

# Feel Your Feelings

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You might be thinking as I did when I was told it was not only good, but necessary to feel my feelings to eliminate stress from my life, *“Huh? I thought I had to fight PAST my feelings to be successful?!”* I was taught to believe, like you probably were, that feelings were things that got in the way of our clear thinking. We were taught as kids to suppress and ignore our feelings with parental statements like:

- “Stop crying, it’s not that bad”
- “I’ll give you something to cry about”
- “I don’t care if your sister hid your truck, stop pouting and eat your dinner!”



Your emotions were likely ignored, minimized or even laughed at by parents who had other things to think about. This teaches us strongly that our emotions are something to ignore. We come to believe that the way to deal with our negative emotions is to suppress and ignore them. Nothing could be further from the truth and this programmed belief is the root cause of your weight and all stress and subsequent suffering in your life.

## Emotional Hunger

It’s really simple. We have learned (subconsciously) from years of experience that good tasting food is the easiest way to accomplish the goal of suppressing our emotions. Your brain can’t experience two opposing feelings at the same time, so if Oreos always makes your tongue and brain feel good, the negative feeling you were experiencing must be suppressed. By the time you reach adulthood, you’ve established a powerful new EMOTIONAL hunger signal that both consciously and subconsciously guides your eating behavior. You feel a bit anxious about a comment a co-worker said at work, you feel hungry. You come home, see the messy house, feel overwhelmed and feel hungry. You’re watching a TV program with thin beautiful women and feel subconsciously less-than and you begin to feel hungry. Your list could go on and on. **If you’re struggling with your eating and weight, you have STRONGLY established eating as your main coping mechanism for suppressing your negative emotions.**

So what do you do? Stop suppressing and start processing!

“The subconscious force of food compulsion is made up of unprocessed feelings. You seek, when you overeat, to contain the emotions that swirl within you—to put them somewhere, to put a lid on them, or to make yourself numb so you won’t feel them. What makes your emotions different is not *what* you feel, but how you process them. For the food addict, feelings that cannot be processed are stored in the body where they cannot be processed and remain stored there. The only way to remove the weight of unprocessed feelings is to allow yourself to actually feel them.” -*Marianne Williamson, A Course in Weight Loss*

Let’s back up a few years to when you were 7 years old. Your little brother took your doll and stuck it in the dog’s poop and ran away laughing. You were devastated. What was your response to negative emotions in your life at this innocent time of your life? You took your emotions to a higher authority. You ran with your emotions to your Mommy and told her the whole story as best you could with tears streaming down your face and snot running out your nose. You shared your feelings with Mommy or Daddy, your higher authority figure, who helped you process your feelings by listening, acknowledging and then offering a bit of advice or wisdom to help you let go of the emotion. This process naturally fostered letting go of the negative feeling. The dialog might have sounded like this:

You: “Mommy (sniff), Taylor took my Barbie (sniff) and put it in the dog’s poop and now it’s ruined forever! (crying)”

Your mother: (hugging you and patting you on the back) “Oh, I’m so sorry about your Barbie, boys can be SO ruff sometimes.”

You: “Yeah, he was so mean (sniff). I can’t believe he is always trying to hurt my stuff and teasing me.”

Your mother: “I understand how you feel. I know that sometimes he teases you just because he wants to play with you. I think too that he wishes you’d play with him more. I think together we should have a talk with him about this. Does that sound good to you?”

You: “yes, OK (sniff)”

Your mother: “And I’ll wash up that Barbie as good as new, I promise! OK?”

You: “Ok....I love you mommy (hug)”

Your mother: “I love you too honey (hug back)”

Now fast forward to today. You no longer have Mommy to run to with your emotions. In fact you've been strongly taught that to be the adult you are, you should NOT let your emotions get the best of you. You've been taught when you have feelings, that you should suppress and ignore them so as to get on with being a productive, responsible adult!

Guess what? Not good! In fact trying to ignore and suppress your emotions makes them affect you more in the long-run—sometimes for many, many years!

