



*"We cannot selectively numb emotions, when we numb the painful emotions, we also numb the positive emotions."*

~ Brene Brown, PhD

# PROCESS PAINFUL EMOTIONS

**1 LABEL** your **emotions**. What are you feeling?

**2 LOCATE** your **emotions**. Where do you feel these emotions in your body? Describe (heavy, hot, tight, suffocating, etc.)

**3 DESCRIBE** the **thoughts and beliefs** you are having in this moment. Allow free-writing without over-thinking.

**4 IDENTIFY** strongest thoughts and emotions you are having vs. the softest, most subtle ones.

Strongest/high energy emotions and thoughts:

More subtle/low energy emotions and thoughts:

**5 WHEN** is the last time you felt this way?

How was it different or similar to now?

How did you end up feeling better? Or did the painful emotions and beliefs go away on their own?

**6 UNDERSTAND** your emotions' purpose and ASK internal questions, using the Emotional Literacy worksheet as a guide.

What questions do you have for your emotions in order to gain clarity? For example, for anger, what has been violated?

Describe who or what is tied to the emotion? Your identity, self-worth, a value, desire, unmet need, safety, a loved one?

Overall, what do you believe is the real reason for these emotions? Since our emotions don't use words to communicate, we must be curious and take the time to understand.

**7 ASSESS** if there is anything you can do right now to help with the situation that caused these emotions. Describe.

**8 REALIZE** what you would prefer to feel, think and believe in this moment. Describe specific emotions and beliefs.

**9 VISUALIZE** your calm place - whatever this means to you (beach, forest, bedroom, etc.). This allows access to your higher rationale. Take 4 deep breaths. Imagine feeling the preferred emotions and beliefs described in Step 8.

**10 LEARN** by asking your higher rationale the following:

"What is **one thing** I could do right now to get *closer* to these preferred feelings/thoughts?

Does anything get in my way of allowing this? What is possibly getting in the way of doing this **one thing**?

What may need to occur in life before this?

What is getting in the way of feeling better in this moment? Do I have any fears surrounding this?

What must I absolutely accept as truth in this moment, whether I like it or not?

**11 EXPLORE** - What emotions do you feel now? What thoughts? Have your emotions changed, more subtle or stronger?

If emotions are stronger or more painful, you may start back at **1** and follow the steps again, or you may try Dr. Neff's meditation for processing difficult emotions: [https://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/softensootheallow\\_cleaned.mp3](https://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/softensootheallow_cleaned.mp3)

**12 ACTION** - What priority, goal, or action plan can you take now or soon to get closer to how you want to feel?

HONOR YOURSELF FOR MAKING IT THROUGH THIS PRACTICE. THIS PRACTICE ISN'T EASY, ESPECIALLY AT FIRST.