



INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

Week 4 Transcript: Emotions

Today, we do a double click on the Emotions portion of practicing pause in the Pause & Pivot method, and take a more expanded look at feelings. Regulating our emotions is one of the main keys to well-being and connection.

But, what's the deal with emotions? And why are they so misunderstood?

Emotions are often seen as a problem, obstacle, or annoyance that stands in the way of clear, rational thought. In my Western culture, we put a much higher value on being rational than being "emotional".

We believe that anger is taboo, and grief paralyzing. Feeling a need makes you weak, and experiencing fear makes you a coward.

But, what if it just means that we're human?

Emotion is the very essence with which our brain organizes our experiences and is the way we create connection. And, the word emotion is rooted in the concept of preparing for action: e-motion or energy in motion. They are designed to move.

When we allow an emotion to move through us, it will last about 3 minutes (or less). If we brace against it and repress it, it could last a lifetime. We're afraid that our unresolved emotions will be the tsunami that is unleashed and crashes in on us, destroying the entire village. It may be uncomfortable to process, but I guarantee it is causing more damage being held and unexpressed over time.

But, expressing dysregulated emotion isn't the answer either. We've all been challenged, disrespected or hurt by others who were "just expressing themselves". I'll teach you how to notice, acknowledge, label, and transmute emotions so they move through you and become something different instead of avoiding and, thereby, recycling them. And, we'll also increase our resiliency so we rebound from these emotions and not get stuck in them



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Primary emotions are defined through bodily experience, our sensory perceptions, such as heaviness in the chest or a pit in our stomach. They are expressed through behavior and impulse, like crossing your arms or reaching toward someone. And, often coupled with a thought, like, "This is fun" or "I've gotta get out of here."

Many of our behavioral habits we feel stuck in have developed as a way to minimize our experience of uncomfortable primary emotions. And, these behaviors are linked to ways we acted in the past to ease a similar sensation. How we feel and what we do are inseparable. You always get to choose what you do with the feelings.

This is all review from the Pause & Pivot method. Are you beginning to see how our emotions, sensations, memory, thoughts and behaviors are all linked together?

Once we become aware, then we begin to categorize. This is where we often abandon the process. Instead of labeling our emotions that are coming up into our awareness through our bodily experience, we try to ignore them.

Suppressing emotions doesn't work and often backfires. Labeling them reduces their negative impact. You may think you look cool on the outside, but your lower brain is still highly activated. When you use just a few simple words to describe your emotion, it requires you to activate your prefrontal cortex, or higher brain, which allows the emotional engine of the brain to calm down.

Labeling, without judgment, is the tricky part. It's somewhat easy to notice I'm feeling anxious, angry or depressed and label it: "Man, I'm feeling so frustrated. What's my problem? Get it together!" OR "Man, I'm feeling so frustrated. What's YOUR problem? Get it together!"



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We can't experience a change in attitude or emotion without first pausing to become aware of what we're feeling. Notice, acknowledge, label (without judgment), and allow emotions to move through and become something different. This is the moment we pivot. And, here's a little short cut: The quickest shift in emotion we can create is through expressing gratitude. Even the process of beginning to think about what I could possibly be grateful for initiates regulation of emotion in our brains.

Ok, so hashtag-Sarah's-opinion. But, people give the head a bad rap. To say we "need to get out of our head and into our heart" perpetuates the already disintegrated state most of us are in. It's not one or the other.

I want to empower you with the understanding that it's about integrating the different parts of the brain - from our bodily experience, through the emotional engine of the brain and up to our Higher Brain, where we can create a coherent narrative about our lived experiences.