

Hello welcome. And today's lesson is about feeling your feelings.

So this is about why and how you want to actually feel your feelings, learning how to feel your feelings in a loving way is one of the very most useful tools you can develop in your life. It's a superpower for your mental wellbeing. And it may seem like you're having all the fields all the time, but I think it's fair to say that most women avoid or repress many or even most of their emotions.

Here's an example. Let's imagine that you're having a conflict with your boss or a client, and she leaves you a snippy message accusing you of doing something wrong. So your body may begin to react before you even know it. Your heart may start to pound. You'll breathe faster. Your face gets hot and you'll likely feel post-op and maybe scared at the same time of losing your job.

You're frustrated that she doesn't understand you. And for all kinds of reasons, it doesn't feel safe to express your anger and frustration. Like maybe you've gotten into trouble in the past when you express your feelings. But you also don't want to feel the emotion because it feels so gross and so uncomfortable.

So what do you do? You try to avoid the intense discomfort of feeling your feelings before I learned how to process my emotions. For example, if something bad happened at work, I used to get up for a break and grab some healthy snacks from the vending machine and then have a huge fried chicken sandwich at lunch gossiping with my colleagues zone out on social media.

While on the job or doing some random meaningless tasks, but none of that helped at all. My feelings would always come out. Some kind of. I would be bossy or snippy with my husband, passive aggressive with my boss, pissy at somebody on my commute home. So now on top of all that anger and that frustration, I would feel guilty and hate myself for being such an awful person.

So even though I was trying really hard to avoid feeling my feelings, I now felt anxious, frustrated, mad, and guilty, then trying to get rid of those feelings. I would just continue the cycle of overeating a dinner, maybe snarky in, at my

husband's some more collapsing on the couch with Netflix in the evening, et cetera, et cetera.

And none of this created the results that I wanted in my life. What I wanted was to do well at work and have a good relationship with my boss and to feel a loving connection with my husband, my friends, and my family. I wanted to feel a wholesome, pride and contentment in my life. But instead I was always playing this horrible, endless game of whack-a-mole.

So sadly I think that most women do some version of this all day long, all week long, all month long, all year long, every year for their whole freaking lives. And this is a total Trek. And I think we do this for most of our emotions from the small emotions. Like somebody cuts you off in traffic to the big emotions.

Like when you lose a job or you move somewhere new or right up to the huge emotions that come up with the death of somebody close to you or a breakup or a divorce or a serious illness. So many times the reaction is so ingrained that you don't even know you're doing it. You kind of automatically short circuit, the emotion that happens as the minute you get too angry, bored, tired, sad.

You, the chances are high that you just reach for Facebook or news or Instagram or Netflix or cookie or chips or shopping or alcohol or yelling at your kids or whatever you do to numb out, or sometimes less. But basically you do anything to not experience the internal pain of that uncomfortable emotion. The problem with this, besides that it sucks is that avoiding or repressing your emotions doesn't work. So, you know, no doubt, no this, but avoiding your feelings, doesn't make them go away. So in fact, there's a decent amount of science that looks at how it can seriously harm your health. So there's a 2013 study by the Harvard school of public health and the university of Rochester. That showed people who bottled up their emotions may increase their chance of premature death from all causes by more than 30%. And their risk of being diagnosed with cancer may increase by 70%. And your relationships can

definitely suffer too. So suppression of emotion, predicted lower social support, less closeness to others and a lower social satisfaction.

So even if there were no scientific studies, I think it's fair to say that most of us know intuitively that a healthy person processes her emotions rather than avoiding. And what I want to offer in this mini class is a great first step to processing your emotions. We're going to talk about this in depth, but first I want to clarify a few terms.

So I'm using the terms, feelings and emotions interchangeably, because most of us do that, but technically it seems that neuroscientists would say that there is a difference that emotions are more primal than feelings. It seems that what they call emotion. I related to the body and that feelings are more related to the thoughts that we develop around the emotions.

