



It's Emotional!

How to value your emotions and to express them authentically and healthily

"...It all starts with really *feeling* our emotions."

Teal Swan

There's a lot of 'stuff' out there right now about how to manage our emotions. How to be more emotionally mature, stable, balanced. How not to be ruled by your emotions...

In my opinion this is potentially damaging. We're being encouraged to think that there's something wrong with us for having emotions. Worse still, if we dare to express them we're shamed into thinking that we're broken in some way. And this is very, very wrong.

We've developed a society that doesn't value our emotions and so anyone who dares to be real is a total pain because they remind us of how we really feel, of what we've been running away from and we're scared that's going to turn out messy for us.

So what we do with someone who expresses their emotions? We shame them. Tell them they're unstable or over reacting. "Man up", "Don't be sad". We make them believe that they're 'too much'.

Sounds like abuse? That's because it is. It's not intentional. It's because we've got our wires crossed. We've been

misinformed. Our emotions are in fact one of the most valuable signposts of our truth. One of the most important keys to our authenticity. And our gateway to freedom.

I'm not suggesting that it's ok for us to attack others because we're feeling angry or to drag someone down because we are sad. However, we do need to find a way to honour and express ourselves healthily at the same time as taking responsibility for how we feel.

It's a process and those of us courageous enough to dive in and explore our emotions after years of suppression and rejection of this part of us may well find we are a little dramatic at first due to the intensity and unfamiliarity of the sensations that arise for us.

So I'm not going to give you advice here on how to manage, control or change your emotions. I'm going to share the process I'm working with myself to help me welcome them, feel them, express them and use them in a healthy constructive way.

1. Sit still with the feeling (aka Meditate) . It's more often than not the last thing I want to do. I don't always succeed. But I'm starting to recognise more and more that I need to take the courage to feel my feelings.
2. Welcome the emotion. Whatever it might be. This is not the same as enjoying it!! No matter what you are feeling it is important to acknowledge it. Invite it in like a long lost friend and listen to it. Trust it. It is telling you something important.
3. Validate the emotion. This is essential. It is ok to feel what you are feeling. Let go of the "I shouldn't be feeling this way, I'm over reacting, here I go again" commentary. This isn't yours and it isn't helpful.
4. Once you are clear about how you are feeling start to look at the story you are telling yourself to create this feeling. My emotions are usually caused by my thinking. My experience has been that emotions don't lie but thoughts do. So check out with yourself "Is the story I'm telling myself true?" ¹ For example, when my cat, Kali doesn't



¹ Check out Byron Katie's "The Work" as a great way to challenge your thinking



come home when I expect her my thinking will quickly rush to disaster. This leads to me spiralling into fear and loss. If I can change my thinking pattern to include the probability that she's out having fun then I can avoid a lot of unnecessary suffering for myself (and my lovely friends who have been on the receiving end of my panic phone calls).

5. Practice expressing your emotions and soothing yourself. Let the emotion out. Go scream and shout on the beach or write or sing or dance. Cuddle up with the cat (if she's home!) under the duvet. Whatever it is that works for you. Give the emotion an outlet.
6. Don't let your emotion define you. Avoid expressions like I'm angry or I'm overwhelmed. Be conscious in your use of language and watch the shift.... "I'm experiencing anger" "I feel overwhelm" means that you keep perspective the emotion is not who you are it is simply part of your current experience
7. Cultivate friendships where emotional availability is encouraged and welcomed. Notice the people around you who are able to hold space for you in your pain as well as your joy. They are golden! See below for some suggestions about how to do this....

Supporting someone to express their emotions

The other side of the coin is the need for us to develop skills in holding safe space for others who are experiencing tough emotions.

We need to encourage and support each other to be real. We need to value the vulnerability of another as a courageous gift not as a sign of weakness or an indication that they're obviously not doing enough Yoga!!

Here's what helps me...

1. Be with the person fully in all their glorious messiness. Let them express how they're feeling. Fully. Listen without trying to fix anything and definitely without expressing judgment.

"When you're struggling hard to manage your own emotions, it becomes unbearable to witness other peoples....."

From "Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine" by Gail Honeyman

2. However over the top or dramatic you might feel the person is being remind yourself that in this moment their reality warrants this. I'm not talking about accepting tolerating violence or abuse (physical or verbal). That is never ok. But pure emotion is not abusive. Messy and uncomfortable yes, but never abusive.
3. Validate their emotion. This doesn't mean saying "You're totally right. yes! You are a complete mess. there's no hope for you!" Its more a case of saying something like "I can understand how you feel that way right now" or maybe "I sometimes feel that way too" (if it is true)
4. Help them to examine the thinking that has cause the emotion. In the case of Kali Kat's AWOL moments it helps me when friends remind me that she's always come back before. "It's a nice sunny day she's probably out hunting or curled up on the neighbour's couch". It reminds me there are other possibilities than the worst case scenario.
5. Check in on them later. Reassure them that it's ok. That you're still here for them. Let them know what a privilege it is to be trusted with their vulnerability because it really is!



I believe that one of the most crippling sicknesses in our Society, one of the biggest barriers to our true freedom and ability to be authentic is our collective fear of our emotions.

It's time to re-evaluate. Let's support each other to dive in to the depths of our truth in order to access the light on the other side.

With Love

Faithfully Me x