

Recovery!



EXPRESS YOURSELF!
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Some Facts About Feelings

- 1) Feelings can involve a total body reaction - you might “feel it all over.” They are mediated both by a part of your brain called the limbic system and the involuntary autonomic nervous system. You may feel body reactions to emotions such as increased heart rate, respiration, perspiration, shaking or trembling.
- 2) Feelings do not come out of the blue, but are influenced by the way you perceive events, react to your doubts and insecurities, memories or stress.
- 3) Feelings can be divided into two categories: simple and complex. Simple emotions tend to be short lived and more impulsive or reactive. Some examples are emotions such as anger, sadness, grief, fear or excitement. Complex emotions, such as eagerness, disappointment, relief or impatience, involve a combination of simpler feelings. They often last longer and are more thought out.
- 4) Being in touch with your feelings and expressing them will give you energy. If you are out of touch with your feelings and are unable to express them you may feel lethargic, numb, tired, depressed or anxious.
- 5) Feelings often come in mixtures of two or more at a time. For example, you may feel anger, guilt and love all at the same time when arguing with your partner, parent or close friend.
- 6) Feelings are often contagious, and you may pick up on the feelings of those around you. The more in touch and comfortable you are with your own feelings, the less likely you will be to “catch” those of others.
- 7) Feelings are not right or wrong. The perceptions or judgements you made which led to your feelings, however, may be right or wrong, valid or invalid.
- 8) Feelings are often subject to suppression. Sometimes you may hold in your feelings because it is not an appropriate time to express them. For example, if you had an argument with your boyfriend last night, you may try to hold in your feelings the next day at work while giving a presentation and deal with them later.

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Greetings!

Express yourself! Keeping your feelings pent up inside can be harmful to yourself physically and psychologically. Perhaps you aren't even aware of the emotions that you are feeling. Learning how to identify those feelings and how to express them effectively will allow you to establish what your needs really are.

Most of us have a general understanding of nutrition. We know the basics of what foods are good for our bodies and which are poorer choices. So, with this knowledge, why do we still not nourish our bodies in a healthy way sometimes? Read Barb's article for a little more insight on the importance of nutrition.

Do you feel guilty when you make a mistake, even an innocent one? Don't panic! Making mistakes is normal, we all make mistakes. It doesn't have to be a bad thing, we can use mistakes as learning experiences and tools for dealing with future situations. Feel better about yourself by raising your awareness and realizing that everyone makes mistakes, even you!

We hope that you are all enjoying your summer, at Westwind we are enjoying the beautiful weather that we've been blessed with. Get outside and soak up the sunshine!

Lynne Robertson

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“For so long we tried to be perfect in every way.

And now, when we think about the women we've become, we realize we are better than perfect. We are real.”

Maya Angelou

This newsletter is a publication of the Westwind eating disorder recovery centre, and is intended for general information only. It is not intended to provide personal medical or psychological advice, which should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

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begin to feel emotions that are unpleasant and decide you do not want to deal with them and so choose to ignore them. Suppressing continuously will make it much more difficult to identify what you are feeling.

Symptoms of Suppressed Feelings

Sometimes when our emotions are withheld for a long time it is hard to even tell what we are feeling. However, held-in feelings do not disappear and will show themselves in many physical and psychological ways. One of these “hiding places” of suppressed emotions is in our anxiety. Anxiety comes from many sources such as fear in the face of uncertainty or anticipating a negative outcome. Other times a lack of emotional expression can lead to a vague, undefined uneasiness that comes from holding back the energy of our feelings, forcing it into an uncomfortable tension.

Depression, or “stuck feelings”, can occur when we hold in unexpressed emotions such as grief, sadness or anger. Depression sometimes serves as a mask by turning anger in against the self. Sometimes a good cry can help relieve the feelings. Other times it may be helpful to ask yourself what you are angry about.

There are many psychosomatic symptoms that serve as clues to suppressed emotions. Some examples include headaches, ulcers, high blood pressure and asthma. Holding in our feelings over many years is one type of stress that is very likely to take a toll on your body.

Another way our bodies respond to suppressed feelings is through stiff, tight muscles. We tend to tighten certain muscle groups for different emotions. Anger or frustration is often held in by tightening the back of the neck and

shoulders. Grief and sadness can be held in by tightening muscles in the chest and around the eyes. Fear is often suppressed by a tightening of the stomach and diaphragm area.

