

How to Better Understand Your Emotions

Having the ability to feel emotions is part of being human. We all experience them and our emotions can affect our life in many ways, both positively and negatively. Sometimes, stress can lead to emotions such as anger, confusion, fear, loneliness, and sadness.

These emotions can be very powerful but the way to overcome them is to practice mindfulness. Once you calm down and relax, you can reflect on the situation and thoughtfully respond, rather than react in a negative way.

Take a look at these six steps to mindfully deal with difficult emotions. Give it a try!

1). Awareness

Become aware of the emotion and try to identify where you sense it in your body. You may feel it as a stomachache, a tightening of your throat, the pounding of your heart, or tension somewhere. Sit with this anger, anxiety, depression, grief, sadness, shame, or whatever emotion you are experiencing. Become aware of it and don't ignore it. Bottling it up inside will only cause it to bubble up and explode later, resulting in more difficult emotions or even a complete emotional shut down.

2). Identify and Label

To stay mindful, say to yourself, "This is anger" or "This is anxiety". In this way, you're acknowledging its presence, while simultaneously empowering you to remain detached from it.

3). Acceptance

Turn toward your emotions with acceptance. Don't try to deny the emotion. Acknowledge and accept that it is there. Through mindful acceptance, you can embrace difficult feelings with compassion, awareness, and understanding towards yourself. In this way, you will gain the power to calm and sooth yourself and others.

4). Realize the Importance

Even if the emotion feels overwhelming, remember that it will pass. It's easy to forget this when you're in the middle of dealing with difficult emotions.

5). Inquire and Investigate

Ask yourself, "What triggered me?" and "Why do I feel this way?"

6). Let Go

Let go of the need to control your emotions. Be open to the outcome of your emotions and what unfolds.

Always remember that every single emotion you feel is only temporary. They come and go. Having the ability to better identify what you are feeling at any given time is an important first step in dealing with these emotions more effectively.