to do something to make up for it. Once you do, it will make you feel better and it will show the other people who know about the mistake that you are sincerely sorry that you made a mistake.

7. **Prevention** - "I know it happened. I did it. I feel bad. I don't want it to happen again."

This is where learning takes place. Mistakes aren't really bad in and of themselves. Mistakes are the place where we can learn things. If you make a mistake and you get to this step, you are ready to not let the mistake happen again. That's learning and that's great.