

# Maximising or Enhancing your Emotional Fitness

Emotional fitness can be described as an individual's ability to:

- Identify inner feelings when they first arise
- Connect early feelings with a range of casual factors
- Take personal responsibility for one's own thoughts and responses
- Express feelings in a constructive way.

Given the fast pace of everyday life, it is no surprise that many people block out feelings and focus on the task at hand just to get through the hectic day. There is no doubt that this strategy does work to some degree.

Every now and then however, we find that issues that have been "put on the shelf" begin to accumulate. Before long, early warning signs begin to appear such as muscle tension, irritability, grinding teeth and so on.

One remedy is to develop your emotional fitness to avoid these feelings banking up and causing problems. Here are a few simple, yet effective ways to reduce your emotional cholesterol!

1. At least once a day, ask yourself, "What emotions am I currently aware of?" This will assist in your ability to identify feelings earlier rather than later.
2. Practice using feeling words more often in your sentences. E.g. "When XXX happened, I felt happy/sad/ embarrassed about that." This will help you to avoid emotional "build-up" without your awareness.
3. Try keeping a private feelings journal as an alternative way of expressing your feelings.
4. Make a list of your earliest warning signs that may indicate that you are feeling some degree of strain e.g. thoughts, behaviours, muscular tension.
5. Consider learning some assertive techniques that provide you with a way to express your feelings honestly and respectfully.
6. Have fun with your new feelings awareness by expressing the positive feelings in your life.



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