



Allow space for all your feelings

Accepting your emotions means giving up the struggle with them.

Emotions are our minds' way of sending us important signals about our environment. Our job is to learn to read the signals so we can respond in ways that help us do what matters in the long-term. When we struggle with, avoid or control our uncomfortable emotions, they build up and get worse over time. Uncomfortable emotions need as much space as good feelings!

If we squash them down they can break free when you feel a bit low: like when you are overtired, hungry, coming down, stressed, intoxicated or hungover. They can pop up when you least expect it! Like if your alarm goes off in the middle of the night and you get disoriented and confused because it isn't time to get up yet. Learning to allow space for all your emotions is an important skill in regulating emotions. Letting emotions be as they are, without trying to change them, is a helpful strategy for managing emotions long-term.

Avoiding or struggling with emotions gives short-term relief, but can lead to emotional difficulties in the long-term. Allowing, or letting be, means accepting your emotions. Avoiding and struggling against emotions is the opposite of acceptance.

LEARN TO SURF YOUR EMOTIONS



Avoiding emotions is like trying to learn how to surf without wanting to get wet.



You use up lots of energy struggling to avoid the water.



Then you get exhausted and frustrated because you are doing everything you can to stay dry, but you are still getting wet!



Allowing space for all your feelings is like learning to surf while accepting that you **will** get wet sometimes.



Even if you get a bit wet, you can still surf the wave and eventually hit the beach.



If you let go of the struggle to stay dry, you are not going to drown. You will be OK.



IDENTIFYING YOUR EMOTIONS

This exercise will help you identify the emotions you are currently struggling with.

STEP 1

Using the list of emotions below, put a cross next to every feeling you struggle with or try to avoid. Place a tick next to every emotion you currently allow space for.

STEP 2

Narrow your focus down to the top 3 emotions you spend time struggling with or avoiding. Write these in the boxes next to the list.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Angry | <input type="radio"/> Frustrated | <input type="radio"/> Motivated |
| <input type="radio"/> Ashamed | <input type="radio"/> Guilty | <input type="radio"/> Nervous |
| <input type="radio"/> Brave | <input type="radio"/> Happy | <input type="radio"/> Overwhelmed |
| <input type="radio"/> Calm | <input type="radio"/> Helpless | <input type="radio"/> Rejected |
| <input type="radio"/> Confident | <input type="radio"/> Hopeful | <input type="radio"/> Restless |
| <input type="radio"/> Curious | <input type="radio"/> Hurt | <input type="radio"/> Sad |
| <input type="radio"/> Disappointed | <input type="radio"/> Jealous | <input type="radio"/> Scared |
| <input type="radio"/> Embarrassed | <input type="radio"/> Lonely | <input type="radio"/> Shy |
| <input type="radio"/> Excited | <input type="radio"/> Love | <input type="radio"/> Surprised |

THE TOP 3 EMOTIONS I STRUGGLE WITH:

1.
2.
3.

PRACTICE & REFLECT



This week allow space for the top 3 emotions you struggle with or avoid. Make a commitment to allow yourself to experience at least one of your most uncomfortable emotions each day. Try using your ERIC skills like mindful breathing or 5-4-3-2-1 to be OK. In the calendar write the name of the emotion that you experienced and tick it off.

MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
<input type="radio"/> _____	<input type="radio"/> _____	<input type="radio"/> _____	<input type="radio"/> _____	<input type="radio"/> _____	<input type="radio"/> _____	<input type="radio"/> _____