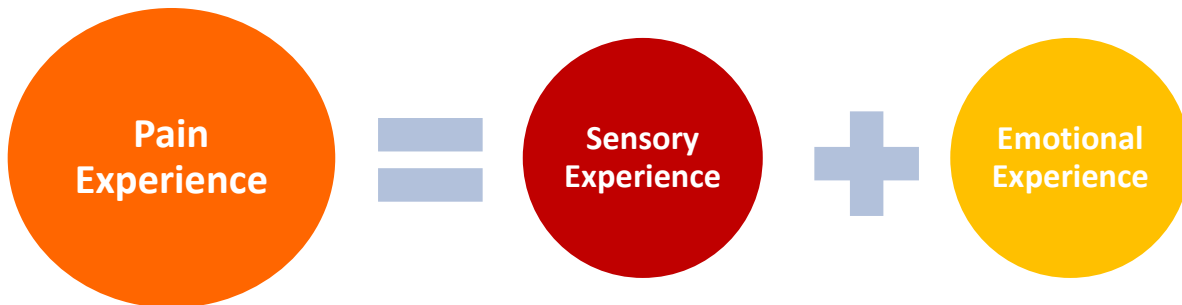


## Negative Emotions & Pain

Any pain experience consists of two parts, the sensory experience which is the actual sensation of the discomfort and the emotional experience which is the reflexive psychological response to the pain.

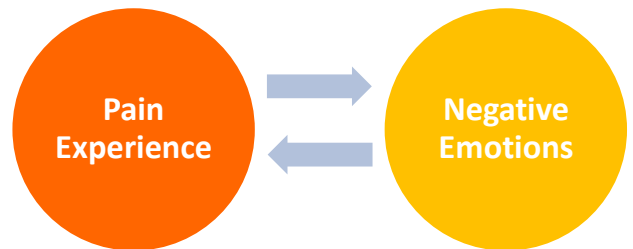


Most unwanted and unexpected pain experiences lead to experiencing negative emotions. When a person stubs their toe against a coffee table, they may yell, curse and get angry at themselves and at the coffee table. This is a natural response to most acute pain experiences, whether it's banging your thumb with a hammer or twisting an ankle.

The good news is that in these acute situations, the negative emotions are often short-lived and resolve after a few minutes, such as the case of stubbed toes. In some cases, for instance after breaking a bone or injuring ligaments, the discomfort and the negative emotions associated with the injury can last for a few weeks or even 3 months. Fortunately, the majority of cases, when the tissue heals and the discomfort fades away, the negative emotions associated with the pain also fade away within the 3 month period and life goes back to normal.

But what happens when the pain lasts longer than 3 months or even longer than a year?

Although the pain experience may produce negative emotional feelings, one must also appreciate that the process also works the other way around; meaning negative emotional experiences may produce and sustain the pain experience.



What makes things a little more complex is that the negative emotions may have nothing to do with the actual pain, but are often buried, unconscious and related to other areas of life. Suppressed emotions such as *anger*, *fear*, or *anxiety* may all contribute to the pain experience.

It is theorized that suppressed negative emotions may present themselves as physical pain as the brain perceives that dealing with a physical pain is easier than dealing with an emotional pain. The “benefit” of experiencing the physical pain is that it distracts the conscious mind from truly experiencing and dealing with the various negative emotions.

On the positive side, many people who have experienced persistent pain have been able to reduce their physical pain by consciously becoming more aware of their hidden and unconscious negative emotions.

If these emotions are considered too terrible to feel or express, your unconscious mind will suppress them but replace them with feeling physical pain or tingling that is “easier” and more acceptable to experience.

The top 10 negative emotions include...	
1. Anger	6. Irritation
2. Anxiety	7. Jealousy
3. Fear	8. Overwhelmed
4. Frustration	9. Sad
5. Guilt/shame	10. Worry

**“Control your brain or your brain will control you”** – Richard Bandler  
**“How you think and how you feel creates your state of being.”** – Joe Dispenza

If you have difficulty accepting this theory, then just ask yourself, is it possible to experience headaches if one is feeling *angry*? Is it possible to experience sweating and tingling if one is feeling *anxiety*? Is it possible to feel abdominal discomfort if one is feeling *fear*? Is it possible to feel chest discomfort and a rapid heart rate if one is feeling *irritated*?

Why is it so difficult then to accept that the unconscious experience of these negative emotions can manifest itself in experiencing physical pain anywhere in the body?



Imagine that you have an empty glass. Every time you bury an emotion, it's like pouring a little water into that glass. You're *angry* at someone... water into the glass. You're *anxious* about a project... water into the glass. You're *fearful* of not recovering... water into the glass. You're *frustrated* with the health care system... water into the glass. You feel *guilty* for not doing something... water into the glass. You're *irritated* by someone's actions... water into the glass. You're *jealous* of a friend... water into the glass. You're *overwhelmed* by life... water into the glass. You're *sad* about the world situation... water into the glass. Now you're *worried* about your health... finally the glass over flows and the overflow maybe manifested as more stress, a hypersensitive nervous system and discomfort in the body.

