

Welcome All Feeling

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY **

Whenever you feel provoked,
 Irritated, pulled to make a response,
 Stop.
 Sit back in the saddle.
 Scan your body and notice what you are feeling.
 Seek out any areas of strong emotional tension;
 Feel what is there. If it helps you, label it:
 Sadness, anger, desire, whatever it may be.
 Stay with the sensations,
 Dropping the story—the why and the because.
 Do everything you can to experience what is here,
 To the maximum possible degree, for no more than
 a few minutes.
 Then, relax.
 Feel your interiority as though for the first time.
 If there's more emotional tension calling to be felt in this moment,
 Take a few extra minutes to welcome feeling even more totally.
 Keep going until the charge is gone.
 Feel yourself now; you are not just a loving person,
 You are Love itself.

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We have all been faced with experiences that seem overwhelming:
 the anger of a drunk parent; the thrill of a sexual encounter; the

end of a relationship. We have learned to say “yes” to parts of what we feel, and “no” to the rest. Long ago, we built a wall in the middle of our emotional landscape. Do we still need that wall today?

Say you receive a letter with news of a long-lost friend. He died of AIDS, alone and misunderstood. Your mind races with all the things you could have said, should have said, would have said. Faced with such feelings of hopelessness and regret, our natural reaction is to try to forget them, to push them away.

Stop. Disengage all stories, drop in, and further in. Feel to the core of your grief, beyond where you know any longer what you are grieving for. Feel.

Whatever feeling we say “no” to will get buried in our muscles and digestive organs. Anger, which could have been clean and wild and free, and which would have harmed no one if it were fully felt as an energy, gets pushed down into the body and becomes festering bitterness. It will lash out unexpectedly in all kinds of ways. Grief, which could take us deeply into the vulnerability of the open heart, gets compressed into the diaphragm and chest, making us gray and stooped, constricting our energy.

When we have strong feelings, we often feel faced with an impossible choice: to repress or to express. When we express, we risk hurting someone with an outburst of anger, or dragging someone down with our grief or sadness. If we repress, we shut down not only this feeling arising now, but all feeling and aliveness that was possible as well. To feel is the middle way. To fully feel each thing as it arises is freedom.

Each passing feeling is waiting to be met. Say “yes” to everything you feel, while discarding the irrelevance of the drama. In this *yes*, breathe true freedom.