



How to Deal with Our

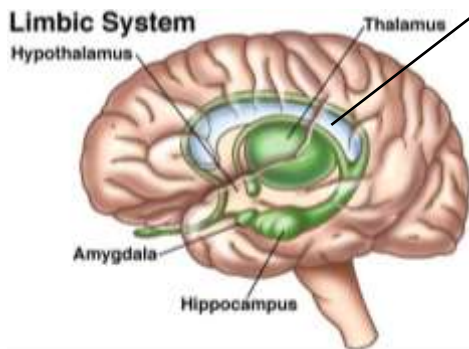
Feelings and Emotions

This "PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET" was developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, NV • joe@southreno.com
Scriptures are printed verbatim with references noted but highlights and underlines are added. Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

A. Introduction:

We have all experienced feelings that we did not wish to feel; we all know how painful it can be to dwell on these undesired feelings. Anger, grief, depression, hurt, anxiety, boredom, confusion, disgust, envy, fear, horror, sadness, and a thousand others—both positive and negative. Some feelings appropriately go with the circumstances one faces. Other feelings are present, but we may not be sure why they are there. Whatever you may be facing, or whatever you are feeling emotionally, this PASTOR GUIDE SHEET is meant to give you a basic understanding on the topic of "Feelings and Emotions" and, more importantly, give you the ability to understand how you can develop the best response for dealing with your feelings.

B. Understanding how feelings happen in our brains:



The Limbic Cavity—The heart and center of your "feelings"

Right between your eyes and right between your ears is a complex (understatement) cavity in your brain. It's your Limbic Cavity. It is filled with hundreds of complicated hormones and chemicals (the primary chemicals in the brain are endorphins, serotonin, dopamine, glutamates, cortisol, oxytocin and norepinephrine). These chemicals generate in the Hippocampus and are negotiated in the Limbic Cortex where a complex relationship between chemicals, electrical currents and positive and negative neutrons work together to make up your *feelings*.

A basic understanding of the five main chemical groups is as follows:

Endorphins are fast-acting and short-lived chemicals that produce intense, but short-lived responses (i.e. like being startled by something). **Serotonins** play a long-term role in how you feel, how you sleep and if you are depressed or happy. They also play a role in many of your body's essential functions, including appetite and mood. **Dopamine** controls behavioral, neurotransmission (communication and motivation processes of the brain) and in the anticipation of rewards or thrills. **Glutamates** related to the long-term memories of the brain (i.e. good and bad experiences), dreams and cognitive recall. **Cortisol** relates specifically to what make us angry and hostile. They are sometimes called "threat hormones." **Oxytocin** related to your attraction and arousal, romantically and spiritually. They are sometimes called "your crying hormones." And **Norepinephrine** (also called *adrenaline*) is a stress hormone and it relates to both the issues that rob you of a life-force (distress—bad stress) or give you a life-force (eustress—good stress). They are also related to your "fight or flight" responses.

In addition, you have *neurons* and *synapses* (both with positive and negative components) that interact with *limbic fibers* that make up the phone system of the brain. Brain chemistry is the sum of all the chemical messaging that takes place in the brain, which allows it to carry out its daily functions, such as generating movement, speaking, thinking, listening, regulating the systems of the body—and *feelings* (and thousand others). The brain communicates with itself by transmitting chemicals from one neuron, or nerve, to the other. And this regular, rapid-fire messaging plays a big role in how you feel and function each day. These neurotransmitter chemicals are classified into two basic categories: *excitatory*, meaning they stimulate brain activity, or *inhibitory*, meaning they have a more calming effect. Understanding this process is key to you understanding the reason (or means) to how you feel.

C. Here's what you need to know about your brain:

1. Your brain is very complex.
2. You will not fully understand your brain (or your feelings and emotions) this side of heaven.
3. Every "feeling" that you have happens in a part of your brain no bigger than your thumb.
4. We need a *basic understanding* of our brains. (i.e. Some "dream therapy" for people with nightmares involve putting their heads in vices to keep their heads from moving, thus restricting their ability to have nightmares. We know people dream, or have nightmares, *only after* they move during sleep. We need a basic understanding of our brains recall, response and "feeling" components.
5. We don't really control *initial feelings* without well-honed coping skills. (i.e. a police officer in an active shooting situation is trained to deal with that situation differently than a citizen would be.)
6. Factors we can control are our overall health, hydration, nourishment and avoiding certain circumstances that put us at risk for intense feelings and self-care matters.
7. Factors we can't control are some illnesses, past experiences, race, gender, age, etc.
8. The *Limbic Fluid* replenishes itself every 90 to 120 days, on average. The Limbic Fluid is the environment where all emotions take place. That means we won't worry too much about certain feelings and certain thought patterns for a few months.
9. It is well documented that many *initial feelings* and responses are not really "up to us". Long-term responses to our feelings are up to us. "*We don't control our feelings—initially.*"
10. Everyone needs an understanding of what to do with their intense feelings and emotions.
11. Not all feelings are inappropriate. God gave us feelings for a reason.
12. VERY IMPORTANT: We don't control our *initial feelings* (short term) to specific circumstances, but we can control *secondary feelings* (long-term). It's been said that, "We don't control our feelings." This is completely true of *initial feelings* to something frightening or something that should makes us sad, etc. Once that initial feeling has occurred, we should begin the intentional process of taking control of our thoughts and emotions. Ultimately, we must gain control of our feelings or they will gain control over us.