Some argue that they don't have any buried emotions as they always express their *anger* when in traffic and their *irritation* when arguing with people. Since this *anger* and *irritation* are conscious, they are unlikely the issue. The emotions that are contributing to the glass overflowing and causing the hypersensitive nervous system are unconscious and not yet within awareness.



Individuals with certain personality traits appear to have an increased risk of suppressing negative emotions and experiencing persistent pain. This includes those who are perfectionists, self-critical, and people pleasers who may overwhelm themselves by always helping others. These individuals may feel the need to always put on a facade in order to hide all their negative emotions such as *anger*, *anxiety* or *fear*. Their unconscious mind believes that openly experiencing the negative emotions would go against their perceived public identity... but at what expense?

So how does one bring the unconscious emotions into the conscious mind? Well, one suggested technique is by using the H.E.E. method which stands for Honestly Expressing Emotions. Let's get started now.

Sit comfortably with a pen and a notepad in front of you. Before you begin, ask yourself,

*“What is my current level of unpleasantness of the pain I am experiencing right now?”*

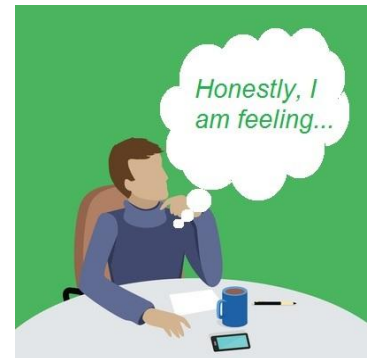
(Not unpleasant at all) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Extremely unpleasant)

Write down or check  the number from zero to ten as you will be asking yourself that same question again in 15 minutes.

Set a timer for 15 minutes and begin by asking yourself out loud with your eyes closed,

*“Honestly, what emotion am I feeling right now?”*

Then answer, *“Honestly, I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_”*



Try not to be self-judging or self-critical as there are no wrong answers.

Just remember *pain* is not an emotion. Also, try not to over-think this process, just go with the flow. Do your best to not think with your head, but focus and think with your heart.

The purpose of this process is to uncover suppressed negative emotions, so avoid focusing on positive emotions... joy and happiness are not likely to be contributing factors to pain.

Write down the emotion, then pause for a few seconds and ask yourself out loud again.

*“Honestly, what emotion am I feeling right now?”*

Then answer out loud again, *“Honestly, I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_”*

You may feel silly, you may feel frustrated and you may feel upset when doing this exercise, but do your best to continue until your timer rings in 15 minutes.

Ask that same question of yourself repeatedly and write down your answer every time. The answer will often be the same, which is perfectly okay. Just be patient and continue with the process unless you feel overwhelmed and feel the need to stop early.

After 15 minutes when the time is up, you may once again ask yourself,

*“What is my current level of unpleasantness of the pain I am experiencing right now?”*

Write down or check  the number from zero to ten. If the number is the same as before, that is perfectly okay as you will do this exercise again tomorrow.

If the number is higher, that is also okay as it may indicate that your unconscious mind is intentionally preventing you from experiencing your true negative emotions, hence producing greater physical discomfort.

If the number is lower, that's great. Repeat the H.E.E. process all over again tomorrow. No matter what the outcome, do this for 5 days in a row and see what comes of it. So print out the H.E.E. sheet and let's begin.

# Honestly Expressing Emotions (H.E.E.)

(May be complete with the [H.E.E. guided audio](#))

**“What is my current level of unpleasantness of the pain I am experiencing right now?”**

(Not unpleasant at all) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Extremely unpleasant)

- Set a timer for 15 minutes
- Close the eyes while thinking
- Think not with the head but with your heart
- Write down your answers below

Ask out loud, **“Honestly, what emotion am I feeling right now?”**

The top 10 negative emotions include...				
1. Anger	3. Fear	5. Irritation	7. Jealousy	9. Sad
2. Anxiety	4. Frustration	6. Guilt/shame	8. Overwhelmed	10. Worry

**Pause, focus on your heart and reply out loud,**

Honestly, I am feeling _____	Honestly, I am feeling _____
Honestly, I am feeling _____	Honestly, I am feeling _____
Honestly, I am feeling _____	Honestly, I am feeling _____
Honestly, I am feeling _____	Honestly, I am feeling _____
Honestly, I am feeling _____	Honestly, I am feeling _____
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Honestly, I am feeling _____	Honestly, I am feeling _____
Honestly, I am feeling _____	Honestly, I am feeling _____
Honestly, I am feeling _____	Honestly, I am feeling _____
Honestly, I am feeling _____	Honestly, I am feeling _____

**“What is my current level of unpleasantness of the pain I am experiencing right now?”**

(Not unpleasant at all) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (Extremely unpleasant)