I honestly, I don't know very much about that, but if you're in this self care course, there will be a link in the lesson page, if you want to learn more about it, but to keep it simple, I'm going to use them in the way that we normally use them, which is pretty much interchangeably feelings equals emotions.

So first up here are some of the most basic emotions or feeling. There are whole dictionaries, like literally big fat dictionaries of emotions, but here are some of the ones that are often identified as the most basic emotions, happiness sadness, fear, disgust, anger, and surprise. I personally was kind of surprised that discussed was one of the basic emotions.

It's kind of. I find that most of us have a sort of set of personal greatest hits of emotions. You know, the emotions that you tend to feel. So for example, most of my emotions are one of these happy, sad, afraid, angry, resentful, anxious, proud, jealous, frustrated, lonely, peaceful, confused, confident, vulnerable, guilty.

You're regretful, loving, overwhelmed, embarrassed, and ashamed. So this is definitely not in order of how often I feel them. So if that were the case, anxiety would be right at the top and probably either embarrassment or ashamed would be like in the top five. So if we have the set, we do have these sets of emotions and now is our million dollar question.

So what do we do about it? How do you process these emotions? And another way to say that is how do you actually feel your feelings? How do you do that? So it's very simple though. It's not easy. So let's start with an example. We'll use the same example from earlier so that your boss was snippy with you.

So it starts the same way. Your heart starts to pound. You breathe faster. Your face gets hot, but this time, rather than get up and head to the vending machine, you stop and you notice how you're feeling. You spend a few minutes actually feeling the sensations in your body. You ask yourself what's going on in my body right now.

How does this feel in my body right now? And you describe the sensations to yourself as they come to you. So, okay. My heart is beating fast. I feel kind of queasy. My head feels hot and kind of tight. My shoulders feel hard and this kind of buzzy feeling in my stomach so far, so good, but here's the bad. It won't feel good.

There's a reason we try to avoid feeling these feelings. Actually, it feels pretty awful, and you're not going to want to do it in my experience. I never want to do it, but here's the good news. The goodness is that your body's first emotional response only lasts about 90 seconds. And we know this from Dr.

Jill Bolte Taylor and her book, *My Stroke of Insight*. So she is a Harvard. If you don't, if you're not familiar with her, she's a Harvard neuroscientist who had a major stroke and the book is absolutely amazing. Again, I'll put a link on the lessons page. So in the book, she says, something happens in the external world and chemicals are flushed through your body, which puts it on full alert.

So for those chemicals to totally flush out of the body, it takes less than 90 seconds. And she continues. This means that for 90 seconds, you can watch the process happening. You can feel it happening and then you can watch it and go away. So something happens in the outside world and you get a Biocom biochemical surge that moves through your body.

In about 90 seconds. The wave of emotion is literally only a very short-term sensation in your. Like when your face gets hot or you feel the butterflies in your stomach or any of the physical feelings that happen in your body, they are all part of that biochemical surge. And it's literally just a flow of energy through your body.

I want you to kind of reflect on that and, and. And take that in. It's literally just like a flow of energy, like a vibration in your body. So that's a good thing. You know, that this first surge of energy and emotion, that first wave of vibrations or inner or energy is very short. The second good thing is that you get a huge benefit when you just notice the emotion flowing through your body.

So just noticing that emotion flowing through your body. It gives you benefit. And that's because when you notice your emotion for the 90 seconds that it takes to move through you, you are then able to access the smart part of your brain. So let me tell you what I mean by that. So basically noticing the emotion instead of trying to ignore it, lets you calm down your nervous system and access the part of your brain that actually.

Dr. Taylor says this when you're stressed, pausing for 90 seconds and labeling what you're feeling. For example, I'm getting angry, tamps down a MIG medulla, sorry, temps down activity in the amygdala. So it's worth talking about your amygdala first. The amygdala is a region in your brain, and it's the first part of your brain to receive information when something happens out in the world. So when you get that pissy email from your boss, the amygdala is the first place that receives the message. So your amygdala scans the situation and checks for threats. So there's an actual physical threat to your survival. The amygdala is

fantastic because it kicks off responses in your body that could help you run or fight or freeze, whatever you need to do to survive.

