



What to Do When Overcome with Emotion

Today I want to continue our discussions about the brain. People seemed to enjoy the last two videos talking about some brain science and how to optimize your brain so today I want to talk to you about what happens when you kind of collapse into your emotions. What happens when you get really, really revved up and you're kind of spinning out with an emotion. I want to begin by reading another quote from the book, *Your Brain at Work*. Rock says, "The key is how you do it, to reduce arousal. You need to use just a few words to describe an emotion, and ideally use symbolic language which means using indirect metaphors metrics and simplifications of your experience. This requires you to activate your prefrontal frontal cortex, which reduces the arousal in the limbic system. Here's the bottom line, describe an emotion in just a word or two. And it helps reduce the emotion. Open up a dialogue about an emotion, though, and you tend to increase it."

So that is really, really important because you can imagine as an ex-therapist and now as a coach and then you put that on top of my unique personality, and I would analyze everything to death. And when I did that whenever I had an emotion come up, fear, anxiety, sadness, depression, whatever it was, what I would do is analyze and judge myself to death. You could call it navel gazing. And what that does is it actually keeps that emotion alive.

Brain science shows us that yes, indeed, you do need to acknowledge the emotion. It's not about denying it, that's not useful either, but you do need to acknowledge it. You do need to describe it, but in as few words as possible. And once you do that, then you need to leave it alone. That seems counter to what I was taught years ago in my graduate degree and what I thought psychotherapy was all about which is reliving the story again and again, delving into it again and again and again

It's important to know that while it is helpful to tell your story, it's not useful to go over it and over it again and again. I see some people posting on Facebook who all they talk about is how horrible things are for them. And I'm not minimizing the fact that there are some horrible things happening out there, but when you keep talking about it over and over and over and over again, you are going to keep the horrible very much alive. So, it's important to bring your attention to and your understanding to the fact that you need to speak it. You need to tell your story. You need to give voice to your emotion. But you don't need to take up residency there. You don't need to live there. This has absolutely been life changing for me and for some of my clients.

You know I've told you before in these videos when I wake up in low moods, instead of analyzing it to death, instead of judging it, instead of criticizing myself like I did for decades, I



now acknowledge it and go about my day. I cannot tell you what a relief that has been to me because I find that when I leave it alone, eventually my psychological system finds equilibrium again. It is always seeking equilibrium and when we can allow it to do its work, and not get too involved in it with all of our stories about it, then our psychological system is able to come back into equilibrium.

Please don't take my word for it. This is something that I want you to experiment with. I want you to play with this. What happens when you leave the emotions alone? After you acknowledge your emotions, what happens when you don't post, you know paragraph after paragraph, day after day? What happens when you share your woes with a friend in confidence, and then you leave it alone? Try it. Play with it and let me know how it is. I would really, really love for you to experiment with this and see how it is for you.

Listen, you have a habit in place if you are used to dwelling in these emotions and talking about them all the time. It's not going to be overnight to break that habit, but I want you to begin experimenting with this and see what you see and see if over time you get relief.