

Foreword by JACK CANFIELD, cocreator of the Chicken Soup for the Soul® series

Goodbye, *Hurt & Pain*



*7 Simple Steps for
Health, Love, and Success*

DEBORAH SANDELLA, PHD, RN

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Conari Press

PRAISE FOR GOODBYE, HURT & PAIN

“This is so much more than a book! It’s an insightful guide to experiencing greater freedom, ease, and success. I’ve had profound experiences with RIM and this book exceeded my expectations. Get a copy for yourself and someone you love. You’ll be glad you did!”

—MARILYN SUTTLE, author of *Who’s Your Gladys? How to Turn Even Your Most Difficult Customer into Your Biggest Fan*

“Ground breaking and innovative, best-selling author Dr. Deborah Sandella provides a sacred road map to bypass logic and get to the heart of lingering pain. Using leading-edge research and techniques to shift your body’s experience, you’ll ultimately transcend even the most painful experiences and discover your innate ability to forgive and love. I highly recommend.”

—DR. SHAWNE DUPERON, six-time Emmy® winner,
founder of Project Forge

“With her book *Goodbye, Hurt & Pain*, Dr. Deborah Sandella makes the case for how we can rapidly activate deep, lasting healing. I recommend it.”

—BARNET BAIN, director of *Milton’s Secret*, producer
of *What Dreams May Come*, author of *The Book of
Doing and Being: Rediscovering Creativity in Life, Love
and Work*

“In her new book *Goodbye, Hurt & Pain*, Dr. Deborah Sandella offers life-changing steps to a better life. It’s a must-read!”

—SHERI FINK, inspirational speaker and author

“If you want to live the most inspired life possible, you will need to deal with your amazing emotions. And Deb Sandella provides a groundbreaking, magical, and credible approach to instantaneously shifting our feelings. Mark this day—because this is a powerful process you’re going to use again and again.”

—TAMA KIEVES, *USA Today* featured visionary career catalyst and best-selling author of *A Year without Fear: 365 Days of Magnificence*

“Dr. Deborah Sandella is changing the way we perceive our emotional selves. Her book *Goodbye, Hurt & Pain* shows us that we have a smart emotional operating system with greater resourcefulness and adaptability than we’ve ever thought. This book is uplifting and inspiring.”

—MARCI SHIMOFF, #1 *New York Times* best-selling author, of *Happy for No Reason*

“Dr. Deborah has found a way to share information on techniques for transforming challenging emotions into life-affirming expression. Take a dive into this work, commit to your growth and then expect miracles.”

—CYNTHIA JAMES, international author/teacher and author of *I Choose Me: The Art of Being a Phenomenally Successful Woman at Home and at Work*

“What Steven Covey is to living a highly successful life, Dr. Deb is to health, love and success. *Goodbye, Hurt & Pain* offers a brilliant combination of engaging reading with understandable neuroscience.”

—TERESA DE GROSBOIS, #1 international best-selling author of *Mass Influence*

“Dr. Deborah Sandella in her book *Goodbye, Hurt & Pain* offers us a user-friendly guide to an easier and less stressful way of living. We all want that! I have learned much from working with Dr. Deb and have used her work in many settings—even with my corporate clients. This book gives you access to Dr. Deb’s deep wisdom and is presented like a warm, personal chat that left me feeling excited and inspired. I highly recommend that you buy this book and put it into practice right away!

—PETE WINIARSKI, best-selling author, business transformation expert, and CEO of Win Enterprises, LLC

“Dr. Sandella’s *Goodbye, Hurt & Pain* is a practical, down-to-earth method of realizing the immense potential that lies within everyone. She is a skillful guide who writes from experience and with gentle compassion.”

—LARRY DOSSEY, MD, author of *ONE MIND: How Our Individual Mind Is Part of a Greater Consciousness and Why It Matters*

“*Goodbye, Hurt & Pain* makes sense! Dr. Deborah Sandella’s empowering steps to create a healthy flow of feelings is transformative and surprisingly easy and enjoyable. Her proven system for removing unconscious blocks frees us to use conscious desire to attract the life we’re meant to live.”

—CATHY AND GARY HAWK, award-winning authors of *Get Clarity: The Lights-On Guide to Manifesting Success in Life and Work*.

“If you have ever wanted to develop your inner life, hone your intuition or connect with the healer within, Deborah Sandella makes it easy and delightful. Her RIM meditations are a masterful guide that can help uncover the core of peace, creativity, compassion, and delight that resides within you.”

—JOAN BORYSENKO, PHD, author of *The PlantPlus Diet Solution: Personalized Nutrition for Life and Minding the Body, Mending the Mind*

“This book has the potential to change your life in amazing ways. *Goodbye, Hurt & Pain* is a user-friendly guide to better moods, relationships, and results. Dive in and enjoy the transformation!”

—ELLEN ROGIN, CPA, CFP(R), co-author of the *New York Times* best-selling *Picture Your Prosperity*.

“Dr. Deb shares a new technique that transforms anxiety, worry, and fear into confidence, joy, and success. *Goodbye, Hurt and Pain* is filled with exercises and inspiring examples that give us a fresh and profound approach to creating health, love, and fulfillment that is nothing short of miraculous. Highly recommended!”

—PEGGY CAPPY, creator of *Yoga for the Rest of Us* as seen on public TV

“Each generation must rediscover and reframe for itself how our emotions rule us unless we understand them. Dr. Sandella’s practical, good sense does splendidly for a new generation. She shares sound advice and a wealth of experience with real people.”

—ROBERT FREEDMAN, MD, Professor of Psychiatry, University of Colorado, and editor of the *American Journal of Psychiatry*

For anyone who feels stuck, unfulfilled, or just knows there can be more to life than you’re now experiencing, this is the book can help open an exciting way of experiencing yourself and the world around you. If life is a stage, Deb Sandella would receive a standing ovation for one of the most liberating books of our time. Bravo, Dr. Sandella, you haven’t been boring God.

—JEAN HOUSTON, PHD, author, speaker, philosopher

Goodbye, Hurt and Pain is a necessary handbook for anyone who would like to hit the reset button on your life. Sandella interweaves the best of neuroscience, psychology, and her own experience in a fascinating book of emotional discovery. Thanks to this brilliant book, your regenerated self can rise above the ashes of the past into a world of hope and new possibilities.

—CONSTANCE BUFFALO, president, Renaissance Project, Intl.



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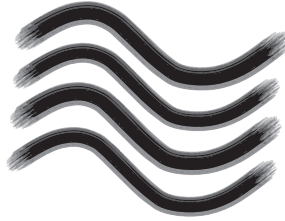
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.....STEP ONE.....



FLOW & GO

Your Feelings Have a Natural Shelf Life

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

Your intellect may be confused, but your emotions will never lie to you.

—ROGER EBERT

The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.

—KHALIL GIBRAN

When you allow the organic flow of feelings, they bring valuable information and naturally expire as you move effortlessly forward. Kris, John, and Nancy show you how it works in the following stories.

