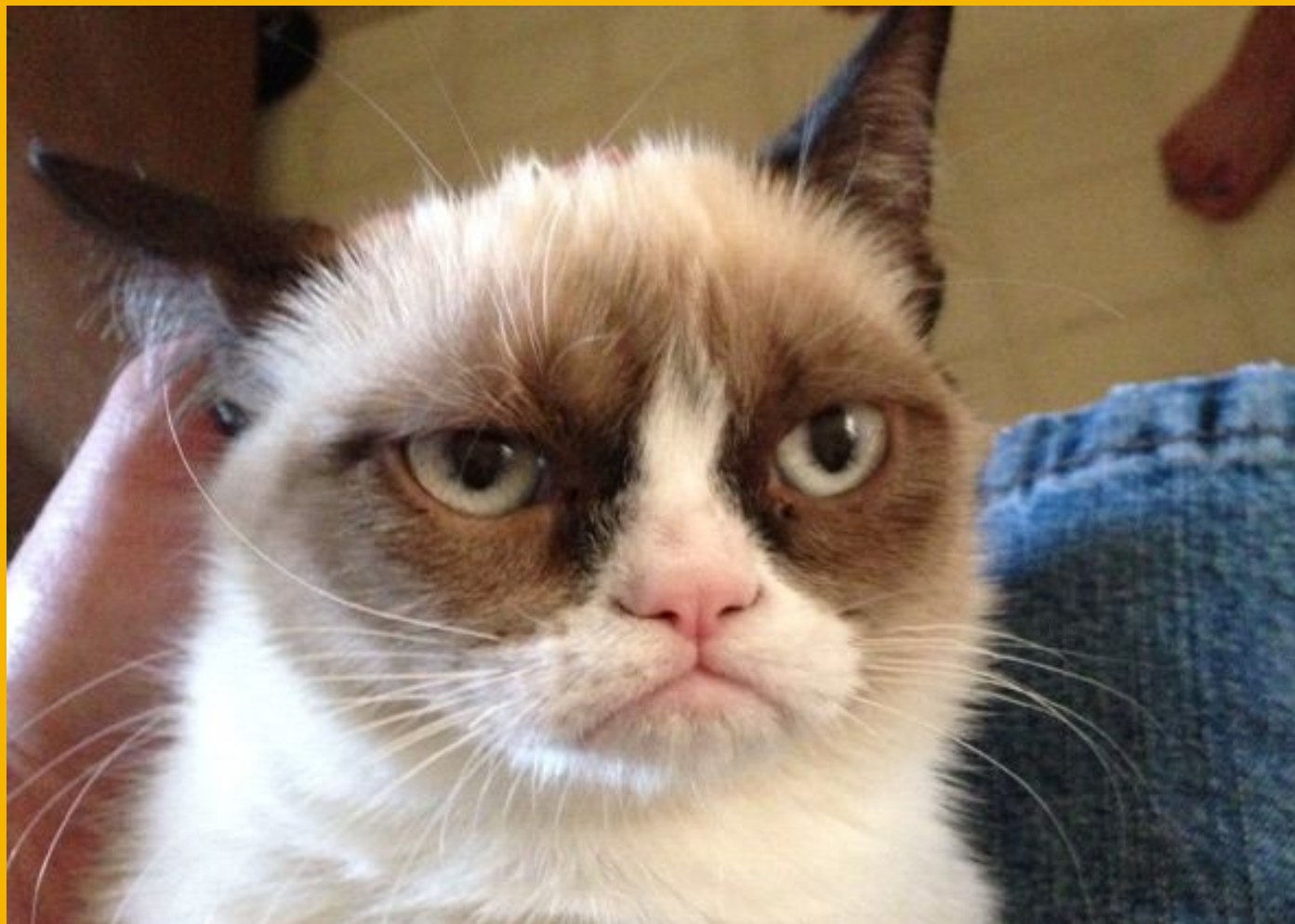


Feeling Your Feelings

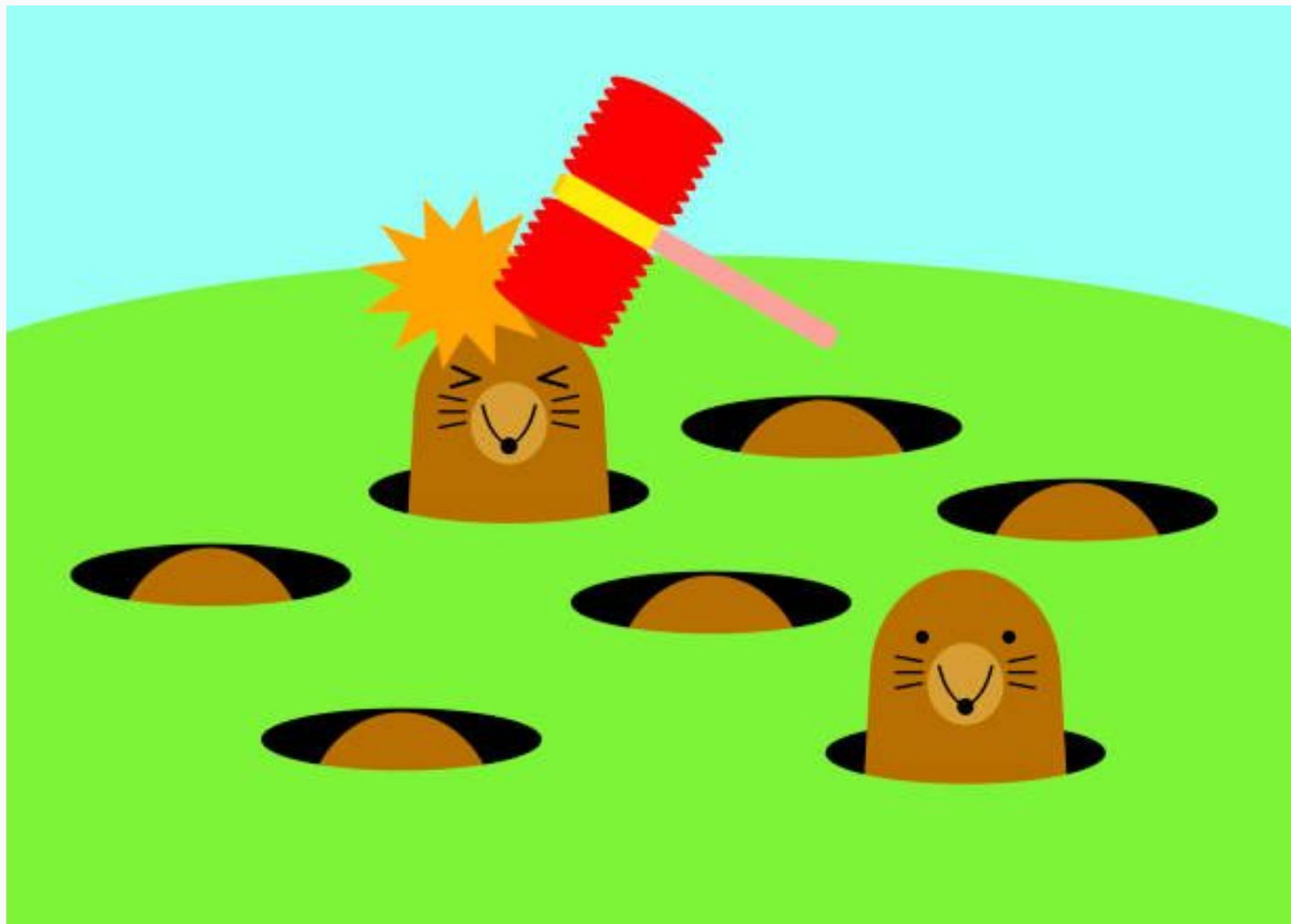


Learning how to actually feel your feelings
in a loving way
=
a superpower









Small

Normal

Large

✓ Huge

Emotion Suppression and Mortality Risk Over a 12-Year Follow-up

[Benjamin P. Chapman](#), PhD, MPH,¹ [Kevin Fiscella](#), MD, MPH,² [Ichiro Kawachi](#), MD, PhD,³ [Paul Duberstein](#), PhD,¹ and [Peter Muennig](#), MD, MPH⁴

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Abstract

Go to: 

Objective

Suppression of emotion has long been suspected to have a role in health, but empirical work has yielded mixed findings. We examined the association between emotion suppression and all-cause, cardiovascular, and cancer mortality over 12 years of follow-up in a nationally representative US sample.