Like it shoots adrenaline, adrenaline, and cortisol. And does all these things get used since impulses to your legs and arms. And I don't know what all it does, but it prepares you to take action. The problem is that the amygdala is related to primitive reactions, like running from a fire or facing a bear.

And they're great. You know, these reactions are great if your house is on fire, but it's not so useful. If you're at work, you're dealing with your boss or you're at home and you're dealing with your family. So your amygdala can be firing off and saying, Your boss sends you a shitty email. You're under attack, defend yourself, fight back, run.

So when they make delays activated, you literally can't think straight because your IQ drops there are studies by Dr. Bruce Perry that show a child's IQ can drop by as much as 40 points when they're in this state of fear. And as a side note, just looking at this picture could make delayed. It could activate your amygdala. And it's not the mental state you want to be in. When you're trying to respond in a wise and sane way, you actually want to be calm enough to be able to access this smarter, more sophisticated part of your brain, where your thinking and your reasoning and your judgment happens. And that part is the prefrontal cortex part of your.

But to access that prefrontal cortex you'd have to first come down your amygdala because when you're a mid to list activated, it's sucking out all the resources of your brain. So this is where the 92nd rule comes in. You calm your mic Dilla down by the simple act of noticing and labeling your emotion. And this is why it's so important to actually notice and label your emotions. So let's dive into the mechanics of how to do. Here's a good three-step process for feeling your feelings. Number one, notice the sensation in your body like we've been talking about your heart is racing. Your palms are sweating.

Your face is hot. You have a clenched jaw to you. Label the emotion. I'm feeling mad. I feel sad. I feel overwhelmed. There can be more than one, emotion going on at the same. Three allow the emotion, just watch it. Like you would watch a movie don't judge it or try to make it go away. You can imagine that you're just hanging out on the couch when you're feeling for 90 seconds. Just me and my emotion, me and my sad and me and my mat hanging out here on the couch 90 seconds. That is literally all you need to do to feel your feelings. And when you do this, the emotions will rise and fall. Okay. And as the wave recedes, your thinking brain is coming back online, and this is the magic of it, allowing you to think and act in a way that you have more control over that leads you to better decisions and lead you to better results and better actions in your life.

So here are a few examples of how you could do this in your life. Let's take the situation of you realize your 16 year old son has not returned from a driving trip and it's getting dark. So first notice the sensation. You have a dense, heavy feeling in your chest, like a rock sinking feeling in your stomach, tightness in your shoulders, throbbing red pressure in your head.

It's hard to breathe. Your heart speeds up your legs. Feel weak. You label the emotions. I feel anxious. I feel dread. I'm afraid. Allow the sensations to rise and fall 97. Here's another one you realize that nobody remembered your birthday. Notice the sensations, a gray heaviness in your eyes and your chest. A general numbness, a floaty wave, like snow on a TV set in your bed.

You label the emotions? I feel sad. I feel so lonesome allow the sensations to rise and fall 90 seconds. The last one it's Friday night and you have nothing special to do you notice the sensations purple-y cloud of jitteriness in your stomach, a heavy, thick, tired feeling in your head, feeling empty all over you.

Label the emotion. I feel bored. I feel unloved. Allow the sensations to rise and fall for 90 seconds. So here's some tips for when you try to do this on your own first tips for noticing the sensations. So it takes practice to even know how your

body feels. So be easy on yourself. If you can't really identify very much right away, it's very common.

You can ask yourself, how do I feel? I mean, do I feel anything in my stomach, in my head, in my arms. What does it feel like whatever comes up for you is okay. Don't stress even if not much is coming up at first, so you can ask yourself, am I sweating? Do I feel breathless? Is my heart beating fast? I sweaty poems.

