

## FEELINGS

1. Humans are feeling creatures and to deny or avoid feelings is to deny our humanness.
2. The way we do or do not deal with our feelings is determined by a culmination of experiences and messages we have chosen to remember and to believe.
3. Chemically dependent families work at avoiding feelings ( at least the painful ones) despite the emotional cost. This method of coping only compounds the pain and reinforces the notion that feelings are dangerous.
4. Some of the messages (tapes) that we believe about feelings that are not necessarily true are:
  - men shouldn't cry
  - nice women shouldn't get angry
  - women as a rule are weak and usually fall apart
  - good Christian people should only have good Christian feelings
  - men should be strong and in control
  - it's better to keep your feelings to yourself
  - if you have negative feelings it means that you are a bad person
5. Some messages that we may need to relearn are:
  - feelings are not good or bad, they just are
  - men are sensitive and feel deeply and they cry
  - feelings say nothing about morality
  - nice women can and do feel angry
  - being "in control" isn't always the healthiest
6. Once you begin the process of closing the door in your painful feelings, you also close the door to the rest of your feeling life, the consequences being: numbness, "I don't care" attitude, depression.

## DEFENSES

agree  
ambivalence  
complying  
disagree

generalizing  
intellectualizing  
justifying  
levity

minimizing  
rationalizing  
shifting  
verbosity

## FEELINGS

abandoned	cowardly	forlorn	knocked-down	revengeful
accepted	daring	free	lonely	robbed
adventurous	dazed	frustrated	love	satisfied
affected	defeated	full	lovely	secure
afraid	defensive	glad	miserable	selfish
alone	defiant	goofy	natural	self-pity
ambivalent	desire	graceful	nervous	shy
anger	despair	graceless	numb	sick
animosity	despondent	grateful	obligated	snappy
anxious	disappointed	great	overcome	stubborn
apathetic	discontent	guilt	overjoyed	stunned
apprehensive	discouraged	gullible	overwhelmed	stupid
ashamed	distracted	gutsy	pain	successful
awed	disturbed	had	peaceful	sucked in
awkward	down	happy	peppy	suffering
bewildered	dull	hate	pious	superior
bold	eager	helpless	pity	surprised
bored	ecstatic	hesitant	playful	surrender
brilliant	elated	high	pleased	suspicious
calm	embarrassed	hopeful	poised	sympathy
captivated	empathy	hopeless	possessive	tired
caring	empty	hostility	proud	tranquil
cautious	enchanted	humble	provoked	trapped
cheated	encouraged	hurt	pushed	uncomfortable
cheered	energized	impatient	put out	understood
clownish	envious	important	rational	uneasy
cold	exasperated	indifferent	refreshed	unhappy
comfortable	excited	inferior	regret	unloved
compelled	exhilarated	intolerant	rejected	unmasked
concerned	exploited	irrational	relieved	unsure
confident	failure	irritated	reluctant	unworthy
congenial	fascinated	jealous	remorse	used
constructive	fear	joyful	resented	warm
contempt	flighty	jubilant	resigned	weary
content	foolish	kind	respectable	witty

## FREEDOM

1. Give yourself permission to feel every feeling.
  - don't judge or moralize your feelings or yourself for having them
  - accepting feelings = accepting yourself
  - Carol Rogers says, " Ok, this is me at this moment and I will accept it as well as I possibly can."
  - Jess Lair says, " Now when I accept myself as I am , I free myself from all my preconceived notions of who and what I'm supposed to be."
  
2. Most of us connect feelings we aren't comfortable with, with behavior.  
Example: anger -----violence  
          fear -----running  
          guilt-----punishment
  - feelings and behavior are not he same thing
  - you can choose how you behave over your feelings
  - find some new ways of behaving over feelings; talking, exercising, painting.
  - Dr. Rollo May says, "Freedom comes with the ability to pause, to extend that moment between emotion and action, to become aware and choose."
  
3. Take full responsibility for your feelings.
  - you create your own feelings
  - if others can make you feel: angry, sad, etc.; you give them the power to control you
  - stop blaming!
  - change the what you talk about your feelings, try "I choose not to forgive myself right now. I am creating guilt for myself" instead of "You make me feel so guilty, why don't you forgive me."
  
4. Share your feelings with somebody.
  - feelings that go unshared don't go away by themselves. They build up, they haunt and they can lead to depression.
  - when you share use "I" messages rather that "You" messages.
  - learn to share your feelings without blaming someone else for them.

What's the goal then? To be happy all the time? Live a painfree life? If these are still your expectations or goals, you are still avoiding life. The goal of to feel. To be as Rogers puts it " congruent, to have your insides meet and mesh with your outsides." To be human.