

Relating to Our Emotions

Begin: WELCOME KIDS, Adults alike!

1. What's one of the biggest differences between Robots and Humans? → one thing ppl have robots don't!
 - a. FEELINGS!!!! Emotions.
2. We all have emotions.
3. **Kids, (show kids faces w emotions, ask folks to identify them)**
4. Yes, we all have emotions, even kids. And lots of different kinds!
5. People tend to fall between two extremes in relating to our emotions:
 - a. emotions are illogical and dangerous, in fact should be suppressed in favor of reason. (esp past generations)
 - b. Currently: your emotions are the most important thing ab you, and it would be WRONG to suppress or discourage anything you feel.
 - c. Most all of us lean one way or the other (typically from our upbringing).
 - i. **WHICH ONE DO YOU LEAN TOWARD?**
6. But reality is: God made our brains to have a left and right side... left side works more on logical, concrete thinking and right side contributes more to our emotions and sensory experience.
7. AND GOD GAVE US BOTH. Both halves work together for healthy humans!
 - a. **PASS OUT BRAIN COLORING SHEET**
8. And God designed us that way, patterned off himself!
9. God Himself is both logical AND emotional.
 - a. The Bible is literally gushing with emotional language about God and his feelings toward us.
1. So contrary to what some have thought, emotions aren't inherently bad. In fact, they're part of our good design!
 - a. We reflect His image in part through our emotional capacities.
2. But, Sin has broken and twisted us at every level, including our emotions, so they often lead us astray from reality, truth, and into sin.
 - a. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick (JER 17:9)
3. But the answer to this sinful brokenness wasn't to jettison our emotions, and live as the ancient Stoics.
 - a. Instead God came himself, stepped into our world, became one of us, and felt deeply!
4. JESUS SHOWED EMOTIONS!
 - a. Hope
 - b. Love
 - c. Compassion
 - d. Joy
 - e. Peace
 - f. Anger
 - g. Depressed
 - h. Lonely
 - i. Sad
 - j. Tearful
 - k. Pain
 - l. Suffering
 - m. Surprised

1. **The big story of the Bible is that God came has come to save and restore us to full, integrated living**, when we had no ability or hope to fix ourselves. Jesus came to redeem all of us, our bodies, our minds, and our emotions! His answer to sin is to **REDEEM, not to reject**.
2. The path forward back to emotional healthy and maturity can be difficult because of the baggage and scars we carry, strongly connected to our emotions.
3. And we're EACH on this journey. And Jesus is still at work in us, helping us to become fully human. Not only transforming and renewing our minds (Rom 12), the way we think,
 - a. But also healing and redeeming our HEARTS → EMOTIONAL LIVES. Fully, wonderfully, godly, wisely, emotional.
 - b. Speaking of The work of the messiah, long before JC came, in Isaiah 61 God promised he would come himself to heal our broken hearts. Amen!
4. So how SHOULD we relate to our emotions NOW, in light of the fall AND Redemption?
 1. What we should do with our emotions PERSONALLY
 - a. Our emotions will control US to the degree they're unexamined
 - b. To keep from being controlled by our emotions, We must learn to the 3Ds of Emotional Awareness:
 - i. Define what you're feeling
 - ii. Discover WHY you're feeling it
 - iii. Decide what you should do with it
 - c. DEFINE
 - i. HUGE step, so many of us emotionally immature
 1. Unaware of what they're really feeling and why
 - ii. Kids
 1. Have you ever felt super strongly about something?
 - a. Maybe you felt super frustrated and you couldn't stop crying
 - b. BUT YOU DIDN'T NECESSARILY KNOW WHAT YOU'RE FEELING exactly?
 2. Learn to define what you're feeling
 - a. **PASS OUT FEELINGS PPL COLORING SHEET**
 3. Feelings are like indicator lights on a dashboard!
 - a. Learn a few indicator lights
 - b. Are you angry
 - c. Sad
 - d. Happy?
 4. Next time you feel something, learn to ask yourself specifically WHAT AM I FEELING
 - iii. Adults
 1. Do the same
 2. And go further
 - a. Learn to get more specific than MAD SAD GLAD
 - b. Learning to get more specific is a HUGE first step
 - i. **PASS OUT EMOTIONS SHEET**
 - ii. WAY MORE INDICATOR LIGHTS
 3. For many, esp men (but women too)
 - a. Become emotionally stunted, repressed
 - b. Only feel a few broad categories of emotions

