

You are encouraged to read the whole book, and please make a proper citation if needed.

Greenberg, L.S. (2002). *Emotion-focused therapy: Coaching clients to work through their feelings*. American Psychological Association.

1. I came to view human emotional experience as a high level synthesis of affect, motivation, cognition, and behavior. The emotion system integrates information across a variety of information-processing domains and is the most complex system of knowing that human possesses. This system can be viewed as involving tacit cognitive-affective structures, internal models, scripts, or emotion schemes. These emotion schemes provide a constant readout of a person's current state and are crucial in determining perception and in helping people mobilize their efforts for goal-directed action. People must pay attention to their emotions and give them equal status to thought and action. It is the integration of emotion and reason that results in a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.
2. It is only in the more recent centuries that the term *emotion* – e-motion, to move out, emphasizing the action tendency aspect – began to be used.
3. Living in the present is healthy and often involves a heightened awareness. People who live in the present are aware of both the environment and their immediate emotional reactions to the environment. Living for the moment however, is tantamount to reckless impulsiveness; people who live for the moment do something if it feels good, without considering the consequences.
4. Emotions are based in the present, but they are influenced by the past, and they influence the future. The past lives on the present to the degree that the past influences a person's experience of current events. People's current reactions to circumstances and relationships often are forged from their emotional history. Emotions about things past differ from vital emotional responses to the present. Emotions of the remembered past are often the source of emotional problems. In coaching people in the use of emotions as a guide, the first important distinction to be made is that unresolved emotions about past events need to be handled differently than emotional responses to present situations.
5. Often emotions are difficult to deal with when they concern events that might happen. The past lives on in memories, and emotions experienced in the past at least were caused by responses to actual circumstances. There is something real about emotions felt in response to past events. With regard to the future, however, emotion is secondary to thought, providing people only with reactions to rehearsals of future scenes played out in the internal theater of the mind.

Problems thus arise when people confuse their fantasies about the future with reality and react as though the future is occurring now. People therefore need to distinguish between emotion in response to present circumstance and emotion in response to anticipated scenarios, because each serves a different purpose in life.

6. Present feeling must be integrated with awareness of future consequences and informed by past learning.
7. Adaptive emotions at work:
 - Emotion informed the person
 - Emotion organized him/her for action
 - Emotion monitored the state of his/her relationship
 - Emotion evaluated whether things were going his/her way
 - Emotions signaled his/her state to others
 - Expressing did not always correct the situation
 - Deciding what to express and how to act on the signal was important
 - Thought put emotion in perspective and made sense of it
8. Greenberg and Paivio (1997) have developed the notion of emotion schematic processing as a basic mode more fundamental than thought to account for this type of integrated processing. In Figure 1.1 one sees that attending preconsciously to a stimulus activates an emotion scheme. This in turn gives rise to conscious emotion and need, thought, and an action tendency that all interact to influence each other and are translated into final behavior. Here the emotion scheme is a fundamental mode of processing information in relation to certain emotion-based scripts that evaluate the significance of the stimulus to a person's well-being.
9. Emotional expression is itself clearly an elaborate cognitive processing task in which data are integrated from many sources in the brain (often in milliseconds), and this occurs, in the main, outside awareness. The conscious narrative flow of evaluation, interpretations, and explanations of experience – the reported story of the emotion – often comes only after the emotion is experienced. The narrative account is significant as a record in memory of experience but often is only peripherally related to the process of generating ongoing emotion.
10. In psychotherapy, thinking about how the cognitive and affective systems work together and how each is blended with the other appears far more profitable than ascertaining which comes first. What is clear, however, is that the simple linear sequence – cognitive leads to emotion, one of the cornerstones of the classical cognitive therapy view of emotion – covers only the most simple means by which emotion is generated. This oversimplification can be misleading in

attempting to understand the complex interactions of emotion, cognition, motivation, and behavior, for people often are not witness to the internal processes by which they become emotional.

11. There appear to be two types of awareness. One is fully present centered, aware of the here and now. With this type of awareness one knows what one is feeling, but that is all. In the second, higher order, more reflective state of awareness one can consider what one is feeling and can evaluate whether one wants to feel this way or decide what to do with what one is feeling. This state of being aware of one's conscious feeling of emotion allows one ultimately also to be aware of the lived past and the anticipated future and to make decisions about one's emotions in the present.
12. An additional curious aspect of emotional living is the importance of the time needed to process and reflect on emotional experience. We all know how important it is to take time to reflect on a troubling emotional feeling or how important it is to simply take time out to do other things so that we can later revisit the experience and see it in a new way. Time provides both flexibility and the opportunity to let things reverberate through people's meaning circuits to bring a fuller sense to the meaning and significance of what they are considering.
13. To act with emotional intelligence, people need to learn to regulate both their emotional experience and their emotional expression. Part of emotional intelligence is the ability to regulate emotionality so that one is guided by it but not compelled by it.
14. The first level of emotion regulation involves the capacity to symbolize in awareness bodily felt emotions and action tendencies to produce complex feelings. Emotional intelligence involves not only having emotions but also handling them. The person reviews situations and changes the meaning of his or her feelings in order to transform or regulate his or her reactions. Once emotion have come alive they can be made to die down. They can be kept within certain bounds by many procedures, some voluntary, some involuntary. People can regulate their emotions by (a) managing the situations to which they expose themselves, (b) transforming their responses by reviewing the situation, or (c) suppressing or intensifying their response. Regulating a response by reviewing the situation generally is far superior to suppressing it.
15. People need to guide their emotions toward constructive action or transform them into ones that are more favorable and more helpful to problem solving.
16. People can transform emotions by stressing different aspects of what is occurring; they can attribute different reasons to explain what happened, project different consequences, focus one accessing different internal and external resources, and

