

# Feelings

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## What generates them?

From ***Facing Codependence*** by Pia Mellody, Andrea Miller, & J. Keith Miller

- The four areas of **REALITY**
  - **BODY:**
    - Our five senses bring input from outer world to our inner world
  - **THINKING:**
    - We interpret, draw conclusions, and give meaning to the sensory input
  - **FEELING:**
    - Physiological response to our thoughts (also called emotions)
    - Uses up energy in our body
  - **BEHAVIOR:**
    - What we choose to do (or not do) as a result of our feelings
- Our belief system (based on our history and values) affects the way we think, feel, and behave
- How we process our thoughts impacts where our feelings go (positive or negative) & intensity of them
  - What we feel is what we feel
  - We cannot change our feelings
  - We can change our thoughts
- We learn to acknowledge it so we can process it
  - Denied feelings are a trigger for inappropriate behavior
  - Unprocessed feelings are stored in our bodies, they don't just disappear because we choose not to process them

## Tools for Feelings

- Allow yourself to feel them
  - Let them be as big (or little) and overwhelming/confusing (ugly) as they really are
- Find the truth
  - What/who is the source (external or internal)?
  - Is there an event that triggered it?
  - Use the True – Not True – Questionable Tool to separate the feelings from the thoughts
- Talk them out with a safe person
- Purge them
  - Journal? Art?
  - Physical: clean the house, beat up a pillow, break dishes, throw darts at a picture
  - Express them in a way that does not harm you, others, or valuable property

## Automatic Negative Thoughts

from ***Change Your Brain Change Your Life*** by Daniel Amen

- Negative thoughts invade your mind like ants at a picnic
  - When you notice an ANT enter your mind, acknowledge it and talk back to it
  - When you hear yourself talk use an ANT, stop and correct yourself
- All or Nothing
  - Everything is all good or all bad; same as black and white thinking
  - One event/moment doesn't define the entirety
- Always Thinking
  - Overgeneralize: using words like "always" or "never"
  - Helplessness that you do not have control over your behavior/self
- Focusing on the Negative
  - Only see the negative aspect of a situation regardless of the positives
  - Hopelessness or wanting to "give up"
- Thinking with your Feelings
  - Assuming our feeling is correct versus questioning it; feelings can lie
  - Use the True – Not True – Questionable Tool
- Guilt Beating
  - Using guilt to control our behavior or using negative control on others
  - When we feel pushed to do something, our natural tendency is to push back
- Labeling
  - Calling yourself (or another) a negative term or name
  - Worthlessness, helplessness, and hopelessness; giving up before trying
- Fortune-Telling (**RED ANT**)
  - Predicting the worse even though you don't know what will happen
- Mind Reading (**RED ANT**)
  - Assuming you know what another is thinking
- Blame (**RED ANT**)
  - Blaming others and not taking responsibility for ourselves
  - Powerless to change our own behavior

## Feelings Chart

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Feeling (Reality)	Gift (Our Feelings)	Challenge (Induced or Carried Feelings)
Joy	Hope / Peace	
Pain	Change / Healing	Hopelessness / Depression
Anger	Energy / Power	Rage / Devalue
Fear	Protection / Wisdom	Panic / Paranoia / Helplessness
Guilt	Values / Integrity	False Guilt / Prolonged Guilt
Shame	Accountability / Fallibility (Limits)	Carried Shame / Shame Bound

## Pain

from ***The Language of Letting Go*** by Melody Beattie

- Many sources of pain: history, current events, transitions or "life events"
- Our choice to
  - Let pain lead and guide us to a positive outcome (healthy choices/behaviors)
  - Stop or avoid pain (addictions, focus on others, denial/repression)
- Takes courage to stay still and feel - it will only hurt for awhile and then it will heal
- Can be confused with Anger

## Anger

from ***Good 'n' Angry: How to Handle Your Anger Positively*** by Les Carter

- Three general ways people handle anger
- Repressed (denial)
  - If I ignore it, it will go away
  - Pushing from conscious to subconscious leads to it worsening
- Expressed (outwardly communicated)
  - Assertive: respects the dignity/value of another
  - Aggressive: without regard for other person's worth/value
- Released (let it go)
  - Making the conscious decision that anger is no longer needed
  - Must first be able to assertively express anger
- Can be confused with Pain

## Fear

from ***Feel the Fear & Do It Anyway*** by Susan Jeffers

- Fear is a part of life
  - Wings: It can be a companion on this journey of life and we take flight
  - Anchor: It can become an anchor and we become frozen (in fear)
- By confronting a situation or "doing something"
  - Fear gradually decreases
  - Self-confidence and self-worth increase
- Fear does not equal isolation
- Fearing fear is worse than facing fear (helplessness)

## Guilt

from ***Mind Over Emotions*** by Les Carter

- Communicates that something is amiss in our thinking and behavior
- True Guilt
  - Inner voice to live a moral, responsible life
- False Guilt
  - Feeling of remorse that is judgmental toward oneself
  - Decreases value/self-worth and increases fear of being "found out" and punished
- Creates a sense of isolation
- Usually is accompanied by Shame

## Shame

from ***Letting Go of Shame*** by Ronald and Patricia Potter-Efron

- Represents a person's identity
- Defense mechanisms: denial, perfectionism, arrogance, exhibitionism, rage
- Become aware of your shame and examine it even though we want to hide from it
  - Where does your shame come from? (society, family, significant other, yourself)
- Shame heals when shared with another
- Set positive goals and take responsibility for reforming your thoughts and changing your behaviors
- Usually is accompanied by Guilt

## Group Questions

- What feeling is hardest for you to process?
- What ANT do you struggle with the most?
- What are some ways you have learned to process/avoid your feelings?