

Freeing Myself from Strong Emotions

Aim: Painful emotions are a normal part of being human but trying to solve problems when you are feeling something really strongly can make things worse. The aim of this exercise is to help free yourself from strong feelings so you can make better choices and solve problems more rationally.

STEP 1 – Observe my emotion

Notice you are having an emotion, e.g. “I am feeling angry.”

Step BACK from the emotion.

Get UNSTUCK from the emotion - call it for what it is. Describe how you are feeling to yourself. It might help to start with the physical aspects as these will kick start you naming the emotion, e.g. “I am clenching my teeth,” what triggered your emotion, “I felt my body change when my friend ignored me,” and what thoughts you are having about the trigger and your feelings, “She shouldn’t treat me that way, she can’t be trusted, I need to get back at her.”

STEP 2 – Experience my emotion

Emotions come and go just like a WAVE, coming and going.

Emotions will change as you experience them - fighting your emotions will freeze them where they are.

Learn to ride the wave:

- Try not to DENY the emotion
- Don’t try to GET RID of the emotion
- Don’t PUSH the emotion away
- Don’t try to KEEP the emotion around
- Don’t HOLD ON to the emotion
- Don’t TURN the volume up on emotion

To MASTER steps 1 and 2, I need to REMEMBER:

“I am NOT my EMOTION “

- Do not ACT on emotion if I think that my emotion is either extreme or might be seen as inconsistent
- Think of times when I have felt different in the same situation – to help remember that emotions do come and go like a wave

Practice accepting my emotion

- I need to practice NOT JUDGING my emotions
- At times I might have to ACCEPT my painful emotion before I can think about change