



Get to Know an Emotion Cycle

This exercise is worth doing many times. You can download this template from www.onwardthebook.com.

Identify a recent emotional experience that you want to reflect on. In a couple sentences, describe what happened:

Name the emotion and the degree of intensity you experienced:

Describe

1. Prompting event: What event triggered this cycle? This is the who, what, when, and where.
2. Interpretation: How did you interpret the event? This is the why.
3. Physical response: What happened in your body?
4. Urge to act: What did you want to do?
5. Action: What did you actually do? What did you say? Be specific.
6. Aftereffects: What was the consequence of what happened and how you responded?

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Reflect

Where in your cycle do you think you could most easily make a change and steer your experience in a different direction?

Look at how you interpreted the event—stage 2. What other ways are there to see the situation? How might a different way to interpret the situation shift your emotional experience?

If you had an intense physical response (for example, you got a pounding headache, burst into tears, or started shaking), you most likely need to start with the physiological aspect. When your body is in high alert, you won't be able to think rationally. What could you do in the moment when you're experiencing an intense physical response?

Example of Getting to Know an Emotion Cycle

What happened: *I got really frustrated because my principal did a surprise observation, and it was only the first week of school.*

The emotion was frustration (or anger), and the level of intensity was a 6.

Describe

1. Prompting event: What event triggered this cycle? This is the who, what, when and where.

My principal showed up in my classroom, unannounced, on the fifth day of school this year to do a formal evaluation.

(continued)

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