



Episode 16 - What you can do to feel better

Welcome to this episode of the managing your smart mind podcast with Master Certified Coach Else Kramer, a.k.a. Coach Kramer.

This week I'm diving into something a lot of smart humans, including myself, love to ignore: feelings.

I'm going to give you a technique you can use to process feelings you've been trying to avoid in a safe way, and explain why, and how, it works.

Now don't get me wrong - I love SOME feelings.

I love the feeling I get when going for a walk on the beach, that first glimpse I get of the sea - that feeling of both excitement and a deep sense of home-coming.

Or the way a Rembrandt painting can move me to tears, by the humanness of his figures, the way they're so incredibly real, so alive, even though my eye can see they're built up by strokes and blotches of paint.

I love the way a Schubert string Quartet can make me feel - melancholic, but also deeply moved by the beauty, the magic of it all whilst acknowledging that yes, we are all going to die (if you have no idea what I'm talking about give the 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' string quartet a listen - it's epic).

Or the pure joy and delight I feel when watching a Studio Ghibli film - even if it's for the 10th time.

Now these are all feelings I am, in some way, in charge of.

I orchestrate them.

I call them in.

But there's the others.

Frustration.

Sadness.

Anger.

Anxiety.

Loneliness.

Unworthiness.

Shame.

And many more.

I really, really don't want to hang out with those feelings.

And the minute they announce themselves, I want to check out.

Most humans do - it's part of our culture.

We're constantly told that our negative emotions are somehow wrong.

That they should be 'fixed' with a cookie, a kiss, a workout.

And when we're smart, our brain LOVES to problem-solve.

So instead of staying with the feeling, we'll analyse:

What's gone wrong?

Why am I feeling sad?

What did I do and how can I avoid it next time?

How can I FIX THIS ASAP so I no longer have to feel this horrible emotion?

In this moving away from the emotion, we leave ourselves.

We check out - we quickly try to get escape whatever is happening in our bodies.

And this mechanism is the underlying cause of so many things that ail us, including addiction, overeating, depression, and so on.

Instead of staying with the feeling, we try to numb ourselves with food, social media, overworking, over-exercising, over-spending.

And then hate ourselves for doing that - creating even more feelings that need to be buried.

It's a very vicious circle - and it's not easy to break.

But those feelings you're pushing away are also the gateway to massive transformation.

I learnt this even before I became a coach, from the amazing psychologist and Buddhist teacher Tara Brach, whose teachings (books, videos, audio) I highly recommend.

During one of her talks she said (I'm paraphrasing here, it was many years ago):

‘What is it you are unwilling to feel?’.

‘That’s exactly where you need to go. And stay.’

Now this is HARD.

And scary - especially if we’ve been running away from our feelings for a long time.

So even though I knew that I needed to run right back to those emotions I was trying to avoid, back then, it felt like an impossible ask.

It wasn’t until I started coach certification that I finally learned how to be with my ‘not so nice’ (as in: scary, sad, red-hot or dark black) emotions.

I also learned that avoiding these is actually what is between us and the life we want to live.

Between us and being fully embodied.

Between us and our goals.

Between us and speaking our truths.

It’s emotions we’re not willing to feel.

So basically, to move a tiny bit towards world peace, we all need to learn how to *feel* better (sorry, couldn’t resist the pun).

And today, I am going to share a technique to help you do this.

This emotional processing technique in itself could transform your life.

So how does it work?

First off, you want to start easy.

Especially if you have a long history of ignoring your feelings, trauma stored in your body, etc.

The key to doing this 'successfully' (I know your smart mind is already trying to figure it out) is NOT by measuring the time, intensity, or number of emotions you manage to process.

We're going to define 'what success looks like' a bit differently here.

Success = you gently easing into this practice and not pushing or hurting yourself.

That's it.

That is enough - in fact, it is the perfect way to do it.

So here is how it works.

Emotional processing technique

Think of an emotion you want to get away from.

Don't begin with something intense, or triggering.

If you rank emotional intensity on a scale of 1-10 you want to start with a 6 or lower.

Ok. Find a space where you're not going to be disturbed. If, like me, you cry easily, you may want to keep some tissues ready.

Sit down.

Close your eyes and call in the feeling - it may help to think about the situation or thought that triggered it.

When you start feeling it, get curious.

Start taking on the role of a scientist, an alien trying to figure out humans or, if you like, Sherlock Holmes.

Ask questions about the emotion, like:

'Where is it in my body?'

'Does this emotion have a shape?'

'Is it solid? Dense? Or more fluid or maybe even airy?'

Stay with the emotion the whole time this is happening.

If it becomes too intense, take a deep breath and stop.

Again, be kind and gentle.

Keep observing it in your body, and asking questions.

This technique of becoming the neutral, curious observer, is incredibly effective in keeping your brain busy enough to not freak out and run away (because negative emotion), and to stay with the emotion, to be present with it, without getting overwhelmed by it.

Here are some more questions to inspire you:

'Does it have a colour?'

'Does it move? If it moves, is it going in a specific direction?'

'Does it need anything?'

Sometimes just processing the emotion like this is enough for it to vanish and leave your body.

This may feel like a massive release which causes your body to produce salty water in your eyes - this is completely normal. This is why I encourage you to bring tissues.

Have a good cry if you need to, and remember to drink lots of water.

Sometimes the emotion doesn't seem to change at all - it's still there, and it still doesn't feel good.

That's OK too - it doesn't mean you've done something wrong.

It just means that this one is bigger and may take longer to process.

So to recap:

1. Pick one emotion that doesn't freak you out too much
2. Call it in, feel it in your body
3. Stay with the feeling whilst taking on the role of curious observer, asking questions
4. Keep breathing, present with the feeling, observing, asking - until you no longer want to or the feeling has disappeared.

This, my friends, is how you process emotions.

It's a skill, like playing the piano - it's not something you can become amazing at overnight.

It takes patience and practice.

But if you're willing to do this, you can start seeing the most amazing results.

Feeling lighter.

Feeling free.

Feeling deeply connected with your true self.

Want to feel better?

Instead of chasing after more achievements and accolades, start feeling the emotions you've been trying to push away.

Now this is much easier to do if you're being guided through it by someone - especially if you have some big emotions stored in your body that you need to clear.

I help my clients create amazing breakthroughs by doing this - and I can help you do the same. DM me on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) to learn how, or send me an email via podcast@elsekramer.com.

Thank you for listening to the Managing the Smart Mind Podcast, until next week, bye!