devise different coping strategies.

17. Some people can redirect processing at different stages. I suggest that therapists need to help people perceive emotions with as little defensive processing as possible and that emotions need to be made as tolerable as possible. This is the best way to help people cope with the sadness of everyday life as well as with the tragedies. Helping people feel the pain or anger and then see the humor in things, see alternatives, gain a sense of agency in their construction of reality and in their responses to it, gives them a sense of being effective rather than being a victim of circumstances. Choosing how to respond, rather than being a victim of circumstances, provides a sense of self-determination. All the means of using people's wonderful capacity to construct meaning is the best way to guide and transform their distressing emotional reactions.
18. In working with emotion, the first distinction that an emotion coach needs to make is whether the client is experiencing too much or too little emotion. The first is distinguishing whether an emotion is a new expression that involves the freeing up of blocked emotion or whether it is an old, stale expression that involves the repetition of emotion too freely expressed. The fresh expression of a previously overinhibited emotion generally is helpful, whereas the venting of too-often-expressed stale emotion that is not blocked is not therapeutic, and does not lead to reduction in expression. The second distinction that emotion coaches need to make is whether the emotion being experienced and expressed is a sign of distress or a sign of the process of resolving distress.
19. At the most general level, coaching interventions will depend on (a) whether the emotion is over- or under-controlled, (b) whether it is a newly expressed or stale emotion, and (c) if the emotion is a signal of distress or a process of change.
20. The first and most important criteria for facilitating more emotion are (a) that there is a relational bond sufficient to contain the emotion that will be facilitated and (b) that there are agreement and collaboration on this task between the client and the emotion coach. Rushing in to facilitate experience and expression with people with whom a secure relational base has not yet been established is unwise, and evoking emotion in an actively unwilling client is potentially harmful.
21. Classification:
 - A healthy core feeling: an adaptive primary emotion;
 - A chronic bad feeling, a maladaptive primary emotion;
 - A reactive or defensive emotion that obscures a primary feeling: a secondary emotion;
 - An influencing or sometimes manipulative emotions that people use to get something they want, an instrumental emotion.

22. Adaptive primary emotions are people's core gut responses to situations. They are the person's very first feelings in response to a stimulus situation, such as anger at violation, sadness at loss, and fear at threat. The therapist has to help clients get past the clutter of their defensive, secondary emotions and let go of their instrumental feelings to become aware of their core primary emotions. These primary feelings tell people who they really are and what they are most fundamentally feeling in any given moment.
23. Maladaptive primary emotions: these feelings are still people's most fundamental, "true" feelings, but they are no longer healthy. Debilitating fear and anxiety, shame and humiliation, destructive rage, and unresolved grief are the main contenders in this category of emotions. Maladaptive emotions are those that people often regret having or those that they regret having so intensely or expressing in the way they did.
24. Secondary emotions are responses to or defenses against a more primary feeling or thought. They are troublesome because they often obscure what people are feeling deep down. For example, a client may feel depressed, but this depression may actually be covering a core feeling of anger. Secondary emotions often arise from attempts to judge and control primary responses. All emotions, basic or complex, can be primary, secondary, or instrumental.
25. Instrumental emotions are the third category that add to the complexity of sorting out emotions. People express instrumental emotions because they have learned that other people will, they hope, react to these emotions the way they want. Often clients may not be aware that they have learned to use these instrumental feelings for the gains they bring.
26. The following sources of information are used in assessing emotion states:
 - Knowledge of the function of adaptive emotion
 - Knowledge of universal emotional responses
 - Understanding of the context of the experience
 - Observing effects of expression
 - Attending to nonverbal expression
 - Empathic attunement (putting oneself in the other's shoes)
 - Knowledge of one's own emotional responses to circumstances
 - Knowledge of the client and his or her issues and ways of responding.
27. Coaches facilitate emotional growth by focusing people's attention on their positive emotional potential and helping them mobilize their inner resources. This is done through moment-by-moment assessments of people's emotional states and by providing guidance that fits people's current states and helps them move toward more desirable states. Guidance also is provided by means of the

subtle use of language and through strategies appropriate to the moment that help mobilize resources. Coaching introduces a psycho-educative model of experiential learning in which the coach is seen as a skilled guide. The goal in emotion coaching is to promote higher levels of functioning and to help people learn rather than to treat a deficit or a disease.

