

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Introduction to Emotional Equations : A Reframe

Let's begin with a story – the first equation in the listing of Emotional Equations developed by Chip Conley was uppermount in his mind and experience in 2012 when he was experiencing a particularly tough time in his life : In an interview he explained:

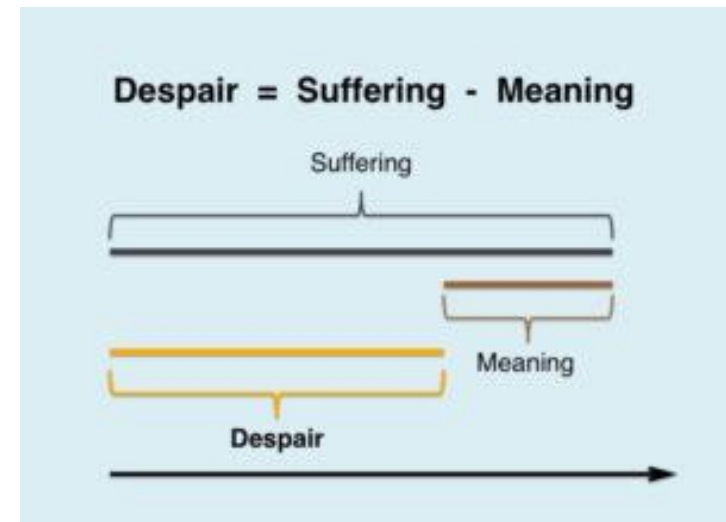
“I was reading 'Man's Search for Meaning' buy Viktor Frankl – whom we have mentioned earlier in this EQ module. Frankl's perspective is that meaning is the fuel of life, and he tested this theory while he was in a concentration camp: Can the idea of meaning actually keep people alive?

At the time I was the CEO of a company of 3,500 employees. When you're a CEO or any kind of leader, you're the emotional thermostat of those whom you're leading. At that time, I felt that my emotional thermostat was very low. A lot of things were going wrong in my life, and I was almost in a state of desperation.

I intuited that I needed to take the profound content of Man's Search for Meaning and turn it into something that was actionable on a daily basis.

We are what we measure in many ways, and if we think about it measurement and math is about relationships—the relationship of number, and I decided that maybe it could be about the relationship of emotions. Specifically, I wanted to find a meaning equation that was solution-driven, simple and concise. At the time I had no idea that there was going to be a book in it. I was just trying to fix my life.

This is the equation I started with: despair equals suffering minus meaning. Let me explain the “sacred algebra.” If you're going through a period of suffering, like Victor Frankl did in a concentration camp, or as I was at the time in my own mental prison, it's as though everything is going wrong, as though you're in a downward spiral. When you're in that place in life, suffering feels like a constant.



in Buddhist philosophy and thinking, the first noble truth of Buddhism is that suffering is ever present. So we can think of suffering as the constant and yet also, think of meaning as the variable.

If you remember back to algebra, there is often a constant and a variable in an equation. So, if suffering remains the constant, then when you increase meaning (the variable) despair goes down.”

It seemed like simple Math. So, from this thinking, Chip took an inventory of his own emotional equations, then in 2012 wrote the book Emotional Equations.

In this part of the EQ module we will explore how we might use his work with our Mentee. In order to support them to find greater meaning, when they are experiencing suffering.

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Introduction to Emotional Equations : A Reframe

The idea behind emotional equations is that they can help us understand and use them to master what is happening emotionally at any given time. So emotional equations assist us in our self regulation, through the process of reframing our interpretation of our emotional states, by providing some bigger context and exploring deeper meaning. We are all in the perfect storm of different chaotic events happening constantly across the planet. Impacting us personally, relationally, socially, nationally and globally. And is it any surprise the we may become overwhelmed and loose hope.

These emotional equations give us the opportunity to step outside of the emotion, and lift ourselves up through gaining insight that will increase our resilience and stamina. Adversity is often where we are forged and re-formed in the fires of destruction and re-birth.

Chip Conley refers to this process as one of becoming your own 'Emotional Concierge'. His approach practiced by himself and other leaders enable to stretch into better versions of themselves – as emotions will no longer get the best of you, but will represent the best in you.

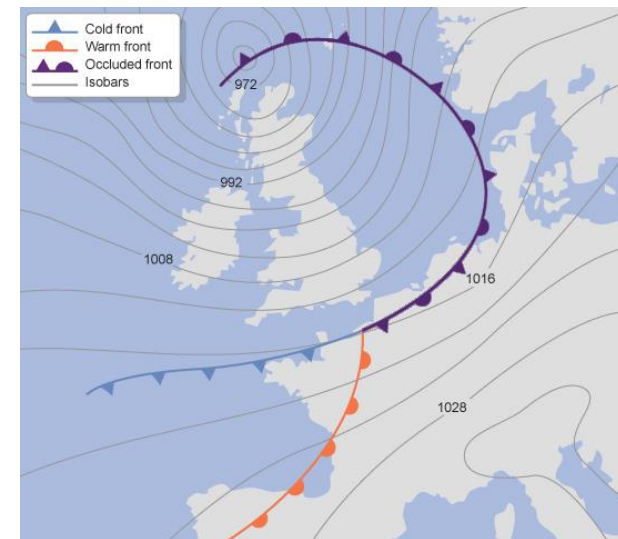
### A Quick Recap : Emotions

Emotion from the Greek, means **TO MOVE**. (Energy + Motion) ; thus they are vehicles for transforming your life. When an emotion is not moving through us, we find ourselves in states of depression, or bottling up anger that can lead ultimately to an explosion – often thrust upon those who are closest to us.

### Weather as a Metaphor

Sun, Rain, Hail, Wind or Gale – are never stationary – they come and they go. Every weather event includes a variety of ingredients, such as barometric pressure, humidity, temperature, elevation that helps cook up the specific weather being experienced in any moment. This is also true of emotions. **EG.** Disappointment might be a combination of surprise and sadness. Joy may be bittersweet.

Developing your own internal barometer and internal weather woman/man enables the development of a deeper understanding as to what is brewing up inside at any particular time.



# Working with Emotional Equations

## How Many Emotions

In other parts of this module we have focused quite a lot on the Seven Universal emotions – this was to assist in making life a bit easier as we are coming to grips with the complexity of the emotional landscape. However, it is not surprisingly more complex than this. So, as there have now been identified more than 800 emotions, and that for some reason the human condition generates two-thirds with a negative connotation, it is time to see how to handle this greater complexity. Because there are so many identifiable emotions it can be hard to sort them out, and we end up with the situation of experiencing ‘mixed emotions’/. Psychologist Robert Plutchik has created a useful framework for our how our emotions interrelate, by placing them on a primary colour wheel. As per below.

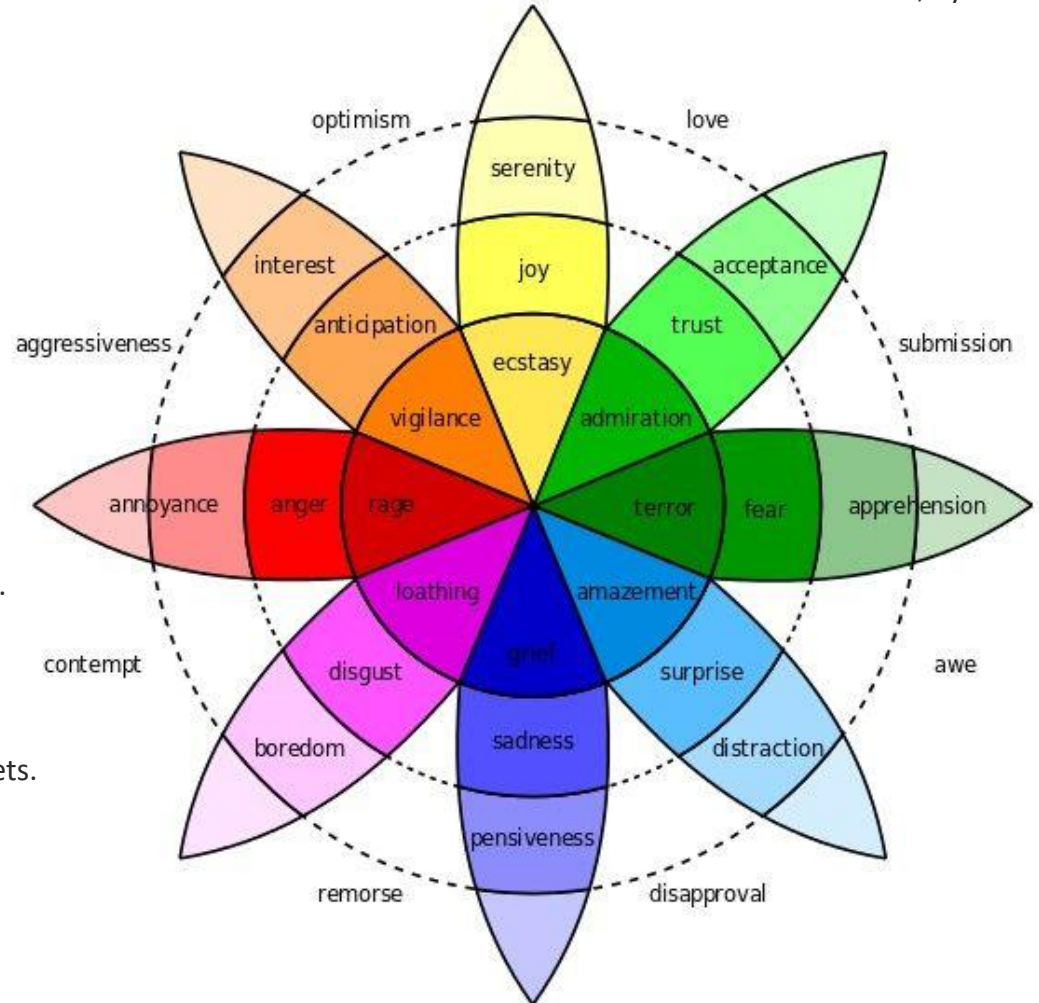
### Plutchik’s Eight Primary Emotions Include:

- Joy
- Anticipation
- Anger
- Disgust
- Sadness
- Surprise
- Fear
- Acceptance

And around these eight there are a number of variations, that illustrate differences in intensity. The wheel is arranged so that the opposite emotions are also represented by opposite colours on the colour wheel.