Methods

We used the 2008 General Social Survey-National Death Index (NDI) cohort, which included an emotion suppression scale administered to 729 people in 1996. Prospective mortality follow up between 1996 and 2008 of 111 deaths (37 by cardiovascular disease, 34 by cancer) was evaluated using Cox proportional hazards models adjusted for age, gender, education, and minority race/ethnicity.

Results

The 75th vs. 25th percentile on the emotional suppression score was associated with hazard ratio (HR) of 1.35 (95% Confidence Interval [95% CI] = 1.00, 1.82; $p = .049$) for all-cause mortality. For cancer and cardiovascular disease mortality, the HRs were 1.70 (95% CI = 1.01, 2.88, $p = 0.049$) and 1.47 (95% CI =

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[About author manuscripts](#)[Submit a manuscript](#)[J Pers Soc Psychol](#). Author manuscript; available in PMC 2014 Aug 22.

PMCID: PMC4141473

Published in final edited form as:

NIHMSID: NIHMS614281

[J Pers Soc Psychol](#). 2009 Apr; 96(4): 883–897.PMID: [19309209](#)doi: [10.1037/a0014755](#)**The Social Costs of Emotional Suppression: A Prospective Study of the Transition to College**[Sanjay Srivastava](#), [Maya Tamir](#), [Kelly M. McGonigal](#), [Oliver P. John](#), and [James J. Gross](#)[▶ Author information](#) ▶ [Copyright and License information](#) [Disclaimer](#)The publisher's final edited version of this article is available at [J Pers Soc Psychol](#)See other articles in PMC that [cite](#) the published article.**Abstract**[Go to:](#) ☒

There is growing interest in understanding how emotion regulation affects adaptation. The present study examined expressive suppression (which involves inhibiting the overt expression of emotion) and how it affects one critical domain of adaptation, social functioning. This investigation focused on the transition to college, a time that presents a variety of emotional and social challenges. Analyses focused on two components of suppression: a stable component, representing individual differences expressed both before and after the transition; and a dynamic component, representing variance specific to the new college context. Both components of suppression predicted lower social support, less closeness to others, and lower social satisfaction. These findings were robustly corroborated across weekly experience reports, self-reports, and peer reports, and are consistent with a theoretical framework that defines emotion regulation as a dynamic process shaped by both stable person factors and environmental demands.

The hundreds of new faces that await freshmen as they begin their first year of college can be overwhelming. Without the comforts of home and the familiarity of high school, many students experience a mix of excitement and dread as they prepare to enter the unknown. During this emotionally intense and disorienting time, meeting new people, making new friends, and creating a new social support system are of paramount importance in having a successful first year in college (Christie & Dinham, 1991). What

“...suppression [of emotion] predicted lower social support, less closeness to others, and lower social satisfaction.”

The background of the slide is a light cream color, decorated with numerous small, five-pointed stars. These stars are scattered across the entire surface, with a higher density in the corners. The stars appear in three colors: a vibrant blue, a muted grey-blue, and a very light, almost white, grey. The overall effect is a soft, celebratory, or dreamlike atmosphere.

