

Life Coach Training

Lesson 12

A Vocabulary of Feelings

There are many ways that human beings receive information, process experience, and express ourselves. In our culture most people live in their head. They perceive the intellect as the only tool with which to navigate their life. While the thinking mind is an important asset when it comes to making life choices, it is limited in its scope and leaves out vast terrains of guidance from other levels. Holistic coaching draws upon *all* the resources within an individual, including the mind, but not limited to it.

Emotions offer gifts of guidance and important avenues of self-expression. There is no such thing as a “bad emotion.” You can assist your client to make healthy choices by helping him to connect more with his feelings so he can become more self-aware and learn from the messages his feelings are communicating. If a client is primarily a thinker, recognizing and utilizing the feeling dimension of his world will create richer balance.

Self-expression is one of the most important goals of coaching. A client out of touch with her feelings may not have a vocabulary to express herself. When you assist a client to express herself more clearly and honestly, you have given her a tool that will carry her through much of life.

If a client gets lost in his story or wanders off into the corridor of his mind, simply ask, “How do you feel about that?” or “What is the strongest feeling you have about that situation?” or “What do you feel in the deepest part of you?”

If the client can express her feelings to you—especially those she has not expressed to herself or others, she has taken a significant step. If she is not in touch with her feelings or does not have the tools to express them, you can offer a vocabulary from which she can choose.

Below is a list of feelings from which you might draw. Ask your client, “Are you feeling _____ about this, or is it more like _____?” In suggesting a feeling word you are not seeking to push the client in a direction, but simply offering a tool for self-expression.

Feeling words

Pleasant Feelings

OPEN	HAPPY	ALIVE	GOOD
understanding	great	playful	calm
confident	gay	courageous	peaceful
reliable	joyous	energetic	at ease
easy	lucky	liberated	comfortable
amazed	fortunate	optimistic	pleased
free	delighted	provocative	encouraged
sympathetic	overjoyed	impulsive	clever

interested
satisfied
receptive
accepting
kind

gleeful
thankful
important
festive
ecstatic
satisfied
glad
cheerful
sunny
merry
elated
jubilant

free
frisky
animated
spirited
thrilled
wonderful

surprised
content
quiet
certain
relaxed
serene
free and easy
bright
blessed
reassured

LOVE

loving
considerate
affectionate
sensitive
tender
devoted
attracted
passionate
admiration
warm
touched
sympathy
close
loved
comforted
drawn toward

INTERESTED

concerned
affected
fascinated
intrigued
absorbed
inquisitive
nosy
snoopy
engrossed
curious

POSITIVE

eager
keen
earnest
intent
anxious
inspired
determined
excited
enthusiastic
bold
brave
daring
challenged
optimistic
re-enforced
confident
hopeful

STRONG

impulsive
free
sure
certain
rebellious
unique
dynamic
tenacious
hardy
secure

Difficult/Unpleasant Feelings

ANGRY
irritated
enraged
hostile
insulting
sore

DEPRESSED
lousy
disappointed
discouraged
ashamed
powerless

CONFUSED
upset
doubtful
uncertain
indecisive
perplexed

HELPLESS
incapable
alone
paralyzed
fatigued
useless

annoyed	diminished	embarrassed	inferior
upset	guilty	hesitant	vulnerable
hateful	dissatisfied	shy	empty
unpleasant	miserable	stupefied	forced
offensive	detestable	disillusioned	hesitant
bitter	repugnant	unbelieving	despair
aggressive	despicable	skeptical	frustrated
resentful	disgusting	distrustful	distressed
inflamed	abominable	misgiving	woeful
provoked	terrible	lost	pathetic
incensed	in despair	unsure	tragic
infuriated	sulky	uneasy	in a stew
cross	bad	pessimistic	dominated
worked up	a sense of loss	tense	
boiling			
fuming			
indignant			

INDIFFERENT	AFRAID	HURT	SAD
insensitive	fearful	crushed	tearful
dull	terrified	tormented	sorrowful
nonchalant	suspicious	deprived	pained
neutral	anxious	pained	grief
reserved	alarmed	tortured	anguish
weary	panic	dejected	desolate
bored	nervous	rejected	desperate
preoccupied	scared	injured	pessimistic
cold	worried	offended	unhappy
disinterested	frightened	afflicted	lonely
lifeless	timid	aching	grieved
	shaky	victimized	mournful
	restless	heartbroken	dismayed
	doubtful	agonized	
	threatened	appalled	
	cowardly	humiliated	
	quaking	wronged	
	menaced	alienated	
	wary		

There are a lot of feeling words to choose from! I know a coach who printed a list of feeling words and offers it to her clients, inviting them to choose those words that express their feelings. You can be creative in how you elicit expression of feelings from your clients.

Feelings are a powerful level to work at in coaching because they run deeper than the intellect. (Emotion = E-motion: energy in motion. Where there is energy there is life.) Regardless of how much we think, feelings run our lives more than our thoughts. You usually can't go wrong if you keep directing your client to come back to an honest expression of feelings.

It is also possible to overindulge the feeling level and miss out on the value of reason. Some clients are so wrapped up or even lost in their feelings that they could use a good dose of intellect. Tune in to each client to assess where she is at and help her find healthy balance. My mentor use to say, "*The mind alone is a tyrant. The heart alone is chaotic. The marriage of the two is mastery.*"

Exercise:

1. List three primary feelings that describe your experience at the moment:

2. List three primary feelings that are or have been undercurrents in your life:

3. Do you navigate your world primarily through your intellect or through your feelings?

4. Are your mind and feelings in a harmonious balance?

If not, how might you create a more harmonious balance?

Affirm:

**I use my feelings as keys to greater awareness of myself and my life.
I guide my coaching clients to use their feelings
as keys to greater awareness.**