D. Quotes

Don't see your struggle as an interruption to life but as His preparation for life. – Max Lucado

God has left nothing to chance, but all things to Christ. – Scotty Smith

There is no possibility of being emotionally healthy without a deep intimate personal relationship with the Holy Spirit of God. – Mark Driscoll

My feelings are not God. God is God. My feelings do not define truth. God's word defines truth. My feelings are echoes and responses to what my mind perceives. And sometimes - many times - my feelings are out of sync with the truth. When that happens - and it happens every day in some measure - I try not to bend the truth to justify my imperfect feelings, but rather, I plead with God: Purify my perceptions of your truth and transform my feelings so that they are in sync with the truth. – Dr. John Piper

Though our feelings come and go, God's love for us does not. – C. S. Lewis

E. So what should we do with our feelings and emotions:

Different Strategies At Our Disposal That Help To Deal With Harmful Feelings And Emotions:

1. Release Them – “*Venting*” is the primary way to deal with feelings and emotions that a person deals with over the long haul. Find a trusted loved one who is mature and godly who will listen to you, confirming what should be confirmed and negating what should be negated. Find a trusted friend who will just listen to you as you vent or release your feelings. Any article that deals with intense feelings will give ample examples of the benefits of expressing our feelings in a healthy way.

Example: Jack, thank you for taking my call. I just wanted you to know that I’m having a little tougher day than usual. I’m not really sure why I just wanted to reach out to you as my friend and let you know what I’m experiencing. I don’t need anything from you other than a few minutes to just get this off my chest....

- Who is the person that you trust enough to give them the details of your situation?

- Could you call them right now and visit with them about your situation?

- Would you be comfortable saying to them, “I just need you to listen, that’s all I need”?

- What additional questions are we not asking that we should be asking?

2. Reframe Them – Our feelings don’t always express truth. If we have circumstances, either in our past or present, or fears we have about the future, they can affect how we feel currently. We may need to process those feelings to discover what is accurate and what is not. We may need to reframe (i.e. retile) our feelings in such a way that’s more accurate based on the truth God has given us. We need to analyze them and state them correctly—objectively, not subjectively. We need truth. A trusted pastor and/or counselor may help you understand the injury you have experienced because of a crisis you weathered. They may also help you discover what is your “curse of words” – the specific lies that those feelings are speaking to you right now.

Example: Jill, thank you for meeting with me. As you know, my ex-husband called me horrible names in the past. I thought for many years that the words he screamed at me were true. The Lord has done a great work in me and I realized that they were simply lies that I believed for a long time. Today, I allowed myself to hear a fresh and new those criticisms that he leveled at me years ago. It took me a little while to get my thoughts under control and reframe my thoughts in a way that were true. I forgot that I was loved by God, beautiful and worthy of double honor as wife.

- Are you in a healthy emotional position to correctly examine your feelings?

- Can you identify the “lies” that your feelings are currently telling you?

- Would you consider letting someone else help you “process” your feelings?

- What additional questions are we not asking that we should be asking?

3. Redirect Them – Redirection is a basic coping skill every person needs. We spend too much time sitting and re-experiencing those feelings, over and over again. We may need to do nothing more than redirect from our feelings. When the feeling comes up, instead of dwelling on it, we purpose to start a new task to get our mind off those feelings. (i.e. go do a task, work out, take a walk, call a family member/friend, check your email, etc.)

Example: *Jack, you'll never guess what happened to me this morning. I woke up and was immediately mortified thinking about what happened during my college experience. After about 10 minutes of sadness, I realized I was doing nothing to better myself. I got up, got in the shower, got dressed and went to work. Before I went into the building, I breathed a prayer to God and ask Him to remove them completely from my mind. A few hours later, I realize he had done just that.*

- What feelings do you deal with most frequently and what triggers them?

- While you're calm, what would be the best process for you to "redirect" to?

- What do you need to do to be ready and able to redirect when that time comes?

- What additional questions are we not asking that we should be asking?