28. The process of emotion coaching is adapted to therapy is as follows:
 - Coaches first need to be aware of their own emotions. They need to have a positive view of emotions as resources and see emotions as providing information and action tendencies.
 - Coaches need to recognize that when clients are experiencing emotion, these moments offer opportunities for therapeutic intimacy and contact.
 - Coaches need to be empathically attuned both to their clients' specific emotions, such as sadness, anger, and fear, and to the tempo, rhythm, intensity, and cadence of their clients' emotional vitality as it changes moment by moment. They need to validate, accept, and respect their clients' emotional experience and communicate their empathic understanding of clients' feelings.
 - Coaches need to help clients symbolize their feelings in words and help them make sense of this experience.
 - Coaches, having entered a client's emotional world, need to guide the client in dealing with his or her emotions and offer strategies to help the client process emotion.
29. Emotion coaching relies on three major principles of emotional change that have been established on the basis of research, theory, and practice: (a) increasing awareness of emotion, (b) enhancing emotion regulation, and (c) changing emotion with emotion.
30. Emotion awareness: Becoming aware of and symbolizing certain types of emotional experience in words provides access both to the information and to the action tendency in the emotion. It also helps people make sense of their experience and promotes the assimilation of this experience into people's ongoing self-narrative. Emotional awareness is not thinking about feeling; it involves experiencing the feeling in awareness. Putting emotion into words thus allows previously unsymbolized experience in emotion memory to be assimilated into one's conscious, conceptual understanding of the self and the world, where it can be organized into a coherent story.
31. Emotion regulation: Emotion can be regulated in a variety of different ways. Clients with under-regulated affect have been shown to benefit from validation and the learning of emotion regulation and distress tolerance skills. The

provision of a safe, supportive, empathic environment also help soothe automatically generated under-regulated distress. Emotion regulation skills involve identifying and labeling emotions, establishing a working distance, increasing positive emotions, reducing vulnerability to negative emotions, self-soothing, breathing, and distraction. Regulation can involve putting some distance between oneself and overwhelming emotions or developing self-soothing capacities. Forms of meditative practice and self-acceptance often are most helpful in achieving distance.

32. Changing emotion with emotion: This suggests that a maladaptive emotion state can be transformed best by replacing the maladaptive emotion with another, more adaptive emotion. A corollary to the principle that emotion is needed to change emotion is that emotional arousal also is needed to change emotion. Emotional awareness and the use of emotional intelligence also are needed to identify what emotion the person is feeling and to distinguish that the emotion is a maladaptive one that should be transformed rather than a healthy one that should be followed. In emotion coaching, adaptive emotions are therefore accessed to replace and transform maladaptive emotions and to help the client organize him- or herself so that he or she can make adaptive responses. Thus, when therapists help clients attend to, access, and symbolize their most fundamental adaptive experience, they are organized by their feelings of adaptive sadness, anger, or joy to act in the world to solve problems and create new meaning.
33. There are a number of major affective competencies that can be facilitated by means of a good relationship with a sensitively attuned emotion coach. The first competency involves clients' acquisition of the ability to become aware of and verbalize their emotional experience through the process of coaches' affective attunement to their experience. The second involves clients' development of a balance between their ability to regulate their own emotional experience and their ability to use others to regulate emotional experience. The third competency involves learning to tolerate and accept painful emotional experience via the process of being in a relationship with a coach who accepts and is able to tolerate both the client's painful emotions and any of the coach's own emotions in response to the client's.
34. Another important relational process in emotion coaching involves coaches giving feedback to their clients to help them develop awareness of action dispositions and experiences that they avoid or interrupt. Clients learn that they are not alone in their emotional world. They experience that their isolation can be broken and their painful feelings can be soothed by connection with another

person.

