



**Feel Your Feelings  
and Not Just your  
Thoughts  
Master Guide**

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## Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

I'm honored and fortunate to have met you on this beautiful journey of healing and loving the beautiful, life you get to live. I know how important this is, as I've walked in your shoes and shared similar feelings. One thought I always had that was malicious and false was that I was alone. I wasn't, I never was and I never will be. But when I was fearful of speaking my truth, and sharing my whole story. The person I was could never see, what was beyond the lie I was living.



## Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

If you're holding onto a secret that you've been carrying for years I fear that these words may hit on your heart the same way they hit mine.

As I recently expressed in an online video, I live by these words "we teach what our hearts need most". I'm unsure where I heard them, or who the author might be, but those six words have become the culmination of my life. When I was sixteen I needed me. When I was twenty-six I needed me. When I was thirty-six I needed me. I still need me, but who I am today is much different than the person I used to be.

And to become that person, I had to walk through shame. I had to peel back every layer to find all that was hiding underneath. I had to feel all of my feelings, rather than continue to push them aside. And it wasn't just this that changed me. Yes, my life changed as my thoughts did, but it was my academic experiences that paved the way.



## Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

Please let me explain, I don't wholeheartedly believe that academia can change someone's life, never mind their thoughts, but my experience was different as my whole academic experience was rooted in uncovering every piece of who I was, so that I would be able to help others do the same. See, in the curriculum for counseling or therapy the principles are rooted in self-discovery and exploration. From there, and only from there, are you then asked to put yourself in every scenario possible so that you can experience life from another's perspective.

*It led me here to you, today and there is no place I'd rather be*

There is a reason you're here as well. A reason you're reading this, right now. I imagine you've tried numerous methods or considered working with different people or trying different programs, but I wonder have you really lowered your walls enough to make the change? I urge you to think about something on this journey... everything you are feeling is manifesting in your body. So if you're thinking I don't have time or money or energy, remember this, the mountain you're carrying on your shoulders is depleting your energy and creating fatigue in your body. The emotions you are hiding are the only reason you are not living.

*I implore you to keep an open mind, an open heart*

Before you move forward, and begin to look at these techniques and methods I encourage you to keep an open mind. As a reminder, just as in life, every technique and method will not work for everyone. But I assure you that a few will bring clarity and perhaps even the closure you're looking for.

For now, remember that we're all here on this journey of healing together.

## Challenge & Reframe your Negative Thoughts

Looping, negative thoughts or rumination are often a trigger for shameful feelings. When you mentally revisit conversations or situations where you felt shamed or if your thoughts are a series of self-criticisms, you are only strengthening your shame. Your job is to weaken the grasp shame has over you, and you can do that by challenging your thoughts.



## Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

Shame-based thinking is often based on dire predictions, doubt in your ability to cope, selective focus on negative aspects of events or the behavior of other people, and rigid ideas about how people should behave.

Our mind has built stringent, impossible expectations for others as well as ourselves with this thought process. They become an endless cycle of vicious thoughts, that repeat over and over in our head and eliminate the possibility of discerning thought from reality.

Rather than believing everything your mind tells you, find evidence to the contrary. Part of you knows you aren't a bad, unworthy person and that your thoughts aren't the truth or the entire truth. When your shamed-based thoughts try to control your mind, don't allow it. Put up a mental fight by reframing your thoughts and focusing on the positive.



## Revisit Your Childhood

As painful as this might be, it's important to have a realistic understanding that shame is not your fault.

Use adult judgment and perspective when working towards completing this exercise. Please allot yourself a time frame of a few hours to wholeheartedly complete this task.

Look at the small, innocent child you were and how incapable you were of understanding and processing the expectations and hurtful behaviors of your parents, even benign behaviors that were "well-intentioned."



# Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

Remind yourself of this whenever you feel your shame triggered.

You so desperately needing their approval and unconditional love, and if that wasn't forthcoming, you grew to feel UNWORTHY of anyone's acceptance and love. You were NOT at fault. Repeat those words again. You were not at fault.

## Affirmations

Affirmations support positive thinking and enhanced self worth. When we use them throughout our day we create a mindset that eliminates doubt and fear and empowers us to face our fears.

For this exercise carve out twenty minutes of your day to sit down and complete the whole task.

List your strengths, positive skills, qualities, abilities and achievements with examples that support each attribute.