4. Rebuke Them – As previously stated, our feelings are not notoriously truth tellers. Occasionally, we experience appropriate feelings based on specific circumstances. More often than not, our feelings do not reveal truth. Many times, our feelings present blatant lies. In that case, let's free ourselves to just rebuke them. Taking control of our feelings is key—you control them, don't let them control you. Many times, when feelings arise, we fail to set healthy boundaries around them.

Example: *Jill, I certainly had a bad day today. I was 10 minutes late to work. I forgot to pay an important bill. I forgot to call my mom. At lunch, I sat in my car and was overwhelmed with the feeling that I was a failure. It was then that I realized none of these things truly mattered and I rebuked them in my mind. I simply said I am not a failure. I took care of the other matters in my day ended up in a much better place. I'm glad we can just rebuke our feelings and tell them we will not be listening to them today.*

- What boundaries do you currently have in place regarding your feelings?

- What boundaries do you need to implement regarding your feelings?

- What specific plan do you need in place to "rebuke" your feelings when they come?

- What additional questions are we not asking that we should be asking?

5. Reassign Them – Many times our feelings are overwhelming. Sometimes we have to give them away or release them to someone else. If you are weathering a season of very intense feelings based on what is real and what is not, you may consider seeing a professional counselor or pastor qualified to deal with your specific circumstances. Maybe you were abused as a child? Maybe you experienced a dramatic experience that you have never fully gotten away from? Maybe you were the victim of a heinous crime? There are certainly events in our lives that will leave us incapable of dealing with feelings all by ourselves. Please don't hesitate to find someone qualified to help you get through the battle that now rages in your heart and mind.

Example: Jack, I want you to know something about me. When I was young, I grew up in a home full of yelling and abuse. There was even occasional physical abuse. I struggled early on in my marriage to my wife doing the same things that I despise and that were done to me as a child. One day I did something incredibly brilliant. I sought out some help. I was amazed that my counselor could get me through that experience as quickly as they did. It wasn't pleasant, but it was well worth it. I'm glad God gave me the strength and the wisdom to just seek a counselor that could help me. I feel like that time is now behind me. It feels good. I've learned a lot from it and I'm a better person because of it.

- Understand the difference between “venting” and “reassignment” is involvement with your helper, counselor and/or friend.

- Who would you trust more than anyone with your feelings/emotions? Who's on your team?

- Specifically, what do you need for them to do, other than listen to you? How can they encourage you when you're having a rough time with your feelings and emotions?

- What additional questions are we not asking that we should be asking?

6. Reappraise Them – Many times we confuse (mis-identify) one feeling with another. Depression, clinically, is anxiety we feel about the past. Many people confuse depression with grief. They say they're depressed when, in actuality, they're grieving. If someone drives down the road and gets a little over a guideline, we re-align our steering wheel to bring the vehicle back where we should be. Realigning our feelings are really putting the right title to the right feeling that we have. Identifying the emotion correctly is very significant. If we misidentify the emotion, we may select a therapy that doesn't work. (It would have worked if we had identified the emotion correctly, in the first place.) Be sure you identify the emotion (or emotions) appropriately. (i.g., Grief is a complex emotion that is treated totally differently than anger, or depression, or fear would be.)

Example: Jill, for the longest time I have felt depressed over what happened in my first marriage. I've never really been able to put my finger on it until now. I realized that what I was feeling was not really depression but grief. Depression seemed to somehow make it my fault, while grief just helps me understand it more of a loss than whose fault it was.

- What do you think are the feelings you have dealt with most recently?

- Now that you have thought about it, do you need to reappraise (title correctly) any feelings?

- How will this reappraising change how you deal with your feelings/emotions?

- What additional questions are we not asking that we should be asking?

7. Rename Them – Renaming is not reappraising. A common therapy for those dealing with intense feelings is *naming your anxiety. Instead of calling it fear, call it “Bart”*. Once fear comes around, ask Bart to sit right beside you. Tell Bart that “he” has 3 minutes to talk to you. When that time is up, he’s going to have to leave. The insight is that you are now taking control of your feeling. Name it, instruct it and control it rather than letting it control you.

Example: [When “fear” attacks you] *okay Bart (your new name for fear), you have three minutes to speak to me... Okay, Bart, your time is up. You need to go. I’m not going to give you any more attention. I’m not going to listen to you anymore. Goodbye!*

[NOTE: When I first heard of this therapy of “naming your emotion,” I thought it was a little peculiar. I was not sure it would work. I have had a number of folks try it. They gave it a try and many of them gave witness that it really helped them. They felt like they finally took control of their feelings. Try it and see if it will work for you. It’s worth a try; you may be another who finds it beneficial for you. Have fun naming your nemesis. – JKT]

- What’s the biggest “feeling” that you deal with?
- What would you like to name this feeling? (e.g., Bart, Bubba, Libby Lou, etc. Have fun with it.)
- What would be an acceptable “time frame” to start with? (If you give your feelings 5 minutes to talk to you initially, give less time each week until they have no more of your time.)
- What additional questions are we not asking at this time?