35. Presence involves being fully in the moment and contacting clients' emotional experience congruently and in a non-power-oriented manner. Being able to be fully present to the other in an open manner, rather than being there for the self, is a highly developed skill that requires letting go of preconceptions and giving full attention in the moment.
36. They are moments of authenticity that help transcend the roles, the familiar positions, in the relationship. They help the participants enter a new intersubjective state. A moment of true meeting occurs in which something new is shared. Both participants now realize that they know something not previously understood, or talked about. This sharing of a new space opens up a new field of mutual experience on which the coach and client can now work together. New possibilities emerge in the relationship.
37. Emotion coaching in therapy is based on eight major steps on how best to help people make emotions work for them in their everyday lives. These steps are embodied in two phases: arriving and leaving.
38. Promote awareness of emotions: It is important to help people become aware of their emotions. Emotional awareness helps people understand what they are really feeling at their core, and this helps them solve problems.
39. Facilitate a welcoming and acceptance of emotional experience: Coaches need to encourage clients to allow themselves to feel their emotional experiences. They also need to communicate to clients that clients do not necessarily have to act on all their emotions. Clients should not, however, be encouraged to avoid or deflect their painful emotions, no matter how difficult it may seem to not do so. They need, rather, to welcome their emotions, dwell on them, breathe, and let them come.
40. Promote putting emotions into words: After helping people pay attention to and welcome their emotions, coaches need to help them describe their emotions in words. People do not always need words for their emotions, but this is helpful when their emotions are signaling difficulties that need attention, or when they want to reflect on or communicate their feelings.
41. Identify the client's primary experience: Both coach and client need constantly to explore whether the client's emotional reactions are his or her core feelings. Thus, when a client talks about feeling angry when a colleague at work disagrees with her, she needs to explore whether at some level under the anger she basically feels threatened. The ability to identify primary emotions is one of the core skills coaches train their clients to develop. Coaches do this by constantly focusing people's attention on their bodily sensed feelings and empathizing with their

- feelings. With practice, clients become adapt at monitoring their own feelings.
42. Facilitate the evaluation of whether the primary feeling is healthy or unhealthy: Coaches and client then together need to ask “Is this feeling adaptive, or is it a maladaptive feeling possibly based on a wound of some kind?” If the person’s core feelings are healthy, they should be used as guides to action. If they are unhealthy, they need to be processed further to promote change. Only when a feeling has been accepted can it be evaluated and changed if necessary. They also have to integrate their emotional responses with all their personal and cultural learnings and with their values.
 43. Identify the destructive beliefs or views attached to the maladaptive emotion: Identifying maladaptive feelings helps people get to the destructive beliefs or construals that are so much a part of them. Maladaptive feelings are almost always accompanied by beliefs or views that are hostile to the self or blaming of others. Destructive thought processes and beliefs need to be identified if they are to be overcome. These beliefs, such as “I am worthless” or “I can’t survive on my own,” often accompany or help articulate a complex maladaptive feeling state.
 44. Facilitate access to alternate adaptive emotions and needs: A more active way in which coaches can help clients access their healthy, more resilient emotions is by focusing them on their needs, goals, and concerns. Asking a client the key question “What do you need when you feel this?” is a good way of bringing goals into awareness. Once people are aware of their goals, then coaches can help them assert their needs and use these needs to challenge their negative beliefs. Focusing people on needs, wants, or goals helps them mobilize themselves to change. People’s goals also have been shown to influence their interpretations of situations and their behaviors. Once clients become clear on what they want – once a goal is clearly defined – they can activate their internal resources required to attain the goal.
 45. Facilitate the transformation of maladaptive emotions and destructive beliefs: The eighth and final step involves helping people use their emotion to change emotion and belief. Coaches cannot rationally argue clients into healthier emotional processes. They can, however, help them overcome their unhealthy feelings by coaching them to identify the destructive voices inside their heads, access their emotional resources, and then combat their negative voices with their healthier voices.
 46. To facilitate the emotional work of others, coaches must have engaged in their own emotion awareness process. Probably the best training in the emotion awareness process is to experience it. It is only by working with one’s own

emotions that one can help others do this. It is only by allowing and accepting one's own emotions that one can see that emotions inform and organize people. It is only by learning to tolerate one's own unpleasant emotions that one can experience that such emotions come and go, and it is only by suffering one's own path and triumphing over it that one truly knows that this is possible for one's clients.

Arriving at a primary emotion

1. Coaching involves helping clients make sense of their bodily feelings. Once people become aware of what they are feeling, they need to either (a) follow their feelings and act on them or (b) judge that their feelings are signaling to them that something within is in disarray. The dilemma is when to be changed by emotions and when to change them.
2. Once a client is feeling something, the client and coach, or the unfolding process between them, need first to answer the following question: Is this feeling a secondary feeling that is obscuring a more primary one? When clients arrive at primary emotions, a type of internal bell often rings and tells them "Yes, this is it. This is what I most truly feel."
3. Primary feelings feel good. They feel right, even if they are painful. Even if they are unhealthy, they help people feel more solid. They clearly are what the person feels. If the emotion helps the client open up and produces further productive steps, it means the client has contacted an emotion that is functionally productive, and it aids problem exploration and problem solving. It therefore is a primary and adaptive emotion.
4. Feelings, however, are most likely not primary when the person is easily able to identify the thoughts that generated them. This sample of negative self-talk gives merely a whiff of the type of chatter that can permeate people's consciousness and produce the type of secondary bad feelings that may mask a more primary sadness, shame, or anger. A coach's task in this situation is to help people identify what produces these negative thoughts. Clients may have to work hard to try and actually sniff out what lies behind their thoughts. They will have to discover what it is that they are feeling at their core that leads to the self-critical voices in their heads. Coaches may have to help them go back into the original situation and remember with full clarity the moment in the meeting in which they tried to speak up but the words did not come clearly. They need to access memories of actual events rather than general memories of the meaning of experiences.
5. A primary emotion is much more of a core feeling about the self, and identifying it is like arriving at a destination. People must then give their attention to this crucial

primary feeling and the memories associated with it.