KRIS'S STORY: WHEN EMOTIONS GO UNDERGROUND

Kris is a vital forty-nine-year-old manager. Married with two young adult children, she and her husband Rich are filling their empty nest with lots of playfulness. For her birthday, he buys her a beautiful, pink mountain bike, and they head to Moab for an exciting adventure. The sun is shining; the trail is wide open. And then it happens: Kris hits a bump and goes flying. Fortunately, her head is protected by her helmet, but her left leg is shattered on impact. Seeing her tibia poking through the ruptured skin causes her and Rich to grow faint, until Rich comes to his senses and calls for emergency help. Thank God there is cell service.

At the small hospital nearby, Kris lies on a gurney swimming in anxiety when the doctor appears: "Don't worry, Kris, we'll get you stabilized and then send you to Salt Lake for surgery where they have better resources to repair the complexity of this break."

Hearing these words, Kris's anxiety ramps up, and her mind races with unanswerable worries: *"Will I be okay? Will I walk again? Will I have a limp? What's going to happen? If only I had seen that rock on the trail. I can't believe it. Is this really me lying in the ER? Could I be dreaming?"*

As the intensity of her concerns increase, so do her symptoms. Her blood pressure drops, and her chest constricts and tightens. She begins to quiver, and her breathing stops. Panicked like a swimmer inhaling water rather than oxygen, she feels she is dying. *"Help me, help me, somebody help me!"* she screams silently, feeling like she is in one of those dreams where you try to yell and can't!

The ER staff recognizes this is not a panic attack, but something more serious, and quickly treats her for life-threatening anaphylactic shock. As her symptoms recede, she learns she has experienced an allergic reaction to one of the medications.

The next day, Kris is taken by ambulance to a medical center in Salt Lake City. Her surgery is successful, and after a few weeks of rehab, she is discharged home. It soon looks like she is healed and back on track—until she returns to her job and quickly slips into severe depression. For no apparent reason, she is unable to work and her previous enjoyment of life is gone. She goes on anti-depressants, yet the depression does not lift.

When her husband Rich contacts me for an appointment for Kris, he sounds desperate. It has been months since she's been off work and nothing is helping; in fact, nothing is changing the least bit.

As Kris sits with closed eyes, she senses a weird feeling in her stomach. Focusing attention on it, she describes it as a black swirling inside that is trying to suck her in and she is afraid of disappearing.

I ask Kris's imagination to call in an image of someone to be a comforting and safe traveler with her on this journey, and her mother shows up. With Mom, she feels safe to bravely move into the black vortex and ride it around and down to the source. As they swirl downward, Kris begins to feel intense dizziness and nausea. Surrendering to the feeling, she and Mom glide down until they hit bottom in an image of the first ER room where she almost died. Watching herself in the scene, she sees Kris lying on the gurney with a broken leg and eyes frozen wide in terror.

Gazing into her own eyes, she begins to cry, even sob:

I thought I was dying . . . I thought I'd never see my kids again . . .
Never again to enjoy the beauty of the mountains and sunshine.
I thought it was over—I thought my life was over. If I tried hard
enough maybe I could hold on—but I couldn't—my chest was
getting tighter and tighter and I couldn't breathe. No matter
how hard I tried, I couldn't force in another breath. I was dying.

Moving her attention into this image and bringing her mother with her, Kris hesitantly looks out of these terrified eyes and senses the feeling of dying. She moves into this emotional experience as if it were today, and her awareness sits in it, as it organically recedes after a few minutes. Soon there's room for remembering the reality of her physical recovery. Slowly and naturally the frozen feeling of dying melts, and her appreciation for life returns. The feeling of being stuck in a horrible memory has been brought forward, allowed, and organically released. Life has come back!

After this deeply visceral expression of terror, Kris's symptoms of severe depression disappear, and she gradually returns to her job and her life. She finally feels the gratitude for surviving the biking accident she couldn't authentically experience while she was emotionally stuck between life and death. The previously stuck memory has been integrated, and she is present again.

Kris's story demonstrates how unprocessed intense emotion goes underground and creates a subconscious block even when the original traumatic event resolves. Furthermore, her journey shows how health can be regained as soon as the original event is integrated in the mind, heart, and body.

JOHN'S STORY: WELCOMING THE HIDDEN MESSAGES IN PAIN

Rheumatoid arthritis struck John when he was in his early forties. Now fifty, his hands are misshapen, his sleeping severely interrupted, and he takes pain relievers daily as frequently as permitted. Feeling oppressed by his physical condition, John requests help. As he closes his eyes to sense his body, the first thing to attract his attention is discomfort around his neck and left ear. Instead of following his usual habit to medicate,

he focuses on the pain, and there comes a subtle lessening of the physical pressure. As he moves his awareness into this painful area, the discomfort gradually dissolves, and he feels a sense of calm.

As he practices moving into the pain and listening during several monthly sessions, John notices that spontaneous insights sometimes pop up: “I need to slow down. I’m doing too much,” or “I’m angry with my wife. She hurt my feelings when she said I wasn’t trying to lose weight. How can I talk with her about it and say it so she’ll hear me instead of getting defensive?”

When he is not constantly trying to get rid of the pain, John begins to respect it as a message from his body. As he starts to value his true feelings, he notices a corresponding change in his medication use: he doesn’t need it the same way. In fact he goes from using analgesics 24/7 to one to two times a week, primarily when he’s excessively tired.

Over time, these insights cause John to change other habits as well. He begins to eat healthier foods and to communicate more honestly when there is a conflict with family members or employees. He speaks up instead of avoiding issues and thus begins to feel a sense of personal power for the first time in his life.

As John continues a collaborative relationship with the pain, he grows happier, healthier, thinner, and better able to navigate relationships. He quits trying to stop the pain and sees it as an expression of his hidden, authentic feelings. John has freed himself from the oppression of illness. Instead, he receives the symptoms as helpful feedback guiding him to live a healthier and happier life. His story demonstrates how welcoming emotions hidden in physical pain brings helpful insights and lessens physical discomfort. Our bodies naturally give a voice to those things within that need our attention. We merely have to listen and heed the messages.

NANCY'S STORY: HOW OUR FEELINGS HELP KEEP US SAFE

We've all known people who genuinely sense and authentically share their emotions without hesitation, freely expressing what they feel. Nancy is one of these people. What you see is what you get. She doesn't beat around the bush. Having known Nancy over many years, I can tell you that the outcome of her way of being is evident.

For example, when she was a young psychotherapist at a community mental health center, she volunteered for a research project that paired difficult teens with therapists to climb and rappel nearby mountains weekly for six weeks. The project was going very well, and Nancy enjoyed this unique way of interacting with her young clients. She also discovered she loved rappelling! No wallflower here, Nancy enjoyed thrill-seeking.

