

The Problem Is Not Our Emotions

It is our relationship with them

Many people spend a great deal of energy trying not to feel.

Trying not to feel anxious.

Trying not to feel sad.

Trying not to feel angry.

Trying not to feel vulnerable.

We learn to distract ourselves.

To suppress.

To explain.

To control.

To push feelings aside and continue functioning.

Yet despite all these efforts, emotions have a remarkable way of returning.

Again and again.

Not because they are trying to harm us.

But because they are trying to tell us something.

Emotions are not mistakes

Modern culture often treats emotions as problems to be solved.

Particularly the uncomfortable ones.

Fear is seen as weakness.

Anger as something dangerous.

Sadness as something that should pass quickly.

As if emotional discomfort is evidence that something has gone wrong.

But emotions are not errors in the human system.

They are part of the system itself.

They are ancient biological responses that evolved to help us navigate life.

Long before human beings developed language or complex reasoning, emotions were already guiding behaviour.

In many ways, emotions are older than thought.

And always faster.

Every emotion serves a purpose

Emotions do not arise randomly.

Each carries information.

Each serves a function.

Fear protects.

It alerts us to danger and prepares us to respond.

Anger mobilizes energy.

It helps us defend ourselves, protect boundaries and take action when necessary.

Sadness creates space for healing.

It allows us to process loss, adapt to change and let go of what can no longer be held onto.

Joy connects.

It brings people together and reinforces the relationships that support life.

The purpose of emotions is not to make us comfortable.

The purpose of emotions is to help us survive, adapt and connect.

We do not choose our emotions

One of the reasons people struggle with emotions is that emotions do not operate according to logic.

We cannot simply decide not to feel afraid.

We cannot order sadness to disappear.

We cannot command anger to stay away.

Emotions arise automatically.

They are automatic responses.

Not decisions.

This can be frustrating.

Particularly for people who are used to solving problems through thinking.

Yet emotions were never designed to obey thought.

They were designed to provide information.

The question is not whether emotions should be there.

The question is what they are trying to tell us.

The struggle creates suffering

Often the greatest difficulty is not the emotion itself.

It is the resistance to it.

Fear becomes fear of fear.

Sadness becomes frustration about being sad.

Anger becomes shame about being angry.

The original emotion may be difficult.

But the battle against it often creates even more suffering.

The harder we push emotions away, the more energy they seem to require.

Like a ball held under water, they eventually demand attention.

Sometimes with even greater force than before.

Feeling is not the same as acting

Understanding emotions does not mean acting on every emotion.

Feeling anger does not mean aggression.

Feeling fear does not mean avoidance.

Feeling sadness does not mean giving up.

Emotions provide information.

They do not automatically dictate behaviour.

This distinction is important.

We may not choose what we feel.

But we remain responsible for how we respond.

Maturity is not the absence of emotion.

It is the ability to remain aware of our emotions without becoming controlled by them.

Listening instead of controlling

Many people spend years trying to manage their emotions.

Perhaps a different approach is possible.

What if we became curious instead?

What if fear was approached with interest rather than resistance?

What if sadness was met with patience rather than frustration?

What if anger was explored rather than judged?

The goal is not to get rid of emotions.

The goal is to understand them.

Because emotions often reveal something important about our relationship with ourselves, with others and with the world around us.

The Art of Feeling

Feeling is not a problem to overcome.

It is a capacity to develop.

The ability to recognise emotions.

To tolerate them.

To understand them.

To learn from them.

The more we are willing to listen, the less we need to fight.

And the less we fight, the more available we become to ourselves.

The problem is not our emotions.

The problem is our relationship with them.

And sometimes, the moment we stop treating emotions as enemies, they become some of our most valuable guides.