

MY FEELINGS

Self-Coaching Guide

How can I handle my feelings better?

Our actively thinking minds cause us to constantly experience a range of feelings. Like the weather, they are ever present and constantly changing. Extremely strong feelings or emotions are often closely connected to specific thoughts, memories and images, and are part of what makes us human. Some emotions are by-products of evolution and, in the past, our response to them kept us alive by activating the fight, flight or freeze behaviours. Understanding our emotions helps us handle them much better.

Here are some important things *we know about the nature of our emotions*:

- Emotions are transient and pass away; they don't always need a response
- Emotions don't control our actions; we can manage our reactions to them
- Emotions never overwhelm us; no matter how big or scary they seem in the moment, we are bigger
- Emotions alert us to look inside ourselves; they can help us discover what matters to us and to others

Here are some key steps *we can take in dealing with a strong emotion*:

- 1) Accept and fully experience your emotion; don't try to suppress it as this is harmful in the long term
- 2) Name, voice and express your emotion; do this carefully and lovingly so as to avoid hurting anyone
- 3) Think about what your emotion reveals about your beliefs and purposes; be open to learn from it

Here are a couple of ways *we can learn from observing our emotions*:

Recent research claims we have four basic emotions: one positive (happiness) and three negative (anger, fear, sadness). It's been suggested that our life desires and goals are connected to our emotions. This means that an emotion can sometimes reveal to us how we are perceiving these goals and desires. How this could work for the above four basic emotions is illustrated below:

- **Happiness**, joy, etc. results from us perceiving a desire or goal as having a successful outcome. Note that this emotion is normally only briefly lived. Sustained happiness is more likely to be experienced when working towards a desire or goal that matches your beliefs and values than actually achieving it.
- **Anger**, frustration, etc. results from us perceiving a desire or goal as having a blocked outcome
- **Fear**, anxiety, etc. results from us perceiving a desire or goal as having an uncertain outcome
- **Sadness**, despair, etc. results from us perceiving a desire or goal as having an unreachable outcome

Our thoughts, behaviours and feelings all influence each other. So, a particular thought can cause us to experience an emotion which, in turn, can lead to a reaction. By changing our beliefs and thoughts, it's possible for us to change the way we react in dealing with an emotional issue. Exploring the relationships between our thoughts, emotions and behaviours can help us handle our emotions much better. Talking all this through with a trusted friend, or working with a coach or therapist may be needed to help you gain a better awareness of the emotional issue and encourage you to take action.

"I don't want to be at the mercy of my emotions. I want to use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them." Oscar Wilde

More Information

M +44 (0)7711 856804 **E** hello@paulhollywell.com **L** www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell **W** www.paulhollywell.com