8. Ratify Them – *Maybe you should be feeling what you’re feeling*. If you’re scared, but you know there’s a bad guy breaking into your house, maybe you should be scared. Maybe your circumstances should leave you fearful? Maybe you should be grieving?

Example: *Jack, I don’t know if you’ve heard but my grandmother passed away last night. Thank you for your concern. My heart is broken over this loss. She was the one who raised me. I heard my pastor say that grief is the price we pay for loving. I’m confident that I’m responding appropriately to the situation. Thank you for your prayers.*

- What emotion are you currently dealing with?
- Do you feel you are a normal person dealing “normally” with your abnormal situation?
- What long-term strategy do you have to bring even a normal reaction to a conclusion?
- What additional questions are we not asking at this time?

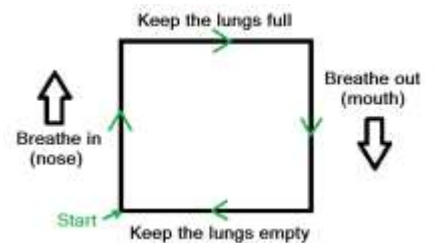
F. What we should NOT do with our feelings:

- 1. Don't Suppress Feelings** – Suppression of feelings is sometimes, but rarely, an efficient way to get rid of them. Simple suppression is a strategy that can backfire. It may reduce the expression of a negative emotion without reducing its experience. A boy who suppresses fear when being harassed by an older boy may not reveal his fear to the bully, but he still experiences it. Environmentalists told us 50 years ago if we would bury toxic waste, the gravitational pull of the earth would pull it to the center of the earth and it would be eliminated. However, osmosis brought it back to Earth's surface and we now have all kinds of cancers. Better to deal with it than to simply suppress it.
- 2. Don't Ignore Feelings** – It's been said that *either you deal with your feelings or your feelings will deal with you*. Suppressing and ignoring them are similar coping skills, but neither one offers a long-term solution to what you may be facing.
- 3. Don't Underestimate Feelings** – At times, feelings are incredibly complex and damaging. You will make a critical mistake if you think you cannot be affected by the intense feelings that are occurring in your life right now. Over the long haul, feelings drain and injure us to the point that we cannot function as we once did. Over the long haul, feelings that are underestimated may produce injury that may take months or years from which to recover. Feelings can be very powerful. Deal with them, but don't underestimate them.
- 4. Don't Make Major Decisions Based Solely on Feelings.** If our primary decision-making paradigm is based on “how we feel,” we are condemned to be completely *subjective* in our decision-making process. Thought: God will never “lead you” to make a decision that is not in keeping with His Holy Word. Throughout Scripture, we are called measure our decision and actions against the Word of God. If a believer has a big decision to make, the real decision-making paradigm should be “What does God want me to do?” or “How does God want me to respond?” to a situation.

G. Coping Skills when dealing with intense feelings:

1. 'Box Breathing' Therapy (A Lesson from US Navy Seals)

Navy Seals are given a technique to calm their nerves in the most intense of circumstances. When faced with a situation where anyone else would be nervous, they use “box breathing” to calm their nerves. In Box Breathing, you take a slow, deep breath in through the nose for 4 seconds; hold it for 4 seconds, let it out slowly through the mouth for 4 seconds and then refrain from breathing in for 4 seconds and repeat the whole process until you sense the anxiety has subsided.



- 2. Encouragement Therapy (Grounding)** – Every person who is facing a major event, seeking to recover from a critical incident or dealing with intense feelings, should begin a “data base” of scriptures, poems, quotes, reflections, testimonies, texts, emails, podcasts, sermons, journal entries, letters, cards, etc. of things that encourage them. (Personally, I have a file on my phone of quotes and short readings, “truth statements” that I use when I am feeling discouraged. I seek to encourage myself by re-grounding my heart; by seeking a more secure place for my emotions and feelings to be dealt with.
- 3. Tigger Therapy (Avoidance)** – People who deal with feelings and emotions (such as anger) must comprehend three major components of their battle. **(1) Triggers** that set you off or set you back. **(2) Responses** that are healthy or not healthy, and **(3) Threats**—those deep reasons that

cause the triggers to cause the hurt in the first place. (Example: You may hear a person's name. That's "triggers" a visceral (feelings orientated) "response" like sadness, hurt, anger, etc. The "threat" is how that person hurt you, or hurt someone you love, etc. You have to avoid certain triggers. It may affect where you go, who you hang around, or mean avoiding certain situations that will **trigger** intense feelings.