The Work of Emotional Expression

Once we are able to identify our emotions it is important to give them some expression and “let them out.” Emotional expression does not mean dumping or directing them towards someone who we feel might be responsible for them. Talking about your feelings with a supportive friend is the best way to express your feelings. Sharing means not only talking about our feelings but openly disclosing them and letting them out. If your feelings are intense and there is no one immediately available to talk with, writing them out can be helpful by serving as an outlet until you have the opportunity to talk with someone.

The Need Behind Our Feelings

Strong feelings are often a clue to unmet needs. Looking for the need behind our feelings gives them a new and deeper perspective. We do not just feel anger, sadness or fear without a reason. Perhaps you feel anxious for fear of what others might think of you if you show panic. The need for acceptance underlies this fear. Maybe you feel sad because you are alone after the departure of someone close to you. The need under this sadness is for companionship and affection. Or perhaps you are feeling bored, empty or depressed because your life seems dull and routine. The need behind these feelings is for a greater sense of meaning and purpose. Gaining insight into our needs gives us the power to begin to meet them and view them as a sign rather than a problem.

Bourne, Edmund, J. Ph.D. (2000). *The Anxiety & Phobia Workbook - Third Edition*. New Harbinger Publications: Oakland CA.

The Importance of Good Nutrition

What are the factors that determine a person's food choices? Most people have a general idea of what a healthy diet is, yet they continue to eat foods that are unhealthy for them. What barriers are blocking people from eating healthily? If we are more aware of what it is that is stopping us from making more healthy food choices we will likely be more willing to make positive changes in our eating habits. Here are the most common barriers experienced:

1) *Money*. Grocery shopping can be expensive. Some people don't believe that they can afford to eat healthy, therefore they purchase cheaper foods and junk foods rather than fresh fruits and vegetables.

2) *Taste*. Some people eat according to how their taste buds react to foods. High fat, high salt and sweet foods taste better, and over time normal eating doesn't taste so good anymore.

3) *Time and Convenience*. These days many of us have busy schedules. Convenience foods have made meals take less time and energy to prepare.

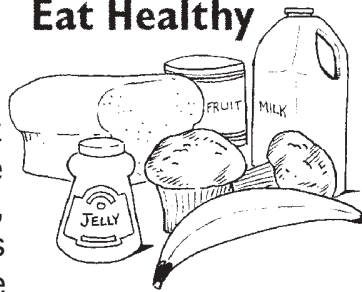
4) *Desire to lose weight*. Some people are concerned only about calorie content of foods not nutrients that their body requires.

Nutrients are the chemical substances in food that nourish our bodies by providing us with energy, building materials, and factors to regulate needed chemical reactions performed in our bodies. We each need over fifty nutrients daily in order to function properly. The major nutrients required are protein, carbohydrates, fats, water, fiber, vitamins

and minerals. Varying degrees of deficiencies can occur without some of these nutrients, which could compromise our health in the long run.

When we are poorly nourished our immune system may be compromised and not able to combat all of the dangerous environmental elements that a well nourished body is able to fight off. Without the protective factors of nutrients our bodies may not be able to fend off the damaging effects of carcinogens, imbalance of nutrients and free radicals. Pregnancy is also a critical time for the foundation of a healthy baby and is dependent on a good nutritional intake, otherwise the risk of complications increase.

Eat Healthy



You don't need to know exactly how much of each and every nutrient you are eating, but how can you know when you are eating a balanced diet? Canada's Food Guide was designed to help you out. Much

research has gone into the process of understanding the relationship between nutrients and the needs of our bodies. The Food Guide breaks down foods into different categories based on their major nutritional components. According to the Food Guide the three most important aspects regarding diet are:

- 1) To eat a variety of foods in adequate quantities from each of the four food groups.
- 2) To eat a balanced diet.
- 3) To consume foods of poor nutritional value in moderation.

Good nutrition is the consumption of foods which will provide the nutrient needs of the body for optimal health. So follow the Canada's Food Guide to better health!

Written by Barbara Hodson, RD.