## Conscious processing

When you allow your feelings to be felt, you allow yourself the time needed to process through your feelings consciously. This allows your reaction to become a response. Any feeling you have ever had always looks and feels much different the next morning. This is because you have the time to THINK consciously about the event or circumstance that caused the feeling and gain a better understanding of it. Just like your mother was able to put things in perspective for you to stop the tears, you can constructively think through your issues of life to gain a better more positive and constructive perspective on what caused your negative feelings. Your brother didn't smear dog poop on your Barbie because he hated you, he did it because he wanted to get your attention and get you to play with him more.

## Subconscious processing—danger!

Your conscious mind has the ability to reason and consider. Your subconscious mind acts like a computer and just records the idea, belief or emotion as a fact and then locks it in as such. Imagine if your mother's response to you would have been:

*"Oh, don't worry about that Barbie. You're going to learn that there are more important things in life. I have so much work to do, please just stop crying. I'll buy you a new Barbie tomorrow if you promise to stop crying."*

This response would have encouraged you to NOT feel your feelings and just move on. But the problem with that is this:

**Your conscious mind CAN move on but your subconscious mind CAN NOT.**

Your conscious mind can forget about the Barbie dog poop incident in a few hours, your subconscious never forgets an emotional event! Let me repeat this. **Your subconscious mind never forgets an emotional event.** And because your brain is a protective mechanism, it ESPECIALLY does not forget negative events! To prove this, your brother could bring up an emotional happening 27 years later at some family event and you honestly have not thought consciously about it in 27 years! But the fact that you remembered it when your brother

brought it up is proof that it has been in your subconscious for the past 27 years! It's been one of the negative unprocessed emotions stacked one on top of the other that are stored in your body fueling your automatic compulsion to eat in response to similar emotions.

Unprocessed feelings just sit in you and radiate their negativity under your conscious awareness. They drive your personality and motivate your behaviors.

## **A whole NEW way to look at your feelings!**

Have you ever wished God would just tell you what to do? Be there like a coach with a clip board helping you make decisions. I know I have.

Did you know He did!

Your feelings are built in guidance signals from the manufacturer of your body. I like to believe they are “messages from God” helping me with my life. These messages fall into two categories:



- 1. Messages that I need to change my *Procedure***
- 2. Messages that I need to change my *Perception*.**

When I feel a negative emotion, it's God's signal to me that I need to either change something I am doing (a procedure or way of doing something) or I need to change the way I am looking at it (I need to change my attitude or perception of something).

I think that's a pretty cool way of looking at my negative emotions—God is either helping me to do something different or telling me I need to change my attitude so that I can learn, improve and live a happy and successful life! If I just run from or fight these messages, I'll stay stuck being less than I could be and never reach 1/10th the potential or live 1/10th the life he intended for me!

As an example, say I feel hurt that my boss criticized my project.

**Do I need to change my procedure or do something different?** Could I have done better work? Could I have put more time or effort into it? Is my boss right? If the answer is “yes”, then I learned where I can improve. If the answer is “No”, my work is excellent, **then I need to look at my attitude and perception of my boss's comment.** Was she having a bad day? Can I go to her and ask her specifically what she was considering? Is it just a personality trait of hers that is out

of my control? Did I overreact to a small point for improvement and need to change my perception of her overall positive appraisal of my work?

The answers to these questions provide me opportunities to learn and grow.

*Can you see how choosing to look at your negative feelings as messages from your Divine Guidance would help YOU change what you are doing or how you are perceiving and thus improve your life!?!*

## **The Unhealthy way to process feelings**

### **Have a feeling →fight or flight (stress response)**

Because we are taught that our negative feelings are a threat, when we have a negative feeling we automatically turn on our stress response. This is the “fight or flight” response that causes any animal when faced with danger to either run or fight for its life. The “fight or flight” response was designed as a powerful neurological response to help animals survive a life-threatening event. We have the same neurological feature, but have conditioned ourselves to activate this response to even our slightest negative emotions. Over time, we can train our brains to kick into the stress response with events as non-life threatening as a long line at a grocery store!



When in the stress response, you see your negative feeling as a threat and you must either fight it or run from it. Fighting it typically means you toss your negative feeling back at someone else. Someone criticizes or blames you, you criticize or blame them back or find someone else to blame or criticize...even our kids act as conduits all too often for this purpose.

