



INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

Week 13 Transcript: Emotions A Deeper Look

Now that we have an increased window of tolerance, and more capacity to experience the depth and expanse of our emotions, we are going to take a deeper look at some of the primary unpleasant emotions we avoid and how we might change our relationship to them.

We live in a culture where there's very little permission to talk about things like shame, anger, fear, uncertainty and grief. But, what we can't be with in our lives will rule our choices and become intolerable to bear in others. Making friends with our unpleasant emotions allows us to have increased empathy for what others are going through.

Like I mentioned before, we can't selectively numb. We can't choose to numb uncomfortable feelings without also numbing our experience of joy, love and fulfillment. If we want to be more present in our lives, it's essential to learn a new way.

We must connect with, pull apart, accept and get curious about these emotions, or they will subversively define our life narrative. We will continue to live in the story of our lives as they define it, and little will ever seem to change.

Generally speaking, many of us have what psychologists call "Experiential Avoidance." What if, instead of avoiding our experience, we approached it with acceptance and curiosity?

Acceptance allows us to no longer be resistant to what we're feeling and curiosity shifts us into exploration and observation which leads us into a place of choice.

Black and White thinking tends to accompany these emotions. Always/Never. Either/Or. This approach depersonalizes these emotions enough to get some distance from them. And, with a little distance, we can see what might be the 3rd option.

Approaching Fear with acceptance and curiosity is recognizing we fear what we can't control. Being able to stay present to, and curious about, our fear helps discern what resilient action we need to take to create a safe space for us and for those we care about.



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We can develop a fear of fear. Accepting fear as a natural response to something outside our comfort zone gives us perspective to choose where we want to be and what risks we are ready to take. It also helps us to take a step back, reassess, see what our options are and choose wisely.

Approaching Anger with acceptance and curiosity is acknowledging that something needs to change. When I notice I am experiencing anger, I ask myself these 2 questions:

Is there an obstacle in my path that I want to move? Is there a boundary that someone has crossed, or I have not honored within myself?

Oftentimes, we are the ones crossing our own boundaries and making allowances for things that are against our core values. Considering these questions diffuses the feeling of anger, gives us perspective and brings us back into a place of choice.

Then we can move into the more positive and powerful expression of this emotion as it informs us how to protect ourselves and our loved ones from injustice, mistreatment and aggression as well as mobilizes us to remove obstacles and draw boundaries.

So, instead of stewing in anger we decide what can be done about it. And, if there is nothing to be done, we can more easily let go once it has been acknowledged and clarified. This certainly takes practice, but the movement it creates is remarkable.

Approaching Uncertainty with acceptance and curiosity is embracing the unknown. This requires surrender. It's challenging to not know what the outcome of a situation is going to be. It goes back to our fear of being out of control.

When we can accept this as a reality of life, that no one has certainty of outcomes, then we can open up to the possibilities that become available when we allow for things to unfold instead of trying to control them.



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We often limit what we experience in life because we try to force an ending. But, what if there is something more wonderful than we could every plot and plan for possible if we would just surrender? The Fear of the Unknown is one of the greatest shared experiences in our common humanity. At least we know we're not alone.

Approaching Grief with acceptance and curiosity is understanding that grief lets us know that we loved someone or cared about a situation. It confirms we have the capacity to connect.

Earlier I talked about tracking emotion like it's a wild animal. Grief is the wildest of them all, coming in waves and often unexpectedly. It's also one of the most powerful. We literally brace around it to try and contain it. That's why this feeling of great pain often accompanies a dampened down feeling of numbness.

When we are in grief, we experience a deep sense of loss. If we don't honor and accept this loss, the feeling of it will grow, not diminish.

We also experience a yearning desire or longing. When we can acknowledge this and pay attention to it, it will give us valuable information about what's important to us and who we truly are.

And, we experience a sense of being floaty and disoriented. Our practice of pause is most valuable here. It supports us in establishing connection to ourselves and what we are experiencing, while grieving. We can stay present to the grieving process and allow it to resolve.

Unresolved grief is the number one thing I see holding people back. They are afraid to go there, yet the work it takes to override and manage it depletes their living.



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We put grief on a timeline and don't allow for it to have its process. We must learn how to make space for grief so that it can move through us in measured doses.

Changing our relationship with grief requires us to embrace uncertainty. We can become reticent to invest ourselves in a relationship, dream or cause again to protect ourselves from the potential of losing it. Resolving our grief gives us strength to choose resilient actions so we can engage again without controlling the outcome.

There's a beautiful quote from an unknown author that says: *"Grief never ends...but it changes. It's a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor a lack of faith...it is the price of love."*

Be sure to download the action guide and let's stay connected as we engage in the process of changing our relationship to these significant emotions.