### “ERO”. ( Event + Reaction = Outcome)

As we learned in the session on the Amygdala, it is our reaction to an event rather than the event, and this is driven by our beliefs and mindsets. Our programming which interprets the reality, and creates the reaction.



# Working with Emotional Equations

## Re-defining and Re-creating your Relationship with your Emotions

Letting an emotion move through you is healthy. Repressing it, or letting it define you is not. In order to move it along we need to have the skill of **'Getting on the Balcony'** where we are able to "witness" and monitor. This means developing the capacity to be acutely conscious of the first signs of an emotion as it arises, what shades from the colour wheel are accompanying it as it arises. It is here that Emotional Equations can be used as a personal GPS to help the navigation of this challenging domain of our emotional landscape.

Emotional Equations are designed to assist in detection, translation, harnessing and challenging emotions productively so they become purposeful and focused for creative action, rather than scattered, chaotic and destructive.

### The Math

As mentioned prior, an equation in math is just a way of expressing a relationship between two or more things or forces. Emotional Equations deepen our understanding by looking at the relationship between emotions and how the mix can create a third. At the risk of being tedious – let's do a quick simple math review in order to understand how the math is used in these equations.

#### Addition and Subtraction

When we add one thing to another, it gets bigger (and possibly more complex), when you subtract one thing from another the positive number gets smaller and closer to zero. EG. According to Robert Plutchik, if you add the primary emotion of anticipation and joy, you'll get a secondary emotion called optimism. Then if you take optimism and subtract the joy – you are left with anticipation. It's just basic math.

$$\text{Optimism} - \text{Joy} = \text{Anticipation}$$

Lets do another example. If you take regret and subtract responsibility – you are left with disappointment. Which is a basic and primary emotion.

$$\text{Regret} = \text{Disappointment} + \text{Responsibility}$$

**NOTE** : not all of the equations can be mixed and matched. The author has presented those which are helpful, so we invite you to take them as is, and use them, rather than seeking to do mathematical gymnastics with them

# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Despair} = \text{Suffering} - \text{Meaning}$$

## Multiplication

Multiplication when relating numbers, ends up with a more combustible effect. It shows that there is a more potent relationship between the elements.

**EG .** The thinking behind the equation  $\text{Anxiety} = \text{Uncertainty} \times \text{Powerlessness}$  is multiplied rather than added because the author feels that – what you don't know about (uncertainty) and what you can't control (powerlessness) creates the emotion of anxiety, which is greater than the sum of its parts. So the closer your sense of uncertainty and or powerlessness gets to zero – the greater the anxiety.

## Division

Division is the most prevalent type of equation in science, physics and algebra. This is because when we change the elements of a division equation, it results in more dynamic consequences than addition or subtraction. To work with division we need to now include the numerator and the denominator. The numerator is the number that sits on top, and the denominator on the bottom of the equation. The denominator in particular has a big impact on the equation's result. EG. The equation  $24 / 2 = 12$  ; if you increase the denominator from 2 to 4 then ;  $24/4 = 6$ . A big impact on the result – cutting the total in half.

## Working Through the Equations

We want to begin with the big idea of the role of Meaning. Following on from what motivated the author to develop this library of work. This first equation is very powerful because it asks us to step into a reframe and look with the perspective of the AND position. Not the either /or.

Suffering often happens at the intersection of old and new thinking. We suffer when we hold onto perspectives that no longer serve us, and we fail to see a new way to reframe our lives. Inquiring into the assumptions that sit at the root of the suffering, and asking whether they are still valid. We do this by revisiting our purpose and our core values – and ask the question “How can this difficulty I am experiencing support me in living out my purpose?”

You can transcend your suffering and get in touch with its meaning by developing a narrative or story or theme that helps you see, how in the long run the experience will serve you on your life path. Journal writing, story boards, a support group or spiritual practice can all help here. **WATCH OUT!** take care not allow these expressions to have you wallowing, and vice versa don't become so rational and objective that there is a separation and you lose sight of the concrete. And don't get distracted, take some time to describe the new you using adjectives – that describe who you are now, given what you've been through. These are the gifts. AND finally do look for what is right in front of you – and ask “What is life asking of me now that it has presented me with this opportunity?”

# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Disappointment} = \text{Expectations} - \text{Reality}$$

## Working Through the Equations

Disappointment resides in the same building as regret. It has a higher charge because it speaks to choices that have been made, that have led to unsatisfactory outcomes, and your role in its creation. You didn't get what you wanted, but unlike frustration – you don't feel you can impact the outcome, it is a done deal. Disappointment recognises that something is over, and that is why it often comes with a sense of deflation or defeat. We are in fact, walking expectation machines.

The math in this equation is very straight forward. The higher your expectations, the more potential for disappointment. In order to impact this equation you can do one of two things:

- Reduce your expectations (which can be hard to stomach if you believe expectations fuel your success)
- Influence your sense of reality

People with high expectations often don't prepare themselves or "emotionally cushion" themselves for disappointment. So they are less able to deal with it when it arises. Compare this with those who expect the worst, and that getting hopes up will result in disappointment – they will tend to give themselves a low ceiling. Where to set our expectations? This is where our view of reality becomes relevant. Let's look at what social scientist Alex Michalos said about this in his studies on how we perceive the quality of experience, our sense of reality about what has happened. There are four gaps that can be considered when looking at this:

- What you have versus what you want. ("I want a beautiful green lawn")
- What you have versus what you think other people have. ("My neighbour's grass is greener")
- What you have, and the best experience of what you've had in the past. ("I don't like Astrofurf, I miss proper grass like I used to have")
- What you have and what you feel you deserve. ("I've worked my tail off for this grass")

The key to dealing with this equation, is not that we need lower our expectations, but our sense of entitlement that creates the bitter disappointment when things don't go our way. And the key question is to ask "Am I frustrated or disappointed?" If you are frustrated there will be a sense that you can still take action to influence the outcome. If its disappointment, pick yourself up and move on.

Ratchet down your expectations in anticipation of an outcome. Don't do this prematurely though as you may create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Much of this is thinking through the circles of Concern, Influence and Control. Letting go of what you can't control, and knowing when you have lost your ability to influence the outcome. When this is done, taking the opportunity to reflect by asking "In the bigger picture of my whole life, how important is this result really and what can I learn from it?"

# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Regret} = \text{Disappointment} + \text{Responsibility}$$

## Working Through the Equations

Anyone with a sense of responsibility can feel regret, which can be sharp, bittersweet or deeply haunting. A cloud that may pervade for years. When you regret your actions more than your choices, regret can become remorse. Remorse may sting more than regret, but regret has it over disappointment due to the hindsight of ‘woulda; shoulda; coulda!’ done something different. The case of “if only”.

Regret isn't totally negative as it can motivate us to correct our mistakes, learn from them – both of which will assist us in the future. Regret arises from our actions and also from our non-actions – those we wished in hindsight we had taken. Regret, does lack immediacy. It comes from reflection or the insight gained with time.

Regret is a ‘First World Emotion’, due to the plethora of choices available. However, whilst having lots of choice can feel like freedom and be a pleasant distraction, too much creates a kind of paralysis and in some instances stress. Choice is both a blessing and a curse as it increases the need to gather more data, and create the risk of “analysis paralysis”, or increase the expectation of how grand the chosen option should be, and increase the likelihood that you'll feel regret and a sense of blame if you make the “wrong” choice.

Examine your sense of responsibility. The equation is very clear. The distinguishing factor over and above disappointment is a sense of responsibility in the matter. Regret may not be totally logical – this can happen when we are perfectionists or feel a need for control, whereby there is an overidentification with the responsibility part of the equation. How do we deal with regret?

- Look at short-term pain as being less significant than long-term angst. That's not easy perhaps. There are two questions that help us here. “Is it repeatable?” and “Can it be repaired?” If its not repeatable – don't say no. If its not repairable – don't say yes. Then there is the great opportunity – like everything in life to:
- Turn regret into a lesson. The deeper the regret the more will be learned. Using it as a wisdom builder for how to make future decisions.
- Teach others by sharing your story, this can be cathartic and unpacking the lessons is healing.
- Make amends if they need to be made. This releases yourself and any others who were disappointed.
- Shift to a mindset of being a “satisfier” rather than a “maximiser”. How much time, money and anguish is worth trying to get all the options in order to make a choice?
- Keep a “Pro” and “Con” list and over a few days of consideration, as they arise, list motives and thoughts. Get them together in one view, give each a weighting. When there are two, one on each side – strike them out. If there is a pro equal to two cons, strike out all three. If there are two cons to three pro, strike out all five. Proceeding through the list like this enables the balance to emerge. Creating clearer point of judgment that is less likely to result in a rash step.

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

$$\text{Jealousy} = \frac{\text{Mistrust}}{\text{Self - Esteem}}$$

$$\text{Envy} = \frac{(\text{Pride} + \text{Vanity})}{\text{Kindness}}$$

Jealousy is a complex emotion that is familiar to most of us. When it strikes it can be accompanied by a whole host of other emotions, from anger to humiliation, betrayal to sorrow that follow in its wake. It is the leading cause of marital homicide and violence. The issue with this emotion is that it can masquerade as love. There is a fine line between devoted love and compulsive jealousy.

