
AFFLICTIVE EMOTION WORKSHEET – Moving from Self-knowledge to Self-Awareness to Peace

SELF KNOWLEDGE PRE-WORK:

Self-knowledge is a building block for self-awareness. Being explicitly aware of your values, beliefs, temperament, triggers and default reactions provides you a better chance of “catching yourself in the act” (self-awareness). As you strengthen your catching-yourself muscle, you create freedom of choice for yourself. You will *respond* in the moment, rather than simply *react*.

- A. List a total of 4 roles or adjectives that others admire about you or that you believe you embody well:
(Role examples: I am a good: Parent, Partner, Peacemaker, Advocate, Achiever, Creator, Scholar, Supporter, Fun maker, Producer/doer) (Adjective Examples: I am: Easy going, principled, helpful, friendly, persuasive, one-of-a-kind, practical, frugal, loyal, dependable, fun, spontaneous, strong willed, goal-oriented)

- B. List a total of 4 roles that could use development or adjectives that describe you that you are not proud of: (Examples of not proud of adjectives: Lazy, Workaholic, Depressed, Arrogant, Suspicious, Manic, Gluttonous, Mean, Short tempered, Judgmental, Unreliable, Dishonest, Needy, Manipulative, Vengeful, Passive aggressive.)

THE EPISODE

Step one is to capture the event that has upset you. Keep it to a single episode that happened on a day, at a time. Briefly tell the event as if a camera were recording it. Keep the emotions out and simply tell the events. What happened that caused your afflictive emotion?

FEELINGS

Our culture has trained us to ignore emotion. As you re-lived the event by writing it above, retell the physical reaction and emotion. What happened inside your body, what sensation, which emotion? (Refer to feelings list on our website: Resources > Self Awareness, Self Disclosure, Confession → Scroll to #4 Feeling Words)
When a word nudges you, write it down.

Next, go over your list word by word. Why did that feeling word ping you? Make sure you can tie it to the episode. If you can't, dig deeper for why it pinged you.

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MY STORY

What story am I telling myself about this episode? What does the experience mean to me?

Focus on what happened to you versus what someone else did. (e.g.: I was cut off versus that person cut me off)

To help unearth the story, try finishing these sentences:

What happened is a problem because...

What happened is upsetting because...

To help unearth the story, consider these questions:

What did I want that I did not get?

What did I expect that didn't happen?

What obstacle stood in my way?

How was I misunderstood, misrepresented, judged or accused?

How was my self-image threatened or called into question?

(See self-knowledge A list above)

Where was my need for development exposed?

(See list B above)

FEELINGS REVISIT

To help explore your story more deeply, try to answer these additional questions about common emotional triggers we all experience...

Did I feel weak, powerless, impotent, unnecessary?

Did I feel vulnerable, unsafe, at risk, in danger?

Did I feel shame, rejection, unloved, un-valuable?

Did I feel less successful?

Did I feel less loveable?

Trace each of these feelings, and those on your earlier list. How has your story evoked each feeling?

Are there feelings with no clear link to your story? (An invitation to dig more deeply.)

Finally, distill story and feelings down. What about this episode most disrupted your well-being?

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PATTERN?

If you remove the person or circumstance that precipitated this episode, have you told yourself this story before? Have you felt un-empowered like this before? Insecure? Afraid of the same kinds of things? Have you seen this pattern before? When? Where? In what circumstances?

Describe the pattern. If you take out the specifics of this episode, what would be a fitting title for the pattern? Have you discovered you hold either a core belief, core identity, or “rule about how life is” that you can now put words to? *Examples:* If I’m not careful, I will get taken advantage of. If I don’t do X, people won’t love me. All injustices must be fought. If I do or don’t do X, I will lose something dear. I am all alone. I am not Ok, unless everyone is Ok. I am what I do.

Well done! This is the end of your pre-work. The rest of the worksheet is completed with a spiritual partner.

MAKE APPOINTMENT WITH A SPIRITUAL PARTNER FOR SELF DISCLOSURE – NorthRaleighCommunityChurch.org

Doing this practice together is a powerful way to build spiritual friendships. We start out tentatively. We sanitize our stories at first – until we begin to feel safe together. But doing the practice forms deep, abiding, and safe spiritual friendships. Who will be your spiritual friend to share this practice with?

Make an appointment with a member of our community care team on our website:

NorthRaleighCommunityChurch.org

Resources > Self Awareness, Self Disclosure Worksheet→ Scroll to #5 and click on the appointment link.

<http://www.northraleighcommunitychurch.org/sasd-worksheet-sign-up/>

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PARTNER WORK - CHALLENGING THE STORY

One of the gifts we give one another in spiritual friendship is the gift of not being inside one another's heads. When I hear your story, and you hear mine, we hear it from outside the emotion, outside the history, outside the fear and hurt and insecurity the episode has evoked. Because we see one another's episodes differently we can ask probing questions that inform this last part of the practice – challenging the stories we tell ourselves. We do that with three questions.

THREE QUESTIONS

This is where we begin to poke holes in our stories. Instead of seeing it as the one true Truth, are there other possible ways to look at it?

1. Is it true? Is the story you tell yourself true? Are there other ways you could tell the story? Other truths that mitigate your truth?
2. Is it helpful? When you tell yourself this story – when your thoughts and emotions follow these well-worn patterns, when your beliefs, and values, and inner narratives kick in – is it helping you? Is producing peace and well-being? Is it deepening your relationships? Expanding your connection to others and the Divine?
3. Is it necessary? Do you have to tell yourself this story? Does your story contain such inviolate truth that you must continue telling it? If not, the next time a trigger like this comes up, you could challenge the pattern and see that thoughts are just thoughts, feelings just feelings. They're not the whole truth. If it's not necessary, could you explore other interpretations, other stories, other truths, other responses?

MOVING FORWARD

As you conclude, your spiritual friend may have a few last questions for you to consider:

- What have you seen in telling your story, that you had not seen before?
- And having seen it, how could you live differently the next time you have this afflictive emotion?
- If nothing changes, can it be OK? If not, is there a clear want, need or ask you can articulate and pursue?
- Notwithstanding your hurt, is there anything you can "give" the offender in terms of intentions, motivations, mitigating circumstances? Would it be possible to find a way to defend (maybe partially) the offender or offense?