On one of the group's outings, she stood on the top of a cliff looking down into a narrow canyon between two steep mountains. When it was her turn to descend, she just couldn't do it, even though she had done so gleefully in the past. In her honest and natural style, she expressed her fear to the climbing guides—her body was refusing to go. They decided to check her equipment and found a disconnected rope—the rope that would have suspended her body, in fact. If she had gone over the edge, she might have fallen to her death.

Nancy is a beautiful example of how the intelligence of our organic, body-centered emotion knows more than our intellectual mind. When we pay attention and listen instead of denying, suppressing, fearing, or disliking our spontaneous feelings, we gain great access to our natural intuition (knowing something without understanding how we know it). Nancy's experience demonstrates how our inherent feelings help keep us safe in spite of what the logical mind thinks. It's wonderful to know the power we possess!

HOW IT WORKS—PRACTICALLY AND SCIENTIFICALLY

We frequently speak of our feelings as if we *are* them. You hear it in our patterns of speech: “I am angry,” as if to say, “I am anger.” However, feelings naturally arise as passing states of awareness and are not part of us. Rather, they give feedback and then expire. Think of it as similar to how a thermometer measures our internal body temperature at 9:00 a.m. at a healthy 98.6 and, three hours later when we are getting the flu, it registers 101.5. The feedback that we have a fever allows us to make an informed decision about whether to take fever-reducing meds, call the doctor, or go to bed and wait it out. A feverish reading is temporary and will change. In the same way, our emotional temperature fluctuates depending on external and internal events and our reaction to them. Looking back at Kris’s real-life story, we see how her bike accident and life-threatening allergic reaction created intense emotions that would have been temporary if she had not gotten stuck.

The origin of the word *emotion* is the 1570–80 Middle French word *esmotion* from *mouvoir* or motion; thus, *esmouvoir* means “to set in motion or move the feelings.”¹ The essential function of feelings is to provide feedback and pass through us organically like water flows in a river. In the same way water moves through the atmosphere, in and out of oceans, over and under land, human feelings continuously precipitate, go underground, rise to the surface, and evaporate through our awareness.

Trying to control our feelings through resistance and avoidance is like damming a river to stop the flow. An emotional dam pools feelings. This reservoir of avoided emotion remains in the body until we release it. In other words, the feelings we tried to avoid get held inside us instead. We hold on to what we are trying to avoid. Life constantly challenges us; it’s not personal, just

the natural process of growth and evolution. The stories of John and Kris demonstrate how easy it is to build emotional dams. Many times the process happens without us realizing it—until a symptom or illness gets our attention.

What emotional dams do you have in place? Distrust after a divorce? Shutting down emotionally after a job loss? Doubting yourself after a personal or professional rejection? Obsessing about safety after an accident? Let's explore the source of some emotional dams to gain more insight into how they operate in our lives.

Emotions Flow Naturally

A range of feeling from the highest high to the lowest low is a normal aspect of our organic emotional system. Each passing feeling arises spontaneously, brings valuable information, and then evaporates. When we allow and recognize this flow, we activate self-recovery. Since everyone's emotional state directly influences success in relationships, work, and health, we gain an ability to produce desired outcomes by allowing our feelings to expire naturally without damming or flooding. Looking through a metaphoric lens, we are the riverbank, and the water flowing through us is emotion. We are stable and solid, while the feelings moving through us are constantly changing. We are emotionally dynamic beings. Sometimes emotion is gentle, like rain feeding the river to nourish life; sometimes it explodes like a rainstorm whose floodwaters wipe out bridges and homes.

You don't have to try to feel your emotions; they have their own momentum. Think of the lyrics in Jennifer Love Hewitt's *Don't Push the River*. On the other hand, when you build dams, the natural emotional flow toward expiration is blocked. Remember you can always choose to stop building dams so that your emotional flow expires as it was meant to.

Whether you dam up your feelings or allow them to run freely is your choice. But make no mistake: how you manage the flow has consequences. When you learn to recognize and understand the nature of your undesirable feelings, you can allow their safe expiration and devise floodgates to discharge intense ones in safe ways that prevent emotional flooding.

Our Three Primal Feelings: Curiosity, Comfort, and Discomfort

We are born with three primal emotional states: curiosity, comfort, and discomfort. You can easily observe them in infants even though they cannot understand or verbalize their internal experience or thoughts. We come programmed with these neurological receptors.

Take curiosity, for example. Researcher Hildy Ross at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, found that a group of twelve-month-olds consistently preferred new toys to familiar ones and spent more time manipulating the complex array of toys rather than the simple ones.² These findings suggest that we come into the world as explorers. That makes sense when we see how determined babies are to do whatever it takes to walk. If you have spent any time observing infants and toddlers, their curiosity is obvious—hence the large array of baby-proofing gadgets available to us.

Similarly, you do not have to be a researcher to know when an alert baby is comfortable. They have the curious glint in the eyes, the smile that tugs at your heart, and the sounds of squealing, gurgling, and laughing that create sympathetic delight in your body. You can sense an infant's spontaneous happiness without words. In fact, the joyful sight and sounds of a happy baby are contagious. Pay attention when you hear a baby cooing or a child laughing, and notice how your body responds. I remember once sitting on an airplane when a

toddler's uncontrollable giggles became audible in the silence immediately after landing. All of us began to make knowing eye contact and smiling at one another. As the spontaneous sounds continued to fill the cabin, our adult smiles finally burst into audible laughter. We just couldn't help ourselves. We all walked off the plane feeling great!

Although infants cannot tell us about their discomfort in words like older children, they give clues through their bodies. Pain is communicated through babies' bodies in changes to heart rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure. Infants act differently when they are in pain than when they are comfortable. Although each infant responds individually and may be inconsistent, there are certain behaviors like fussing, crying, furrowed brow, squeezed-shut eyes, and a quivering chin that reflect discomfort.

Discomfort is a visceral or physiological experience even when the source is emotional. Neuroanatomist A. D. Craig suggests the definition of human emotion to be both a subjective feeling and a body experience. He points out that, given this insight, emotions are not simply occasional events, but ongoing and continuous, even when they go unnoticed as unconscious human emotional acts.³ In other words, our feelings are constantly changing and creating different body experiences even when we are oblivious to them.

Although you may not remember your very early experiences, you too were born with the three spontaneous states of curiosity, comfort, and discomfort. Through the years you have evolved more complex feelings, but these primal emotions still strongly motivate behavior. As a growing baby, then child, you organically sought intuitive ways to maintain comfort. It all happened through your body, not your head, because your intellectual mind was immature.

The techniques you learn in this book will show you how to unravel primal discomfort dammed in your body. As it quickly

and naturally evaporates, you can remember your inherent curiosity and childlike joy, regardless of age.

The Most Commonly Dammed or “Damned” Feelings

As adults, our central motivators continue to be maintaining comfort and avoiding discomfort. It is no surprise, then, that emotions that get dammed up consciously and unconsciously are related to discomfort. They are those we consider “negative,” such as fear, anger, sadness/grief, and envy. These are the emotions we often avoid, forget, resist, ignore, bury, and control because they are uncomfortable. Those young and old alike who have not learned to delay gratification demonstrate how strongly we want what we want and don’t want what we don’t want. Just observe the persistent drive in young children to get their way.