Emotions

Feelings

Basic Emotions

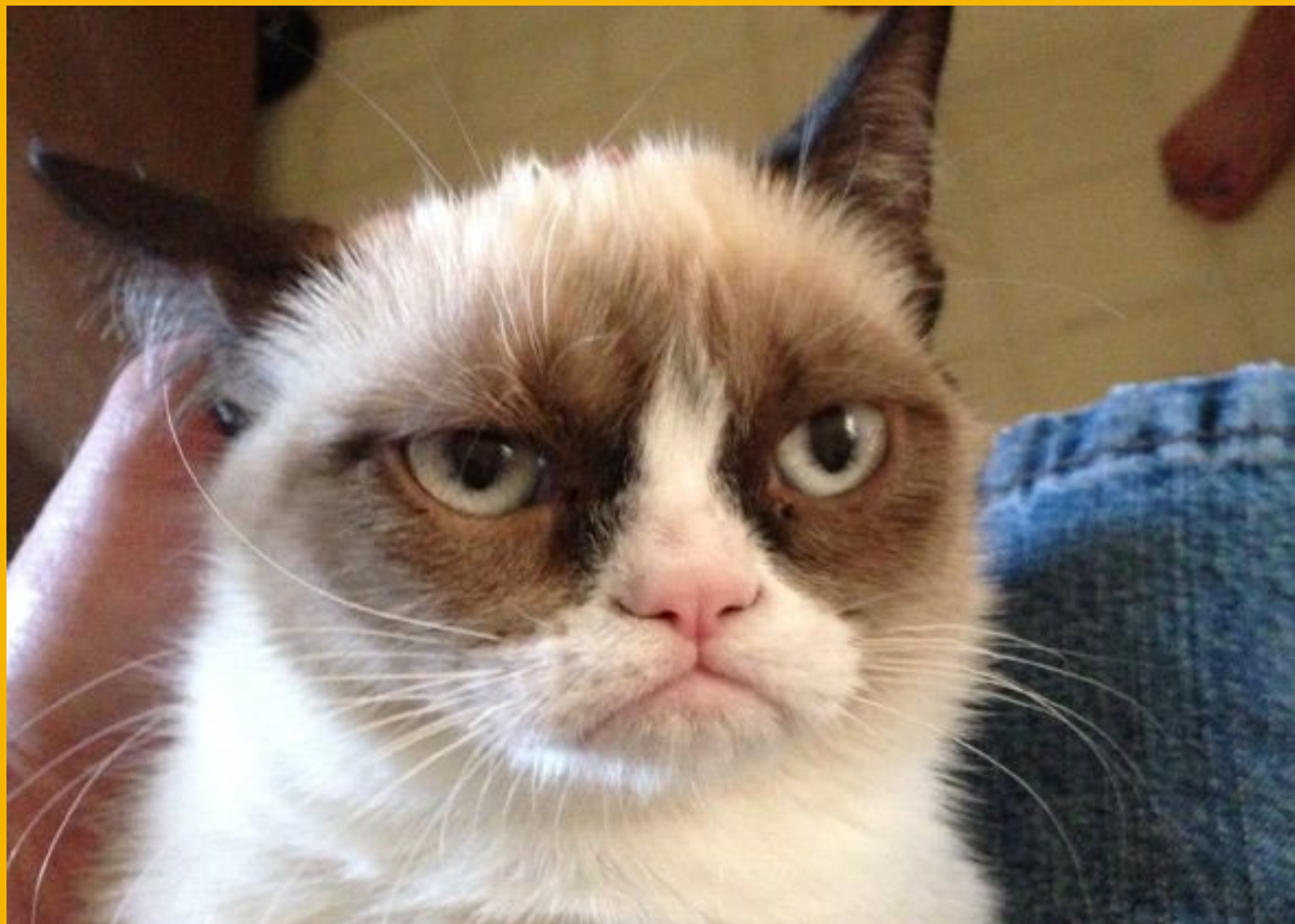


- Happy
- Sad
- Afraid
- Angry
- Resentful
- Anxious
- Proud

- Jealous
- Frustrated
- Lonely
- Peaceful
- Confused
- Confident
- Vulnerable

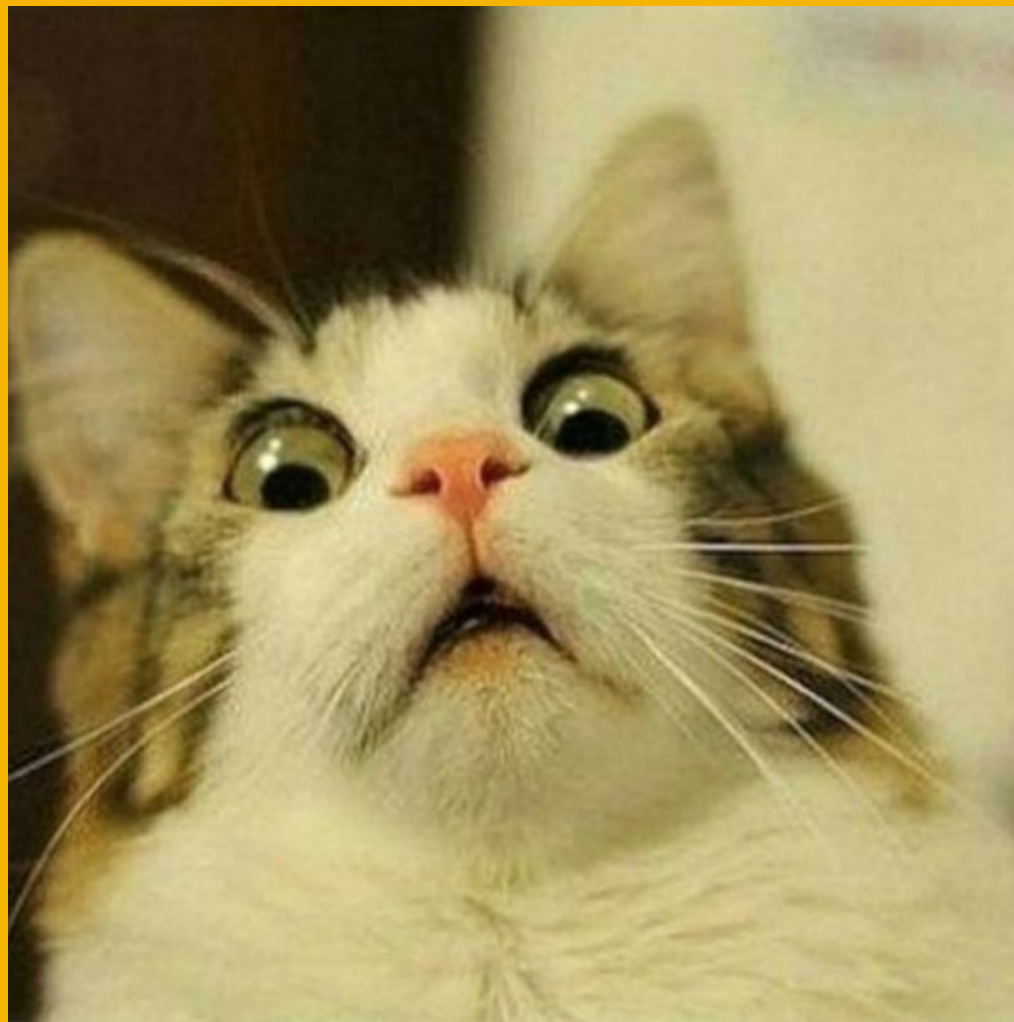
- Guilty
- Eager
- Regretful
- Loving
- Overwhelmed
- Embarrassed
- Ashamed

How do you actually
FEEL
your feelings?





- Heart beating fast
- Kind of queasy
- Head hot and kind of tight
- Shoulders hard
- Buzzy feeling in stomach



90-Second Rule

“Something happens in the external world, and chemicals are flushed through your body which puts it on full alert. For those chemicals to totally flush out of the body, it takes less than 90 seconds.”

Neuroscientist Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor in *My Stroke of Insight*