The flight response shows up as an effort to ignore or brush the feeling aside—using your energy to consciously focus your attention off of it and onto something else. Although this may seem like the best response to your negative feelings because you don't cause more negative feelings and collateral damage as happens with the fight response, in the long run this can be even worse. Subconsciously you don't forget a negative memory. If it doesn't get processed in a more positive way, it will get stored in its most negative form into your subconscious and become locked there. You never give your conscious brain the time to process through it so as to take the sting out of it before filing it away and moving on. Soon you have so many negative

memories stored away in your subconscious that you begin to view life more negatively. You begin to fear more and take fewer risks. You begin to doubt yourself more and more. All this happening under your conscious awareness! You just feel this way. It is like an emotional cancer inside you sapping all your positive energy and causing you to search out a needed regular source of easy and reliable positive energy—eating pleasure foods!

By trying to defend against your feelings overwhelming you, you actually create emotions that are overwhelming. This is because emotions get filed away in your brain as categories of experiences. Every time you perceive you were hurt by someone, the experience gets filed in the “Hurt by People” file in your brain. Each time you experience this same emotion, your brain automatically checks with your files. If your file is full of “Hurt by People” experiences, your brain will cause you to have a much more emotional reaction to the same event as a person with only a few experiences filed in this same file. Thus over time, you become highly sensitized to things and prone to overwhelming emotions when things happen because your files are full of negative emotional experiences that were stored rather than processed through!

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## **The healthy way to process feelings**

**Have a feeling → Acknowledge it → Look & Learn → Move on**

The way you used to process your feelings as a child looks like the above. With the assistance of an authority figure (parent), your feelings were acknowledged, learned from and then let go of. Let’s look at each step:

**Acknowledge your feeling.** This simply means taking a moment to best figure out what you are actually feeling. So often we don’t even know what feeling we are fighting or fleeing

from because the stress response becomes an automatic knee-jerk reaction. We have so efficiently conditioned our brains to kick into the Fight or Flight response that we just react! Just the simple conscious action of defining the feeling you are experiencing is HALF the difference of processing it in a way that benefits you rather than hurts you and others.

- “I’m feeling hurt by what she said”
- “I’m feeling overwhelmed by all that I have to do”
- “I’m feeling embarrassed by what he said in front of everyone”
- “I’m feeling guilty for eating too much tonight”
- “I’m feeling hopeless because I keep screwing up”

**Look & Learn.** Now that you’ve identified and acknowledged the feeling you are experiencing, you can choose to learn from it and thus choose to not allow it to destroy you. Learning from your feelings requires independence and maturity. As a child, mom or dad provided this wisdom when you came to them with your hurt feelings. Now as an adult, you have only yourself or your divine guidance to be that source of wisdom. The fact is though that your faculties of wisdom are not functioning very well, if at all, when you are experiencing the negative emotion. So if you are still feeling too overwhelmed by the emotion to think constructively, back up, acknowledge it again and wait, repeat until you feel at peace with your ability to consciously *look* at your feeling and learn from it.

This is effectively done by writing down the event that occurred and the feeling you are experiencing. Yes, it will take 5 minutes—a small investment for your sanity and success! If the emotion is still too strong, place it somewhere and then commit to pull it out and process it tomorrow or later that day.

Warning: Your brain will play powerful “tricks” on you to keep you either fighting it or running from it. To break past this destructive habit and learn from your negative feelings ask yourself these two questions after you have identified and acknowledged your emotion.

1. **What could I have done differently?**
2. **Can I perceive this differently?**

For example, you **feel depressed and angry at yourself** because your weight went up this week.

Such strong emotional feelings are typically ran from (flight response) and the emotional hole left is filled with what always brings comfort—excuses and food. Alternatively, you might

choose the Fight response and become antagonistic at work or a bitch to your family the rest of the day and blame this or that on your weight increase.

Your awareness of this self-destructive method of dealing with your negative emotions should be enough motivation to choose the *Look & Learn* method no matter how difficult you think it is to look in the mirror and ask these questions.

