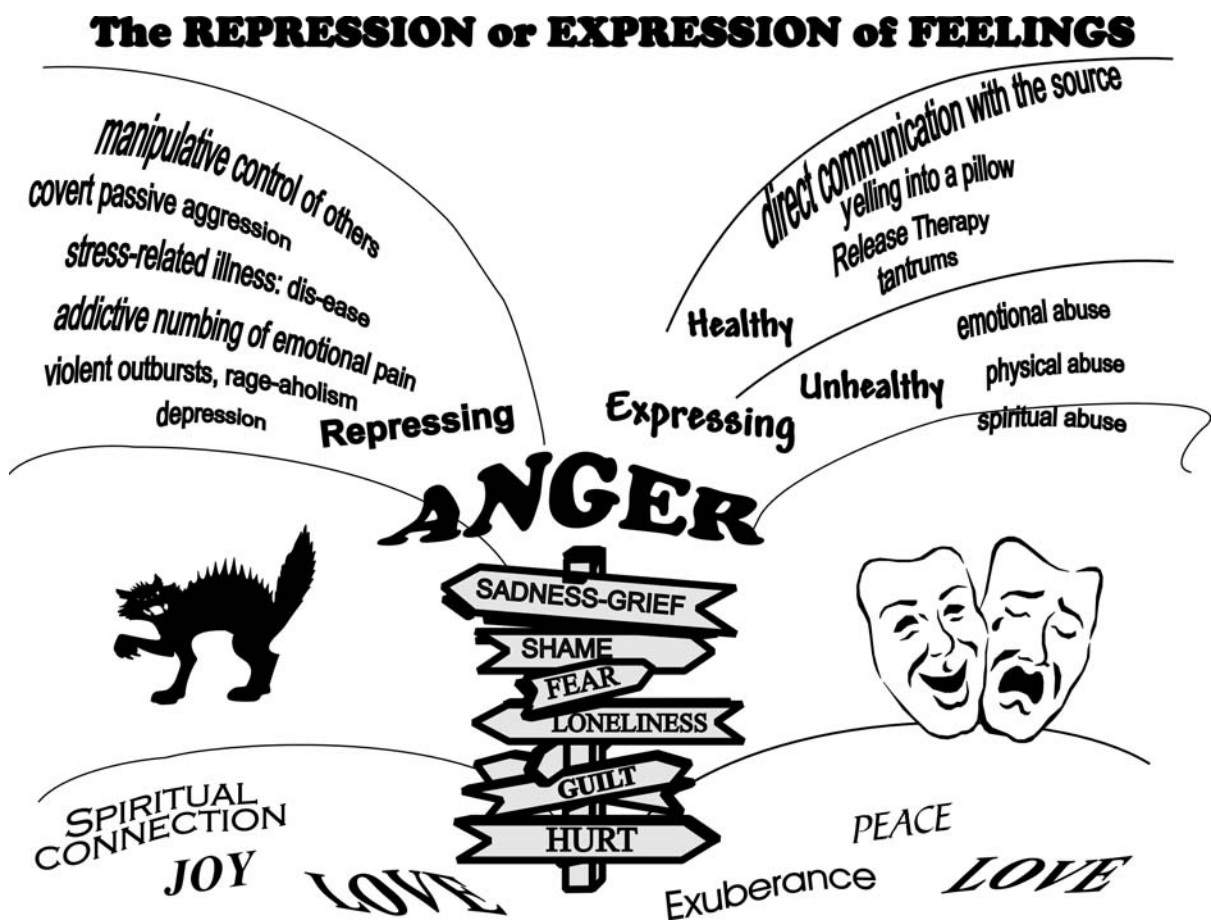


Personal Transformation Intensive PTI

The Expression or Repression of Feelings

Learning how to deal with feelings is a very important part of the healing process. In most families around the world, the child is not given the tools she/he needs to express feelings in a healthy way. Over the past thirty years of doing therapeutic work with thousands of people, I have found that for therapy to be most effective, it must actually teach you to identify and express your feelings.