Remind yourself that you are strong and capable of achieving greatness. Build mantras around these achievements that you repeat to yourself daily.

Please express your affirmations in the first person, e.g. "I did..." or "I am ..." or "I have..."

Reread this list first in the morning and again at night.

Over and over again until they become commonly used throughout your day.

*\*\*\*Please keep this in mind, on average it takes 21 days to break a habit, so this type of change is not something that is going to happen overnight.*

## Recognizing Your Triggers

Start to notice what triggers your feelings of shame (person, place, experience, desire...).

In the beginning this can be an extremely difficult task to complete as we bury our feelings underneath multiple layers. We then use various coping mechanisms, overeating, drinking, drugs, NETFLIX, sex ..., to continue to avoid feeling our feelings.

Begin this exercise by acknowledging your behaviors and your reactions. Did someone say something to make you feel vulnerable?

Were you rejected in some way that reminded you of childhood rejection? Were you caught in looping thoughts, ruminating about an event that feels shameful?

Once you know what trips you up and mires you in feelings of shame, you can begin to manage the triggers and learn healthier responses.

As an added task carry around a small notebook with you and jot down your triggers as they come up for the next 3-5 days. This will become an incredible tool for you on your journey to spiritual healing.



## It's A Miracle

Imagine that tomorrow morning you wake up and suddenly find that a magical transformation, a miracle, has taken place.

Your world is just as you would like it to be and you have resolved all your problems or come to terms with all the things that were bothering you.

*Describe what is different and what has changed...*

Enter into as much detail as you can. Where would you live? Work? Would you be surrounded by family? Friends? Noone? Would someone be missing from your life who is in it now? Would there be an addition of someone? What problems would have been washed away by this miracle?

What can you do in the future that will help you move towards the world you describe?

*You can work at achieving all that your miracle world provides.*

## What do You Like about Me?

We all have strengths, skills, qualities and personality preferences; the secret is to understand what you are good at. And yes I know that this can be hard to do, especially when considering that we spend most of our days thinking about all of the things that we cannot do.

However, as we grow older we often forget the person we use to be, the young you. As we age and evolve, we develop responsibilities, worries and insecurities. Over time, we begin to lose touch with the person we once were. We're still the same person were just buried underneath multiple layers.

As a youngster or teenager with different skills, experience and outlook on life what were you good at? What were your strengths?

What would other people, your friends and peers say that they liked about you?

## Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

Now let's take a look at your life now.

Concentrate **ONLY** on your positives and strengths, we will look at your areas of development later on. What have you learned since being a teenager, what new skills, qualities and experiences have you gained and learned?

How has your life changed for the better, what part of your life have you improved?



This is a two-part task. If you'd like to work on your areas of development please get with me so we can create a program and plan to change your life.

## Automatic Negative Thoughts

Every single one of us has Automatic Negative Thoughts. Here's an IDEA to minimize them, as I believe it's impossible to eliminate them.

Get a piece of paper and fold it in half.

On one side write your automatic negative thought and on the other side write something different. The side that is different should have a phrase that is positive but it can also be logical or humorous. These phrases are to help you remember that these thoughts are just thoughts and that they not REAL. They never were.

Another version of this exercise is to practice adding this simple phrase to the end of your thought " and that's just a thought and that's ok."



## Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

Here are some examples-

Thought says "I believe I'm going to fail my exam." You say "I believe I'm going to fail my exam and that's just a thought I'm having and that's ok."

Thought says "She doesn't like me." You say "She doesn't like me and that's just a thought and that's ok."

Adding this simple phrase to the end of all your thoughts reminds you that your thoughts are not real and that you are not alone. You are supported and loved. "

*This shift in mindset might just be the extraordinary gift you need.*



## Regrets... I have quite a few

This exercise is designed to come to terms with actions you feel bad about, but when you look at them in the context of the world's worries really aren't quite so bad.

If you find yourself thinking, I should have done \_\_\_\_\_ or I should not have done \_\_\_\_\_, think of positive thoughts that you can say in your mind as constructive thoughts to take the place of the negative thoughts, or even comments on the situation which make you realize, it may not be as bad as it looks. Remind your self that you are a small bit in a tiny world and at times we drag ourselves through the mud for thoughts or comments that are inconsequential.

When you say I should have done this or I should have done that imagine what you would say to a friend who was saying that. Would that change your reaction? For some of us, we find it easier to care for friends and family then we do for ourselves.