Fear

One primal discomfort is fear. When we feel afraid, there is a disturbance in our body, mind, and spirit. The fear stimulated by chest pain and shortness of breath in panic attacks highlights the direct connection between our bodies and emotions that bypasses thinking. Feelings acting through our bodies can be quite convincing in making us feel we are dying.

Fear expresses in various ways depending on personality and beliefs about the world. An acutely fearful experience elicits a biochemical reaction that expresses as fight, flight, freeze, or faint. When your concern is about future safety, anxiety arises. Fear directed to past experiences results in shame, regret, and guilt.

What is your initial response to fear? Your secondary response? As you look back over your life, you will notice whether you have a tendency to flee, fight, freeze, or faint. None of these responses is better or worse; each is a natural pattern of responding given your genetic predisposition and life experiences. By identifying

reflective habits, you can compassionately understand yourself and realize you have additional choices to feel comfortable.

Anger

Within anger is an implicit fear of loss of control/comfort—like a child throwing a temper tantrum: “Something’s not going my way, and I don’t like it.” Yes, our infantile need for comfort continues regardless of age. The good news is when the crying baby in us gets loud, our adult self can listen, soothe, and learn to understand the cause.

Anger is commonly misunderstood. Synonyms that surface in an online thesaurus search describe *anger* as a very strong attitude: “bitterness, cantankerousness, vexation, acrimony, antagonism, violence, peevishness, petulance, ill humor, ill temper.”

Do you sense the implication? There is a subtle suggestion the angry person has a difficult personality. Who wants to be labeled that way? Over the years, many of us have learned to shut off feelings of anger for fear of sounding ill-tempered, demanding, and antagonistic.

Growing up with a first-generation Italian father, my childhood experiences with raw anger were somewhat frightening. When I visited Italy in college, I witnessed angry outbursts frequently and began to understand my dad. The dramatic verbal expression of anger I saw there is common and fleeting; it is not necessarily personal or threatening. In fact, you frequently see it between people who are strangers on Italian streets. It is a dramatic acknowledgment that something has happened you did not expect and do not like. The speaker lets it be known in a passionate voice that there is a perceived offense, and then it is done. It is interesting to note that in stroke research anger did not increase the risk of stroke or ministroke, but *hostility* did. Anger like I saw in Italy is fleeting, whereas hostility is enduring. Furthermore, the incidence of stroke in southern Italy where my grandparents grew up is significantly lower than in

other European countries.⁴ (Diet differences, however, were not considered in the study.)

Anger, like all emotion, is feedback from our built-in navigational system. It warns us we may be facing a potential violation externally or internally. As we understand from hardwired home security systems, most violations are false alarms without an actual intruder, but we just don't know until we investigate. Though rare, when a real burglar is in the area, we definitely want to be alerted so we can protect ourselves. Anger operates like a personal emotional security system. Feelings of anger warn you something dangerous could happen and further investigation is indicated to determine if action is needed to stay safe.

You can see how disregarding angry feelings may keep you from recognizing a real violation in your midst and you could get hurt. In fact, Siegman and Smith, editors of *Anger, Hostility, and the Heart*, found when they reviewed the literature preceding 2013 that *repressed* anger is associated with autoimmune diseases.⁵

I remember that in my early twenties as a single, “nice Catholic girl” afraid of being “bitchy,” I distanced myself from any hint of rising anger. As a result, I constantly felt confused. Clarity about friends and dating relationships evaded me, and I frequently postponed discerning decisions because I was living in a blur. Eventually, the influence of the women's movement dissolved these old assumptions, and I grew brave enough to sense and acknowledge angry feelings. Wow! What a breakthrough. I finally knew enough about myself to trust I could keep myself safe—my feelings would tell me when I needed to investigate. I was empowered to determine who/what was safe or not.

On the other hand, assuming all anger means a real burglar is in your midst is inaccurate and will lead you to feel the world is a more dangerous place than it is, which could compromise a healthy sense of trust. When we constantly assess our anger as a real violation without investigation, it snowballs into an *attitude*

of anger or *hostility*, defined by researchers Siegman and Smith as a cynical and negative expectation of life. Their review of previous studies finds hostility to be associated with coronary heart disease (CHD).

An interesting 2015 study analyzed language used on Twitter and found that people reflecting “negative emotions—especially anger—were at significantly greater risk for cardiovascular mortality” than those with positive emotional language patterns. The study controlled for income and education factors. The researchers suggest: “A cross-sectional regression model based only on Twitter language predicted AHD [atherosclerotic heart disease] mortality significantly better than did a model that combined ten common demographic, socioeconomic, and health risk factors including smoking, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.”⁶

Siegman and Smith further found that verbally sharing anger is positive and insightful, while an explosive, aggressive expression of anger is toxic to the heart. The research identifies the dangerous element to be aggressiveness, while Raymond A. DiGiuseppe, coauthor of the 2006 book *Understanding Anger Disorders*, finds revenge is the major driver of whether someone will behave in an aggressive way. He says it’s hard to change such people with anger management classes because they feel justified in their feeling.⁷

Interestingly, the research reflects a significant difference between how men and women handle similar levels of anger, with men scoring higher on “aggressive expression of anger.” Men show higher levels of “hostility” in comparison to women who are more likely to express their anger in a “communicative fashion.” The male editors share a powerful conclusion: “It is not at all unreasonable to suggest that gender differences in anger-hostility may account for the gender differences in coronary heart disease.”⁸

Anger is feedback from the psyche and body that suggests you pay attention and investigate further to see what’s happening

because, although an uncommon occurrence, your safety could be jeopardized. When anger is fully allowed and understood, it becomes mobilizing, and decisions can be made that assure emotional and physical health. Twenty years of witnessing clients dealing with anger through the RIM process has shown me that identifying the underlying source of anger rapidly accelerates an understanding of what's happening and whether there is real danger and what action, if any, is indicated.

For example, Mary was referred to me by her acupuncturist because she continued to experience physical symptoms secondary to intense, ongoing anger with her ex-husband, though they had been divorced for six years. He had remarried, but she still was so caught up in hating him for cheating on her, she was unable to enjoy her life. When Mary closed her eyes, followed her attention into her body, and sensed the energy of anger there, she saw it was like a smoldering volcano.

As she acknowledged and greeted this hostile energy she was carrying in her body, the tension began to release. She talked freely to her imagined ex-husband without fear of retaliation or rejection. Gradually, as the emotion poured from her body through her words, she felt some inner openness. She had been holding a tightly wound ball of fury for a long time, and it had taken up a lot of room and required constant energy to contain. With this gut-level emptying of pent-up anger, Mary began to breathe more easily. Her thinking began to relax, and she had spontaneous insights of how she had contributed to the breakup of the marriage. Surprised and able to see she was not just a helpless victim, Mary felt lighter and freer. At the end of her process, she felt ready to begin living her own life in a joyful way.