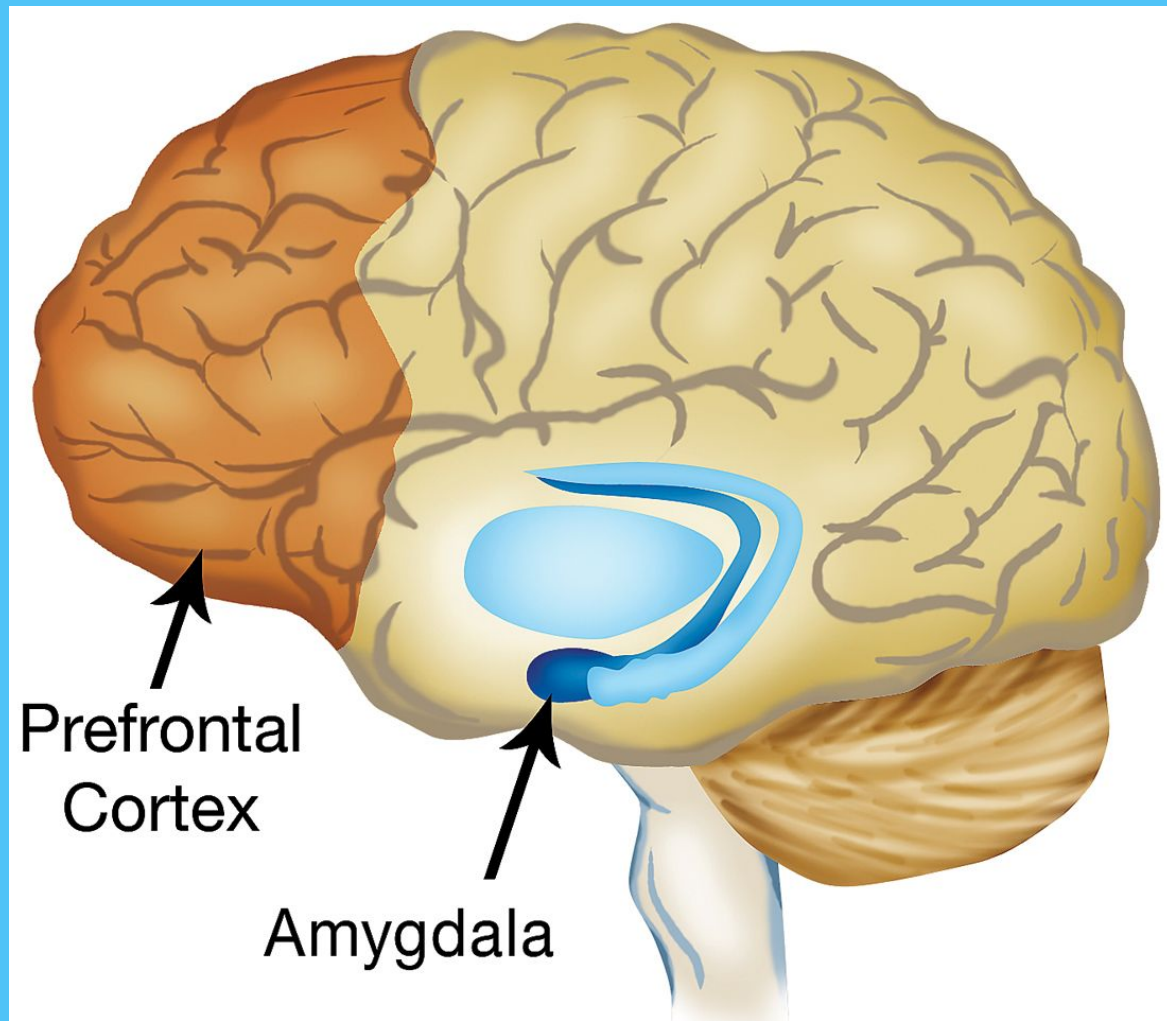


Noticing your emotions
makes you

smart

“When you’re stressed, pausing 90 seconds and labelling what you’re feeling (e.g. I’m getting angry), tamps down activity in the amygdala.”









HOW TO FEEL YOUR FEELINGS?

1. **Notice the sensations in your body:**
heart racing, sweaty palms, clenched jaw
2. **Label the emotion:**
I feel mad. I feel sad. I feel overwhelmed...
3. **Allow your emotion:**
Just watch it, like you would watch a movie. Don't judge it or try to make it go away.

富嶽三十六景 神奈川沖
浪裏

江村漁翁



You realize that your 16-year-old son has not returned from his first driving trip and it's getting dark.

- Notice the sensations: a dense, heavy feeling in your chest like a rock and a sick feeling in your stomach, a tightness in your shoulders, a throbbing red pressure in your head, hard to breathe, heart speeds up, your legs feel weak.
- Label the emotions: I feel anxious. I feel dread. I'm afraid.
- Allow the sensations rise and fall

No one remembered your birthday.