Men's and women's brains respond differently when in the midst of a jealous fit. In men testosterone receptors are triggered – those involved in sexual and aggressive behaviours. In women the activation is associated with the region of the brain that seeks to understand others intentions and trustworthiness. Both men and women experience a dark enchantment with the possessiveness known as jealousy.

Let's look at the equation. The denominator is weighty so solving for it helps us to understand the emotional puzzle. There are two key variables in Jealousy – that of self esteem and that of the level of mistrust. Self-esteem has the biggest impact. A Psychology Today survey has found that those who exhibit high amounts of jealousy tend to show three personality characteristics:

- They had a low opinion of themselves
- They saw a large discrepancy between how they really are and how they would ideally like to be
- They valued visible achievements like being wealthy, famous, well-liked, and especially physically attractive.

At the root of all self esteem is a sense of worthiness. And the key question is whether there is a feeling of worthiness based on just who you are, as opposed to what you do or are going to do, what you wear, how you look, how much money is in your bank account. Since jealousy is an 'anticipatory emotion' when someone isn't feeling good about themselves they may tend to imagine the worst – in order to soften the blow. Or imagining a partner being attracted to others may appear as a coping mechanism for the expectation of disappointment. Comparison is a key consideration here. Being 'good enough' for a choice of partner whom you perceive as either "above" or "below" you can influence feelings about how stable the relationship is. Matching with someone who feels equal gives greater confidence that the relationship has legs and will last.

The numerator. The less you trust your partner (or the world in general) the more jealous you are likely to be. From a contextual perspective, those who are more anxious about the world are less likely to be trusting and this can spill into personal dynamics. Beyond this is the extent to which you feel your partner is trustworthy. There are many things that may influence the answer to this question.



# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

$$\text{Jealousy} = \frac{\text{Mistrust}}{\text{Self - Esteem}}$$

$$\text{Envy} = \frac{(\text{Pride} + \text{Vanity})}{\text{Kindness}}$$

- Does s/he tell the truth?
- Has he/she admitted cheating on you? or in past relationships?
- In the past have they left a relationship when the going gets tough?

We can put the mirror on ourself and answer the same question for ourselves. To discover if we are projecting and blaming them for with your own issues. It is critical to take responsibility for our own insecurities. Jealousy provides a vehicle for looking at what is creating these strong emotions. Jealousy is more painful than envy due to its very personal nature. So, as a starting point doing an audit of the self through running a checklist against your self worth and self esteem, both independently of and in relationship to the other AND reflecting on your level of trust, your own natural tendency along with whether you feel your partner is trustworthy or not. Being conscious to the ingredients of jealousy will help moderate the influence.

Identify what you can learn from your jealousy, as it can be a wise teacher and a test of your sense of reality.

- Seek to break obsessive negative loops of thinking about either yourself or the other – as when this loop entrances us, it doesn't allow new information or new perspectives in
- Share with someone who is an objective third party and is willing to not only talk through your thinking but will also challenge thinking that is twisted or unrealistic
- Ponder whether it is low trust or low self-esteem that has allowed this jealousy to arise
- **AND**, you may find that the other doesn't deserve your trust, in which case you have a choice, to move on.
- When in doubt, do the work needed to build your self esteem. Making the denominator bigger is the most direct way to not being held captive.
- To do this ask yourself "What activities or actions illicit joy in you?"
  - Being of service to another
  - Spending time in nature
  - Petting animals
  - Providing positive feedback and thanks to colleagues or friends
  - Spoiling yourself with some pampering
  - Anything that will grow confidence across your life more fully

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

$$\text{Jealousy} = \frac{\text{Mistrust}}{\text{Self - Esteem}}$$

$$\text{Envy} = \frac{(\text{Pride} + \text{Vanity})}{\text{Kindness}}$$

**Envy.** Is an emotion we often don't want to admit. Even though we may say to someone "I envy you" what we really mean is I admire you. At the heart of real envy (one of the seven deadly sins) is playing the game of social comparison – which is a natural tendency to measure and compare ourselves to others around us. Envy lurks in the shadow and it can create a whole world of justification around itself. Research further shows that resentment follows envy, whereby there is pleasure derived in the misfortune of others. And as with jealousy, low self esteem is a contributor. That said benign envy may involve admiration and a motivation to take charge in one's own life.

Envy and narcissism are cut from the same cloth. And Vanity and Pride as they appear in the numerator of the equation are often used synonymously, whilst we can be proud without being vain. Pride relates to the opinion we have of ourself, whilst vanity is about what we would have people think of us – it is the addition of greed that creates the envious fire. The virtue that counteracts envy is kindness or a spirit of generosity. When cultivating such a mindset, it enables us to feel encouraged and enthusiastic about the good fortune of others.

**A Small Reflection :** Take a moment to bring to mind someone who feels like a rival to you – someone you compare yourself to. (This person might not even know you), his or her positive fortune in life makes you feel less successful, that you are a 'less than' in comparison. Now, imagine this person receiving some kind of honour, award, recognition, financial benefit or other gift that could easily have also been yours. Feeling a bit envious? **NOW THE SWITCH.** Step forward to stand inside the body of this person. Imagine yourself being them at that moment. How would you be feeling? How does it feel to consider the positive elation this person is experiencing?

Most people when they do this activity realise that they are able to empathise, and when this happens it moves them out of pride and vanity.

Ask yourself "What can envy teach me?" What makes you feel envious is an indicator of what you truly value.

- What can you learn from the other that you are able to apply to yourself?
- How do you shift out of spending time in pride and being vain about how deserving you are and focus on the work needed to get the outcomes you are wanting?
- How might you measure your growth and success in terms of yourself, your own past and standards (internal locus of control) rather than from others
- Reflecting on how you would also like the support and delight of another for your own achievements, creates a charitable spirit
- The gift – is the enablement of yourself to step up your own desire and maximise your own potential as well as celebrating the success of others

In these two equations we see that Jealousy can teach us about what we treasure in our life today and envy can teach us about what we wish to manifest in the future.

# Working with Emotional Equations

Anxiety = Uncertainty x Powerlessness

## Working Through the Equations

About 20% of the population suffers from some kind of anxiety disorder, whether that be it's a generalised anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic attacks, or social phobia. Anxiety is the result of feeling that you are ill-equipped to cope with something you are about to face. Its potency is in the anticipation of an event or experience that is yet to happen, or that you imagine will happen. It is driven by a fear of the unknown and a belief that we have no control over what may come. The issue is 'where are we in time?'

We invite anxiety when we allow our minds to race into the future. The two variables in the equation are what you don't know (uncertainty) and what you can't control (powerlessness) and because powerlessness feels debilitating we use multiplication to produce an exponential effect. That does mean that if you can influence one of the variables toward zero, then there will be a significant reduction in anxiety, and better placed to respond. Anxiety does bring up the feeling of 'butterflies in the stomach'. This is because our gut holds neurotransmitters that regulate our mood. Recent research shows us that around 95% of serotonin is actually produced in the gut. Self-medication (sugar, alcohol, caffeine) and prescribed medicines for anxiety can exacerbate symptoms in the long run.

Waiting results in distress. Studies show that when given a choice of a bigger shock now, rather than a reduced one at some time in the future, most people prefer to get it over with, even though it creates greater suffering. So, what is the opposite of this equation. This is when the mindset is one of certainty, being an all-powerful being strutting bravado. This behaviour can be an overcompensation – used as a coping mechanism. Anxiety often hits high-functioning over achieving types – those who like to be in control of everything in their lives. So let's speak about the role of control.

The need for and yet the illusion of control is a key factor in this equation, as we discovered earlier in this phase when we looked at the Circle of Control, Influence and Concern. Realistically all the dynamics we are confronted with either directly or indirectly can be classified into one of the three, and yet – particularly those driven by success, are blinded to this reality, believing if they are only able to control all the inputs and the context, they can get the outcome they want – they can control the result. This can be particularly difficult those who have a high perfectionist streak – and as a leader what we end up seeing is an Autocrat or Dictator dynamic.

So when anxiety comes up what can we do about it in the moment?

- Well the first this is to pause and breathe. Deeply into the abdomen order to help calm our butterflies. (this is a somatic action – which is very useful in grounding and keeping you stable)
- Get in touch with where it is in the body and apply the 'Great Disappearing Technique' – ( show on the next page )
- Create a balance sheet of what you know and don't know – identifying what is in your control and influence (see Circles of Control, Influence and Concern)

# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Anxiety} = \text{Uncertainty} \times \text{Powerlessness}$$

## Working Through the Equations

- Ask yourself whether you might be overblowing the uncertainty, overestimating the danger
- Do an audit to determine whether you are really so ill-equipped. What resources and skills do you have that are relevant? Where have you coped before?
- Undertake an audit. Create a formal four column 'balance sheet' of uncertainty and powerlessness.
  - "What I know"
  - "What I don't know"
  - "What I can influence"
  - "What I have no control over"

Then fill in the columns. You will then see the reality of what you can impact and what is more certain in the situation.

- Create a conscious "worry period" and allow yourself to worry even catastrophise as much as you want during that allotted time. It sounds strange but schedule dedicated worry time – make lists of all the things that can go wrong, all the collateral damage – get them outside of the turmoil in your brain and onto a piece of paper outside of yourself. **THEN THE IMPORTANT BIT.** Let them go, knowing you have the opportunity to re-engage later or the next day.
- Use a therapist as a sounding board and also safe space to express without fear of being judged
- Extreme it up! This is where you over exaggerate – you take the issue at the heart of the anxiety, and run through a game of dominos'. Thinking of the worst that can happen, and if that happens what does that result in that is the worst that can happen ... etc. Once you've created the worst possible case scenario, you then stand back and reflect on the probability of all the dominos falling.
- Extreme it in the opposite direction! Ask yourself "If this were happening for a higher purpose or for a bigger reason – what might that be?" What might be the profound message and future life that the suffering is preparing you for?
- Paradoxical Intention. One means of coping with anxiety is to detach from it. **EG.** If you have insomnia and get anxious about not being able to sleep, instead of tossing and turning, you get up.
- Considering the severity of consequences. There are some things in life that are important and worth paying attention to and there are others that are not. Before any mental breakthrough we need to make a 'Pause Through'

### The Great Disappearing Technique

Used for reducing and disappearing pain, pressure, negative emotions, depressions, irritability, restlessness, anxiety, fatigue, tiredness, boredom etc.