Her imagination also shared how their young daughter was in need of more fun. Through the unfolding imagery, Mary saw how her hostility was preventing playful interactions. Although regret came with this new awareness, she now felt she could spend time with her daughter differently.

The week after Mary's single session, a follow-up message came from her referral source: "OMG, whatever happened with Mary must have been powerful. Right after her session, she called her ex-husband and apologized to him for her part in the breakup of their relationship, and now she is a different woman!"

Hurt and Anger

Anger and hurt are two sides of the same coin. Depending on your unique personality and life events, you spontaneously feel one of them first, but they are stacked. For example, Mary was stuck in her anger at being betrayed. As she dived into it and gave it a voice, she uncovered the deeper hurt. Previously, she had only allowed herself to experience the anger.

Many women feel hurt first because they are uncomfortable with anger. Dipping into their depths, they eventually discover the anger. Barbara was deeply hurt that her stepdad had sexually abused her as a child. She could not understand why and tended to blame herself. When she found the hurt in her body and allowed it, she was also able to sense the underlying and appropriate indignant anger—"How could he be so narcissistic?" and "Where was Mom?" With a feeling of safety created through imagination, she could voice her angry feelings directly without risking emotional or physical retaliation. In the experience of standing up for herself for the first time, her countenance transformed from worry and tension to relaxation and beauty. Her appearance, in fact, changed dramatically. The previous hardness that had kept people away vanished, and she felt safe enough to be her true self: smart, soft, and beautiful.

If anger expresses first, it is important to get down to the hurt, and if hurt shows up first, it is important to get down to the anger. Whichever feeling initially surfaces is more comfortable, and the one underneath is less comfortable. Diving into what is less comfortable and surviving unharmed yield resilience and strength.

What is your conditioned take on anger? Did your family welcome such feelings or judge them? Were you punished or made fun of when angry? Did you share your feelings openly or were you ashamed?

What anger is present for you right this minute? Is it indignation at how you've been treated by family, friends, a spouse, an employer, strangers? Take a minute to allow whatever there is to rise to the surface of your mind and take a look at it. Write it down so you can work with it in the Practice It Yourself section at the end of the chapter.

Sadness and Grief

Another set of often dammed feelings is sadness/grief. Who wants to be sad or grieve? No one. Most of us try to avoid these two related feelings at all costs. But sadness and grief are inevitable in this life. Some of us may have more than our share and some less, but it's impossible to live life without them. We all understand loss is a part of living. However, we play games to trick ourselves into believing we can transcend sadness and grief. Though this path may seem to be the high road at the time, it does not take into account the body's reaction—remember, emotional pain is a physical experience. This *visceral* response to discomfort is the nervous system preparing the body to react to stress or an emergency. You may think, “*I'm okay*,” but your body is still processing the experience in its own way.

Sadness and grief are sometimes interchangeable, but they usually differ in duration. Sadness can last a few minutes to a few hours and represents a normal response to perceived and actual loss. Grief usually lasts a few weeks to a few years and involves various states of mind over the course of its resolution. Sadness, if extended, may become grief, and grief includes many feelings of sadness.

Putting a name to these feelings makes them sound almost simple: “sadness and grief,” so neat and tidy. Of course, nothing

could be further from the truth. The internal, subjective experience of loss is indescribably painful—it's the realization that our life can change in a split second and we can lose what we have held close to keep us safe and happy. Grief shatters our illusion of control and involuntarily reveals feelings of helplessness.

Early in my career, a bright, kind thirty-year-old woman I will call Jane taught me a great deal about sadness and grief. Years after her father's death, she was still holding on to the sadness; it was such a strong influence she found herself unable to develop a long-term romantic relationship. As she looked deeply into her connection with her deceased dad, two things became clear. First, she had a wonderfully close rapport with him and he had been her biggest cheerleader. Second, she was clinging to the sadness because it was all that was left of him in a worldly way; it was their last physical connection. She was stuck in a dead feeling about her most loving relationship and unable to move past it because if she did, she thought she would lose what little was left.

As Jane delved deeper, she was able to find the energy of her dad's love permanently imprinted in her heart. By tuning in to her feelings, she could reconnect with his undying affection whenever she chose. Freed from grief, her heart opened. She had her personal cheerleader back. His love again supported her to enjoy life and welcome intimacy with a romantic partner.

Before long, Jane met an attractive young man, fell in love, married, and had a child. It was natural and very tender. She had recovered the feeling of her dad's unconditional love. We both learned that love does not end with physical death.

Elizabeth Kübler-Ross eloquently discerned that grief is a natural process in which we move through five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. When and how we move through each stage is spontaneous and personal. And even though we may wish to avoid all the messiness of it, the body needs to process the experience regardless of what we

think. Whether the loss is through death, divorce, rejection, firing, or something personal, the five stages still apply.

The Stages of Grief

DENIAL

The intellectual mind does not seem able to comprehend the instantaneous awareness that something we consider essential is here one minute and gone the next; it defies logic and we resist. Those of us old enough to remember watching television January 28, 1986, all can understand denial from the experience of watching live as the space shuttle *Challenger* launched and broke apart seventy-three seconds into takeoff. The whole country saw the spacecraft disintegrate before our eyes as seven heroic lives evaporated with it. Our brains could not compute. We were shocked, stunned, and immobilized by denial.

ANGER

Next comes the anger: Someone must be at fault—and “How could they!” No matter how mature we are, we go through a stage of wanting to blame someone. After all, if someone is at fault, we might prevent this experience from happening again and save ourselves future suffering. It’s a very understandable response, but it doesn’t work. No matter how much we want to feel better by being angry, it does not bring back what we have lost.

BARGAINING

Eventually, the mind recovers enough to raise its intellectual voice, and we start negotiating with life, a partner, a boss, a higher power, or just ourselves. Sometimes, we promise to behave better in exchange for a feeling of security instead of grief—“*I’ll be a more loving person and never get mad,*” “*I’ll never drink again,*” or “*I’ll pray every day.*” Other times, we hope to replay the events that occurred in ways that save us from suffering—“*If only I*

hadn't gone to that party," "If only I had looked into his room when I noticed his door ajar," "If only I had forced him to go to the doctor." More than anything, we want some comfort even though we know a different outcome is unattainable.

DEPRESSION

When the mind and body accept that the loss is real and there is no evading it, there is a period of depression—being engulfed in the sadness of life without the lost one. An inevitable sense of reality returns, and it is uncomfortable. It is what it is—significant loss—and there is nothing we can do about it.

ACCEPTANCE

Eventually we come to terms with what is. We reach a place of realizing we can go on, though differently than before—possibilities of a new way of living begin to open up. Joan lost her seventeen-year-old son when a drunk teen in an SUV barreling downhill hit his turning car broadside. When she and I met serendipitously, she shared how her world went black for what felt like forever after her son's tragic death. She continued to feel angry with the driver, who was unhurt in the accident, and

I knew my life was over and I expected to live forever in a world of blackened death like a completely burnt forest . . . and then out of the blue when I wasn't considering it a possibility, a single blade of grass grew up in the middle of the burnt nothingness. I wanted my son back instead of a new life, but without my permission life took over and I began to live again.

