Suppose you are playing tug-of-war with a monster. The monster is a metaphor for the basic fact that problems exist in your life. It may represent depression, feelings of shame, physical pain, or anything else.

Between you and the monster, is a huge, apparently bottomless, pit. It may often feel like your problems are overwhelming. At those times, you might feel like the monster is going to pull you into the pit and it will be “game over.” You also might think that if you could pull on the rope, just the right way, then you could pull the monster into the pit. Then you would not have any problems any more! Wouldn’t that be awesome?

As hard as you try, though, it just seems impossible to pull the monster into the pit. You try coiling the rope around your hands and digging your feet into the ground better in order to try even harder to pull the monster into the pit, but it just doesn’t work.
Why doesn't it work? Because, as we have talked about, perhaps there is no such thing as a life that doesn’t involve problems.

And in the meanwhile, off in another direction lies the things that are important to you- your values. You feel the deep desire to move towards what is important to you, but if you do that, you worry that the monster will come after you. The pit is deep, but not so wide that the monster can’t jump over it and bother you. So, as long as you feel the need to tug on the rope, you can’t move towards the things that matter to you.

So, what do you do?

That’s right, you *drop the rope*.

What does that mean really? If you let go of the rope, the monster can now wander around freely. The problems that you face, especially things like worries, negative thoughts, and other negative emotions, feel scary, but can they actually harm you? No.
So, letting go of the rope means letting things like worries, negative thoughts, and other negative emotions show up and do whatever they do while you move toward what is important to you.