- Scan the body for a sensation, pressure, pain, tightness or block.
- Where is it? (relationship to other parts of the body)
- What shape is it? (exact measurement)
- How deep is it?
- What colour is it?
- What texture is it? (hard like metal or wood, or softer like rubber, like a liquid)
- On a scale of one to ten, where ten is the worst, you have ever experienced, what number would you give it?

**(Repeat the process until it disappears)**

# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Calling} = \frac{\text{Pleasure}}{\text{Pain}}$$

## Working Through the Equations

We all have examples of those we know are living or lived their calling. Examples are as wide as Mother Teresa, Oprah Winfrey, Nelson Mandela, Greta Thunberg, Jane Goodall, Elon Musk, Leonardo De-Vinci are some who come to mind. But we don't have to be famous to engage in our calling. A calling feels like a constant tug – that can be really annoying when we aren't willing to listen. How many of us spend lives distracted from our true destiny and deaf to its call. When, we listen, hear and respond to that call – it energises you. A job that has no meaning depletes and drains you whilst living your calling enables the tapping into of a deep inner reservoir of energy. We might call it enabling the creation of our personal masterpiece.

Turning to Pleasure. It is often associated with short term gratification. It is an aesthetic, of both the best and worst kind. We can use it as a distraction to divert us from our pain. Our pain is often a shell that contains us, within false boundaries that keep us from surrendering to the full pleasure of our capacity to live our calling. When we live our calling we have the opportunity to enter what is known as the state of 'flow', whereby our attention is so focused that any pain has no chance to register in our consciousness. The bottom line is, the more you're living your calling – the more pleasure dominates over pain. When we hold down a job, there is a requirement to 'fit into it'. A calling (sometimes called a Vocation – although this is probably not as powerful as a calling which is more pervasive beyond our work life) fits into who we are. The key is that the calling comes from being intrinsically motivated.

As mentioned a calling can move beyond the work we do and we may in fact find we have more than one, and as we move through life our calling may morph or an new one that may appear as if out of nowhere. Callings can also decline, they start to loose their gleam, and dissatisfaction starts to set in. And the calling is for a transition. However, we may not be fully clear about what is seeking to emerge. Grasping on in order to get the 'old mojo back' generally doesn't work when the passion or the meaning is gone. So how to land on it ?:

- Reflect on a time or experience in your life when you had a deep sense of pleasure that overrode any suffering you may have been experiencing at the time. EG. Running an marathon, physically having a baby, volunteering, crafting a art piece for someone you care about – whatever. What is the energy that emerges in this place?
- Don't worry if your calling is beyond work, this is the case for many people. If so, choosing to spend enough time in your non-work calling is important, as you never know what will happen as a result.
- Evaluate your internal 'want-to' (pleasure) verses 'have-to' (pain) ratio. Do this by drawing up two columns, want to on the left and have to on the right. Write down all the elements that make up both day to day existence in your work and overall theme and purpose of your life. Look at the balance. An obligation is not a calling.
- Does your work energise or deplete you? "What am I becoming as a result of my work?" This question personalises the calling fitting you, not you fitting a job.
- Do you feel the invisible hands of synchronicity? Are you able to let go and trust there is a path with a purpose that is bigger than you could imagine? To those who are wilful, surrender may sound like defeat, yet surrendering is one of the most courageous and powerful acts we can take to pursue our true purpose and calling

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

Workaholism = What are you Running From?  
What are you Living For?

There is an interesting language we use when we speak in business. The Japanese have a word **karoshi** “death from overwork”. But we use language like “drop-dead dates”; “deadlines”; we are “terminated”; we “drown in debt”; and a “dying to get a job”; we “kill time”; work with “skeleton crews”; we get “crazed” when we are busy. All of this indicates a toxic mindset and thus relationship with our work in many countries. Following the exploration of calling, it seems appropriate to discuss workaholism – because often people are unable to distinguish between the two.

Workaholism is a kind of addiction. Most addictions are not socially acceptable, yet there is a bit of a blurred line where this one is concerned, given that most people need to work to survive. In some cultures workaholics are even glorified. However, it is an addiction that can result in devastation of burn out and other stress related diseases. And it is not easy to treat.

Addictions are about “running from” that results in an intoxication or entrancement with something that alters our mood. Under the surface of addiction are the emotions of unworthiness, shame, fear of intimacy, fear of failure or even fear of success. Busyness becomes an escape, an excuse for not confronting aspects of life that create fear or even terror. The following 10 questions are designed to explore our relationship to our work:

- Do you often neglect family, friends, your health and other important elements of life because you get so wrapped up in work? Is it impossible to put down your smart phone?
- If you created a pie chart of your sense of esteem and confidence as a person, what % would come from your work as opposed to the balance of your life?
- At social gatherings with non-work people, what % of your time do you spend speaking about work?
- Are you a perfectionist who prefers to do the work yourself, rather than delegate – since that means losing control, and others can’t do it as well as you?
- Do you have a dictionary of excuses as to why you have to work so hard?
- Do you believe that money, fame or professional respect will solve all other problems in life?
- Is your sense of self esteem too reliant on others’ opinions of you?
- Do you have difficulty sleeping because your mind is racing? Do you have an addiction to adrenalin, or the rush of completing a task or saving the day?
- Is it easier for you to logically understand emotions rather than allow yourself to feel them? Does the word intimacy send a shiver up your spine?
- Do you know what it feels like to just sit still and do nothing?

Workaholism tends to afflict men more than women, as the latter are generally better able to express their emotions, and deal with conflict. Workaholic men will often use work as a shield against difficult family dynamics, thinking that work success will solve marital woes, when in fact workaholism makes spouses and children more resentful.

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

Workaholism = What are you Running From?  
What are you Living For?

The cycle of ‘Running From’ happens because there is a sense that in work there is control. Those addicted to success don’t escape their personal lives, they just neglect them.

So how to deal with this equation? We need to turn our attention to the denominator. “What are you Living For?” ; Lets ask it of ourself right now. On a piece of paper write out a few lines in response – describing what’s important to you. Read and reflect and re-ask the question. If you get stuck, there are some follow up questions you can also ask.

- At the end of your life, what would you want to be remembered for?
- When was the last time you experienced true joy in your life? (not just the satisfaction of getting something done) – and what bought you that joy?
- If you had 24 hours left to live, how would you spend your time? Doing – or Being?

If after this (honest) reflection you feel your work is part of your unique reason for being on the planet – then that says you’ve found your calling. However, if you find these questions difficult to consider or answer because you are so cut off from anything not work-related, that your work subsumes and occupies you, then that’s workaholism.

Workaholism can produce ‘out-of-body’ experiences or altered states. The peak performance of the work addict can be experienced as a form of ecstasy, thus the self re-enforcing cycle that gets set up. So, now a challenge! Take time – perhaps even a whole day to shift off the work-pleasure-work treadmill and seek clarity about what you are truly living for. You don’t have to do this alone. There are a couple of helpful questions to consider:

- “If you were to start over again, based on what you know is important to me (us) how could my (our) life be re-imagined?”
- “What are the small delights in my (our) life that deserve more attention and investment?”

Approaching the question of “What are you Running From” in the numerator of the equation, may be even more stretching – even frightening. But it is worth the investment in a honest appraisal and acknowledgement of ourself in the mirror. Naming it, lessens the demons. So, if you sense there is an imbalance there are a number of other things you can consider. Researchers have identified three types of workaholics, so lets consider which you might be exhibiting:

- The compulsive-dependent (staying busy whether they are productive or effective) ; Answer reflection or therapy that digs into why you fill your attention
- The perfectionist (control driven, practice makes perfect) ; look at the benefits and downsides for yourself and others. Do you really need such high standards ?
- The achievement-oriented (Are generally healthier due to their work obsession being situational) ; watch out for wanting to be the hero and creating dependencies

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

Workaholism = What are you Running From?  
What are you Living For?

As with other addictions, reducing the numerator (“What are you Running From?”) will release the stranglehold of your habitual behaviour. It is easy to be in denial, as it is an emotional loop people get caught into rather than an indictment of the human themselves. In order to break the loop steps are needed to unpack the underlying drivers – emotion and unconscious messages that drive the behaviour.