Joan eventually adopted a thirteen-year-old girl from Mexico, and though she did not forget her love for her son, she was reborn. In the same way Nature naturally heals a burned forest, emotional recovery has an organic life of its own. We are designed to thrive.

One of the ways healing works through us is in layers of memory. Even when we have completed the grieving process, deeper levels of sadness and grief may appear years later, triggered by some reminder or similar situation. These are fortuitous times because they bring what was buried and unconscious into view and allow for release. Deeper pain becomes accessible because we have cleared what was there, and now we're ready for another level of lightening the sorrow.

Several months ago, my husband had back surgery. As I sat in the hospital, I became acutely aware of my last experience in a surgery waiting room. It was in 2000, and my dad was having knee-replacement surgery. He suffered a serious stroke the day after surgery and eventually passed away without leaving the hospital. These memories came flooding in as I waited to hear from the doctor. Up came deep feelings of sadness, and I started to cry. Acknowledging and remembering provided a powerful release. As I wrote down my feelings, the sadness gradually dissipated, and I felt clearer and lighter than before.

Receiving the Gift of Old Feelings

Whenever old feelings show up, no matter how old, you have an opportunity to dissolve previously dammed emotion. Instead of thinking you ought to be done with those feelings or that something must be wrong, treat them as dams that you are now strong enough to remove. They offer a door to deeper healing and greater emotional freedom and intelligence.

The RIM processes you will learn about in this book act as a catalyst to bring stuck emotion forward into your conscious awareness so you can set it free to expire naturally, allowing your inherently comfortable self to live again.

As one example, Julie had lost her twenty-five-year-old son Jacob in a skydiving accident fifteen years before she came to see me, and she had been suffering severely ever since. Jacob was her only child, and she and his father had already been divorced

for years when Jacob died. Though she was a psychiatric nurse specialist, losing him abruptly created a dam of chronic depression in her. It was like her lifeblood had been sucked out at the time of his death and never returned, that is, until she connected with Jacob through imagination. With eyes closed and his imaginary form before her, she sobbed and shared out loud how she felt she must have done something wrong for this to happen and how sorry she was. Through imagination, she began to hear him lovingly respond—*“You didn’t do anything wrong Mom; it was just my time. I love you and I always will.”* In that experience, Julie regained her loving connection with Jacob. She could finally remember him without feeling extreme guilt and grief. Now that she was no longer punishing herself, organic healing spontaneously occurred and she could feel joy once again.

Similarly, sixty-year-old Ted was stuck in denial two years after he was released from his job. He could not believe his employers had let him go. After all, he was a loyal and committed worker. How could this happen? Stuck in his denial, Ted was unable to find an equal position and was just getting by in a sales job with less than stellar results.

As he relaxed into his body, he saw he was fooling himself. He was fired when he had slacked off at the job because he was tired and wanted to retire, but couldn’t because he needed the income. As he opened up to this inner conflict consciously during a series of three sessions, Ted realized he was wishing for something that was no longer available. Living in the past was stopping him from realistically pursuing the new job he still needed at a similar or better professional level.

Moving through his denial allowed Ted to progress through the stages of loss to acceptance almost instantly. As this realization registered in his mind and body, he got it! His interest in his current sales job changed dramatically, and he began to excel. His results and his confidence significantly improved so that he no longer wanted to retire.

At the end of an interview for a documentary, the interviewer asked: “Can I ask you a personal question? I have experienced a trauma, and I feel it is still influencing me. I can feel it right here in my chest like a ball. Is it possible for it to go away?” The tenderness in his vulnerable, young voice was touching.

“Yes, definitely,” I replied, “I’ve witnessed thousands of people release traumatic pain. Your spirit is greater than any human experience you’ve had.”

He broke into a big smile and his countenance transformed from tentative and anxious to light and free. It was so obvious, I asked his interview partner if she noticed anything different. When he turned to face her, she looked completely surprised and said, “Wow, you look happy.”

When I asked him what had changed, he said, “I have hope,” and smiled brightly and confidently. The mere shift of attention from fear to possibility can have remarkable results. Perspective is that powerful.

What sadness or grief is lingering in your body? A death, a rejection, a hurt of some kind? Close your eyes, and ask your imagination for a number between one and ten (with ten being the most) of how much sadness/grief is influencing you:

.....
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
.....

Move your attention into your heart, and notice a word pops into your mind of what pain remains and you get a sense of what it is. Write this word down so you can work with it further in the Practice It Yourself section below.

Envy and Jealousy

Feelings of envy are extremely difficult to acknowledge because they make us feel small-minded and less than we think we should be. Thus, we rarely share these feelings with others; they are our secrets. The reality is, there’s always someone out there who is

more successful and others who are less successful. These “more successful” people can find others who are “more so than they” and so on. It’s an almost never-ending process.

The key is for us to recognize our feelings as feedback rather than something good or bad, so we can learn from them. Jealousy is frequently a projection of what we want and feel we can’t have. Looking at them as something of a Rorschach test,⁹ we see in the people we envy a reflection of what is inside us that wants to express more fully. These people who inspire jealousy instead of admiration mirror a passionate purpose or inherent desire in us that wants to express in a bigger way.

At a social gathering, a woman shared how she couldn’t figure out why she was feeling jealous of her friend who got a piano and was taking lessons. Finally, she realized she had always wanted to learn how to play the piano. Once she acknowledged these feelings, it happened that someone she knew was getting rid of a piano and she offered to take it. With two young children taking most of her attention, her piano lessons and practicing have become gratifying personal time.

When you allow yourself to name your jealous feelings (it takes guts), you can unabashedly uncover their hidden purpose. You also connect positively with those you envy—“*I am the same as they*”—which raises your self-esteem.

I have been blessed over the last eleven years to work with *New York Times* best-selling author Jack Canfield (classic books: *Chicken Soup for the Soul*® series and *Success Principles*™), initially as a student and progressing to coauthor and friend. There came a time when my work had expanded and grown, but remained limited compared to Jack’s. I felt frustrated by reaching smaller numbers of people through RIM; I worried that many more people were needlessly suffering and I wasn’t able to get to them.

Around this time, I became seriously jealous of Jack, who had always been kind and supportive to me. I saw his mastery

at teaching audiences of hundreds, even thousands, of people at a time and the way he stayed authentic and honest. He could adeptly facilitate difficult seminar situations in ways that were graceful and effective. I also envied his support resources that made it easy for him to reach millions. In other words: I wanted to be him.

Initially, I felt bad that I would have these feelings for someone who was a great friend and wonderful mentor. Then I realized it wasn't about Jack; the jealous voice was from me and about me and it was saying: "*Deb, you are playing smaller than your inner urge. . . . You are playing it safe.*" Sensing that truth, I decided to take more risks and step into greater visibility, and my jealousy organically dissolved. Instead of viewing Jack in comparison to me, I was able to see him as my inspiration again.