- i. MAD SAD GLAD, FRUSTRATED
 - 4. Frustrated common catch all term
 - a. Are you really embarrassed
 - b. nervous
 - c. Ashamed
 - d. Exhausted
 - e. (others?)
- iv. Parents
 - 1. TEACH YOUR KIDS to define their emotions (start with big 4, then more)
 - 2. Beware of subtly (or not so subtly) teaching your kids its not OK to feel negative emotions!
 - 3. Excellent movie INSIDE OUT all about addressing this problem!
 - a. **PASS OUT INSIDE OUT COLORING SHEET**
 - b. We've got a whole generation of kids growing up being told constantly they should be happy
 - i. And they have no idea what to do with their negative emotions, sadness, anger, fear
 - c. This starts at the home!
 - d. Consider watching this one as a family specifically as a teaching/conversation tool.
 - i. Stop and ask questions as it goes.
- v. Beware of gender stereotypes
 - 1. Many stereotypes about what's expected or appropriate for different genders
 - 2. So much of this is culturally based – not inherent to design!
 - a. Girls are super emotional
 - b. Guys don't show emotions
 - c. IS THAT TRUE?
 - 3. Actually we see Great men of God displaying the gamut of emotions
 - 4. King David wept and mourned publically
 - a. DISPLAYING it all (not just internal bomb making)
 - b. He even danced for joy in his underwear in public! (2 Sam 6)
 - i. Perhaps we shouldn't follow that one to the T!
 - 5. JESUS HIMSELF an adult male, felt deeply, and expressed even negative emotions
 - a. Anyone know John 11:35? --JESUS WEPT
 - b. Profound
 - i. Not only did God himself get so emotional when his friend died that he cried → a LOT
 - ii. He allowed others to see him do it
 - 6. Men, when's the last time you wept,
 - a. Let alone with others?
 - b. WHY? → I promise you it's not because you're a man, and don't have emotions.
 - 7. It's actually the STRONG one who can express and utilize his emotions, not the weak one
 - a. Mr Rogers → A Methodist minister "Confronting our feelings and giving them appropriate expression always takes strength, not weakness. It takes strength to acknowledge our anger, and sometimes more strength yet to curb the aggressive urges anger may bring and to channel them into nonviolent outlets. It takes strength to face our sadness and to grieve and to let our grief and our anger flow in

tears when they need to. It takes strength to talk about our feelings and to reach out for help and comfort when we need it."

- vi. Step 1: DEFINE what you're feeling
- d. DISCOVER
 - i. Learn to ask yourself WHY you're feeling that emotion
 - 1. At first, this might take some real work
 - a. Most never taught this
 - 2. Be as specific as you can
 - a. Your knee-jerk answer might not be accurate.
 - b. Often our stronger emotions are coming from somewhere else
 - c. Or are more nuanced than general initial answers
 - ii. Remember, the goal is to discover WHAT THAT INDICATOR LIGHT IS TRYING TO TELL YOU
 - iii. Whats going on inside (that likely needs attention)
 - iv. I Had a great conversation with a fellow TGian this week, and he told me how he's been experiencing lots more anxiety lately
 - 1. We talked about why: and he said work is stressful and uncertain,
 - 2. But then paused and → this is the stuff we're talking about → said but that's probably not the deeper reason..... wonder what that would be
 - v. The deeper, more specific you can get on the WHY the better
 - 1. Surface level answer = work is stressful
 - 2. Deeper, more helpful answer might be
 - a. I'm afraid ... I might lose my job and then we won't have enough money
 - b. I'm embarrassed that I haven't been able to secure another job, even though I've been looking
 - c. I'm hurt because I feel unappreciated for my work
 - 3. Kids, maybe you feel like this: _____ SUPER MAD
 - a. WHY? → Maybe because your friend didn't want to play with you
 - b. Or maybe even more specifically, you're hurt and sad because your friend said mean things to you
 - c. Or maybe you feel unheard because your mom or dad didn't listen or believe you
 - vi. It's to the extent we can DISCOVER WHY we feel a certain way that we can move forward healthily
- e. DECIDE
 - i. Decide how you're going to respond to that emotion
 - 1. What you're going to DO with it.
 - ii. Everyone does something with their feelings
 - 1. Even those who try to ignore or stuff them down make that choice
 - iii. Since not all emotions are healthy, some twisted by sin, we need to be careful in what we do w/ them!
 - iv. No matter what we're feeling, our first step is always to take them to God, esp the more negative ones
 - 1. Bring what IS to God, give it over to him
 - 2. Tell him what you're feeling and why you're feeling it (as best you can)
 - 3. And ask him to take those feelings and help you respond well
 - v. And open yourself up to God's perspective on reality
 - 1. Ultimately, our subjective reality doesn't always mesh with truth