Do my legs feel like jelly? Do I want to run away? do I have a sinking feeling in my stomach is my Dominik. Feeling like a rock. Sorry. I lost my place. You know? Is your arms trembling, is he coming from your head? Do you have blurry vision? So here is some other ways to think about this sensations.

You can ask yourself, what is this sensation feel like? Is it heavy or light, hot or cold still or moving fast or. Solid or maybe cloud-like or liquidy. Is it a color red, black purple white. If you feel buzzy or jittery or Trembly, is it feeling sharp or dull? It may not be clear at all. At first. You may be thinking, I don't know.

Is it purple if it pink? Is it? Where is it? That's fine. There's no real right answer. And literally just go with the first things that come to your mind. You're just trying to learn to read your body at this point. And here's some tips for labeling the emotions. Don't worry about whether the words that come up are actually emotions.

So whatever comes up is okay. Like if the word overwhelmed or unloved comes up, you may doubt if that's an actual emotion. But don't worry about it. So in this case, just the act of noticing and labeling is the valuable thing that you're doing. So remember that, sorry, the garbage is going by. So just notice that the act of labeling, noticing and labeling is the valuable thing that's going on.

You may notice also layers of emotion. Like you may feel ashamed that you were jealous or you may feel confused that you are. That's totally normal. You



don't have to get it. Right. So even practicing the tiniest bit is helpful and good. And here are some tips for allowing the sensations to come and go.

These emotions aren't good or bad. They're actually, they're just like automatically rising in your body. They're not, they're not your fault. So they're just you being here. So, this is really important to understand. So any feeling that can come up that's a hundred percent. Okay. There's no good or bad emotion. Also a feeling is literally just a sensation or a vibration in your body. So it won't kill you, even though it feels like. Even though it can feel scary to allow it. The truth is not allowing it causes so much more harm than allowing it. Your body may be acting like there's a saber tooth tiger coming towards you.

The truth is there's just chemicals moving through your body and your experience, those like a vibration or a sensation. That's literally all that's happening. The more you practice, the more you trust that you will develop that it's okay to just feel the feelings and that they can't really harm you.

The most important tip. The most important thing to do is to be very kind to yourself. As you learn this process, it can be very, very tender when you're first practicing, feeling your emotions. But like I said, it's simple, but it's not easy. And I have a few self care mantras that I've developed to use while I'm doing this. One of them is I forgive myself for being human. That's actually one of my all time favorite. I forgive myself for being human usually comes. If I feel kind of embarrassed about an emotion that I have, it's like, forgive myself for being human. Another one is, and that's okay. Like I feel pissy and that's okay.

I feel jealous. That's okay. I feel a tight that's okay. I feel frustrated. That's okay. And finally I say this I've got you. I'm with you. It's okay. To feel this. The last one is what I say when I asked myself what the kindest sweetest friend would say to me in that moment. So say that for yourself, because that's one of the greatest gifts to give yourself, to practice being your own best friend.

So just say, what would my best friend, what would the kindest sweetest soulmates say to me in this situation? And just give yourself that gift and. And what I say is I got you. I'm with you. It's okay for you to feel this way. So here's one thing that's important to know. It's totally normal for the emotional waves to return.

So this isn't a once and done kind of thing. It's, it's a small emotion. It can be, but if it's a biggie, it will almost definitely return. You'll process it once and it'll die down and then something else may spark a new. In my experience, the return is like aftershocks of an earthquake. It's like you see in this message of the Northridge Northridge earthquake that happened in LA on January 17th, 1994, you see that the aftershocks kept going through February of 1995 over one full year.

So the first quake is big. You see it's the large pink dot and the. And then the following ones tend to be smaller, but every now and again, another big one we'll roll through, but not as big as the first one, but even if you get another wave as big as the first one, it's not okay. Yeah. I mean, sorry. It is okay.

It's not a problem. You just, all you have to do is notice it, label it, watch it fade away, but you may ask yourself if this is hard and the emotions may keep coming back. Why would I bother to do that? Why shouldn't I just shut down emotionally or holler at my kids or eat a bucket of chicken or a bag of Lay's while I'm watching Netflix, basically taking this first step in processing your emotions in that horrible, endless game of whack-a-mole.