### REPLACEMENT THOUGHT EXAMPLES

Hey, at least I did something!

Maybe what I did wasn't quite as significant as I think.

Relax, nobody's perfect. Breathe girl.

It's not the end of the world. Did I learn something?

Am I jumping to conclusions?

What happened is not entirely my fault.

Maybe the other person's reaction had nothing to do with what I did, but was more to do with something else they were worried about at the moment or with their attitude.

I'll do something different next time.

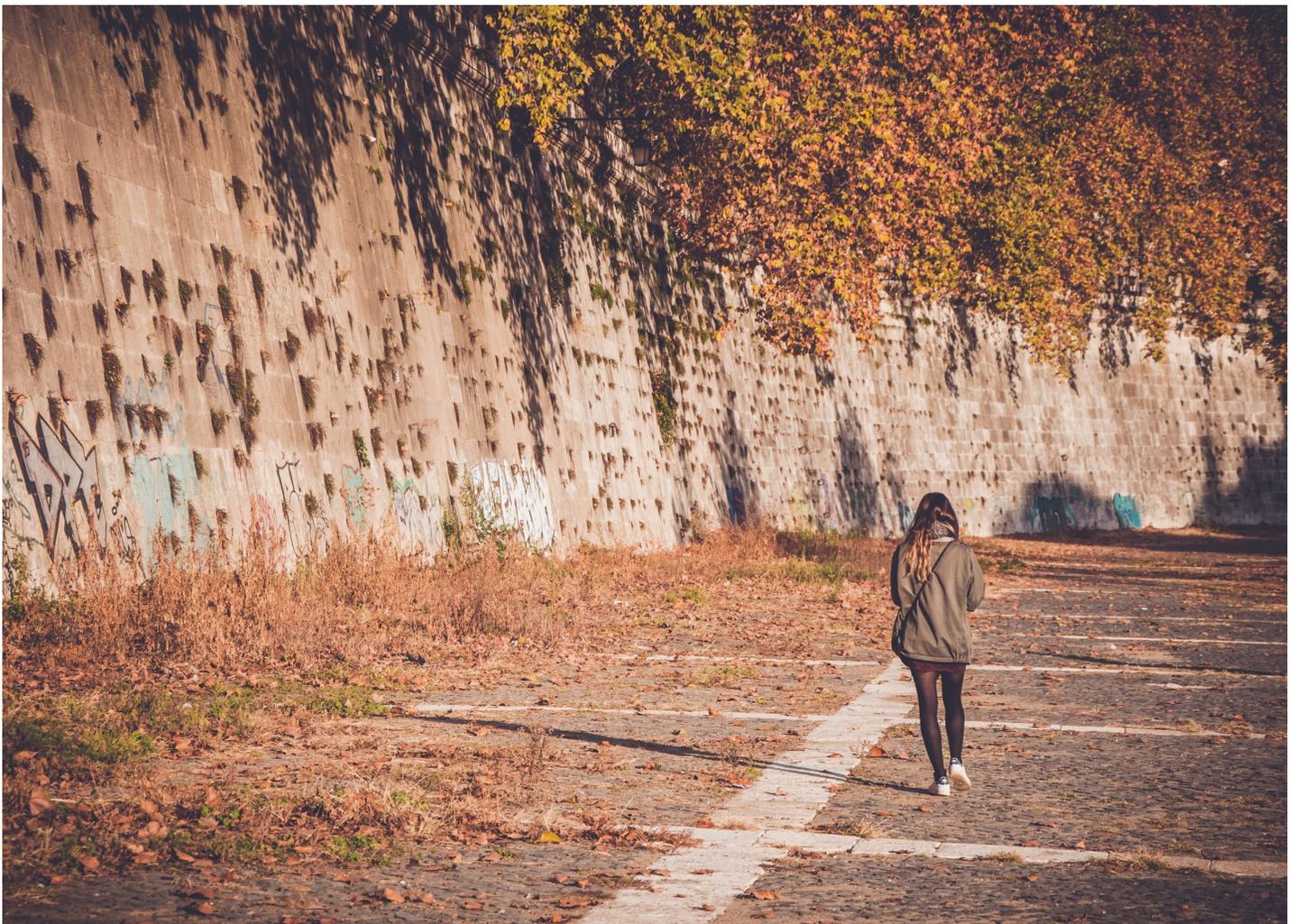
Girl, that was one minute in one hour, please don't make it the whole day.