6. There are two ways in which emotions emerge and two ways in which emotion coaches can help people become aware of what they fundamentally feel. The first type of emotion is one that is vivid, clearly available, and strong. The second type of emotion occurs when people can feel something in their bodies, but the feeling is not yet clear. In regard to the first type of emotion, coaches help people make sense of what their emotion is telling them; for the second type of emotion, coaches must first help people find the feeling, then help them symbolize and make sense of it.
7. When people are clearly feeling an emotion, they need to have their feelings recognized and have them named. It is important for coaches to both validate and empathically offer words to clients who are unable to name their feelings to help capture those feelings. Some people first need their feelings recognized by another person before they can come to symbolize them. At first, they may not have the ability to name them. This is where validation and empathic understanding help. Once people have words to describe their emotions, they can work with their emotions. The goal of describing feelings is to transform aroused emotion into words. Instead of people simply acting on their emotions, coaches want to help them develop the ability to speak them.
8. The second basic emotion awareness process involves helping people focus on a vaguely felt emotion. Often a person may feel something only vaguely rather than being overwhelmed by the emotion. To help people in any of the above states, coaches need to guide them in an internal search to get a clearer sense of what they do feel.
9. Two-step sequences: Implicit in the steps of emotion coaching are a number of important two-step sequences that occur when one is working to access primary emotion. The first sequence is that anger is often a reactive feeling to, or sometimes a defense against, an original or more primary feeling of sadness, hurt, or vulnerability. Another major two-step sequence is the inverse of the above sequence. This is where sadness obscures the original anger. When clients have learned that it is unsafe to experience and share their original sadness-hurt-vulnerability and they cover it with anger, emotion coaches need first to acknowledge the client's secondary anger and then promote the client's experience of the sadness beneath the anger. After acknowledging the anger, the coach must first help locate its source and target and help the client find an appropriate way to express it.
10. Three-step sequences: A more complex process involves three-step sequences. A major three-step sequence involves first acknowledging secondary despair,

hopelessness, or rage as the first step and then, as a second step, accessing the primary maladaptive feelings of shame or fear that lie beneath the first state. The third step in the sequence then involves accessing more adaptive emotions, usually a healthy anger or sadness that is overregulated or not readily accessible.

Coaching to evaluate whether an emotion is healthy

1. Evaluating whether sadness is healthy primary sadness

- People get sad when they leave or lose the ones they love. Sadness tells them that they will miss their loved ones when they are separated. Without this sadness, people would be a lot less connected and more likely to wander.
- Sadness at the failure and loss of a relationship is another great source of sorrow. People get sad at how difficult their struggles are. They are sad because of the pain of life, and they are sad for not loving or feeling loved. They are sad when they are misunderstood, when they are isolated, when someone they love pulls away, and when they lose a person forever or even for awhile.
- Sadness often involves crying. The general biological function of crying is to signal to oneself and others that something is distressing. It motivates the crying person and others to do something about the distressing circumstances.

2. Evaluating whether anger is healthy primary anger

- Coaching people to handle anger and other hostile feelings in daily living requires special attention. The question always arises of whether one can simply express anger. It is important to help people recognize that angry feelings can be wholesome and are part of being human. It is important, however, to balance anger with gentleness. Being gentle does not mean never being angry.
- Outbursts may relieve pent-up anger, but they might also increase a tendency toward venting and becoming more angry and explosive. Rather than engaging in outbursts or rage, the best way to deal with anger is to talk about one's feelings to others. The goal is to communicate feelings for their information value and not to be verbally aggressive.

3. Evaluating whether fear and anxiety are healthy primary emotions

- Fear is highly unpleasant and provides people with a compelling survival-oriented signal to escape from danger or seek protection. It is generally a transient response to a specific threat that abates after one has escaped the danger. Anxiety, on the other hand, is a response to "threats"

sensed in the mind – symbolic, psychological, or social situations rather than an immediately present, physical danger. It is a response to uncertainty that arises when one feels threatened.

