

## **Tips for Releasing Emotional Turbulence**

It's not easy to deal with painful emotions head-on. But it's a key to good health and well-being physically, mentally and spiritually. If we don't deal with pain when it occurs, it will resurface as compounded emotional toxicity later on showing up as insomnia, hostility and anger or fear and anxiety.

As a further complication, if you don't know how to deal with feelings of anger and fear, you're likely to turn them inward at yourself, believing, "It's all my fault." That guilt depletes our physical, emotional and spiritual energy until any initiative or movement feels impossible. We feel exhausted and paralyzed, leading to depression.

You can learn how to recognize painful emotions right away and how to effectively "metabolize" and eliminate pain.

Overcoming difficult emotions such as fear, anger, guilt and anxiety can bring the same disguised benefits that dealing with a physical illness can bring. Patients suffering from life-threatening illness often report that their diseases have taught them to love and value the other people in their lives more deeply than before they became ill. During recovery they learn to appreciate and understand areas of life that they took for granted before. While anger, fear and worry are not diseases, we can grow from them even as we process them to become the person we want to be.

By turning to our inherent intelligence, harmony and creativity, we can create a positive outcome; but if we are emotionally turbulent, we are too agitated to access that possibility.

### **Why meditation is part of this exercise**

Through meditation we can experience our silent self beyond our thoughts and emotions. This is our internal reference point for equilibrium. From here we can create a desired outcome. To restore balance in our life, meditation must be an essential ingredient.

It is also important to support this with balanced activity in the basic areas of diet, exercise and sleep.

Assuming these fundamental balancing components are in place, I would offer an additional exercise to specifically address what to do in the face of intense anxiety and fear.

### **Learn how to metabolize pain with this seven-step exercise**

Toxic, turbulent emotions have one cause — not knowing how to deal with pain. Pain is normal in life, but suffering isn't. When we do not know how to deal with pain, we suffer.

#### **1. Identify and locate the emotion physically**

Set aside a few minutes when you won't be disturbed. Sit comfortably and close your eyes. For a few minutes, just meditate in silence. Focus on your breathing — or if you prefer, you may use a mantra.

Now with eyes still closed, recall some circumstance in the recent past that was upsetting to you. It may be a time when you felt you were mistreated, an argument with your partner, or perhaps a past injustice at work. Identify some instance where you felt emotionally upset.

For the next 30 seconds, think in detail about that incident. Try to picture what actually happened as vividly as you can, as if you were reporting it for a newspaper. Here, you are the observer watching this event. You are not the event, argument or emotional upset; you are merely witnessing what is happening from the perspective of your silent self. You are carrying the effect of the meditation you just did, allowing you to maintain a vantage point that is not overshadowed by the quality of the emotions.

Now identify exactly what you are feeling. Put some word on the incident that describes what you are experiencing. Be as precise as you can. Do you feel unappreciated? Insulted? Treated unfairly? Give the feeling a name. Come up with a word that epitomizes the painful experience. Focus your attention on that word.

## **2. Witness the experience**

Gradually allow your attention to move away from the word. Let your attention wander into your body. Become aware of the physical sensations that arise in your body as a result of the emotion you've identified.

These two elements — an idea in the mind and a physical sensation in the body — are what an emotion truly is, and they can't really be separated. This is why we call it a feeling — because we feel emotions in our bodies.

Let your attention pass through your body as you're recalling this experience. Locate the sensations the memory brings up. For many it's a pressure in the chest or a sensation of tightness in the gut. Some feel it as pressure in their throat. Find where it is in your body that you're feeling and holding the emotional experience.

## **3. Express the emotion**

Now express that feeling. Place your hand on the part of your body where you sense that the feeling is located. Say it out loud: "It hurts here." If you're aware of more than one location for the pain, move your hand from place to place. At every location, pause for a moment and express what you're feeling. Say, "It hurts here."

When you experience physical discomfort, it means that something is unbalanced in your experience — physically, mentally or spiritually. Your body knows it — every cell in your body knows it. Befriend these sensations and their wisdom, because the pain is actually leading you to wholeness.

Writing your feelings out on paper is also a valuable way to express the emotion. This is especially effective when you can write out your painful experience in the first person, in the second person and finally from the perspective of a third person account.

## **4. Take responsibility**

Be aware that any painful feelings you experience are your feelings. These feelings are happening inside your body now as you remember the pain, even though nothing is actually taking place in the material world. You're only remembering what happened, yet your body is reacting with muscle contractions, hormonal secretions and other responses within you. Even when the painful incident was occurring in the material world, the effect was entirely within you. You have choice in how you interpret and respond to emotional turbulence. Recognizing this is taking responsibility for your feelings.

This doesn't mean you feel guilty. Instead, it means you recognize your ability to respond to painful situations in new and creative ways. By taking responsibility for your feelings, you can also gain the power to make the pain melt away. You're no longer blaming anyone else for having caused the pain, so you no longer have to depend on anyone else to make it go away. Hold that understanding in your consciousness for the next few moments.

## **5. Release the emotion**

Place your attention on the part of your body where you're holding the pain, and with every exhalation of your breath, have an intention of releasing that tension. For the next 30 seconds, just feel the painful sensation leaving your body with every breath. Some people find that making an audible tone that resonates in that part of your body where the pain is localized helps to loosen and lift the contraction away.

You can also experiment to discover what works best for you. For some people, singing or dancing does the trick. You may try deep breathing, using essential oils, or taking a long warm bath. Finally, if you have written out your emotions on paper, it can be helpful to ritually burn the paper and offer the ashes to the winds.

## **6. Share the outcome**

Sharing the outcome of releasing your pain is important because it activates the new pattern of behavior after the old painful pattern is released. Imagine that you could speak to the person who was involved in that original painful incident. What would you say to that person now?

Bear in mind that he/she was not the real cause of your pain. The real cause was your response. In your transformed state, you are now free. So you can share what happened without blame, manipulation or seeking approval. Perhaps they intended to cause you pain, and you may have unwittingly collaborated in that intention. Maybe you would like to say you no longer intend to fall into such traps.

Whatever you say is totally up to you. As long as you have an awareness of the steps we've taken so far in this exercise, whatever you say will be right for you.

## **7. Celebrate the process**

Now you can celebrate the painful experience that had taken place as the valuable material that helped you move to a higher level of consciousness. What was previously a disconnected, destructive and disabled part of your psyche is now integrated and contributing its power toward your greater spiritual goal. Instead of responding to the situation with a pain reflex, perpetuating the problem, you've turned it into an opportunity for spiritual transformation. That is something to celebrate! Go out for a nice dinner or buy yourself some flowers or a present to honor the new you.

Use this exercise whenever you feel upset, to free yourself from emotional turbulence and the underlying pain. When you do that, you'll find that opportunities will arise more often in every area of your life.