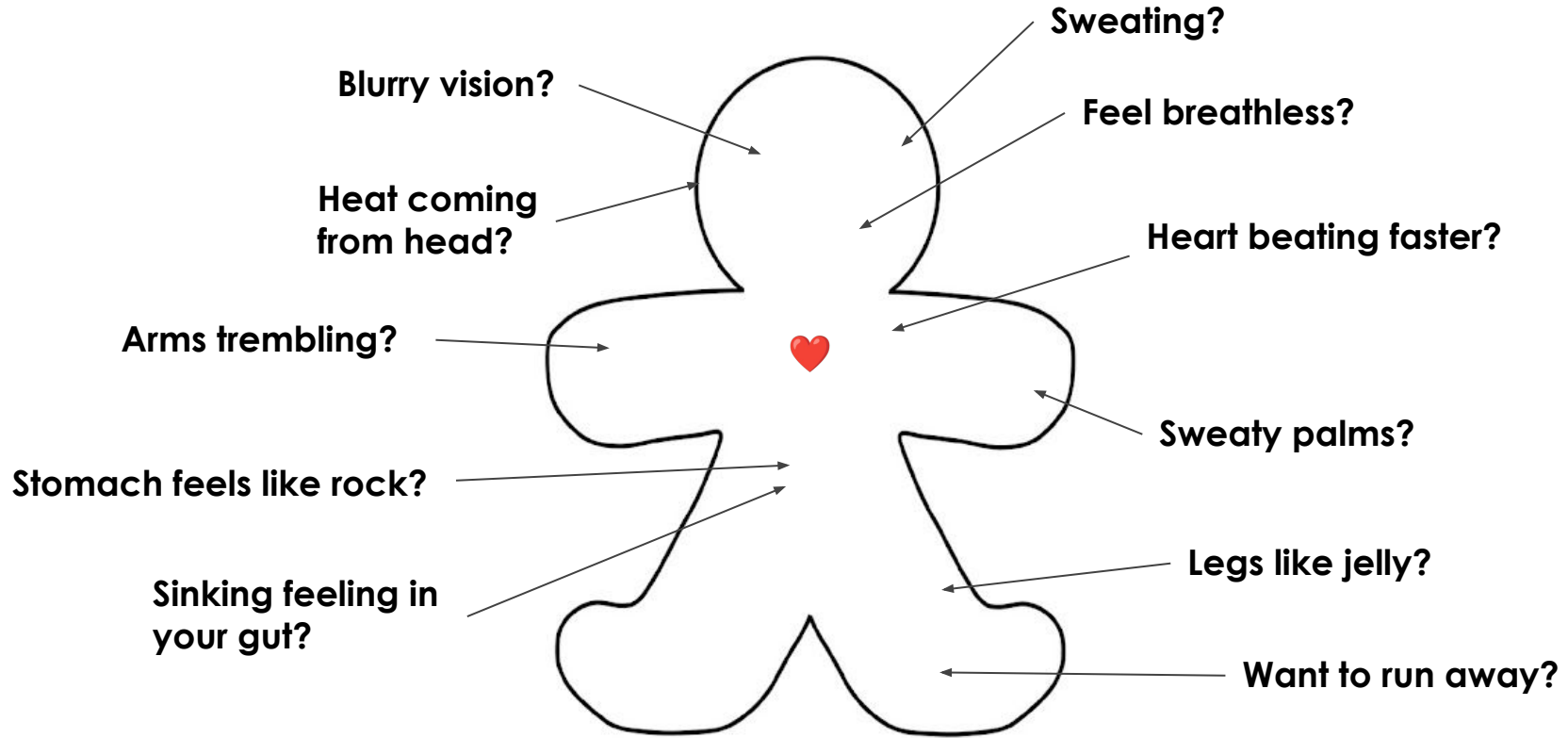
- Notice the sensations: A gray heaviness in your eyes and in your chest, a general numbness, a floaty wave like snow on a TV set in your belly
- Label the emotions: I feel sad.
- Allow the sensations rise and fall

It's Friday night and you have nothing special to do.