4. Processing Therapy (The Biblical Response) - God's Word gives us this insight that all the things that we will struggle with throughout our entire lives God will ultimately use for His good. In Scriptures, Romans 8:28 states, (the biblical text is in bold face while the commentary is in light face text) Romans 8:28 - ²⁸ **And we** as Christians **know** intuitively and can experience personally **that God causes** lit., "harmonizes" **all** i.e. every single one--all **things to work** we get our English word "synergy" from this word **together for good** lit., "the good" **to those who** (1) **love God**, and (2) **to those who are called according to His** i.e. eternal **purpose**.

- a. There is always something **CONFIDENTIAL** about the storms in your life. "*And we know ...*"
- b. There is always something **COMPREHENSIVE** about the storms in your life. "*... that God causes all things ...*"
- c. There is always something **CONSTRUCTIVE** about the storms in your life. - "*... that God causes all things to work together for good...*"
- d. There is always something **CONDITIONAL** about the storms in your life. - "*... to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose ...*"

The goal of processing is to let something good come out of the current bad you are experiencing. It is not negating the difficulty or unfairness of a situation. It is trusting that God will ultimately use it in a way that will bring him glory and you, relief. Faith is foundational for any significant recovery following a critical incident. People of faith always have the advantage in dealing with life's difficulties. [For more information on processing, see Pastor Joe's Pastor's Guide Sheet, "PGS – Processing," on our church website.]

5. Professional Therapy (Counseling) - Depending on the severity of the incident, the longevity of the incident or the injury that resulted from the incident, a person may want to consider professional therapy. Think about this: if your transmission breaks down, you will take your car to a mechanic. If you break your arm, you will go to a doctor to get it fixed. It is completely honorable and valiant to find a professional therapist or counselor that is trained in helping you face the circumstances that now rage in your life. The Bible says there is wisdom in a multitude of counselors. Don't hesitate to seek professional counseling for yourself. [Most insurances may dictate who you can see. If you would like a list of referrals, please call the church office, at 775.827.3227, and a list will be provided for you.]

6. Spiritual Therapy (Pastoral Care) - When a healthy person responds normally to abnormal circumstances, a professional therapist may not be needed. (Even if you're seeing a professional therapist, you are strongly encouraged to seek out your pastor, chaplain or someone who can encourage your faith.) Your pastor, chaplain, or spiritual friend may be all the assistance you will need to negotiate what you face. Most pastors are not certified in counseling, but they are God's ambassador to your life. Don't underestimate the strength of your pastor praying with you and encouraging you through your trials.

7. Naming Therapy (Taking Control) - As mentioned above, a new therapy that's come out of late is when a professional counselor will have his or her client name the anxiety that has resulted from the circumstances a person faces. Example: a client may name his anxiety "Bubba."

When something triggers an emotional response, the client would be instructed to just simply say these words: *“Come here, Bubba, sit right down beside me. I’m going to give you about two minutes to cause anxiety in my life but that’s all. When your two minutes are up, you have to go away. I’m going to redirect and you’re going to leave.”* Don’t underestimate the strength of this coping skill. It helps you take control of the anxiety that attacks you. It allows that initial response to be acknowledged but the long-term response to be purposely negotiated. Many people find strength utilizing this coping skill.

8. Support Groups (Venting/Education) - Throughout Scripture and throughout therapy literature, finding support groups have proven effective in dealing with feelings and emotions that are not desired. You may locate a formal group that is led by a trained facilitator and focuses on your area of concern. You may also elect to find 2 to 5 friends that can join around you to encourage you and strengthen you during this season of unrest. There are marvelous organizations and counseling ministries that offer seminars, books, podcasts, and literature devoted specifically to the battle that now rages in your life. Whether formal or informal, don’t underestimate the value of bringing people around you to support you emotionally, physically, and possibly even financially during this time. Also, your family needs to be completely aware of what’s happening in your life, if possible. Your church absolutely needs to be briefed on the struggles you face.

9. Self-Care (Grounding) - You will not read an article in any counseling or psychological publication that does not have an article about self-care. It has long been understood both in ministry and professional counseling circles that self-care is pivotal to becoming a healthy individual. The healthier you become, the better you can manage anything. A good self-care program will involve many of the following categories: prayer, reading, scheduling, exercising, nutrition, etc. think of it as a stress management program for your life. What are the things that you will do every single day to gain momentum and the upper hand over the crisis you face? No one will weather a long-term crisis without a significant focus on self-care. [For more information about self-care, see Pastor Joe’s Pastor Guide Sheet on “PGS – Self-Care,” located on the church website at www.SouthReno.com.]