After 2008 and one of the stock market crashes, my husband and I realized we needed to limit travel for a while. When I heard our friends sharing their fun trips, I felt envious. Born an adventurer, I longed for the stimulation and excitement. The discomfort of this jealousy caused me to seek a resolution. Soon the idea of offering international retreats popped into my head. This new business venture paid for exotic travels and even brought additional income.

Not only did retreats dissolve my feelings of jealousy; they called me to expand. As I guided groups to Maui, Costa Rica, Australia, and Peru, there were constant challenges that spurred me to grow my skills, and I loved it. This growth was a springboard to greater vitality and connection.

Self Check-In

Who makes you the most jealous? What is it about this person that really gets you? Is she or he making more money? Exercising greater power? Expressing more talents? Having more fun? Fostering a healthier, fitter body? Having greater closeness in an intimate relationship? Name this quality you want more of right

now. For example, I was jealous of Jack Canfield's level of successfully fulfilling his purpose in his work. Thus, I wanted to live my purpose more successfully.

Once you have named the quality you want more of, ask your imagination to give you a number on a scale of one to ten (ten being the most) of how much you are manifesting this quality currently. Whatever number pops into your mind first, receive it, letting go of any desire to edit.

.....
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
.....

Imagine standing in the number you received and, with eyes closed or open, looking to the “ten” where your imagination shows you an image of you speaking and acting in a way that fully embraces this quality. By looking to the “ten” from where you are, you can easily sense the step-by-step course to greater fulfillment. These steps are your road map to a more fully lived life. For example, when I looked to the “ten” level of living my purpose, I saw myself taking immediate action to write a new book, expand RIM class offerings, and seek RIM research opportunities. The underbelly of envy and jealousy is an unconscious holding back of yourself. Some of us have grown up in families and cultures feeding us messages like “Don’t get too big for your britches” and “It’s selfish to call attention to yourself or your needs.” In these situations, you may have learned to shy away from playing at the level that excites you. The emotional result can be to think you are less capable than you are and to take fewer risks.

If this is happening for you, you can stretch beyond your comfort zone to explore. Stepping out is scary at first—until you begin to experience greater aliveness, joy, and sense of purpose. Then the call to the quest becomes compelling.

When my husband wanted to make a career change before his fiftieth birthday, we decided to put aside our work to take the kids on a yearlong personal sabbatical to Australia. Around

this time, I came across a poignant quote by French philosopher André Gide: “One does not discover new lands, without losing sight of the shore for a very long time.” I thought, “*Oh yes, we’re losing sight of the shore for a year.*” That year was so transformational for the entire family, it has developed into a way of life for each of us. We have been drawn to lose sight of the shore regularly. We visit the shore of “comfortable same old” for a while, then head out again to explore unknown waters.

You have new shores calling to you, too. They are unique to your personality and talents. It is irrelevant how dramatic the risk. The important thing is to express yourself step-by-step more fully in your own way and timing.

Feelings about Feelings

What is your conditioned take on feelings? Did your family embrace feelings or judge them? Did you learn to share your feelings openly or were you shamed for feeling anger, sadness, and envy? Were you celebrated for your successes or cautioned to remain humble or silent?

It’s possible to free yourself of these emotions. However, it requires you to look honestly at feelings you have judged as ugly and undesirable.

In nursing school, we learned the “dead man’s test” for developing effective patient goals. If a dead man can do it, it doesn’t support growth and improvement. For example, a dead man can easily accomplish the goal of not feeling angry. This phrase “if a dead man can do it” is a powerful statement emphasizing how *feeling* is a sign of life and *not feeling* is a sign of death. To allow uncomfortable feelings rather than avoid them is to be fully alive. Otherwise, we shut off the emotional faucet that also supplies joy and excitement. We think we can turn off *bad* feelings and continuously be in *good* feelings; however, the body keeps score and buried feelings eventually show up in numbness or as emotional

or physical symptoms. It's interesting to notice the love-hate relationship we have with emotion. We crave the highs that enliven us and hate the lows that make us feel bad. It's no surprise we seek pleasure to avoid pain.

On the other hand, we can allow the continuous, dynamic river of feelings to flow safely regardless of how terrible they seem. There are many techniques to keep our emotional waters moving safely and evaporating naturally. Let's look at a few for you to practice.

Feelings into Words and Thoughts

When you name your feelings, it's like pouring water from a pitcher. Feelings are the water, and we are the pitchers. By expressing our deepest emotions verbally, on paper, or through movement, we pour out the feelings, see them as external to us, and regain a sense of internal spaciousness and capacity to welcome new experience. As you are learning in this book, feelings do not have to be shared with the person with whom we are upset. In fact, spilling uncensored feelings in an *imagined* way is often the most beneficial initial action. Once the intense agitation has been drained off, we can become clear about whether we need to have a real conversation. I've witnessed that most of the time it's unnecessary. Sometimes, the person with whom we are upset is elusive or unavailable. Yet we're not stuck being a victim because they aren't listening. Quite the contrary, the process happens within us, for us.

Ashley, who came in following a double mastectomy, offers a great example of how this process works. She had successfully undergone reconstructive surgery and was returning to her normal life with a supportive husband and grown children, yet she felt extremely anxious. As she closed her eyes and dipped into her body through her imagination, she saw black energy filling both of her arms where the surgery had left numbness. Although

this darkness scared her, she bravely moved her attention to it, and the source of her anxiety materialized into an image of a declining self. The image looked small, bent over, weak, pale, and fragile. At the sight, Ashley's anxiety peaked—until she began to speak aloud and freely. By voicing directly to her image, she discerned a discrepancy between the image of a declining self and the truth:

You are not me. I'm not declining. I'm adapting and growing stronger each day. I won't let you scare me because you are just a shadow of a fear—a fear that's ungrounded. Wow! I feel so much better. Now, I see I was letting you haunt me as I went about my daily activities. But you aren't real. You aren't real. Thank God you aren't real.

With eyes still closed, Ashley looks over and senses that the image of the declining self has evaporated along with her anxiety.

A friend who was directly affected by the 2013 Colorado floods was feeling quite upset when tornadoes devastated her neighbors' homes again. Finally, she expressed her angst in a long, booming scream, "No." Afterwards, she noticed she felt better.

Although I had recommended uncensored writing to my psychotherapy clients, I had never tried it until I found myself in a serious power struggle with my beautiful and spirited daughter Elena when she was seven. Appropriate to her age, she resisted every request, and I felt quite inadequate. Unfortunately, being a psychotherapist did not make me invulnerable to emotional mistakes (as I secretly longed to be).

