

Climbing the Ladder of Emotions

Our emotions give us clues to our thoughts and feelings. The lower you feel, the more out of alignment your thoughts and beliefs. Once you are able to identify the cognitive distortions and self-defeating beliefs in a thought, you can move onto the next step: climbing the emotional ladder.

Process:

1. Identify where you are on the emotional scale. You may be feeling many things at once. If this is the case, identify the lowest feeling and start from that place on the ladder. In the For example, you could be feeling frustrated, overwhelmed and powerless. In this case you would start at #22 as powerless is the lowest feeling.
2. Next, identify the thought that support this place on the ladder. For example, "I feel powerless because I don't know if I have the skills to do the job."
3. Then identify how many rungs (1-4) you want to climb with your next thought. You can climb one rung or reach up to four rungs up the ladder. Reaching beyond four rungs may be too far of a reach.
4. Identify a thought to help you climb the ladder using the "I feel (emotion) because (reason)" to help you reach this rung. For example, if I want to climb two rungs from powerless, I would be at jealousy. "I feel jealous because Joan seems to have no problem doing the job."
5. Check in with yourself. Are you securely on this rung? If you don't believe the thought then try again.
 - a. If you aren't securely on this emotional rung, then you can come down the emotional scale and try again. For example, try shooting for insecurity before attempting to get to the jealousy rung.
 - b. If you are securely on this rung, then keep climbing. To keep climbing, go to step three of this process and keep going.

Things to consider:

- In some situations, boredom is the highest you may be able to climb. For example, if you broke your arm and are feeling discouraged, you may not be able to feel joy but you can certainly get to boredom.
- Remember the connection: Beliefs → Thoughts → Feelings → Experiences
- Think positive. You may be concerned that you didn't climb enough rungs. This is okay. Contentment is just four rungs away from overwhelmed. Any climbing you can do puts you in a better place.
- This takes practice. Please don't expect yourself to be a master at this exercise.
- Sometimes it is helpful to talk to someone else about the situation so you can get alternative perspectives. If you are having difficulty climbing, talk to a trusted friend or your therapist about the situation and then try climbing again.
- Use the worksheet on the next page or do this exercise on a separate page. It is helpful to write it out when you are first practicing this tool. As you become more skilled, you can do this without paper.
- The emotional scale is also available on a business card. If this would be helpful, ask Teresa for the wallet sized scale.

The list is from "Ask and It is Given" by Esther and Jerry Hicks

Handout compiled by Teresa Kleffner, MSW, LCSW. St. Louis Counseling and Wellness. www.stlcw.com

Climbing the Ladder of Emotions - Worksheet

1. I feel (circle one) Joy/Knowledge/Freedom/Love/Appreciation because _____

2. I feel Passion because _____
3. I feel (circle one) Enthusiasm/Eagerness/Happiness because _____

4. I feel (circle one) Positive Expectation/Belief because _____

5. I feel Optimism because _____
6. I feel Hopefulness because _____
7. I feel Contentment because _____
8. I feel Boredom because _____
9. I feel Pessimism because _____

10. Frustration/Irritation/Impatience because _____

11. I feel Overwhelmed because _____

12. I feel Disappointment because _____

13. I feel Doubt because _____

14. I feel Worry because _____

15. I feel Blame because _____

16. I feel Discouragement because _____

17. I feel Anger because _____
18. I feel Revenge because _____
19. I feel (circle one) Hatred/Rage because _____

20. I feel Jealousy because _____
21. I feel (circle one) Insecurity/Guilt/Unworthiness because _____

22. I feel (circle one) Fear/Grief/Depression/Despair/Powerlessness because _____

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