- Notice the sensations: A purple cloud of jitteriness in your stomach, a thick, heavy, tired feeling in your head, empty feeling all over
- Label the emotions: I feel bored
- Allow the sensations rise and fall

Tips for practicing
this on your own

Tips for noticing the sensations



- Heavy
- Light
- Hot
- Cold
- Still
- Moving

- Solid
- Cloud-like
- Liquidy
- A color?
- Buzzy
- Jittery

Tips for labeling the emotions

- Don't worry about whether the words are actually emotions.
- Remember that the acts of labeling and noticing are what is important.
- You may notice layers of emotion.

Tips for allowing the sensations to come and go

- **No good or bad emotions!**
- A feeling is literally just a sensation in your body, a vibration in your body.



Be Kind to Yourself

I forgive myself for being human.

I feel pissy, and that's okay...

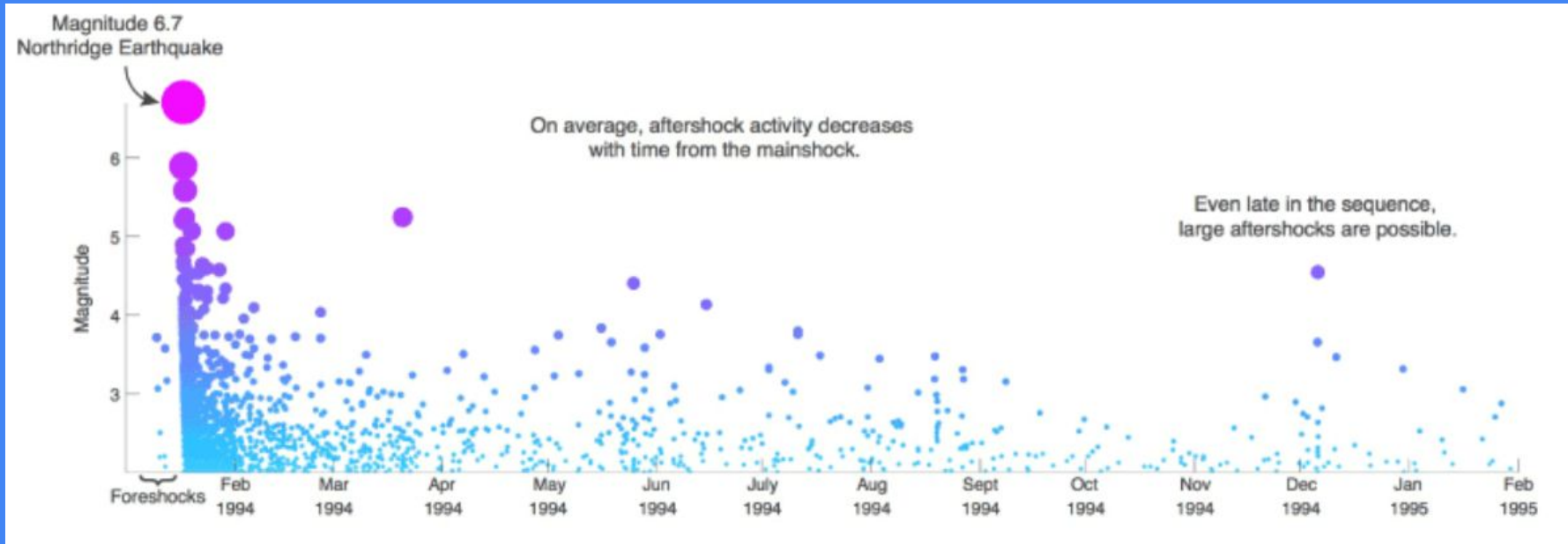
I feel jealous, and that's okay...


I feel uptight, and that's okay...

I feel frustrated, and that's okay...

I've got you, I'm with you. It's okay to feel this way.

Emotional waves



A decorative watercolor border featuring various green leaves, small yellow flowers, and a purple flower, framing the central text.

Calm your
nervous system

A full-page background image of a sunset sky. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds in shades of orange, yellow, and pink, set against a deep blue background. The text "Keep calm and carry on." is centered in the upper half of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Keep calm and carry on.



The more I learn how to allow
tough emotions, the more...

- I learn and grow
- weight I lose
- love and connection I have
- money I make
- Impact my work makes

