

Processing An Emotion

ASHLEIGH WELCH | MBA



Introduction

As you become more familiar with the self-coaching model, you'll realise that all your feelings are caused by your thinking, which can make you want to change your thoughts because you realise you're the one creating your experience, as we discovered. This thought swapping, like "Oh, this thought is making me feel horrible! I need a better thought!" works but for the most part, the first step is simply to increase your awareness.

Paying attention to your thinking and noticing what you're feeling is not something most people do on a regular basis. From new houses and cars, to relationships and perfect lives for the people we love, we all have hopes for ourselves and the people around us. But the truth is, what we really want are the feelings we believe we'll have once we get those things.

Take a moment and think about what you want. Then go a layer deeper and ask yourself what you really, really want. Finally, ask yourself how you believe you'll feel when you get what you want. You'll find that in every case, it's the feeling you desire, and that's great news when you consider that all of your feelings come from your thoughts, which you get to choose. There's no problem with wanting things, but recognising that what you really want is a feeling is a powerful realisation; your desired feelings are available at any time regardless of your circumstances.

Why Do Your Feelings Matter?

Every single thing we do in our lives is because of how we think it will make us feel. Every single thing we don't do in our lives is because of how we think it will make us feel. Seriously, think about that. Every decision we make, every dream we achieve or let die, and every relationship we nurture or ruin is based on how we want to feel.

Feelings are directive. We naturally avoid any negative emotion because of how it feels. We naturally move towards any positive emotion because of how it feels. We become humans searching out feelings in the night, with no understanding of how they work.

This is why we are a species of over-pleasure. We overindulge in food, drink, drugs, sex, technology, and even work. We become pleasure and dopamine junkies, chasing our next pleasure high.

This is also the reason why we are limited when it comes to our potential. It has nothing to do with the available opportunity, and everything to do with our desire to avoid any discomfort.

Your feelings limit your potential when you avoid them.

What Is A Feeling?

A feeling is simply a vibration in your body caused by a thought in your mind.

Do not confuse a feeling with an involuntary sensation. Feelings are caused by what we think and sensations are involuntary bodily reactions.

Hungry, hot, cold, thirsty, sick, and tired are all physical sensations. Whereas, frustrated, cranky, lonely, agitated, and bored are all emotions.

Emotions start in the brain and travel to the body. Sensations start in the body and travel to the brain.

Some of my clients argue that their feelings come first, not the thought but let me explain why this is untrue.

if someone yells at you, you might immediately feel scared. It might feel involuntary because of the voice being loud. It might even feel as if your body is reacting before you know it. But I promise you, there is a thought causing the reaction, not simply the yelling.

If you knew the person was an actor, they could do the exact same thing, and you would not be upset at all.

That's the power of your thoughts.

Why Is Life 50/50?

We are supposed to feel negative!

Negative emotion makes positive emotion possible. Sad makes happy exist. Hate makes love exist. With only positive emotion, we don't even know we are having positive emotion. What makes abundance feel so amazing is because we know what scarcity feels like.

Negative emotion lets us know what we don't want, and when we know what we don't want, then we more easily can find out what we do want. Our experience as humans includes 50% negative emotion. This is normal.

The better we get at processing negative emotion, the more freedom we are going to have. Negative emotion is harmless. It's just a vibration in our body yet we're so scared of experiencing the negative emotion that we resist, react or avoid it, rather than simply letting it be there.

Imagine there was a way for me to inject you with an emotion for 60 seconds. I would warn you that humiliation is going to be vibrating in your body. You could handle it, no problem. You will feel flushed in your face. You will feel a quickening in your heart and sweat in your pores. This is not the end of the world.

But we create suffering by resisting our emotions.

Resisting, Reacting and Avoiding

We're not taught to feel our emotions. Feeling is an ability that most of us need to learn because we're taught by the media and social conditioning to escape emotions. We are even taught that positive emotions aren't enough by themselves—they need to be heightened by purchasing something.

There are three main things we do with uncomfortable emotions:

Resist: This is confusing because so many of us think that resisting emotion is the same as feeling, but it creates no relief. It's the difference between opening the door of an emotion or holding it shut. They both might seem productive, but resistance just creates more tension and perpetuates the emotion.

Reacting: is another way that people like to describe feeling. Yelling or screaming or crying is not the same as feeling. When we act out our emotions, we seem to be releasing something and feeling something, but we're often just acting them out and not processing or feeling them at all. Feeling doesn't look like "acting"—feeling is something you can do sitting on a chair and experiencing a subtle vibration.

Avoiding: Our culture has made avoiding emotion quite easy and acceptable. The most common ways people avoid emotions is by overeating, over drinking and working. For high performing women like you, it's no surprise you avoid feeling panic by doing something productive.

How To Allow An Emotion

Allowing is a skill you have to learn and practice. It's not the same as reacting or resisting; it's not the same as pretending it's not there. Let's say you're feeling angry. When you allow the feeling of anger without resisting, reacting, or avoiding, you will notice it by observing it with compassion. The easiest way to do this is to describe the emotion in detail. Write it down. Ask yourself, "What am I feeling? Where is it in my body? How do I know I am feeling it rather than another emotion? What is specific about this one?" Then, instead of trying to get rid of it, breathe it in. Allow it by opening your heart up to it. Move toward it. Know that you can handle the emotion. It's just a vibration in your body.

Often, you will feel your body wanting to tighten up against it. That's OK—just release it. Let the emotion be heavy or buzz or vibrate or agitate. Whatever the emotion needs to do in your body, allow it without suffering. As soon as you're observing and describing the emotion, feel yourself soften. Accept the emotion without judgment and notice.

It's like the metaphor of carrying around a heavy purse of emotion for as long as it takes. This skill is one of the most important you will ever learn. Once you are good at it, it can completely change your relationship with yourself and all the people you come in contact with because you won't be reactive, but rather the compassionate observer.

Homework

How are you feeling now?

1. What are you feeling now?
2. Where is this feeling in your body?
3. What colour is this feeling?
4. Is this feeling hard or soft?
5. Is this feeling fast or slow?
6. How does this feeling make you want to react?
7. Why are you feeling this? - For many of my clients, this can be a turning point.

When they understand the thought behind why they are feeling the emotion and take ownership of it, the feeling passed. Like a thought download, start describing the thoughts that are coming to your brain that are creating the feeling you're experiencing now and get to the core thought if you can.

Do this once a day for the next week, as well as your daily models. :