- Look at “opportunity costs” in the denominator. This is the extent to which time or money is invested into one activity, thus prohibiting investment in another. There is an opportunity cost to investing money or putting it in the bank – which is why it accrues interest. The denominator in the equation has the same impact. It provides a point of focus and attention when the focus of work becomes too over weighted.
- In order to remain conscious to this, it is useful to make a list of opportunities costs in life and factor them into your decisions in a conscious matter. Five is a good number – those five that really matter and create a platform that is a reminder of them. A screen saver shot, a vision board that you create yourself and hang in an accessible position – whatever works for you.
- When taking on new projects or extra work, then review these five and the impact on them as they are the more meaningful elements in your life. This is the opportunity to make a conscious choice about where you place attention, energy and focus.
- Workaholics Anonymous [www.workaholicsanonymous.org](http://www.workaholicsanonymous.org) has a collection of helpful resources. The program is the in the traditional 12 step format, with its meeting format that allows expression of experiences and the gaining of support from others who are also struggling.
- Workaholism isn’t an emotion. However, often workaholics are disconnected from their emotions – and using this equation can help unlock problematic dynamics that keep people stuck.
- Sometimes as in the issue of ‘karoshi’. There is also a cultural element – intense social pressure to conform - this is in fact then a difficult situation, for it may mean going against what society expects of someone in a particular role or position.
- Financial pressures may be at the root of work obsession, in which case a full audit of finances and ambitions driving them. Whether what ever is extending us is really what we want for ourself – or whether it is to impress others. Making a plan to create some balance.
- The person’s sense of identity merges with the work so that there is no separation. In which case exploring who you are beyond the work is still a helpful thing to do.
- Finally, others often experience and see workaholism more clearly before we ourselves do. Thus, being open to feedback and listening to others’ perspectives of how they experience you. Asking those closest what they would like to see differently and why is also helpful as it gets us, not only into conversation but provides us an outside perspective that is the reality of those we love and who care about us.



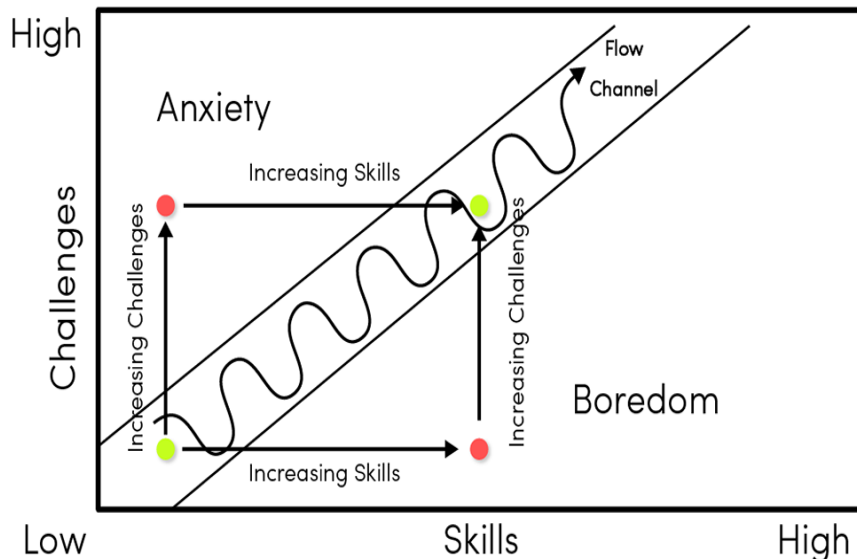
# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

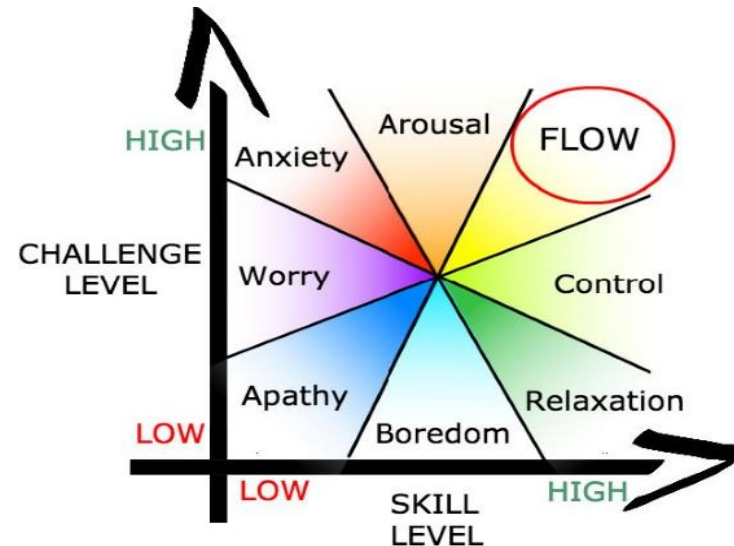
$$\text{Flow} = \frac{\text{Skill}}{\text{Challenge}}$$

According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the author of “Flow”, this state is defined as “A highly focused state of relaxed concentration the obliterates all else out of consciousness. It is the state of self-actualisation or transcendental behaviour that is euphoric”. It is in flow that that self collapses and becomes ‘one with’. When we see others in the ‘Zone’ or in ‘Flow’ it is often experienced as being divine. It is the state where there is a loss of consciousness of the self, we loose attachment to the ‘self’

We, particularly in the western world, spend our lives being obsessively aware of ourselves, what we think, how our body is, how many likes we are generating on social media, how we look and come across. The good news however, is the the Gallop Organisation (in the US) has found that 15-20% of adults experience flow on a daily basis, and the same % have never experienced it. The balance may feel it on occasion – weekly, monthly or every year or so. When we find flow at work, it enables the focusing and harnessing of our emotional strengths into single-minded immersion of activity that creates peak performance.



The 45 degree vector shows the flow channel. This defines when the challenge and the skill of the individual are balanced.



This version shows the range of emotion that can occur when an individual is out of balance. If an activity is relatively easy for the skill level, the emotion evoked will likely be boredom or relaxation. However, if the challenge is a stretch and outside the current skill level, this may tip the emotions into the worry or anxious zone.

# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Flow} = \frac{\text{Skill}}{\text{Challenge}}$$

## Working Through the Equations

There are three conditions necessary to be in a state of flow:

- Being involved in an activity that has structure, direction and a clear goal. That is why games and sport are well suited to achieving flow.
- Having a good balance between the gradient of the perceived challenge and the our own perception of our skill level, meaning we are capable to live up to the challenge.
- Receiving clear and immediate feedback, which allows performance adjustment through toggling up or down in the level of challenge in order to stay in the flow zone.

The “sweet spot” for flow is where the challenge level is 5-10% above the actual skill level. This enables the shift from learning to mastery as the challenge moves incrementally from elementary to world class. The emotional positioning of this is the boundary between anxiety and excitement rather than between control and relaxation.

Think about a time when you broke through a barrier – what was the motivation behind doing that? What emotions came into play just when you kicked into the elevated state of being and you hit that state of flow?

The realm of the ‘gifted’ may seem like an exclusive club. Mastery however isn’t reserved for a special few. And when we become impatient and give up, we confirm our belief that mastery is for others. However, sticking with practicing the skills will see improvement – until hitting the learning plateau that is part of the process. At this point we may again be tempted to give up, as the energy going in isn’t producing greater competence. Until suddenly its like a switch is thrown and the skill ratchets up to the next level. Mastery comes in fits and starts.

- Calculate your flow for different elements of your work. Plot where you are in skill and challenge level on the charts on the previous page, including the emotional zone.
- Use the follow checklist developed by Csikzzentmihalyi. How many of the eight factors are relevant? The first 3 are conditions that facilitate flow (listed at the top of the page) and the five that follow are experiential indicators of flow:
  - The ability to concentrate and focus exclusively on the activity through to completion
  - A loss of feeling self conscious when merging action and awareness – including a loss of bodily needs
  - A loss of a sense of time passing
  - A sense of personal control over the situation or activity
  - Feeling of intrinsic reward, effortless action
- Realise that flow happens when talents, aspirations and personal purpose match with what the world needs – as if the calling. The profound sense of answering the big question “why am I here?” and “what is my contribution?” enables the tapping into the field and force that creates the flow experience.

# Working with Emotional Equations

Curiosity = Wonder + Awe

## Working Through the Equations

**“I am neither especially clever, nor especially gifted. I am however, very very curious” - Albert Einstein.**

Creativity gets more attention than curiosity due to its greater tangibility. Curiosity is typically an activity without a predetermined purpose – however it is like a fertilizer for the mind, a life affirming emotion that keeps us young. It is also an escape from anxiety and depression. Curiosity is the engine of growth as it is about being open; open to learning, open to loving, open to stumbling, open to life in its fullness and richness. Curiosity also means admitting ‘we don’t know what we don’t know’. Letting go of the need to have the right answer. It is about the willingness to explore with the open mind of a child.

Curiosity is the key to creativity. It enables leaders to discover the great questions that lie beyond the ‘right’ answer. An ability that is critical in a world of relentless change.

Mindset is a critical factor in this. Research on success shows that those who believe success is due to some innate ability (fixed mindset), compared with those who believe success is due to learning (growth mindset) have very different experiences. The former fear failure, considering it a negative reflection of their abilities, so they are risk adverse and not curious. Those with a growth mindset view failure as a constructive path toward improvement.

### How open are you to seeing failure as a positive experience?

Curiosity is all about a childlike wonder that invites exploration and making new discoveries. AND as Einstein said, “the important thing is not to stop questioning”, and as such there is also a wise elder present in the energy of curiosity. Thus the two elements in the equation – of Wonder and Awe. How do they differ? Awe implies a certain respect for the unknown – we feel humbled by something bigger than ourselves – it is transformative and puts us in our place in a context of the the miraculous in an untamed world. Wonder, by contrast, bathes us in pure joy and unbridled delight.

- Take a look at your myths around curiosity. Our minds and our culture caution us against taking curiosity too far. “Curiosity killed the cat!” yet curiosity comes from a deep quality of respect and non-judgment.
- Cultivate curiosity as a habit. It is fresh and spontaneous – thus may need some remembering. If you have kids you can play a game with them (without them knowing) for every question they ask – you also ask one. To do this we utilise our old friends : **WHO; WHAT; WHERE; WHY; WHEN and HOW.**
- Find Awe – which comes in big packages and small packages – from a mountain range at sunset to baby ducklings following their mom into the water, to reading a cherished and poignant poem or piece of prose, listening to a sublime concerto and so on. Awe is defined as “profound reverence in the presence of supreme authority, moral greatness or sublimity, a mysterious sacredness”
- Channel your Peter Drucker and every year choose some new subject or skill to learn – become an expert and teach it to others. The “annual learning check-up”

# Working with Emotional Equations

Authenticity = Self-Awareness x Courage

## Working Through the Equations

Over 500 years ago, Michelangelo perceived that his marble sculptures already existed and lived inside the stone, and that he was literally releasing them through his craft. “I saw an angel in the stone, and carved to set it free!” As a metaphor for this equation. Is there an authentic self, trapped behind a mask, like David within the block of marble? And the process of finding the true self is the quest for discovering our authenticity. As children, the age of the ‘terrible twos’ announces the arrival of the first flurry into consciousness around own authentic thoughts, feelings and sensations that are separate from other people and objects.

