

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

Feelings and emotions are completely normal human responses and serve various purposes; recovering addicts experience a wide array of emotions once addictive behaviors are arrested, and sometimes these emotions are unfamiliar. It can be very helpful to be able to identify feelings and emotions.

Desired Feelings:			
Mild	Moderate	Strong	Intense
friendly, regarded, benevolent, wide awake, at-ease, relaxed, comfortable, content, keen, amazed, alert, sure, attractive, approved, untroubled, graceful, turned on, warm, amused, daring, comfortable, smart, interested	liked, cared for, esteemed, affectionate, fond, excited, patient, strong, inspired, anticipating, amused, yearning, popular, peaceful, appealing, determined, pleased, excited, jolly, relieved, glad, adventurous, peaceful, intelligent	enchanted, infatuated, tender, vibrant, independent, capable, happy, proud, gratified, worthy, sympathetic, important, concerned, appreciated, consoled, delighted, eager, optimistic, joyful, courage, hopeful, valiant, brave, brilliant	loved, adored, idolized, alive, wanted, lustful, worthy, pity, respected, empathy, awed, enthusiastic, zealous, courageous

Confusing Feelings:			
Mild	Moderate	Strong	Intense
unpopular, listless, moody, lethargic, gloomy, dismal, discontented, tired, indifferent, unsure, impatient, dependent, unimportant, regretful, bashful, puzzled, self-conscious, edgy, upset, reluctant, timid, mixed-up, sullen, provoked	suspicious, envious, aversion, dejected, unhappy, bored, disappointed, wearied, inadequate, ineffectual, helpless, resigned, apathetic, shy, uncomfortable, baffled, confused, nervous, tempted, tense, worried, perplexed, troubled, disdainful, contemptuous, alarmed, annoyed, provoked	disgusted, resentful, bitter, detested, fed-up, frustrated, sad, depressed, sick, dissatisfied, fatigued, worn-out, useless, weak, hopeless, rejected, guilty, embarrassed, inhibited, bewildered, frightened, anxious, dismayed, apprehensive, disturbed, antagonistic, vengeful, indignant, mad, torn	hate, unloved, abhor, despised, angry, hurt, miserable, pain, lonely, cynical, worthless, impotent, futile, abandoned, estranged, degraded, humiliated, shocked, panicky, trapped, horrified, afraid, scared, terrified, threatened, infuriated, furious, exhausted

Many feelings and emotions are frightening for recovering or active addicts. When more than one feeling and emotion is experienced, whether positive or otherwise, there can be a cumulative effect on the individual leaving them feeling overwhelmed and not knowing why. The anxiety of being overwhelmed can cause paralyzes in the addict which can often lead to relapse. To better prevent the relapse cycle from beginning, it is important to understand each feeling and emotion separately and individually.

Exercise:

An addict can go from calm to intense anxiety in a matter of moments. While this is quite normal, it is helpful to have some assistance when this happens. Here is one way to try to reduce anxiety by separating feelings and emotions to reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed.

When you realize that you are becoming overwhelmed...

1. Write down a feelings and emotions list on a piece of paper. Write down how YOU feel right now, try to identify each feeling and emotion as you are feeling it. It does not matter if your feelings and emotions make sense or not, just write them all down, even if they seem to contradict each other. Remember to own your feelings in the present time, not from the past or in the future.
2. If you are inspired to take action due to something you have written down, simply make a note of the action you would like to take and move on: you can come back to it later.
3. After making the list of feelings and emotions, go back over the content and identify any feelings or emotions that seem to be overstated or exaggerated. If you find any, and it is very normal to find exaggerated emotions, make a note and restate the feelings and emotions more accurately. Remember that feelings and emotions change by the minute.
4. When you have finished all the steps, tear up the paper. Let your feelings and emotions go after you have understood them better, and let your anxiety go with them.

Tips for breaking a pattern of stuck feelings and emotions:

1. Stop what you are doing and go do a task that will take no more than 5 minutes to complete. By breaking away from the anxiety building cycle, you will most likely return to a calmer and clearer mental state.
2. Make a phone call or strike up a conversation with another recovering individual. Let them know that your head is swimming and you would like to talk a while until your head clears.