2. So we need to submit our feelings to God, inviting him to help us deal with our feelings in a healthy way and lead us to truth
 3. **HEB 4: 14-16** ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
- vi. GOD wants to help us with our emotions, especially the messy ones we tend to think he doesn’t want bothered with!
1. In fact, through JC, we come instead to a God who understands what it’s like to have emotions, and to be tempted by them to sin.
 - a. So he understands our weaknesses, is kind and compassionate
 2. And he’s already paid for our sins on the cross, opening a way for us to relate to him directly, not out of our goodness or badness, but out of our forgiveness
 3. So, we can boldly approach him with our mess, our emotions, confident that we’ll find great grace and mercy, HELP in our time of need.

2. Case Study:

- a. GOD HIMSELF DID THIS
- b. Matthew 26: 36-39
 - i. JC the night before letting himself get arrested and ultimately executed on the cross for the sins of the world
 - ii. ³⁶Then Jesus went with them [The disciples] to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” ³⁹And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.
- c. Do you see the 3 Ds?
 - i. Define = troubled and sorrowful, even to the point of death
 - ii. Discover = why? He knows he’s about to fulfill his mission, to be sacrificed for the sins of the world
 1. To drink the cup of God’s wrath (to the dregs)
 2. LET HIS CUP PASS FROM ME
 - iii. Decide = Bring Friends, pray to God, decide to trust and obey the Father no matter what you feel
 - iv. Stop and consider the fact that your God and mine processed his emotions this same way!
 - v. And begin to read the psalms and see it all over!
- d. So kids, adults, next time you feel a strong emotion, especially if it feels negative, walk through the 3Ds!
 - i. And see what happens!

3. What we should do with our emotions in community

- a. Emotions are the basic access points for relationships
- b. 2 ditches
 - i. I’m going to stuff/ignore my real emotions in community

- ii. I'm going to express all my feelings, unfiltered, always
- c. not every emotion needs to be expressed to others, unfiltered. Especially broader community. Especially since they're often mixed with sin and unhealthy
 - i. learn the discipline of self control (Gal 5 Fruit of the Spirit → self control!)
- d. Instead look for opportunities to share appropriately and vulnerably in ways that would DEEPEN COMMUNITY and bless others
 - i. Beware the temptation to just VENT your negative emotions
 - 1. [Proverbs 29:11](#) ESV
 - a. A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.
 - 2. We all like to vent, but sometimes it can be unhelpful
 - a. Healthy "venting" humbly opens up self to others for correction
 - i. And genuinely desires relational restoration
 - b. UNHEALTHY venting simply spews filth everywhere
 - i. Like vomiting everywhere on your friends
 - ii. You may feel better, but they're left dealing with your mess.
 - iii. Often now struggling not to get infected with your illness
 - 1. Your rage, anger towards others
 - iv. And can actually keep you from doing the hard work to restore relationship
 - ii. Look for ways to express your emotions in ways that INCREASE relationship
- e. Historically, the western church has fallen into these 2 ditches!
 - i. Some have fallen into the hyper-emotional ditch → elevating our feelings to ultimate.
 - ii. Seeking primarily an emotional experience through church/spirituality.
 - iii. Denigrating self control or submitting our emotions to truth!
- f. Other traditions (like ones I've grown up in) tended toward denigrated sharing our emotions in Christian community
 - i. You go to church, and tell everybody you're fine. Look happy.
 - 1. I'm not messy.
 - 2. I'm not sad
 - 3. I'm not ashamed
 - 4. I'm not feeling guilty
 - 5. I'm not struggling with fear in my finances
 - 6. I'm not deeply hurting in my marriage
 - ii. You sit through a bible teaching relatively unemotionally (bored?)
 - iii. And then you sing some songs of praise nearly as emotionally disconnected.
 - iv. THIS SHOULDN'T BE
- g. Have a small group of close friends who you can be very vulnerable with. Share your emotions, even the messy ones, and open yourself up to know and be known.
 - i. AND to be helped to grow
 - 1. Not just a vent fest, but brothers and sisters committed to loving and walking with you on your journey toward wholeness in Christ
- h. This is what Dship is great for, LG, counseling
- i. Another practical way to engage more healthily together with our emotions is to use more emotional language as we communicate.
 - i. Words that convey emotion
 - 1. Or encouragements that would connect with the emotions
 - 2. Or questions that would get down to a deeper emotional level
 - ii. Instead of saying, good job

