



The Emotion Focused Compass™ in Practice

Examples of listening to your emotions and responding to your needs with care.



This guide is a companion to the Emotion Focused Compass™. Use it when you want to pause, understand what you're feeling, identify what you need, and respond with compassion and wisdom. It can be especially helpful when you notice an urge to binge, feel emotionally overwhelmed, or sense that something is wrong but aren't yet sure what you need.

		EXAMPLE 1 Feeling uncared for	EXAMPLE 2 After a tough presentation	
1	NOTICE THE BODY  Notice, allow and focus attention on the sensations in the body. (lump, rock, butterflies, tingling, tension...)	 Stay here for a moment – all feelings and sensations are welcome. When we welcome them, we don't need to go into defenses.	Tingling in my chest, tightness in my throat Heaviness and churning Butterfly feeling in my tummy, heart racing	Heaviness in my chest Tight throat Butterflies, shaky, hot face
2	RIDE THE WAVE  Can I stay with this feeling for a few moments? Can I allow it to be here without fighting it, avoiding it, or acting on it? Notice your breath. Notice what is happening in your body. Make space for your experience with curiosity and compassion.	I notice the tightness, heaviness, and churning. I take a slow breath and allow the feelings to be here without acting on them.	I notice my racing heart and hot face. I breathe and make room for the discomfort for a few moments.	
3	NAME THE EMOTION  What emotions are coming up? Sadness, anger, fear, disgust, shame? Use the feelings wheel, if it's helpful.	 Anger	Fear and embarrassment	
4	LISTEN WITH CURIOSITY  What might these emotions be telling me? What happened that brought up these feelings? What is my experience in this moment? What story am I telling myself?	I'm feeling hurt because I don't feel seen or cared for in this relationship. I feel disappointed and lonely when my needs for connection and reciprocity are not met.	I didn't do a good job of the presentation. My coworkers think I'm an idiot.	
5	IDENTIFY THE NEED  Is there an unmet need? (to be seen/to be heard/to be connected/cared for/loved/respected/competent/safe...) Is there an action that needs to be taken to get this need met?	I want to feel seen and cared for. I want someone to ask how I'm doing. My unmet need is connection, care, and being valued in this relationship.	The unmet need is the need to be competent.	
6	RESPOND WITH COMPASSION  Thank the emotion for bringing your attention to something important. Ask yourself: What would a kind, loving, gentle guide say to me right now? Is the story I'm telling myself helpful? What do I need to believe in this moment? What would compassion sound like?	I believe if she knew what my need was in this moment, she would try to meet it. Whether or not she can meet that need, I am worthy of care. My need for connection matters. I deserve relationships where I feel seen and valued.	Yes, I was a big goofball but that's okay because I'm a human being and human beings are imperfect and flawed. I'm proud of myself for doing something hard for me. If I could, I would make everyone think I'm amazing but in reality, they are allowed to think whatever they want. I can give a crappy presentation and still be a lovable human being.	
7	CHOOSE A SUPPORTIVE RESPONSE  Instead of following old patterns and urges to feel better, what can I do instead? What would my wise mind or my compassionate coach advise?	I can recognize the anger is the result of an unmet need. Instead of giving her the cold shoulder or telling her she doesn't care about me, I can either let her know how I'm feeling (I'm feeling uncared for because...) or I can just drop the story that she doesn't care – or that no one cares about me.	Instead of rehashing it in my mind over and over and shouting on and judging myself I'm going to give myself permission to put this down. Instead, I could ask a trusted coworker for feedback if I want it, or focus on what I did well.	




*You are
not too much.
You are human.
And that is
more than
enough.*

