

Finding the Courage to Express Your Feelings.

In this module about living authentically, you previously learned some strategies for revealing your true personality. This lesson helps you find the courage to express your true feelings as well.

Life is full of situations where it can be difficult to say what we really think but silence sometimes comes at a high cost.

In a recent article in the British newspaper The Guardian, ***a nurse reported that failing to express our true emotions is one of the most common deathbed regrets.***

Read on to discover the major benefits of speaking your mind and constructive ways to get started.

Benefits of Expressing Your Emotions

1. **Lead a fuller life.** Dare to take on difficult issues. You'll learn more about yourself, your loved ones and the world around you. Taking on more challenges will help you discover your true potential.
2. **Become more authentic.** If you habitually suppress your true feelings, you may become unfamiliar with them yourself. Get to know the real you and accept yourself for who you are.
3. **Banish your fears.** ***Fear and anxiety build up when we try to shelter ourselves from difficult truths rather than facing them directly.*** When you see yourself successfully negotiating a disagreement with your boss, you'll feel more confident in your abilities.
4. **Improve your relationships.** Clearing the air promptly can keep resentments from building up. Ask your spouse to share in more of the housework rather than feeling like a martyr.
5. **Liberate others.** Courage is contagious. Your willingness to be direct and

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honest makes it easier for others to do the same.

Techniques for Expressing Your Emotions

1. **Clarify your intentions.** Everyone benefits when we devote ourselves to promoting the common good. It beats worrying about being comfortable or universally popular.
2. **Consider the risks involved.** There may still be situations in which you need to choose restraint. Maybe you have valid concerns about an office policy but know that your supervisor is unlikely to be receptive to suggestions.
3. **Take accountability for your own emotions.** State your feelings in a way that avoids putting the blame on others. *Recognize that your unpleasant feelings have more to do with your mindset rather than external events.*
4. **Start out small.** It's okay to proceed gradually. Talk with your best friend about how her showing up late for appointments affects you. Soon you'll be able to approach people who may be less directly concerned with your well-being.
5. **Practise regularly.** Like any skill, open communications improve the more you practice. Notice daily opportunities to speak up so you'll be in shape when more difficult conflicts come along.
6. **Remain tactful.** Even when you need to confront difficult truths, you can pick a setting and language that will make the message more palatable. If tempers are already flaring, give yourselves time to calm down and speak privately. *Try making requests rather than demanding changes.*
7. **Respect other's boundaries.** Just because you've decided to become more forthright, other people may still have different priorities. Unless someone's welfare is in serious danger, be sensitive to the topics they may prefer to leave untouched.
8. **Listen intentionally.** On the other hand, you may find that others welcome the opportunity to be candid. Give people your full attention. Show that you're attuned to their concerns. If you feel overwhelmed by what you're hearing, ask for time to reflect before continuing the discussion.

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9. **Share good news too.** Sometimes we shy away from pleasant feelings as well as the unpleasant ones. Get in the habit of handing out more compliments. Let people know how their kind acts improve your life and how much you care about them.

If you want to live life to the fullest, get in touch with your true feelings and bring them out into the open. You'll enrich your own experiences and empower those around you to do the same.

In living authentically, it's important to be honest with others and yourself, too. The next lesson shares some tips about presenting yourself honestly.

Here's what you need to do today:

Start out small and share good news too. Today, share your good feelings and give out at least 5 sincere compliments.