- It is adaptive for clients to acknowledge both their primary fears and their anxieties. Acknowledging weakness and vulnerability, rather than having to present a façade of strength, helps people to be more human and stronger. Ignoring fear or insecurity leads to too much risk taking and needless danger. Acknowledging adaptive, primary fear lets one know that something is threatening and helps one maintain secure connections with others as protection.
4. Evaluating whether shame is healthy primary shame
- Adaptive shame helps people not alienate themselves from their group. This is the adaptive shame that, if denied, causes brashness. Shame generally strikes deep in the human heart. It is about a person's sense of worth; it makes people want to hide, as opposed to guilt, which prompts apology or the making of amends.
 - Shame can be an adaptive emotion if it is felt in response to violations of implicit or explicit personal standards and values. In such cases feelings of shame need to be acknowledged, because they are providing valuable information about socially acceptable behavior that one might choose to use to guide one's conduct.
5. Evaluating whether sadness is unhealthy primary sadness
- Unhealthy sadness brought on by personal rejection or loss can evoke a deep sense of helplessness and powerlessness. The pain and sadness seem to envelop a person's whole body; it is as though a sadness "madness" takes over.
 - Helping clients sense whether their primary sadness is adaptive or maladaptive takes time and involves understanding the context and the content of their sadness. If a situation involves loss or injury to self, the first step is to learn how to describe and feel the sadness in the belief that, over time, this will lead to a resolution of the emotion. However, in certain instances the feeling does not seem to shift, and the client just seems to repeat the same feeling again and again without any noticeable change in either quality or intensity. This is a signal that the person is stuck in a feeling that is unhealthy.
 - Complicated grief reactions are another form of maladaptive primary sadness. Clients might be unable to cope with an important loss and unable to move on. Often they need to learn to express unresolved anger and guilt

to be able to move forward. They may also need to develop a stronger sense of themselves so that they believe that they can cope without the other person.

6. Evaluating whether anger is unhealthy primary anger
 - Core anger is maladaptive when it no longer functions to protect a person from harm and violation or when it is destructive. Coaches need to help people first cope with the intense and overwhelming emotion and then, in the safety of therapy, learn to acknowledge all the feelings and beliefs associated with the rage in the safety of therapy and how to contact another feeling, often fear or grief causes by an unsatisfied need to be loved. Often people's maladaptive anger is not about who or what they are angry at; it is about the unmet need. Once people understand this they can begin to process this experience, thereby preventing their rage.
 - Maladaptive anger also emerges in response to felt diminishment to self-esteem and causes a lot of interpersonal difficulties. This anger often feels justified in the moment.
7. Evaluating whether fear and anxiety are unhealthy primary emotions
 - The fear of a client in the past may have been a normal reaction to a frightening situation, but the client may have problems now if he or she continues to get scared even when there is no real danger.
8. Evaluating whether shame is unhealthy primary shame
 - In this form of shame clients may feel humiliated, dirty, and worthless. These feelings often come from a history of being shamed and are part of the primary sense of the self as worthless, inferior, or unlovable.

Identifying maladaptive emotions

1. Emotion coaches need to help people access their healthy feelings and the needs, goals, or concerns that their emotion is telling them are relevant in their particular situations.
2. Accessing maladaptive emotions
 - Half of the battle of change is won when people see that it is their states that are problematic, that they are in conflict, or that they are in part authors of their own distress rather than viewing themselves as victims of others or of a lack of support or believing that fate is to blame. Helping people acknowledge maladaptive states as problematic lets them take a form of responsibility for their own experience.
 - I have not found it that helpful, with this type of enduring maladaptive state, to try to demonstrate to people that their thoughts or beliefs are faulty.

Rather, what I have found helpful is helping them get a perspective that this is a temporary, maladaptive, overreactive state they get sucked into and that this is not all they are or all of which they are capable. In other words, I work toward a view of this being a partial self among many possible selves. In addition, rather than viewing clients' beliefs, thoughts, or perceptions as faulty, I understand that it is their reactions that are problematic and that these are what need to be regulated. I therefore work to create a sense of other possibilities based on the notion that this is one of a variety of states available to clients and to help them regulate their reactions. Therefore, what I do first is empathize with the person and validate how awful it is to feel so helpless, and I convey an understanding of what he or she is feeling. For me to truly validate the person's feeling of helplessness, this empathy has to come from a place in me of real acceptance and understanding of what it is like for the person to feel so unable.

- At the same time that I validate how the client feels, I hold onto the knowledge of his or her other possibilities, and I wonder aloud about them. I might say, "The issue is how to find a way out when you are feeling so caught," or "The dilemma is how, when you are in these states, you can find your feet, and how I can help you do that." Often clients insist that this is the way they are and that no other reality is true or conceivable. In such cases I might say, "I know this is a part of your identity and that when you are in this state it really feels like this is true and all else is a sham." I might also comment on how important it seems for them right now to convince me that this is the case. I add that this painful place is where they get stuck and lose all their resources, that I have seen them at other times feel differently about themselves, and that I know they sometimes handle things differently. I tell them that if I could help them solve the problem, I would, but that I know that ultimately when they are feeling this way it is they who have to figure out how to find their feet. I can only offer support or guidance; it is the clients who have to find the will to change.
- I also try to position myself at this point in such a way that I can present problems to clients of how to access their resources. I allude to and express faith that there are other possibilities but try to encourage clients in the task of how they can find them. We work together on trying to figure out how they can find their strengths and resources when they are feeling so overwhelmed by their maladaptive feeling states. Throughout such interactions it is my valuing of the inner cores of possibility in the clients that is important. I take it for granted that there is strength. The problem is

not is there strength but how to access it. I do not try to prove to clients, or have them prove to themselves, that there is another reality. The pertinent issue is how to access another healthier reality rather than evaluating the truth or falsity of clients' beliefs.