The following diagram shows that feelings are usually arranged in layers with the anger on top. The anger is often experienced like a big wet blanket which covers all the other ones. Rage is the result of years and years of anger that has been held in. Once people learn to express their anger in a healthy way, the other feelings become much more accessible. As people release their anger, we usually notice grief, pain and sadness emerge. The love, joy and exuberance are on the bottom of the diagram because those are so often buried underneath the heaviness of the repressed anger. When you release the anger, pain and sadness, you will experience much more love, joy and spiritual connection in your life.



Repression of Emotions

Repression of emotions is one of the major causes of addictions, abuse, depression, and disease in our culture. In many families, emotions are either repressed or expressed in abusive ways. When children indicate a feeling of anger, the parent may punish them or shame them into repressing it. "Go to your room until you can act like a lady," is a common response. This shames the child and makes him/her feel rejected. A healthier response would be to help the child identify the feeling and to release it. "I see you're feeling angry, let's go and punch your punching bag."

Another common response of parents that leads to repression and confusion is denial of the feelings. Whatever the child says they may be feeling, such as angry, sad, or scared, the response of the parent is, "Oh no, you're not feeling that," or "Be a big boy now and stop that!" The child then learns to mistrust their own perceptions and repress what they feel. Children look around at the older people in their lives and their *mental video camera* records what they see for use later on. So they may see their mother using food or tranquilizers to numb her feelings, their father drinking alcohol, an older brother smoking pot or a sister smoking cigarettes. When this child begins to feel his or her own stress, they use one of these coping strategies to numb their own emotions. This is how addictions begin in our lives.

In the diagram, you can see that repression of feelings will lead to many serious complications. Millions of Americans take anti-depressant drugs because our whole society has been taught to repress feelings with drugs. The popular drug Prozac was originally supposed to be prescribed for a course of six months, to be used only in conjunction with psychotherapy. Now it is given out like candy for indefinite periods of time and the therapy recommendation has been long forgotten. When children see this medical model as a role model, then it is obvious why drug addictions are rampant among our youth. Many people are taught to repress their feelings by being shamed for having feelings. The expression "Shame on you" is very common when a child expresses anger. So we are consistently made to feel that our angry feelings (for girls) and our sad or scared feelings (for boys) are shameful. It is extremely unhealthy the way males in our culture have been systematically shamed for their soft tender feelings. This has led to the majority of men in our culture having a very difficult time crying and expressing their grief. I have worked with many men who were easily able to cry during the hypnotherapy and thanked me profusely. Many have said they've never been able to cry as adults. One man told me he couldn't even cry at his own mother's funeral. This has also led to many stress-related symptoms, such as heart attacks and strokes. In Louise Hay's book *You Can Heal Your Life*, she states that heart attacks are often related to unexpressed grief!

When people repress their emotions, there is a tendency to use passive aggression as a way of expressing them. This results in a person who may express his/her anger indirectly, which is called passive aggression. These can be people who smile to your face and then stab you in the back. A common expression in our culture which reflects this concept is, "I don't get mad, I get even!" I would much rather experience healthy direct expression of anger than a continual indirect attack.

Repression of Emotions and Disease

The whole concept of disease or illness is often related to emotions which have been repressed. When a person holds in anger, that angry energy has to go somewhere. Some people hold it in their jaw, others in their chest and some in their stomach. Angry energy can actually be held anywhere and everywhere in the body. This energy, if not released, then does violence to the body itself, in the form of disease. So the person that holds in their feelings and does not say what needs to be said, may experience tension in the jaw which can result in TMJ or grinding of the teeth. The person with ulcers or stomach or colon cancer perhaps has held unexpressed anger in

that area of the body for many years. The person with breast cancer may have rescued and taken care of everyone else but herself for many years and held the resentment inside of her body. The breast, after all, is the part of the body that represents a woman's nurturing of others. The word *dis-ease* means an uneasiness somewhere in the body. If you have a disease, ask yourself, "What is the uneasiness in my life?" People often transfer their emotional pain into physical pain because it may be easier to say, "My stomach hurts" than to say "I hurt."