1. Consider saying, I'm proud of you for _____
- iii. Instead of bummer, or that sucks
 1. Consider saying, "Man, that feels really sad. I'm so sorry"
 2. Or perhaps "I tend to struggle with anxiety when things feel out of control, what's that been like for you"

4. BOOKS

- a. Emo Healthy Church – Scazzero
 - i. Surprisingly good
 - ii. Includes a brief 10min quiz to help you gauge your current emotional maturity level.
 1. **PASS OUT PRINT COPIES!**
 2. I took test 10-15 yrs ago and again yesterday (I've grown some!)
 - iii. But pretty helpful diagnostic tool. Surprise, you might not be as emotionally mature as you think 😊
#God's not done
- b. Those dealing specifically with worry and anxiety, MINDSCAPE by Witmer

5. MY STORY

- a. Learned I could reduce sting of pain by repressing my emotions
 - i. Kinda worked
- b. Lived increasingly out of my head
 - i. And even consciously resisted feeling (much less expressing) negative emotions like anger, fear, sadness, loneliness, embarrassment
- c. Oh I felt emotions, like happy, sometimes sad or scared
 - i. But mostly I was even
 - ii. Even prided myself on it
- d. Worked, kinda, thru college, even into marriage
 - i. Until It didn't
- e. Seminary program, strong focus on emotional health and counseling
 - i. I quickly discovered I wasn't normal
 - ii. Pretty disconnected from my emotions, unable to feel much range
- f. Decided to move forward into health
 - i. It got worse before it got better
 - ii. Its as if I'd been stuffing my feelings, esp my negative ones, down so long that a lot of pressure had built up
 - iii. Like tapping a new oil well
 - iv. Every time I'd go there, lots of black stuff would spray out
 - v. I didn't like it
- g. But I kept at it, with help, and eventually the pressure eased, and I began to experience more than just extreme anger and sadness
- h. This journey continues to this day!
 - i. Recently had some breakthroughs personally helping me see how my emotional disconnectedness, my continued preference to push down my sadness, has been keeping me from connecting deeply with God
 1. EMOTIONALLY
 2. Hearing his voice
 - ii. And it's getting better
 - iii. I'm finding out that God has actually made me personally pretty sensitive

1. And ive been resisting that, to my detriment!
2. In fact it's something I'd hated about myself, that I was so sensitive
 - a. A liability
 - b. The tragedy is my strategy to make my life work by suppressing my emotions and living out of my head meant I interacted (and taught others to interact w me) in ways that made ppl think I was direct, logical, unemotional, insensitive
 - c. Tragic because it meant I actually was constantly being hurt, and not getting the gentleness I needed from others, because I was pretending to be someone I wasn't
3. Kinda a deep hole to dig out of!
- iv. It's something we're having to adjust to in our marriage!
 1. But its good
6. I already see many positive indicators in TG's ethos when it comes to our emotions
 - a. We have a strong value for authenticity
 - b. Honesty, realness, openness
 - c. Vulnerability
7. But I think we have some room to grow too as God keeps moving us individually AND AS A BODY toward greater emotional health and maturity
 - a. Room to grow in expressing appropriate emotions in corporate worship
 - b. Room to grow with sharing our emotions (not just our thoughts) → esp guys
 - c. Conversely, room to grow in being willing to subjugate our emotions and feeling to truth (rather than taking them as truth!)
8. TONIGHT: Hear that God cares about you and your feelings a GREAT deal → and he's moved heaven and earth to heal your broken heart, and make a way for you to live fully and free and alive in Him!
9. NEXT STEPS
 - i. Take a next step PERSONALLY toward emotional health and maturity
 1. Practice the 3 Ds..... others?
 - b. Help our kids (OUR KIDS, not just parents, all us TGians with OUR kids TGians) grow into emotional maturity
 - i. Mr Rogers → "We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."
 - c. Take a next step for you to engage more healthily with emotions as you engage this church body.
10. PRAY → 1 song
11. LORDS SUPPER → Engage with your emotions! Ask God to help you feel the celebration for his redemption!