A poetry class, however, pushed me to discover the healing power of expression through spontaneous writing firsthand. I had the assignment to write about an object. Interestingly, a child's china teacup was my item, and I found myself spontaneously writing to Elena:

A tiny, rounded vessel with a hand-painted blue flower rests on a barn-wood table. The rim where lips have touched and drunk tea narrows into a leprechaun-sized handle made for small digits sticky with marmalade jelly. Fingers that search out every hole and corner hoping to find hidden treasure—old jewelry or forgotten sweets—cherished trinkets as reflected in the gleeful eye of childhood.

If only we could sit together, pouring tea and laughing. Of all that is in my care, you are most precious. Yet I let my vision wander to trivial tasks, domestic chores and half-written books. Meanwhile, my tea party chair remains vacant.

Sometimes I wish I were in someone else's body, escaping these fears. I would play trickster and tickle them from the inside out, making them giggle without knowing why. And when they were busy at work, I would make their feet itch so badly they had to get up and walk away from their obsession.

They'd never have a quiet moment because I would be there to knock at their heart, reminding them of my presence, always ready for a new joke or a reckless game. I would be so close to them that sharing the same skin wouldn't be enough; inhabiting their entire being would be my wish. The chatter and tug-of-war would tell me who I am and that I am.

Ah! Is wanting to get under my skin what your seven-year-old ego seeks? Hitting up against my resistance, you can learn your boundaries, see your ability to spar, to excite, to stir.

Little one, you own my heart, and yet I claim my body. What a mixed message that must seem. You see me as capable, full of confidence, always getting my way, juxtaposed against your childlike lack of knowing.

I, too, have childlike fears and lacks. I, too, am searching out myself amid the experiences of the world. Can you not see me

as you pester me from the inside out? Of course you don't, for I don't wish it. The freedom to discover without interference is the gift I hope to offer.

I am you and you are me; how can I wrench myself out of the picture without somehow abandoning you? We come together in total union and complete conflict as you worm your way from inside me out into the light of your own separate life.

We sit together laughing and sipping tea from a small, magic teacup hand-painted with a blue flower.¹⁰

As I wrote, my hidden feelings organically materialized and connected me with Elena's playful and evolving spirit. How freeing it felt to appreciate in me the same childlike desires. My anger and guilt immediately dissolved as I vividly experienced the love-hate relationship inherent in separation. You probably guessed it already—our relationship improved the minute I lightened up.

You may remember times when you were feeling uptight, but didn't really know why until you started expressing. As your mind formulates the words, you hear yourself and gain insight. When you speak, write, or move (e.g., jogging or yoga) relative to an issue, you gain clarity and a feeling of freedom. There is no need to know the answers, to be stoic, or to control yourself—merely translate the inner experience into words as best as you can, letting go of any desire to edit.

On the other hand, the intellectual and constant retelling of a victim story becomes a broken record. Rather than releasing emotions, it deepens the groove of helplessness in the nervous system. It's easy to hear when listening to someone's story. We easily discern the tonal difference between personal release and repeating victimhood.

The good news with the RIM® process is that emotional release happens organically as long as the person is willing to explore the inner spontaneous experience.

PRACTICE IT YOURSELF

The following activities demonstrate ways you can activate a safe flow of emotion for whatever feeling/issue you wish to address. Each of these RIM practices can be applied to any emotion. For simplicity, I've assigned one of the discussed emotions of anger, sadness/grief, and jealousy to them. Feel free to mix and match in whatever order feels good to you. To go deeper, you can do all three practices successively with the same intense emotion/issue. Continue to cycle through them until you feel a significant shift. Some issues require more attention than others. Luxuriate in the time it takes—you deserve it!

Three Simple Activities to Keep Your River of Feeling Flowing

Emptying Angry Feelings through Uncensored Writing

- Arrange a quiet, personal place to sit with a pen and paper in hand.
- Write down the specific anger you identified earlier or choose another one that's bothering you.
- Put the pen to paper and begin to write whatever comes into your mind as you remember this experience. It doesn't need to make sense or look good, it can be scribbled. Pour your uncomfortable emotions onto the accepting page by writing with intensity.

- Write down whatever words come. For example, it may ramble like:

.....
I don't know what to say. This is stupid. I don't know. I'm so frustrated that I don't know. It feels like I don't know anything. That's what happened before, I didn't know what I wanted and I suffered. I'm so pissed about it, I can't even think.
.....

- Continue to write whatever comes. If nothing is coming, return to this sentence lead: "What I feel as I remember this specific emotion/event is . . ."
- Take as much time and paper as needed to write yourself into a new feeling state. As you write, you leave your feelings on the paper.

Notice how this process connects you with your body and feelings. Writing allows you the unique and uncensored expression of whatever wants to be spoken. You are free to have your feelings and express them in a safe way. Giving a voice to your feelings is a necessary personal freedom. For some of us, it may be the first time we feel completely free to express what feels unspeakable.

Clearing Sadness/Grief through Your Heart

Recall the sadness/grief that showed up earlier.¹¹

- Close your eyes and move your attention into your heart where *one word* pops into your mind of how you're feeling about it right now. (Take a minute.)
- As you sense this feeling, embrace it as much as you can. (Take a minute.)
- Repeat the above two actions at least two more times.

- Notice the natural dynamic nature of your feelings: how they constantly change all of their own accord without you doing anything except naming and embracing them as fully as you can.

Freeing Feelings of Envy through Movement

Now that you know the intimate relationship between your feelings and your body, you can express and process emotion physically through movement. Recall the jealous feelings that showed up earlier. Read the following simple process all the way through and then organically enact it with your eyes open or closed:

- Find a private space with enough room for you to move. (If you are doing this as a group activity, everyone's eyes are closed and there's spacing between people to allow free movement.)
- Stand up and close your eyes.
- Sense what you are feeling emotionally as you recall the specific jealous/envious feeling that showed up earlier or another emotion of your choosing. Name it in your mind or aloud.
- With background music or not, your body freely expresses this feeling physically however it wants to move. Imagine you are a kinetic art sculpture whose job is to visibly express the emotion present from moment to moment.
- Notice when your body wants to move and when it wants to remain still, when it wants to be small and when it wants to be big, when it feels strong and when it feels vulnerable . . .
- Notice how you feel in response to the spontaneous body expressions.

- Notice how your feelings are changing automatically as your body is changing positions.
- Continue to move until your body feels calmer and lighter. Sense how you're feeling now compared to when you started.

Body moves and dances—Mind speaks and listens
Heart beats and feels—Body-Mind-Heart
We are rhythms of Life



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PHOTO BY DOUG ELLIS



Deborah Sandella lives in Colorado with her husband. She enjoys hiking the trails and camping under 14,000 foot peaks (climbing a couple), and can't imagine not having 300 days of sunshine. Deb loves personal and professional adventure and pushing the limits.

Early in her career, she developed an intensive mental health program that decreased hospital stays from three weeks to three days and kept patients connected with their families. Over the last twenty years, she's discovered how to activate one's emotional operating system for quicker and more effective ways to have health, love and success. She calls it the RIM Method (Regenerating Images in Memory) and has founded the RIM Institute where others learn to apply the technique with themselves and their clients to improve personal and professional success.

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