Unhealthy Expression of Emotions

Many people find it difficult at first when we teach them to express their feelings in healthy ways. In fact, they often react with embarrassment and say, "Oh, I can't do that. I don't want to be violent." The most common reason for this reaction is that most people have been shamed for any outward expression of emotions. However, there is also a whole group of folks who grew up in families where one or more of their parents were rage-aholics. Perhaps you grew up in a family where someone yelled or threw things on a regular basis. In some families children are whipped with belts, paddles or switches. There is a fine line between discipline and abuse, and too often parents cross that line with their children when they themselves lose their temper. Also, most of our parents were never taught good parenting skills and had no role modeling for good discipline. In many families rage is dumped on other people, which is seen as normal. This happens most often when alcohol is involved and then all hell breaks loose. When we ask adults raised in alcoholic or abusive families to express their emotions, they immediately bring that rage to mind. They associate what we are asking them to do with the rage-aholic abuse that happened in their families. That is why they say, "I don't want to be violent." If their parents had done Heart-Centered Hypnotherapy, and had been taught to express feelings in healthy ways, they would not have shamed their children or dumped their angry feelings on them.

Healthy Expression of Feelings

The first step in healthy expression of feelings is to learn to label what we feel. Most people don't even have words for the intense emotional reactions that go on in their bodies. We always ask people to learn the core emotions: anger, fear, hurt, sadness, loneliness and shame. That way they begin to have a vocabulary for what is going on inside them. Then as they speak about a situation, or some feeling, we always ask them to locate where and how they experience those feelings are in their body. This helps to really be able to know when the feelings are strong, when they are reduced and when they are released. Feelings are also the very powerful bridges that take you back to childhood memories and experiences. Sometimes we call them *body memories*. Even if your conscious mind has dissociated from a memory because it was too painful to remember, your body remembers it.

What is the difference between healthy expression of feelings and abuse or violence? This is a very important question. Healthy expression of feelings gets the angry, hurt or scared energy out of your body without hurting property, yourself or any other person. It can be an intense release using the voice by yelling into a pillow, and perhaps using an energy release hose on a punching bag. The angry energy is always focused on the punching bag, and is in that way very safe for all involved. In all the years that I have done this work, I have always had great results from introducing the energy release hose to people from all walks of life and from all over the world. Once people got over their embarrassment or fear, they usually love the feeling of power, release and freedom they feel when they get the stuck energy moving in their bodies. I have witnessed amazing emotional and physical healings too numerous to mention here, once people let out what has become body armor for most of their lives.

Another great way to release pent up stress and frustration is to have a tantrum on your bed. Most children do this naturally when they feel frustrated. The problem is that we have shamed children for doing this and so they turn it around and shame us by having a tantrum in public at the grocery store or the doctor's office. Instead, a healthier approach is to teach them the value of the tantrum and help them identify their feelings. The first time they have a tantrum, get right down on the floor with them and look them in the eye and say , "It looks like you are feeling very mad right now. So let's pound on this pillow (or whatever is available and appropriate) and get that anger out of your body. Mommy will do it with you." Then you role model expressing your feelings by having a little tantrum and yelling in your pillow. This teaches children how to label and express feelings in a healthy way.

It is important to get the angry energy out of our bodies before we communicate with those that we love. So many people come home from a stressful or frustrating day at work and then take out that stress on their family members. This is where the victim triangle can get triggered in a matter of minutes. Instead of dumping the intensity on your family, release the energy by having a tantrum, going to the gym or taking a nice relaxing bath. Then use clear, direct and loving language with family members. "When I left home this morning, you said you would have your homework done by tonight at six. It is now seven and the homework is still not finished. What I would like from you is for you to keep your agreements. So please let me know when you are willing to keep the agreement to complete your homework." This type of a clear message uses no profanity, blame or shame, and does not in any way demean the other person. Therefore it is not abusive and is much more likely to receive a positive response than yelling and put downs are.

Healing through Emotions

The *Personal Transformation Intensive* is a group experience where it is safe to express feelings. People are taught the above principles and boundaries and ground rules are set. We have a clearing process that is used so that if someone gets triggered by someone else, we have a safe, structured way to deal with it. No one is allowed to take over the group or abuse anyone with their own "stuff." Just as in families, boundaries are very important in any group. This group experience is actually a role model for healthy families. It is the way to break out of the victim pattern and to create healthy families.

**The Personal Transformation Intensive
Is offered exclusively by
Professionals trained at**



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