**What could you have done differently?** The honest answers might be:

- ✓ Close the kitchen after dinner—I ate something every night before bed last week
- ✓ Drink only water—I drank a lot of juice and even had a regular pop last week
- ✓ Eat more vegetables with my dinners—I ate too many starches last week
- ✓ Exercise for just 15 min in the morning—I couldn't get out of bed last week
- ✓ Bring fruit to work as snacks—I ended up eating rice crispy bars out of the vending machine last week

**Could I perceive this differently?** You are feeling depressed and angry at yourself because you want to lose weight. This means you CARE about your desire to live in a healthy body—that's a good thing! Thinking you must be perfect every week of your weight loss journey is an incorrect perception of what causes long-term success and a perception that will destroy your success. A new healthier perception is to expect slip-ups and know that they are a part of the learning process—just like how a baby learns to walk.

**Taking your feelings to others—BIG MISTAKE!** Very often people still do what they did as kids. In the case of overwhelming or negative feelings most of us are now



taking them to our friends or spouse rather than process them ourselves. This is a BIG mistake! If you bring your negative emotions to your friends, what are they going to do? Because they are your friends, they are going to agree with you and make your negative feeling worse! *“Your husband should have never done that...my husband is a selfish slob too!”* Most friends don't help you see the issue from a more positive frame or help you to see how you could have changed your

procedure or perception. **Confirming your negative feelings FEELS GOOD, so you get addicted to it, but confirmation of your negative feelings only ASSURES they get filed away negatively into your subconscious and will remain there and destroy you for years to come!**

Likewise, if you take your negative emotions to your spouse, he or she will likely not be as caring as your father or mother was because they are dealing with their own issues and would rather share their issues with you for the same reason. This often creates a new negative feeling of being unheard or feeling your spouse doesn't care and your marriage is worthless! **Your spouse and/or your friends are NOT the adult replacement for mommy's arms that brought you relief from your negative emotions when you were a child.** Only YOU can process through your negative emotions effectively using the healthy processing sequence. And now that you know, you can consciously choose to do this!

**Move on.** Moving on from your negative feeling is typically an automatic result of your acknowledging it and learning from it. By processing through your feeling, you store the memory of the event in a less negative or even positive way in your heart. This is HUGE and a key factor in not only getting your weight under control, but also the rest of your life. However, some feelings are difficult to process through. Effectively answering what you could have done differently or perceived differently is not easy and can often be skipped because of the mind's powerful pull to keep you focused on the negative (who wronged you, why it's unfair, how it could happen again, etc.) This is where taking your negative feeling and releasing it away from you is a highly important skill to learn.

**A new powerful belief.** Moving on from a negative emotion requires you to install this new belief into your thinking:

**It is OK that things don't go as I had planned because I don't know how every event of my life will guide me toward my best interest. Only God knows this and I can trust this.**

**I do know that if I fight this and try to think I know, I can screw up God's plan for my best interest.**

Have you ever had something "bad" happen to you only to realize that later it was the best thing for you? The boy who rejected you in High School ended up in jail. The job

you got fired from caused you to open your own business and now you're happier than you ever were before. Even things we are not aware of like the dead car battery from the dome light you left on that kept you from a head-on collision with a sleepy truck driver is an example of the infinite amount of things that could be going on in your best interest that you're not aware of!

**Let's agree on one thing if nothing else.** You and I have NO IDEA what is in our best interest! Just because the guiding hand of infinite intelligence (God) is invisible, doesn't mean it doesn't exist! But we keep establishing expectations about our lives and experience negative emotions that harm us when those expectations are not met or are damaged by someone else.

Some people refer to moving on as "releasing" or "surrendering" their negative feeling to God or a Higher Intelligence. It IS truly this! To me "surrendering" used to sound negative until I fully understood that I was not "giving up" but instead "giving in" to the Divine Intelligence that created every cell of my body and keeps the moon from crashing into the earth and the birds flying south.



Tapping into this unbounded wisdom allows you to give the circumstance that caused your negative feeling over to the belief that a Higher Intelligence, that knows way more than you do, will allow it to work in your best interest even if you were unable to process through it positively or constructively on your own.