Our identity becomes more fixed as a young adult and we craft our life around who and what we think we are. However, often that self has been moulded by our societal and familial conditioning and we get defined by peer groups, and external expectations. Our inner compass and antennae gets buried and it is only when we start to feel that something is out of alignment, we are dissatisfied with something we perhaps can’t even put our finger on or name. This is the wake up that tells us we are off our authentic path.

For many it is too challenging, and in order not to upset others who have expectations of us, it is easier to conform than do the soul searching and the confronting work of transformation that reveals our true and hidden self. Authenticity is actually at the heart of well being and healthy functioning, and the key to living a truly fulfilled life.

Taking this path means embracing two primary tools – that of self-awareness and courage. Both are essential. Self-awareness without courage means you know who you are but no-one else does. Courage without self-awareness can lead to posturing and machismo. It is the multiplication of these two that leads to our authentic self. Doing this is helped through the support of a Mentor, or a therapist, yet it is also doable as a self driven adventure. The latter however, will need the cultivation of objectivity and in order to ‘witness’ yourself from the Balcony – noticing habitual patterns of behaviour, thought, narrative and emotional responses and all without judgment.

There are four questions that can assist us in developing objectivity needed for cultivating self awareness:

1. **Who knows you best?** Would they describe you more accurately than others? When you are with them, do you show up differently? What are the key emotions you feel in their presence, and what is their source?
2. **What is the biggest masquerade you are living in your life today?** When do you feel the biggest disconnect between who you are and what you are doing? What has led you to this situation? How do you compensate for this disconnection? How does it impact the people and relationships you have?
3. **How are you frequently misperceived or interpreted in your work life and at home?** What has been your biggest career mistake and what did you learn from it?
4. **As an outside objective observer**, someone who doesn’t know you, what would they list as your 3 greatest strengths and weaknesses if they observed you for 24 hours a day for a month? How do you feel about those 6 qualities?

# Working with Emotional Equations

Authenticity = Self-Awareness x Courage

## Working Through the Equations

Courage takes great heart. 'Cour' is from the Latin root that means heart. Courage, as defined by Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman in their book 'Character Strengths and Virtues', has four subcategories.

1. **Bravery:** Standing up for something in a challenging situation. Grace under pressure that may require the ability to withstand physical and/or psychological assaults of not fitting in – being unpopular or disapproved of.
2. **Preservice:** Remaining committed long after others would have quit. If it was courage rather than stupidity – how did it feel when it paid off, did it create more courage?
3. **Honesty:** Truth telling whilst even risking dire consequences of speaking up. Living with real integrity? (think of the whistle-blower / or the one who names the elephant in the room)
4. **Zest:** When faced with long odds, the ability to remain positive with a zest for life, that gets you and others through difficult times?

### In what parts of your life – do you need to 'come out' as who you truly are?

- Create a "to-be" list. This is not a "to-do" list but a list that describes what you truly want to **BE** when you grow up? It could be a series of identities (such as a leader, or a mom), or it could be qualities that you aspire toward. It is important that there are not "doing" elements that get in the way of the "being". This list is in answer to the question "Who do I need to be to represent my authentic self in the world?"
- Take a good look at your shadow and what it is trying to teach you. In order to be complete and whole, we need to venture into the shadow, which will appear in our projections onto others – we see the dark side in them, due to not owning it in ourself. When ever we go into judgment, this is an indication that there is a part of us that we are disowning. This process is a mirror to us.
- Identify a Role Model. Think of someone who emulates self awareness, and courage – and when stuck ask yourself "what would .....do?"
- Dig for it! Draw a circle on a piece of paper and in the centre write "The authentic me". Draw a series of bigger circles around this inner core circle – the more disconnected you feel the more circles you will draw. Allow your hand to just do it ... you will know when it feels the right number. Then starting with the first circle next to the core circle, ask the question :
  - When did this mask/rock/barrier form around the authentic self?
  - What is not real or not part of you?
  - Move out to the next circle and repeat this process. All the way to the outermost circle which represents the persona you present to the world today.
  - Consider which walls are unstable and need to be dismantled, or allow to fall to the ground
  - Finish up with the inner circle and by contrast to what you discovered in the outer realms – what is within the very inner core of you as your authentic self.

# Working with Emotional Equations

**Narcissism = (Self-Esteem)<sup>2</sup> x Entitlement**



## Working Through the Equations

Narcissism isn't an emotion, it is a condition – like workaholism – that stands at the intersection of many other emotions, some well regarded (confidence and magnetic optimism) and some derided (vanity and aggressiveness). The mythological source for this modern condition comes from Narcissus, a handsome Greek youth who fell in love with his reflection in the surface of a pond. Unable to leave the pond and lose sight of himself, he died from lack of sustenance. The small daffodil flower that sprouted where he dies is known by this same name today. Historically in humans, narcissism have been seen as being on a spectrum, with the far end of the continuum being considered as dysfunctional and unhealthy.

In individualistic societies where self-promotion, winning and confidence are seen as desirable characteristics, narcissism has become almost commonplace. And whether an official disorder or what we might refer to as 'garden variety' narcissism, it is an important topic to explore.

A "Healthy" narcissist is seen as one who has a realistic self-interest and a strong desire to achieve. Freud argued that healthy narcissism is a part of the normal development process. And many great business leaders seem to possess a single minded rejection of the status quo, along with a compelling vision that allows their narcissistic qualities to impact the organisation positively. But when does confidence become grandiosity and an alluring charisma. Extreme narcissism is destructive for everyone concerned. Common qualities and emotions of narcissists are:

- Self focused in interpersonal exchanges (can't stop talking about themselves)
- Feeling superior (consider themselves better than others, exaggerating their talents and achievements)
- Preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, intelligence, beauty or love
- Envious (often they envy others or believe others are envious of them – they are very aware of their position in the pecking order)
- Entitlement (believing they are entitled to special treatment – and are willing to bend rules to obtain it)
- Overly sensitive (can be easily hurt, and either don't readily show it or are unconscious to it – however are often "ragers" if their fantasy world is threatened)
- Lack empathy (along with a fear of intimacy and problems sustaining satisfying relationships)
- Blame shifters who won't take responsibility
- Vulnerable to shame (more than guilt as they are more outer-directed rather than inner-directed)

Few readily admit to narcissism. And true narcissists don't have the self awareness to see those qualities in themselves. They rationalise away why they behave how they do – mostly looking to make it someone else's fault.

# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Narcissism} = (\text{Self-Esteem})^2 \times \text{Entitlement}$$

## Working Through the Equations

The equation is the only one that uses an exponent – of squared, multiplying itself by itself. This makes the point that self-esteem taken to the extreme can be dangerous. The equation is also in parentheses indicating a separation from the world, in as much as narcissism in the ultimate form of loneliness. When there is such an inflated sense of self, there is no room for anyone else.

Self-esteem multiplied by itself, leads to entitlement and usually disappointment when the story of uniqueness present in the head is not recognised with special treatment. This thinking creates the drive toward instant gratification as an extreme version of expectation. And today we are in the age of mass narcissism. Selfies; broadcasting yourself on YouTube; Tic-Tok; Facebook; Twitter with the minutiae of the day – that plays to the social phenomenon of FOMO (fear of missing out). And the sad reflection is that in the minds of many “I Tweet therefore I Am” is a reality.

This equation is a difficult one. As narcissists live their life in fear of being “found out” and being humiliated through social comparison. And due to the tendency to internalise failure and then seek to turn that into blame of others, can also show up as the need to numb the self so as not to feel the emotion of shame (being wrong to the core) rather than guilt (doing something wrong). So the question is, how to work with this equation?” All of the following take courage, commitment and discipline.

- **Dilute self-esteem so it is not ‘squared’, by consciously acting to dial back habitual self absorption.** Make an inventory list of where you are most challenged **EG.** you spouse feels invisible to you; your colleagues see you as an egomaniac; you have not close friends. Ask questions and hit PAUSE and listen to how your behaviour is impacting others. You will no doubt come away with a list of unproductive behaviours – choose one that you feel is within your control to shift, and make it a priority to focus on. This will take the balcony perspective to notice, hit pause and choose another action that is less self-absorbed.
- **Replace bravado and entitlement with humility and compassion.** Spend time with another who is more entitled than you and notice where they are coming from. Reflect on someone you truly admire – their qualities, someone who makes you feel accepted and good about our self. Seek out people like this to surround yourself with.
- **Change environments.** Shift away from the safe bubble where you are able to act out egoic tendencies. Dismantle the constructed narcissistic enabling habitat and push yourself outside your comfort zone.
- **Change relationships** or explore how to shift the dynamic by agreeing to listen, prepare some open ended questions to help the other speak more openly.
- Find something bigger. Love, nature, faith (watch out for spiritual one-ups-man-ship) , a purposeful venture that is of service to others, parenting.
- **Take time out from social media.** Spend time with real people instead. Living on line isn’t living
- **Do something you really enjoy and love to do.** Whether it be a sport, a hobby, learning about something new (see the section on curiosity), playing with a pet ?
- **Choose to PAUSE.** Practice is in an exaggerated manner – plan ahead to keep your lip zipped and notice what happens, what you hear and learn.