So when you feel your feelings this way, you and now allow your nervous system to calm down for a while it completes a loop. So your nervous system gets activated, then it comes to. You finish a loop and it comes to rest. On the other hand, if you interrupt or suppress the emotions as they're coming up, like we normally do, you're kept in a, you're keeping your nervous system in a kind of constant agitated state by feeling your feelings, your nervous system gets some downtime.

It gets some true rest and you put your thinking brain to use at the same time. So this is great for your body, your mind, and your. If you, aren't trying to suppress your emotions, you aren't as much at the mercy of your negative behaviors, like eating too much, drinking, too much shopping or yelling at somebody.

You feel calmer. You're smarter by that. I mean that you have access to the highest part of your brain. You have the choice of options that you're blind to when the amygdala is in control. So if you think about it, if your amygdala is activated all the time, You're kind of stupid all the time. You just don't have access to your brain and your day and your life go much better.

If you do have that thinking brain, helping you kind of direct your life. So here's a recent example of how it works for me. I was hiking with my husband a couple of Sundays ago on this foggy early morning picture. Early morning that you see in the picture and we just passed the top of this hill.

It's in the picture actually. We just took a picture of before this thing happened. So we're starting to go down the other side of the hill and you could hear a coyote yipping and howling, and obviously running our way from back where we'd come from. So if he came over the hill, he would be like right there.

I love to hike, but I'm pretty scared about various kinds of wildlife, even coyotes. And so whilst we had no idea that this was just one coyote or why he was running or how. So I got the surge of fear and actually it was pretty useful at the moment. So I was ready to run and I hollered out really loudly.

Hey, you coyote. We're here. Get out of here. And I started like clapping, like a mad woman and the Cody stopped. He didn't come over the hill. So that was all. Well, what happened next was where usually I would have trouble. So my husband lives on mocked me a little bit for being so scared. I can't remember exactly what he said, but he said something like, well, if somebody is a nervous Nelly or something like that, and then I felt foolish.

So this surge of anger and resentment went through me. I didn't have the awareness to really feel that surge. And so instead I kind of automatically shot back something at him. I don't remember what it was, but it was something different. So important thing is I didn't process that feeling at all. So my nervous system was still agitated.

So we keep walking a few minutes pass and I'm feeling another wave of anger and it's not fun, but this time I catch the wave of be emotion and I try to feel it physically. Okay. My jaw is clenched. My head is hot. My hands are tightened up. My stomach is sort of shaky and I label it. I feel pissed. I feel foolish and I allow it.

This. I sit with a sensations until they pass. And now my nervous system comes down and my brain kicks in and they find the situation kind of funny, not laugh out loud, funny, but a little amusing. And I look for a rock in case the dang coyote comes back and I still feel a little foolish, but at that point, my brain is working.

So I forgive myself for being human. I just said that to myself. I forgive myself for being. Then I don't still the need then I didn't still need to be mad at my husband or say anything else mean, and we just carry on and have a nice hike. Then I had a few smaller waves of resentment as we were going along, but I could just feel them and it was no big deal.

So in the past, before I learned that tool for feeling my feelings, I would have been in this bad cycle of emotions, I would have said more snarky things. And then he would have said something snarky, and then I would escalate more snarky. Maybe even be mad and uncomfortable for the rest of the hike or we'd get into a bigger fight, but that's just an example of the endless feelings and situations that can be made better by actually just feeling your feelings.

Because in this case I had the feelings, I felt them, and then I just let them go. And we ended up having a couple more hours of a beautiful hike that day. So you can do it every day, multiple times a day. So personally, the more I develop the skill of allowing my tough emotions, the more I learn and grow, the more weight I lose, the more money I make, the more love and connection I'm creating in my life.

The more impact my work makes. I really can't recommend it enough. So that's it for this lesson on feelings.