



# Detox Your Heart

## Feeling Your Feelings

*Instead of connecting with what we may actually be feeling, we have become experts in judging ourselves, often harshly, and in explaining away our experience. So, when we do become aware of what we're feeling, we can become critical of ourselves. We can interpret a feeling so quickly it becomes a judgment about how we are.*

### A PERSONAL EXAMPLE

Fifteen years ago I was walking along the road and my attention was captured by a letter I had received earlier that day. "Miss Mason-John, while we enjoyed your application, we had so many candidates for the Arts Bursary that we are sorry to tell you that your application was unsuccessful this time. Thank you for applying." My thinking went into a spin as I remembered the letter, and five minutes later I burst out laughing and said aloud, "I can't blame my mother for that." Let's look at what happened.

- The Fact: Remembered the words of the letter that told me my application had been unsuccessful.
- The Feeling Tone: Unpleasant—in the neck, throat, and jaw.
- The Thoughts: "It's not fair. What's wrong with me. Nobody cares. I hate myself." (Identification of these thoughts becomes thinking and I stir up an emotion.)
- The Thinking (interpretations and judgments): It's all my mother's fault, if she had loved me, it would have been different. If she had looked after me I wouldn't have to be begging for money. If she had not abused me I would be more successful in the world. (Hence my stories begin to unfold.)
- The Emotion: Sadness mixed with anger.

Fortunately I caught myself in the story and stopped walking, paused, and hence the laughter came, and then more thoughts. "I can't blame my mother for that. How long am I going to keep on blaming my mother for things I don't get?" The awareness of this stopped me from acting out by turning to a distraction to stuff down my sadness and frustration.

This was a great epiphany that helped me to begin uprooting old stories that had kept me in a rut. Let's look at a generic example. And then you can try one for yourself.

### A GENERIC EXAMPLE

- The Fact: Our partner or a friend says the relationship is over.
- The Feeling Tone: Unpleasant all over the body.
- The Thoughts: "It's not fair. Why me. I'm unlovable. I'm not good enough. I've been abandoned."
- The Thinking: I bet s/he is seeing someone else. If they are I'm going to stalk them and make their life hell. I hope they are as miserable as me. Nobody is going to leave me like this. It's not fair. Who do they think they are?
- The Emotion: Sadness mixed with anger and rage.
- The Actions: We beat ourselves up. We blame ourselves for the loss of the relationship. We begin to act out with our choice of distraction. We isolate.
- What We Gain: Temporary relief.
- What It Costs Us: We become depressed, angry, and resentful for a long time. Relapse into our choice of distraction. Begin to overeat or over drink. Dwell in negative mental states.



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### PRACTICE ONE - CHOOSE YOUR OWN EXAMPLE

Now fill in the blanks for your own example:

- The Fact (What happened): Make it clear, concise, and clean.

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- The Feeling Tone (Where you feel it in the body)

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- The Thoughts

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- The Thinking (Interpretations, judgments, stories)

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- The Emotions

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- The Actions (What you did or what you do)

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- What We Gain (What you gain from your actions)

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- What It Costs Us (What your actions cost you)

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