3. Identifying destructive beliefs and construal

- Once an experience is clearly accepted and recognized as maladaptive, the coach needs to help clients identify the destructive beliefs and patterns of thoughts that accompany their unhealthy feelings and access the core negative belief or construal embedded in these feelings. The negative belief is much more easily accessible and put into words when the person is experiencing the maladaptive feeling. The coach thus needs to work with cognition when it is hot.
- After isolating the content of the self-critical thoughts it is helpful to externalize the negative thoughts, as though they are coming from outside the person. This helps separate these antagonistic attitudes from more realistic ones and identify them as the source of the person's distress. Often people's self-attacks at first may be displayed in a rational or descriptive manner.
- Often people find it quite natural to articulate their self-accusations in a statement spoken from the third-person point of view, for example, saying such things as "You are too stupid, ugly, fat, or lazy." It is therefore helpful when dealing with this self-attacking voice to promote a two-chair dialogue in which the voice is truly externalized by being enacted. Here the critic voices its criticism to the imagined self in an empty chair. After identifying these hostile voices it is much easier to help the client separate out a healthier, self-supportive view. Once the vicious contemptuous quality of the internal voice is identified, people often recognize that the voice is acting way out of proportion to what has occurred. This helps them overcome it.
- The coach's job is to help clients become aware of this voice and to understand the distress these destructive thought are causing them. Often these hostile attitudes toward the self sound very similar to what the person's caretakers might have said to him or her, and the person has adopted all the criticisms and now repeats them to himself or herself. It is as though a negative parent or significant other now lives inside the person's head. If these destructive thoughts are to be overcome, then the core criticisms need to be articulated and recognized as attacks that originally came from someone else. Then people will more easily be able to combat

them with another voice inside themselves. The coach's task here is to help articulate the negative core belief in words to provide a handle with which clients can hold onto this unwanted baggage so they can change it. Once the content of the belief has been articulated, it can be inspected, and the role it has played in hampering people's lives can be understood.

- My approach to working with negative beliefs and construal is neither didactic nor disputational. I do not try to debate, persuade, or reason with people to see that their beliefs or views are irrational. Neither do I help them inspect their reasoning or the rational basis of their beliefs. I also do not try to get them to collect evidence for or against their beliefs. The issue is not one of the truth or validity of their beliefs but of their usefulness. I take the stance from the outset that these beliefs are probably neither useful nor helpful; rather, they are generally self-evidently destructive. I thus take it for granted that the beliefs are maladaptive if they make people feel bad, and I work to demonstrate this by helping my clients discover what they are telling themselves and how this makes them feel, and I try to assist them in moving away from the negative beliefs and injunctions that are hurting them.
- The process of working with negative beliefs often involves first identifying the content of the negative belief and saying this in the second person to the self. Experiencing how the belief makes the person feel is the second step. Reflecting on the sources and destructive effects of the beliefs, and understanding how these beliefs influence the person's life constitute a third step. Finally, the person needs to formulate a resilient response to the belief so that he or she can separate the self from the dictates of these beliefs and identify with his or her strengths and resources.

The transformation power of affect: facilitating access to alternate adaptive emotions and needs

1. Shifting attention

- Shifting people's focus of attention to a background feeling is a key method of helping them change their emotional states. On the edge of awareness, or in the background, behind their current dominant emotion, often lies another, subdominant emotion that can be found if one attends to or searches for it. The therapist's crucial role is to shift client's attention to this subdominant feeling, to focus on it and elaborate on it, and then to reach teach them how to do this one their own.