We All Make Mistakes

If you were given the message when you were younger that when you made a mistake you were bad, then likely today your own critic has internalized this message. Today, you might find that you are very critical of yourself when you make even a minor mistake. This can lead to a couple of situations:

- 1) You are defensive and rationalize all mistakes
- 2) You are so afraid of any mistake that you do not admit any
- 3) You are chronically depressed about all your mistakes
- 4) You avoid certain activities in order to attempt to do everything perfectly

Self-esteem has nothing to do with being perfect or avoiding mistakes. Self-esteem is accepting that you are a worthy being, regardless of your mistakes. Feeling good about yourself is not something you do after you have corrected your mistakes, it is something you do in spite of your mistakes.

A mistake is anything you do that you later, upon reflection, wish you had done differently (or things you did not do that you later wish you had done). At the moment you are doing what seems most reasonable. Mistakes are often due to a lack of awareness. So here are some questions to ask yourself to increase your awareness when making a decision:

- 1) Have I experienced this situation before?
- 2) What negative consequences came (both short and long term) or might be expected to come from the decision I plan to make?
- 3) Are the consequences worth it, given what I expect to gain?
- 4) Do I know any alternative with less negative consequences?

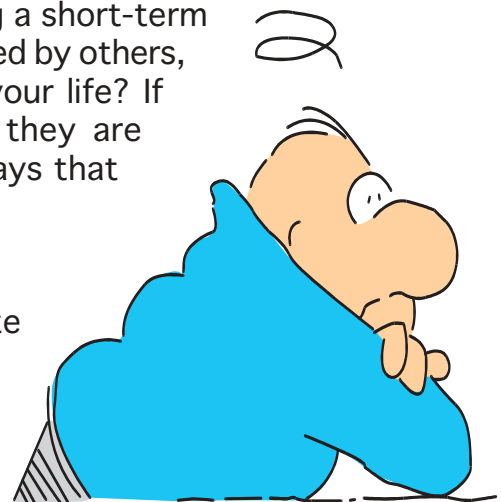
Chronic Mistakes

Everyone has one or more areas where similar mistakes are repeated. Do these two things after every reoccurrence of the error:

- 1) Write in detail the negative consequences of the mistake (writing is a memory aid).
- 2) Examine your priorities. What was the main thing you got or hoped to get from your decision? Were you seeking a short-term pleasure, were you trying to feel safe, trying to be liked by others, or avoiding loneliness? Is this priority a theme in your life? If so, you should examine new decisions to see if they are motivated by that priority. Then, examine other ways that you could meet that need.

Reframing Mistakes

- 1) *Mistakes as teachers*. Mistakes are a prerequisite for any learning process - you cannot learn any task or skill without errors. The psychological term for this idea is successive approximation (getting closer and closer to successful performance by using the



feedback provided by your mistakes). In other words, each error you make tells you what you need to correct and you become incrementally closer to the correct behavioural sequence for the completion of the task. For example, putting an end to restriction, binge eating or purging is learning a new behavioural sequence and will likely require slips along the way before this sequence is perfected.

2) *Mistakes as warnings.* Mistakes are warnings for us, telling us that there is something about our behaviour that we need to change. For example, if you get a D in one of your courses, this is a warning that you need to improve your study habits. However, the dream of perfection turns mistakes from warnings into sins. With perfectionism you can become so absorbed in defending your mistake that you do not learn the lesson of the mistake. When we fail to observe the lessons to be learned from our mistakes, we can be more likely to repeat these mistakes. For example, when you have a slip in recovery, it is important to look at this as a learning experience rather than using this as ammunition for self-criticism. By looking at your slip as a chance to learn something new, you can make a change in your behaviour and reduce the chances of repeating this same mistake in the future.

3) *Mistakes: Prerequisite for spontaneity.* We need to make mistakes in order to be spontaneous. A fear of making mistakes limits your ability to be your spontaneous self. If you never allow yourself to say the wrong thing, you may never feel free enough to say the right thing (that you love someone, that you hurt, that you want to give comfort). A willingness to

make mistakes means that it is okay to disappoint someone or to have a moment of awkwardness sometimes.

4) *Mistakes: The necessary quota.* A rule of thumb to follow is that for most people between 1-3 out of 10 decisions are dead wrong and many others are in a gray area. Everyone deserves a quota for mistakes and needs to allow for these mistakes. It is a myth that all mistakes can be avoided if the person is competent, intelligent, or worthwhile. Everyone makes mistakes!

