



Emotion Recognition Worksheet Part 2

Recognizing

Anger

1. When we get angry we are realizing that we think someone has *crossed a line* that they shouldn't have crossed. Another way to think about this is that we are wanting there to be a *boundary* that was not being enforced. What kind of lines are bothering you when people cross them?
2. What kind of boundaries do you want that you are not enforcing in your life? What steps can you take to stop people crossing lines that upset you.

Fear

1. What are the situations that made you the most afraid?
2. When we feel fear we are really feeling *vulnerable*. What are the triggers that make you feel vulnerable?
3. What exactly are you afraid of happening to you in those situations? Is there an underlying fear that you notice in your life?

Sadness

1. What are the situations that made you the most afraid?
2. When we are feeling sad we are feeling *hurt* or wounded. When you felt sad what was the nature of the hurt?
3. What parts of you were hurt? Eg. Was your pride hurt? Did you feel threatened in a relationship that was supposed to be safe? Was your concept of yourself or expectations of yourself hurt by something you did?

Processing

1. Which emotions did you experience the most frequently?

When we can't stop feeling an emotion or it becomes overwhelming, it is likely that we are not really *feeling* the emotion but are "stuck" not being able to feel it. The fear, sadness, or anger that we are feeling feels like it will never end because we are actually trying to turn it off or run from the true experience of it.

For example if I constantly feel sad, it is likely that I am afraid of how sad I *might* feel if I truly went into the experience. In this case the emotion starts to feel like a slippery slope. I might be afraid that if I really go into the experience that it will never end. I might be afraid that the depths of the emotion are too much and would make me hopeless, dangerous, or suicidal.

a. Notice the situations that activate the overwhelming emotion the most.

Eg. people believing the wrong thing about me, feeling alone, feeling trapped.

Many of the "symptoms" that bring us to therapy are actually protective parts that we develop to "turn off" the depths of the overwhelming emotion.

b. Make a list of the protective parts that you use to protect yourself from experiencing the emotion.

Eg. drinking, disordered eating, socializing, texting, dating, talking

Often obsession, fighting or intellectualization are protective parts that we fail to notice.

c. Imagine your worst fear or the worst outcome in the situations that you are trying to control with the protective part.

Eg. Imagine being completely judged, disliked, alone, unloveable, inadequate, etc.

d. Let yourself feel the depths of this experience. How it defines the world around you. How it changes your sense of self. How it changes temperature, energy, tension, and pressure in your body.

Notice how anxiety, “fidgets” and restlessness reduce when you let yourself feel the emotion

- e. Explore how old the truly deep feeling feels. How long has it been there? At what parts in your life has it been pulling the strings of how you act.

Until we learn to feel the places that we learned in childhood, our whole life will become a construction to avoid them.

- f. Meditate on how this feeling has been “under” your life. Notice that many times you were “at your worst” you were trying to avoid this experience.

As you learn to feel the emotion the protective part will let go as it realizes you do not need its protection

- g. If it feels helpful try and draw or write down what the deep emotion feels like.

2. Which emotions did you experience the least frequently or never felt at all?

- a. If you never felt an emotion it is likely that experiencing that emotion is blocked or not allowed.

- b. Hold that emotion in your mind and see what reactions come up. Notice what you feel in your body.

Eg. Do you feel panicked when you think about being sad?

Do you feel dirty or mean when you think about being angry?

Did you feel “foggy” or dissociated when you felt fear?

- c. What are the protective parts or messages that you tell yourself to pull you out of the experience when you try to feel the emotion?