10. Self-Soothing - Self soothing is an appropriate coping skill for anyone. It involves focusing on the five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. Examples are as follows: regarding “sight”: go to a park or a special place and just gaze at the marvel of creation. Regarding “sound”: find music that encourages you and uplifts you or a podcast that educates you about the situation you face. Regarding “smell”: light scented candles, bake some cookies or cook a meal. Some people even burn incense to encourage themselves. Regarding “touch”: consider a warm bath or shower, a massage, an embrace from a friend or mate. Regarding “taste”: re-live a meal that you had as a child or cook your favorite meal that you would describe as comfort food. Some therapists recommend kinesthetic activities such as rocking in a rocking chair, taking a walk, or doing anything that would involve more than one sense at a time.

11. Medication (Medical) - you need to be opened to utilizing medication if necessary. You would certainly take antibiotics for infection or painkillers following the surgery. Consider an anti-anxiety medication or psychotropic medication if your situation could be described as long-term or if it is so significant in scope, that no single coping skill would be able to pull you through. Many honorable and upstanding citizens have found assistance in the medical profession. Don’t hesitate to consider it if it would be appropriate for you.

12. Ceremonial Restart for Healing - Throughout Scripture, the children of Israel were called to ceremony. They might lay rocks in the river to remember what God had done. They might build an altar to proclaim the activity of God in their lives. You might consider going into the woods and stacking rocks on top of each other and determining that you are to be healthy and not be adversely affected by your circumstances. You might go to the worship center of your church and sit in there alone and give your life and your situation over to God. You might have your family over to your house and announce that you've determined you will get well or that you will get through this. A public declaration or public ceremony should be considered following any major incident. Let it be a time where people can understand the commitment you've made and encourage you in that healing process.

H. Developing a specific Strategy for you:

1. What should you be doing with your feelings?

Do you need to

- Release them (venting)
- Reframe them (process)
- Redirect them (redirect)
- Rebuke them (set boundaries and take control)
- Reassign them (release them for someone else to deal with)
- Reappraise them (putting the right title to the right feelings)
- Rename them (naming your anxiety "Bart" instead of fear.)
- Ratify them (maybe you should be feeling what your feeling)

2. What should you not be doing with your feelings?

Do you need to...

- Stop suppressing your feelings?
- Stop ignoring your feelings?
- Stop underestimating your feelings?
- Stop making major decisions during this time of intense feelings?

3. What coping skill do you think might be helping for you to consider?

- Box Breathing
- Encouragement date base
- Trigger Avoidance
- Processing to find the "good out of your bad"
- Professional therapy
- Spiritual therapy with a pastor/counselor
- Naming therapy
- Support group
- Self-Care
- Medication
- Ceremonial restart for healing

"M.A.P.S. Rule"

The key to making good application in every area of life (especially the Scripture) is making sure it meets the "M.A.P.S. Rule". The M.A.P.S. Rule is a four-step requirement based on an acrostic of the word "maps." Each application statement must meet all the following requirements, or you will never reach your goals.

M measurable

Every *application statement* must be able to be measured. Keep your item worded in such a way that anyone could "test" and see if the item was kept.

A attainable

Set *application statements/goals* that are realistic. Don't set up your application in a way that you will fail. Try to be both realistic and challenging at the same time.

P personal

Set goals only for yourself. Make personal application of God's Word. If God reveals His will for your family, let them be involved in the decision to apply God Word in their lives.

S specific

Set goals only for yourself. Make personal application of God's Word. If God reveals His will for your family, let them be involved in the decision to apply God Word in their lives.

What will your specific emotional growth goals be:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

I. Immediately Following Major Incidents:

The purpose of this handout is to help you *initially* negotiate with feelings associating with major incidents that have affected or are affecting your life. This crisis has interrupted you as a person, a family, or a group. This major event could be a death, divorce, accident, decision, diagnosis, disaster or some other event that has caused significant disruption in your life. Let us talk about what to expect and what to do *initially* when a critical incident takes place.

What to expect...