2. Access needs and goals

- A second and more directive way in which therapists can help clients access their healthy, healing emotions and internal resources is by asking them, when they are in their maladaptive states, what they need. People, when they are suffering and in pain, usually know what they need. Once they know what they need in a situation they often begin to feel like they have some control over it. “Which of the things that you need can you get from others or give to yourself? How can you affirm yourself, soothe yourself, or care for yourself or get these things from others?”
3. Positive imagery
 - A third way to activate alternate feelings is to use imagery. Imagination is a means of bringing about an emotional response. Imagery involves using people’s more conscious capacities to change their experiences. People can use their imaginations to create scenes that they know will help them feel an emotion, and they can use this as an antidote to a maladaptive feeling they want to change. They can thus change what they feel, not by changing feelings with reason but by using imagination to evoke new emotions. The goal is to evoke new emotional states that provide alternatives to the maladaptive states in which the person is struck and then to use these new, more adaptive states as launching pads to help transform the old, maladaptive ones. To do this people need to have internalized enough self-support. If they cannot do so, then the therapist’s empathic attunement to their possibilities is their only available resources.
 4. Expressive enactment of the emotion
 - A therapist might ask people to adopt certain emotional stances and help them deliberately assume the expressive posture of that feeling and then intensify it. Instructing people to organize their facial expressions into representations of emotions, although difficult to do, is effective, because facial expression appears to have a strong feedback component.
 5. Remembering another emotion
 - Remembering past emotional scenes clearly produces emotion. The physiological and expressive changes that occur in emotional responses to memories have been shown to closely resemble the changes that occur when emotions are activated in response to present stimuli. Memories of emotional events therefore are an important means of accessing another emotion that can then be used to help change a more maladaptive state. Emotion and memory are highly linked. Emotion is both evoked by memory and is important in restructuring emotion memories and the narratives that are built on them. Another way to work with emotion memory to change

emotional states is to access a memory of a person in one's life who supported, or would support, a different, more adaptive emotion and experience of the self.

6. Talking about an emotion

- Therapists can help people access new emotions by talking with them about the more desirable emotions. Talking about an emotional episode helps people re-experience the feelings they had in that emotional episode. Thus, when someone feels like a failure, talking about success experiences helps him or her contact feelings or possibilities of effectiveness. People can benefit from re-experiencing the feelings they had in past emotional episodes, and conversation can bring forth a sense of how they achieved that feeling.

7. Expressing an emotion on the client's behalf

- In certain situations therapists can express a particular feeling that the client is unable to express. In these instances the therapist is giving voice to the client's alternate emotion. This does not prompt violence, but rather gives the client the potential to express him- or herself on a deeper level than he or she feels entitled to express. The therapist's expression of the emotion helps the client feel supported and validated and gives the client access to this emotion to help promote emotional change.

8. Other methods for expressing emotion

- Humor is another method of changing emotion with emotion. Laughing can change a person's emotional state and the perspective given by humor can reframe the situation.

9. Shifting out of emotional states

- There is no need for people to be passive victims of their emotions. Emotion coaches can help people learn to focus on their emotions and to shift away from them whenever this seems appropriate or necessary. One of the better ways of coaching people in how to do this is by making sure that first they can describe what they feel at the moment when they recognize a need to shift out of an emotion. This helps them center themselves and gives them a handle that they can pick up later when they are able to deal with the feeling. They need to practice being able to put certain experiences on hold with the knowledge that they can come back to them later and process them further. The coach then needs to invite them to shift their attention to the present, outer reality and to focus on what is happening outside of the self.

10. Awareness of needs

- People not only need to use their judgment in this process, but they also

need to be very attentive to what their feelings and needs are and then find a creative integration of these. Coaches, however, need to focus instead on the healthy, growth-producing processes and encourage development of these.

11. Regulation and self-soothing

- In addition to transforming emotions with emotions, people also sometimes need to learn the skills of regulating emotion. Therapists need to help people learn better emotion regulation skills. Coaches need to teach their clients how to put some distance between themselves and their experiences of being lost in overwhelming emotions and thoughts that swamp their consciousness. Helping clients be mindful of their experiences can facilitate this. Coaches can offer people meditative methods of focusing on their breath as it enters their nostrils and of observing the contents of the mind as engaged in a process of arising and passing away. This helps people regulate their emotions when they know the emotions are unhealthy but still cannot control them. Helping people create a working distance from intense emotions is a helpful method for working with distressing emotion. Here, rather than simply coping with the emotion by regulating its intensity, the emphasis is on getting the appropriate distance from the emotion to facilitate access to it in a manner that will assist in its processing.

12. Facilitating the transformation of maladaptive emotions and destructive thoughts

- A coach's job is to help clients find their alternate healthy feelings and to use these to transform their unhealthy feelings. Change comes by accessing previously unacknowledged healthy feelings and needs in the context of the affective attunement and confirmation of these inner resources by an empathic other. In working to change emotion with emotion, in relation to trauma, coaches need to (a) acknowledge and validate the client's initial experience of hopelessness; (b) activate the emotional memories and associated dysfunctional beliefs by arousing, for example, fear and shame in reaction to an imagined scene, in the safety of therapeutic situation; and (c) activate healthy emotional resources in the person, such as anger at violation and sadness at loss, or self-soothing, as alternate responses to replace or help transform the person's maladaptive responses. This allows for the formation of new, more complex responses through a synthesis of the adaptive and maladaptive emotional responses and by transforming negative beliefs with newly accessed needs.