*Stop thinking "bad things" in your life are hurting you and feeling sorry for yourself....they are your divine guide to growth, learning and thus living to your potential! If you look closely, great people are great because they decided to learn from life's tough lessons rather than run from them.*

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## **Moving on Exercise**

For any unprocessed negative feelings you can do the following powerful exercise:

Write the event and your feeling on a piece of paper. Go outside and find a safe place to burn the paper. First read what you wrote slowly and with feeling, and then light the paper on fire. As you see the smoke rising say the below prayer. Visualize the event and your negative feeling as the smoke rises up to God or your Higher Intelligence that guides you. Picture in your

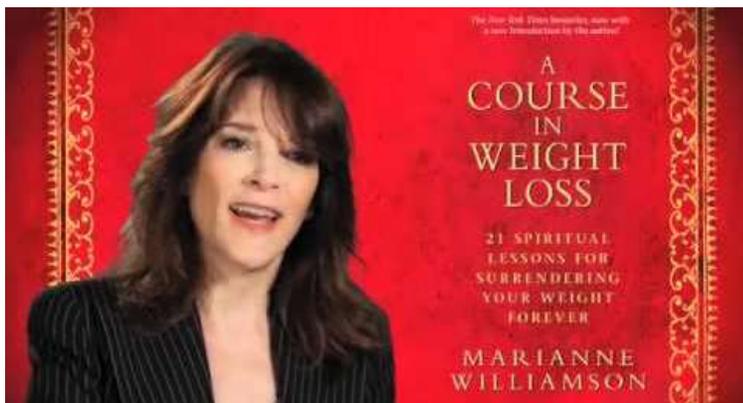
mind's eye Him gratefully receiving it from you. Feel the comfort you felt as a child in your mother's or father's arms.

Dear God,  
I surrender my feeling of \_\_\_\_\_ (name feeling) to you.  
I release it to you to do with it in my best interest.  
I go forward with a healed heart knowing this is true.  
Give me a healthy heart for myself and all those I Love.  
Amen

You only need to do this exercise a few times to imprint the vision of it clearly in your brain. You can then easily visualize the details of this powerful healing ceremony to release future negative feelings you find difficult to process through.

“Once your feelings are felt, they can be acknowledged, looked at, learned from, and surrendered to Divine Mind. But instead of acknowledging and *feeling* your feelings, you've learned to discount them before they can even rise up fully formed. You suppress what you're too afraid to feel, having little trust in the wisdom of your emotions. You don't know your emotions *have* any wisdom—how could you, given that no one honored them when you were a child? But they do; they are part of the genius of the human psyche.

Emotions, even painful ones, are here to tell you something. They are messages to be tended to. Yet how can you tend to something you don't know is there? Emotions must be acknowledged and *felt*; or else they cannot be learned from, grown from, or processed.” -Marianne Williamson, *A Course in Weight Loss*



I highly recommend making “A Course in Weigh Loss” a study, not just a read, to help you harness your own spiritual power to move into a new place of confidence and peace with your emotions.

## ASSIGNMENT 1:

Teach yourself the healthy way to treat your emotions. This will take practice because you've been dealing with your emotions by going into the fight or flight response up until now. Have patience and keep practicing!! Try your best to do this process daily until your brain gets into the habit of doing it. Write it out!

What happened?:

- a. **Acknowledge the feeling:**
- b. **Learn from it:**
  - i. Can you change a procedure (what you are doing)?
  - ii. Can you change your perception (how you see it or your attitude)?
- c. **Move on:**
  - i. Did you effectively process it so you feel moving on is automatic?
  - ii. Is the feeling difficult to process and you need to surrender it to your Higher Guardian? How did you do this?

## ASSIGNMENT 2:

Do the burning ceremony to give your brain an effective method to release the toxic energy of your negative emotions. By doing it 3 times, your brain will have a strong imprint for future visualizations of this method. Using this tool that most people don't even know about will help you enormously to reach permanent weight loss as well as permanent peace with your relationships, kids, work, relatives, family—every aspect of your life.

# Processing worksheet

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What happened?:

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**b. Learn from it:**

Can you change a procedure (what you are doing)?

Can you change your perception (how you see it or your attitude)?

**c. Move on:**

Did you effectively process it so you feel moving on is automatic?

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