<p style="text-align: center;">Physically</p> <p>These are normal reactions to major incidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased heart rate, respiration, and blood pressure • Nausea, upset stomach, and diarrhea • Soreness of muscles • Fatigue • Reflux • Appetite change <p>These are reactions that need addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chest pains (Call 911 immediately) • Fainting/Dizziness (medical check required) • Debilitating headaches (medical check required) • Bleeding in the stool (medical check required) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Cognitively</p> <p>These are normal reactions to major incidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory problems in naming common objects • “Slowness” in thinking • Difficulty in using logic in decision making • Difficulty in problem solving/making simple calculations • Poor concentration • Limited attention span <p>These are reactions that need addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extreme loss of objectivity (becoming subjective)* • Extreme mental confusion* • Loss of awareness of long periods of time* <p><small>* Please seek out a mental health professional, pastor or chaplain</small></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Emotionally</p> <p>These are normal reactions to major incidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadness, grief, depression, moodiness • Apathy and diminished interests • A sense of being overwhelmed • Feeling guilty about not having done enough (“What ifs”) • Reoccurring dreams and sleep disturbances • Excessive worry about the safety of others • Euphoria, feeling high, euphoric <p>These are reactions that need addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling you “can’t go on”* • Anger that endangers you or others* • Extreme detachment from the world <p><small>* Please seek out a mental health professional, pastor or chaplain</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Behaviorally</p> <p>These are normal reactions to major incidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in sleep patterns • Decreased efficiency • Periods of crying • Change in bathroom patterns • Difficulty in communicating • Changes in appetite • Feeling of sense of “I need some space” <p>These are reactions that need addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs* • Extended periods of crying* • Withdrawal or “distancing” that is not healthy <p><small>* Please seek out a mental health professional, pastor or chaplain</small></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Spiritually</p> <p>Once you have experienced a critical incident, you may experience many things “spiritually” (i.e. Anger at God, questioning God, feeling distant from God, etc.) The reality is that people will do one of two things following a crisis: (1) You may turn from God or (2) You may turn to God for strength and help. We live in a “fallen world”. It will never be “Heaven on Earth”; it is never going to seem completely fair or always be “right”. Tragedy does happen. It will seldom make sense—especially in a crisis. Please, make the decision to reach into your faith. “Reach for faith, not fear.” God is not the author of evil. He is the one who brings “good out of bad” (Romans 8:28). Reach out to God! He is <i>the</i> Higher Power that you may need most in a crisis. Let God stand with you in this moment. Pray, read your Bible, ask others to pray for you or find a good, relevant spiritual resource. <i>Make the needed decision to reach out to God in this stressful time!</i></p>	

What to do *initially* following a Major Event

1. **You need to talk it out.** The most important thing you can do in the *initial* stages following a crisis is “talk it out”. Do not isolate yourself from family, co-workers, friends or helpers.
2. You need to **eat, exercise, drink plenty of water** and reduce caffeine, fat and sugar.
3. **Do not use alcohol, illegal drugs or misuse prescription drugs to cope with a crisis**—it only leads to more pain.
4. **Give yourself permission to hurt.** Expect the incident to bother you.
5. **Give yourself time to heal**—do not set unrealistic expectations for recovery.
6. **Reduce your schedule** and responsibilities if possible.
7. Make **no “major” decisions** following a critical incident.
8. **Let people know you are hurting.** Family members, co-workers, church members, and friends would want to know. You need a healthy support system during this time.
9. Develop good recourses on **grief management** and **stress management** (i.e. take a course, read a book, download a podcast, or download a good article—this is needed and important).
10. Initially, you need some idle time but **transition back to activity as soon as you feel you can.**
11. **Watch for fixation on the incident.** Limit your time seeking news, media updates or watching TV.
12. **Do not become obsessed with finding reasons why** regarding the tragedy. *Answers do not heal our hearts!*
13. **“Watch the crowd.”** Too many people around you can drain you. Know yourself. Do not let yourself be angered when people who do care make stupid statements to you—they do not know what you are going through.
14. **Do something that will help!** Consider journaling your feelings, find a truth for your life, honor a life in some way, help someone else, write a book, write a letter, cook a meal for someone, leave a flower, paint a picture, plant a tree, donate blood, raise money for a cause, tell a story, remember the loss, make a memorial, build an altar—do something to manage the stress of this moment. Memorialize this event in a tangible way.
15. **You are not alone in this**—please, do not act like it. You need others. They need you. Find other people and minister to them. It may help you both/all.
16. **“Watch your stress voices.”** What does your body do to tell you that you are under stress? (i.e. legs ache, diarrhea, fatigue, irritability, appetite changes, etc.) **Again, if you need professional help*, seek it, it is okay!** Contact a counselor, pastor, and/or chaplain. *You will be glad you did!* (If I (Pastor Joe) can help, call me at 775.827.3227 or email me at joe@southreno.com. I would love to visit with you.)

The Three T's

Counselors tell us initially in a critical incident to remember the “Three T’s”:
Talk (it out), **Tears** (express what you’re feeling) and **Time** (healing always takes some time.)

*10 Ways to Recognize Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:

Source: American Counseling Association. Reprinted with Permission

The symptoms discussed in this document (on the other side) are, in many ways, *normal responses to abnormal situations*. Sometimes, however, other, more severe symptoms (listed below) may surface several weeks or months after the tragedy. This is called POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD). If you experience these symptoms longer than a few weeks following a major event, you need to strongly consider getting appropriate treatment. Contact a counselor, pastor, or chaplain soon:

1. Re-experiencing the event through vivid memories or flash backs.
2. Feeling “emotionally numb.”
3. Feeling overwhelmed by what should normally be considered an everyday situation and diminished interest in performing normal tasks or pursuing usual interests.
4. Crying uncontrollably.
5. Isolating oneself from family and friends and avoiding social situations.
6. Relying increasingly on alcohol or drugs to get through the day.
7. Feeling extremely moody, irritable, angry, suspicious or frightened.
8. Having difficulty falling or staying asleep, sleeping too much and experiencing nightmares.
9. Feeling guilty about surviving the event or being unable to solve the problem, change the event or prevent the disaster.
10. Feeling fears and sense of doom about the future.