Raising Your Mistake Consciousness

1) *Realize that everyone makes mistakes.* Even the good guys and the heroes make mistakes (political leaders, movie stars, scientists, and so on). For example, the Wright brothers failed many times before their plane finally flew. The future is hidden and no one can perfectly forecast what is to come, no matter how intelligent that person is. Make a list of historical or public figures (that you respect) that have made significant mistakes. Also, make a list of people you know personally and admire and list their mistakes. This will help you to work on accepting your own mistakes.

2) *Realize that even you make mistakes.* Make a list of 10 mistakes you have made. Then, for each item on your list, go back in time to when you made that decision. Remember your thoughts and feelings. Did you know what would happen, or did you hope for a happier consequence? Did you know the pain that it would cause you or others? What needs pushed you to the decision? Did any alternative seem more attractive to you? If you were to return to that time, with the same needs, perceptions, and predictions of future

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outcomes, would you act differently? In many cases you will find that you would not have acted differently, given what you knew at the current time.

3) *Forgive yourself.* You deserve forgiveness for 3 reasons:

- i) You made the only decision you could make at the present time.
- ii) You have already paid for your mistake. You have already endured the negative consequences.
- iii) Mistakes are unavoidable. Everything you have learned in your lifetime has been at the price of thousands of little mistakes.

McKay, M. & Fanning, P. (2000). *Self-Esteem* (3rd Edition). New Harbinger Publications: Oakland, CA.

Some facts to keep in mind...

- 1) *You can gain greater self-control.* Gather accurate data about your behaviour so that you'll know what you are doing and thinking and be able to take charge!
- 2) *You can increase positive feelings.* Use positive self-talk, develop a healthy praise list, and learn to receive compliments to help you focus on your strengths and reduce self-criticism.
- 3) *You can understand social influences on body image.* Become sensitive to lookism by thinking about how you use age and weight labels, how you have shaped your ideas about attractiveness and the influences of the media.
- 4) *You can develop sensory awareness.* Listen carefully to feelings of hunger and to the effects of movement or touch.
- 5) *You can correct faulty beliefs.* Challenge irrational thoughts by learning to refute your cognitive errors with positive counter-arguments, and replace myths with facts.

Freedman, Rita, Ph. D. (2002). *Body Love: Learning to Like Our Looks and Ourselves.* Gurze Books: Carlsbad, CA.

What's New at Westwind?

Support Groups

Support groups are offered free of charge to individuals suffering from forms of disordered eating, their family members and friends, every Monday evening at Westwind at 7pm. Join our on-line support group at <http://groups.msn.com/westwindeatingdisordersupportgroup>.

Newsletter Subscriptions

Due to the rising costs in printing and postage, we regret that we will no longer be distributing this newsletter, Recovery!, free of charge (past clients will receive a free subscription for one year). Subscriptions are \$13/yr US mailed to the USA, or \$15/yr CAN in Canada. Other countries are \$18/yr US. The newsletter is published six times per year. Subscriptions for past clients of Westwind eating disorder recovery centre are \$8/yr US mailed to the USA, or \$10/yr CAN in Canada.

Golf Tournament

The Westwind Foundation for eating disorders will be holding their second annual golf tournament to raise funds to aid in the awareness, prevention and treatment of eating disorders. The tournament will be a fun best ball tournament held at Glen Lea Golf Course on Saturday September 6th with tee off times beginning at 1pm. If you would like to participate in the tournament, help in the planning of the tournament or make a donation to the Westwind Foundation please contact Lynne at 204-728-2499. Break out your golf clubs and join us for a day of fun on the fairways to help in the fight against eating disorders.

Rockin' Moroccan Stew

What you'll need:

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1/2 cup each diced celery and chopped green bell pepper
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- 3 cups peeled, cubed sweet potatoes
- 1 can (19 oz) potatoes, drained and cut up
- 1 can (19 oz) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp grated gingerroot
- 1 tsp each ground cumin, curry powder, ground coriander, and chili powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 2 tbsp each light peanut butter and chopped, fresh cilantro

- Heat olive oil in a large, non-stick saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onions, celery, green pepper, and garlic. Cook and stir until vegetables begin to soften, about 3 minutes.

- Add all remaining ingredients, except raisins, peanut butter, and cilantro. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes.

- Stir in raisins, peanut butter, and cilantro. Mix well. Simmer for 5 more minutes. Serve hot.

Makes 6 servings.

