

Based on Teal Swan's
emotional vipassana
process

Befriending your feelings

'What you resist persists'

You may have heard this saying time and time again but what does it really mean?

- In a nutshell, when you move towards your feelings and allow them to be there they lose their power.
- This may sound counterintuitive; however, by no longer resisting what is already present, your fears can no longer 'hijack' you.

Why do we have feelings?

- Your feelings enable you to experience your thoughts by creating physical and emotional sensations in the body.
- Your feelings are your 'compass', guiding your decisions, choices and behaviours.
- Your feelings connect you to others and to the heart of life. Without them we would be like robots.

What can I do to reduce my unpleasant feelings of anxiety, low mood, fear, anger...?

- Firstly acknowledge that there is nothing that needs to be fixed about you. Your emotions and physical sensations are simply signals from your body letting you know what might no longer be helping you or what might need your attention.
 - By embracing your feelings with an attitude of curiosity and approval you give your body the space to bring things back into balance.
 - **Let go of trying to feel better.** By constantly moving away and suppressing pain we encourage more suffering. Instead try following the steps below:
1. **Acknowledge** what you are feeling in this moment. For instance, you might say 'anger'.
 2. Next, close your eyes and sink into that signature feeling of 'anger'.
 3. Gently **observe** the sensations in your body of this signature feeling whilst breathing in and out of your nose, without any unnecessary pauses.
 4. **Notice** where you feel the sensations of this particular feeling most intensely in your body and bring your focus of attention to that part of your body.
 5. On your next outbreath, **breathe** into that part of your body and send the feeling sensation a message that you are completely present with it and approve of it being there.

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6. By imagining the breath flowing in and out of this area you support yourself to **remain present with the sensations** without trying to change them.
7. As you stay present with the feelings you may notice them become more intense at first. This is natural. As best you can continue to be with the sensations and **describe** them to yourself either mentally or out loud. For instance, are they associated with any colours or images, do they feel gas like or solid?
8. You may notice that in time your sensations begin to shift. If this happens ask yourself how the feelings are changing and what they are changing into. For instance, initially you may have felt anger, which might have felt like hot coals burning in your chest and throat. Then the sensations could have shifted into a feeling of sadness, which may have felt like a slow moving black gas around your heart area. Continue to notice if the feelings are associated with any colours, images or textures and always come back to the body if your mind gets distracted.
9. If thoughts come up, just notice them and let them be there and come back to the sensations in the body.
10. To help yourself feel supported throughout this process you can mentally repeat yourself '**I am completely here with you now**'.
11. **Remain attentive, curious and focused** on how you feel until you experience a shift and some relief. Then expand on that feeling of relief, again noticing what it feels like for you to experience relief in your body.
12. Then slowly open your eyes and thank yourself for being with your emotions and therefore fully with yourself. ⁱ

NB: You can do this for positive emotional states too.

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