J. Biblical Insight about Feelings and Emotions

All Scriptures are printed the English Standard Version

Read slowing through the following Scriptures and decide which ones are just for you. Memorize them and let them stabilize you.

Philippians 4:6-7 - *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Proverbs 29:11 - *A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.*

Proverbs 15:18 - *A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.*

Romans 12:2 - *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Galatians 5:16-24 - *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ...*

Ecclesiastes 3:4 - *A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

Joshua 1:9 - *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."*

Romans 12:15 - *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

2 Corinthians 10:5 - *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*

Romans 12:9 - *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.*

Proverbs 15:13 - *A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.*

Ephesians 4:26-27 - *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger and give no opportunity to the devil.*

Philippians 4:13 - *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

2 Timothy 1:7 - *For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

John 11:35 - *Jesus wept.*

1 John 4:16 - So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Colossians 2:8 - See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Matthew 10:28 - And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Ephesians 6:13 - Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Isaiah 30:15 - For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." But you were unwilling,

Proverbs 25:28 - A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

Ecclesiastes 3:4-6 - A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

Psalms 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Ephesians 4:26 - Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Proverbs 16:32 - Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

Hebrews 10:23 - Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Galatians 5:19-21 - Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

2 Corinthians 5:7 - For we walk by faith, not by sight.

1 Corinthians 14:33 - For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints,

Psalms 4:1-8 - Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer! O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him. Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds and be silent. Offer right sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord. ...

Proverbs 17:22-23 - A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. The wicked accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the ways of justice.

Colossians 3:1-25 - *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ...*

Mark 10:21 - *And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."*

Galatians 5:1-26 - *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. ...*

Proverbs 3:5-6 - *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

Colossians 3:2 - *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*

John 8:31-32 - *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

1 Peter 5:7 - *Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

John 11:1-57 - *Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So, the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ...*

Proverbs 4:23 - *Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

Jeremiah 32:41 - *I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.*

Psalms 23:1-6 - *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ...*

James 1:20 - *For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

Jeremiah 31:3 - *The Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have continued my faithfulness to you.*

Psalms 11:5 - *The Lord tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.*

Ephesians 5:15 - *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,*

Romans 1:16 - *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Matthew 20:34 - *And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.*

1 John 3:15 - *Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

Galatians 5:22 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

Galatians 5:22-25 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.*

Matthew 12:33-34 - *“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

Esther 5:1-14 - *On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, in front of the king's quarters, while the king was sitting on his royal throne inside the throne room opposite the entrance to the palace. And when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. And the king said to her, “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom.” And Esther said, “If it please the king, let the king and Haman come today to a feast that I have prepared for the king.” Then the king said, “Bring Haman quickly, so that we may do as Esther has asked.” So, the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared. ...*

James 1:19-20 - *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

Colossians 3:15 - *And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.*

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.*

Acts 17:10-11 - *The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*

1 Corinthians 14:1-40 - *Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to*

prophecy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. ...

John 15:5 - *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

Isaiah 62:5 - *For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.*

Exodus 33:19 - *And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.*

Colossians 3:8 - *But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.*

Romans 8:6 - *For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*

Genesis 6:6 - *And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.*

2 Corinthians 13:14 - *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

Romans 8:1 - *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Romans 6:1-23 - *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ...*

Romans 1:17 - *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

John 14:1 - *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.*

Matthew 5:4 - *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Proverbs 28:26 - *Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.*

Hebrews 10:24-25 - *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Hebrews 2:1-18 - *Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ...*

Philippians 1:8- *For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.*

Ephesians 5:18 - *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,*

Galatians 6:9 - *And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.*

Jeremiah 17:9 - *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

Isaiah 43:4 - *Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.*

Proverbs 10:18 - *The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever utters slander is a fool.*

Revelation 1:1 - *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,*

Romans 3:4 - *By no means! Let God be true though everyone were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged."*

John 17:23 - *I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.*

John 14:2 - *In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?*

Matthew 9:36 - *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Hosea 11:1 - *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.*

Ezekiel 5:13 - *"Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will vent my fury upon them and satisfy myself. And they shall know that I am the Lord—that I have spoken in my jealousy—when I spend my fury upon them.*

Psalms 103:13 - *As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.*

Psalms 30:1-12 - *I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me. O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. O Lord, you have brought up my soul from; you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit. Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning. ...*

Deuteronomy 7:7-8- *It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

Mark 3:5 - *And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.*