## Stop the Isolation

Shame is isolating. There is no other feeling that strongly prompts us to go home, lock our doors and hide just as much as shame. However, if we want to move past it we have to recognize when we feel the need to isolate

Stop the lies. When we experience the lows of shame we lie to ourselves by convincing ourselves that we are ALONE WITH OUR FEELINGS and that there are very few people who care for us.

This is a thought that we perpetuate in our head because of the SHAME WE CARRY.



## Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

But this is not true. It's only a reality that exists in our minds in real life we are not alone. There will always be someone who can hold our hands and walk with us. Whether it be a friend, a family member, a neighbor, a coworker or even a support group.

There is always someone. You are not alone.

Practice the opposite of isolation, which is a wide, open heart.

EXERCISE: Recognize when you judge others and realize this is about you: it makes you feel separate. Is shame at the root of this need to separate?

Inquire into what you're thinking and feeling.

Acknowledge there could be shared feelings or emotions and there is a possibility of missing a future connection.

### **What Are You Proud of?**

I know what you're thinking... How is this going to help me move through shame?

Think about every experience that repeats over and over in your mind, is it negative or positive? Is it possible that the negative experiences that repeat over and over on your head have brought you strength, or brought you closer to a place you've never thought you would be?

Behind every struggle we find strength. Life doesn't unfold the way we plan it to. It never will. And there would never be a way to understand joy if we've never felt any pain. Please understand me when I say this, in no way is this an attempt to minimize any of the experiences or struggles that some of you beautiful women have walked through it's only to bring the focus to the opposite of what you're feeling by highlighting the positive.

## Avoid The Fire

Are there still people in your life who reinforce your shame? It might be your parents who continue to say and do things to control, belittle, or hurt you.

Sometimes our shame leads us to be in relationships with people who repeat the dynamics we experienced in childhood. How many of us have found ourselves in unhealthy relationships that mirrored what hurt us most? Our spouses or partners and even some friends might unconsciously or consciously reinforce our feelings of shame.



You have a choice to be in relationships that are emotionally healthy. You can avoid immature, dysfunctional people and choose to surround yourself with supportive, understanding, and loving people instead. If you are married to someone who triggers your shame, go to counseling together so your partner can better understand your history of shame and you can create boundaries to protect yourself.

## Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

It is painful to let go of relationships, even if they are harmful, but if someone in your life is using your shame to manipulate or hurt you, then you must say goodbye if you want to escape the cycle of shame.

These relationships are hard to see at times as we find ourselves in the same patterns, day in and day out. The easiest way to find these is to carry a journal with you at all times. Notate all moments when you are uncomfortable, a negative feeling arises, or when an experience triggers you to react. It is in these moments that either the person or the experience is to blame. You will begin to notice patterns that will make these easy to identify. Shift where you spend your time based on the patterns that arise.

### **Become Honest With Yourself**

A life lived in the shadows of shame, is a life lived in a lie. Living an honest life would be the exact opposite of the life that you are currently living. Consider the thoughts that placate your mind and how they prompt you to react. All of the actions you make today are based on inaccurate thoughts that you believed were your truth, but they're not.



## Feel Your Feelings and Not Just your Thoughts

In order to change your thoughts, you need to begin living a life that is exactly the opposite of the life you live now.

If something triggers you talk about it.

If something hurts you talk about it.

If something isn't easy, say it isn't easy for you.

If you want to say no, say no.

When your identity becomes one of truth, you're no longer living a broken life filled with lies. It is then that you will begin the process of loving yourself, as you are.

So how do you feel? Yes, I agree it can be overwhelming. Life is overwhelming especially when we live in our thoughts and don't feel our days. When we hide our truth, we focus all of our time on hiding that we almost forget that life is happening right in front of us. We spend our time living in the past or our thoughts frequently rush to what will come and what will they think of me.

*The wandering mind happens easily, but it's difficult to recognize.*

Think of this as your gift. And it's yours, to use, if you're ready. When you're ready. And if you're not I hope you find the method or technique that works for you because I don't ever want to see someone walk alone. Remember, no one is ever alone, that's a thought created in an isolated mind.

Looking forward to this beautiful process of healing and watching as it all unfolds

**Love and light,  
Melissa  
Love Your Life Community**