And also how people respond.

# Working with Emotional Equations

**Integrity = Authenticity x Invisibility x Reliability**

## Working Through the Equations

“Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching”. so said novelist, academic and theologian C. S. Lewis.

Integrity is the number one quality we look for in business leadership today. Most business people strive to follow a moral compass and adhere to ethics that can withstand the expedient, transactional nature of life. This equation boils down to a simple acronym – AIR (the essential element for life – yet one that is often ignored). The word itself comes from the Latin ‘integer’ – meaning whole or complete. In this sense integrity is the inner sense of wholeness, whereby all parts of our identity are integrated into one. However, we are often a cluster of different persona’s and identities depending on context and our audience. Thus the work that needs to be done is to stand back on the balcony and look at the various identities that comprise the self, and ask how integrated they are – is there a common or core thread that ties them together into an overarching way of being, a philosophy or a mantra? (In order to help you with this process we recommend you take a look at Carol Pearson’s 12 archetypes – to determine which feels most real to you.

The 3 aspects of AIR. We have already looked at Authenticity in another equation. At the root of C. S. Lewis’s quote lies the idea of invisibility – and this contains more than a strong hint of humility. Reliability is about consistency, faithfulness and our word is our bond. The integrity gap occurs when one or more of these elements is missing.

As mentioned earlier we change our masks, our costumes our identity to suit the different contexts we find ourselves in. This can be particularly problematic when worlds and therefore our different identities collide. This is when the vision of who you are is at odds with the rest of the world’s viewpoint. Psychologists describe the various domains of the self as being:

- The ACTUAL self. As you or others perceive it.
- The IDEAL self. The representation of the attributes that either you or another would like you to have
- The OUGHT self. The attributes that either you or another believe you ‘ought to’ or ‘should’ possess

When our actual and ideal self are at odds, we are likely to feel disappointed or regret about ourselves. When our actual self is at odds with someone else’s idealised vision of us, we may feel shame or embarrassment. If there is a gap between our actual self and what we think we ought to be, it can generate guilt or self-contempt. And if that gap is between our actual and what others expect us to be, then it can create fear. We can see here then that being fully in integrity is not an easy thing. And if others have expectations – and they see and connect to you as your mask, there are two choices ; wear the mask and divide the private and public self, or remove the mask and deal with the fall out of potentially losing the relationship. However, our challenge is to liberate ourselves from our various masks and show up authentically no matter whom is watching.



# Working with Emotional Equations

**Integrity = Authenticity x Invisibility x Reliability**

## Working Through the Equations

Viktor Frankl said “Listen to what your conscience commands you to do”. Do you give yourself time to listen? Do you wake up at 3 Am with such thoughts running through your head? There are three questions to ask that address each of the three elements in this equation.

- What tools and resources do you use (included candid and trusted friends and colleagues) do you use in order to become more aware to your authentic self?
- When was the last time you really went out of your way to do something magnificent, that took huge effort whilst not expecting recognition or attention for it?
- Where do you ‘walk your talk’ most consistently in your life?
  
- Make integrity a foundational part of your work life. Look to your core values and integrate them into your thinking and choices
- Get clarity around the 3 selves. The actual self, ideal self and the ought self. A fun way to do this that is impactful is to make a collage.
  - Get yourself 6 pieces of card/paper, some old magazines and glue stick.
  - Label the first three pages – My Actual; My Ideal and My Ought.
  - Search through the pages of the magazines – cut out and paste pictures, letters and words that represent each – covering both your work and personal life (or just one if it is where you sense the issue to lie).
  - When finished write Others’ Actual; Others’ Ideal; and Others’ Ought on the other three pages.
  - Repeat the process, by imagining how others see you in these 3 ways.
  - When finished – lay all six on a flat surface or stick on a wall or white board and review them as one.
  - Look for where there are incongruencies – where are the biggest divides and gaps.
  - Consider – what steps can be taken in order to create greater alignment?
- Integrity isn’t just about being moral and ethical – it is also about allowing the truest expression of the self to show up across all of life’s landscapes. And to do this dismantling the various masks and identities is the critical process to undertake. One way to do this is to do the work around identifying core values and using these as your narrative to yourself and others. Placing them at the heart and core of your decision making – and also any communication about who you are, what’s truly of importance to you and why.

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

Most versions of happiness can be slotted into 1 of 3 categories. Pleasure; Passion or Purpose. Happiness has become such a big thing with the rise of Positive Psychology and even some countries (such as Bhutan, Finland) having a gross national happiness index for their citizens. The happiest place on the planet tends to go back and forth between Scandinavia and Costa Rica.

Lets make a distinction for ourselves. Is happiness a journey, a destination or an object; or as many objects as possible? There is a belief that is we are able to gratify our instincts /desires then we will achieve happiness. When we think about this equation there is more to it than perhaps on first look. 'Wanting what you have (**HAVING**)' and 'Having what you want (**WANTING**)'.

Research done by the University of Pennsylvania and Stanford, examined 12 million personal blogs to determine the meaning of happiness and the other emotions that tend to coexist with being happy. They discovered the most chosen (which relate to the wanting what you have camp):

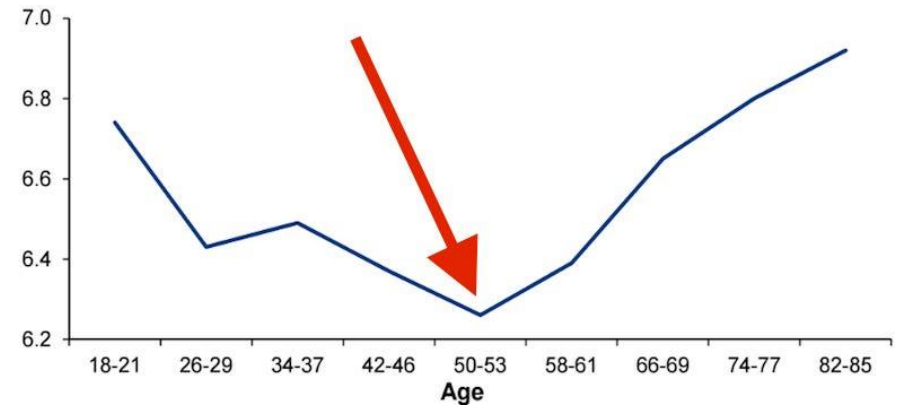
- Contentment
- Feeling appreciative
- Peaceful
- Glad and grateful for one's state of life

These along with a small number of 'being excited' or 'aspirationally hopeful' fit into the having what you want camp – and these tended to be associated with younger people. This may also explain why there is a 'U' Bend in self-reported well being. The height of happiness being around 18-21 years, after which it declines to hit rock bottom at 46- 50 years when anxiety and disappointment peak. From then, with each passing decade levels of happiness improve so that in our 80's we are happier than we were at 20!

As with any division equation the way to increase happiness is to grow the numerator and shrink the denominator. How do we do this?

- Eliminate attachment to having 'things' OR if this seems impossible then,
- Pursue things and balance it with big appreciation of what you have – through the expression of gratitude

Happiness = Wanting What you Have  
Having What you Want



Source: Nielsen

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

$$\text{Happiness} = \frac{\text{Gratitude}}{\text{Gratification}}$$

Another way of looking at this equation may be what is shown above. Happiness like all other emotions – passes away naturally, and when we realise that we are more likely to feel grateful in the moment of that experience. John Lennon said "Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans"

There is some interesting research that relates to source of happiness overall. 10% relates to life circumstances (including how much money you make) 40% is due to intentional activities and ways of thinking (mindsets) and 50% is an innate biological set point much like familial tendency toward height or weight. This has implications for those who believe being on the aspirational treadmill will bring more happiness. Chasing a moving target whilst comparing ourselves to how others are doing undermines happiness as we mix up insatiable wants with our true needs. The mindset behind this is "if-then" thinking. It is the belief that if we attain what we want we will automatically be happier (richer, more beautiful etc.), this is referred to as the 'tyranny of the unnecessary'. There will always be things we want but don't need.

As a human, what are the 10 most essential needs for life? Water, Food, Sleep and Air to breathe - these are universal and are at the base of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Add six more. Then make a list of your 10 favourite wants right now. Wants are perfectly fine but often they can't be fully satisfied. So beyond this, how might we practice happiness rather than chasing it? Let's see the options:

- **Do an annual 'wanting what you have' check up.** A January retrospective focusing on rating own life satisfaction in the following domains. Love; Profession/work/career; Finances; Play; Friends; Family; Health; Personal growth and learning; Spirituality and Overall. Then an additional category called 'trajectory' which looks at year by year changes across these domains. It is also useful to envisage one element per category and imagine what your life would be like without it.
- **Experience happiness with happy people.** List the four people who are in your life who are the happiest you know. Spend time with them and notice how they spend more time on the numerator rather than the denominator. Identify one lesson you can learn from each of these people, and determine how you might apply it to your own life.
- **Create the right habitat.** Be mindful about the pond we choose to live and swim in, as those who surround us as a reference group will have a greater impact than perhaps we may realise on our perception of our wants and needs. Sharing time with others with whom you have an emotional connection creates memories and positively impacts happiness.
- **Practice Gratitude.** Psychologists inform us that gratitude is the most essential ingredient in the happiness cake. A gratitude journal assists us in becoming more aware of the gifts and things to appreciate in life. AND spending quality time with people you care about is also meaningful and creates appreciation. Gratitude is the most effective means of reminding you to "want what you have" ; Also, expressing gratitude and appreciation to those who have done things to support you, saying THANK YOU and meaning it and acknowledging people whom you have chosen to have in your life by paying them attention.

# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Joy} = \text{Love} - \text{Fear}$$

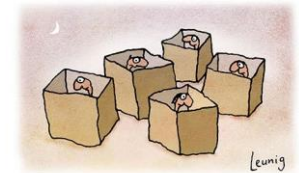
## Working Through the Equations

Love and Fear cannot co-exist at the same time. Most of us wear our “fear-goggles” to protect ourselves from a world that has or we suspect might wound us. Having this scarcity based mindset doesn’t allow the space for love to enter our life fully. No one ever conquers fear with more fear. In contrast, joy is an attitude of the heart. There is an irony in the fact that if we are willing to give up the search for happiness we just might discover our joy. Joy goes beyond the experience of happiness into what we can think of as a full body contact emotion that floods the senses. It bubbles up from within and overflows – it is an internal somatic state.

The two key motivating forces in the world are Love and Fear. When we are faced with challenge, or a decision – what would it feel like to make the choice on how to proceed from a place of love, instead of fear? What happens in the body when you choose each path? It is easy to take the path of fear, due to our tendency to associate something in the present with a painful past experience or an outdated belief that hasn’t yet been let go of or transformed. Add to this just the every day pressure of modern life and is it any surprise that we are in a perennial state of fight or flight. Fear is an aggressive predator of joy.

This equation applies to teams, families, organisations, societies as well as ourselves as individuals. In fact it is the most prevalent emotion in most companies. It is a demotivator that traps us in a lack of innovation and creativity as the amygdala is running the show. By contrast, innovation enables the sheer joy that comes with a new creation. Creativity is love and cynicism which breeds conformity and risk aversion comes from fear. And at the root of fear is attachment. When we fear something we tend to be attached to an outcome that we either want or don’t want to happen. So how can we shift this dynamic?

*There are only two feelings  
Love and fear.  
There are only two languages  
Love and fear.  
There are only two activities  
Love and fear.  
There are only two motives,  
two procedures, two frameworks  
two results:  
Love and fear. Love and fear.*



- **Write the field guide for how to live in fear – one subject at a time.** Sometimes to combat fear the best way is to take it to its extreme, and notice how illogical that is. Describe the training steps that would help another understand the terror of whatever it is you are fearful of. Let’s look an illustration. Fear of financial insecurity.
  - First, paint the bleakest picture of your future you can
  - Imagine as part of that every potential financial issue as playing out to its worst conclusion
  - Assume you are completely powerless to affect the outcome
  - Believe you are doomed to fail
  - Continue to add more and more financial responsibilities in order to increase the fear
  - Imagine giving up all the things and freedoms you have at the moment when the moment of collapse hits you
  - Assume your family are now helpless and will resent you if you ask them to make sacrifices
  - Practice telling your family you have been whipped out
  - Remember and repeat this process any time you see you are about to make progress

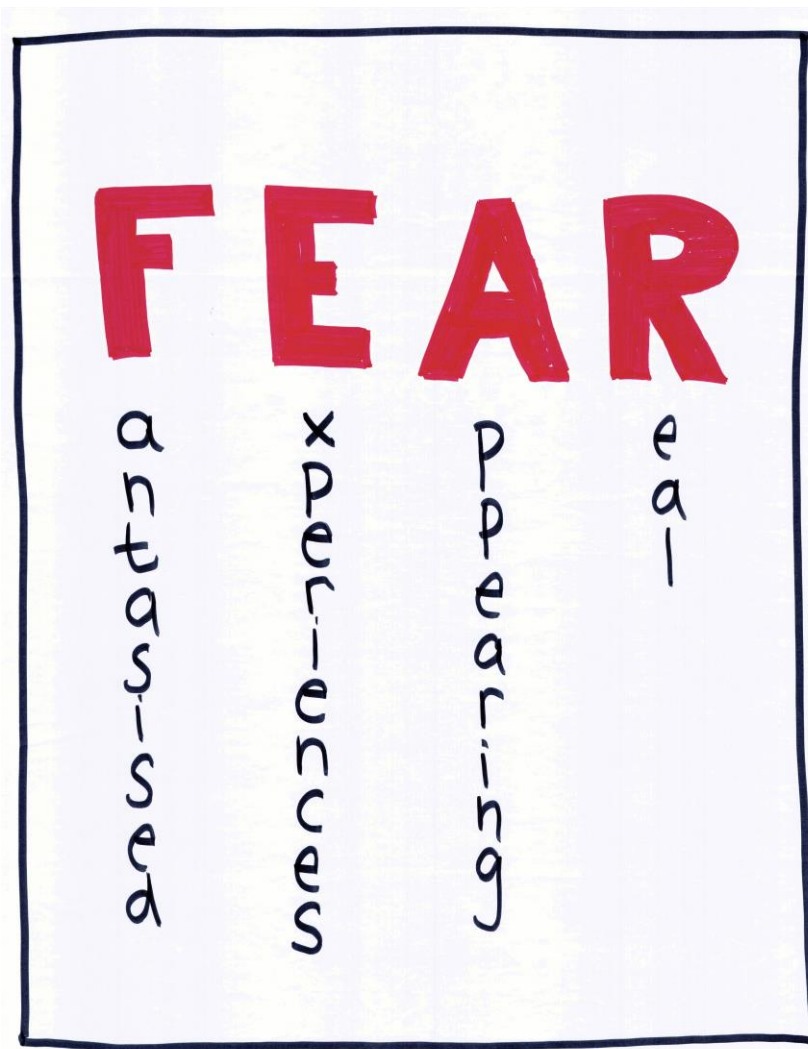
# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Joy} = \text{Love} - \text{Fear}$$

## Working Through the Equations

Paradoxically this process shines a bright light onto the mental loops we create that exaggerate and catastrophise our fears. We see the recipe that is self created. And when the training manual is reviewed piece by piece we are able to see that these fantasies are either blatantly false or so over the top in exaggeration to be absurd.

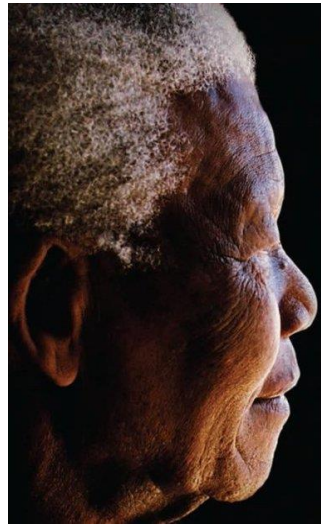
- **Take a page from Franklin D. Roosevelt** during the Great Depression when he addressed the American people saying “Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of this moment” **AND** he also very famously said “The only thing we have to fear, is fear itself !” – The lesson being in tough times, be a realist yet don’t let fear overtake, and when in doubt focus attention on what brings joy.
- **Ask “Where is the love in all of this?”** This seems like a strange question to ask oneself when caught in the grip of fear. One thing it does do is that it invites the mind to think and look at the bigger picture. This is a function of the Executive Brain (Prefrontal Lobe) and if we can breathe, pause and ask the question – even if we need to do so more than once, it will shift the brain function from out of being controlled by the Amygdala and into our higher order thinking functions. We like to use the expression ‘turning sour milk into yoghurt’ ! Where is the potential gift and the love in this circumstance or situation.
- **Practice the Law of Attraction.** Fear begets more fear, love begets more love. Learn how to mirror out into the world what you would like to create in your own life. If you want love, learn to give love. If you want attention and appreciation, learn to give those two things. Cultivating and such states is a matter of recalling a time when the emotion was real, feeling into the full experience of that time, and then switching it up and into the now.
- **Do something just for the pure joy of it.**
- **Explore the work of Dr Gerald Jampolsky** in the 70’s. ‘Love is letting go of Fear’ using the self-study work “A Course in Miracles” as a basis of his work.
- **Susan Jeffers’s** latter work on fear is also a useful resource around this topic as is **Martha Beck’s** book ‘The Joy Diet’



# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

$$\text{Thriving}^* = \frac{\text{Frequency of Positive}}{\text{Frequency of Negative}}$$



"During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, & I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic & free society in which all persons live together in harmony & with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die"

*Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela*

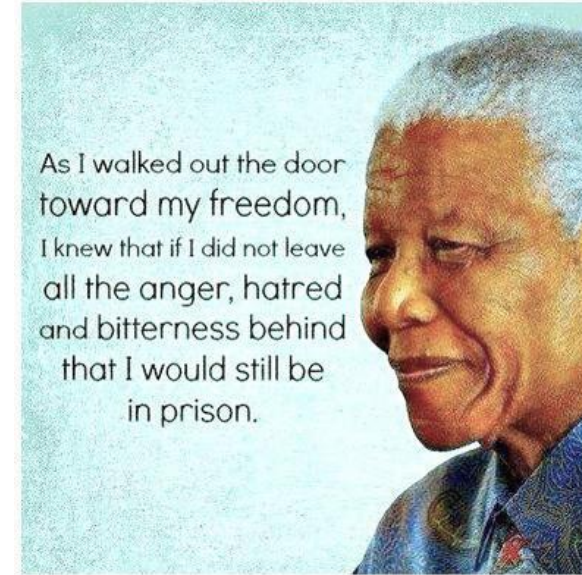
Maya Angelou wrote most eloquently about thriving in her own life when she said "I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow. I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way s/he handles three things: a rainy day, lost luggage and tangled Christmas tree lights ... I've learned that everyday you should reach out and touch someone. I've learned that people will forget what you've said, but they never forget how you made them feel.

How often do we evaluate the quality of our life on the extremes of highs and lows we experience. Psychologists historically have taken a deficit approach to the human condition – focussing on 'what's wrong ... what went wrong'. However the work of Barbara Fredrickson showed that positive emotions create a "broaden and build" impact, that creates an upward spiral of momentum. Positive emotions and mindsets are the key to a strong sense of resilience.

How to apply this practically? Think about a moment of anguish due to the anxiety and frustration of working in a fear-based environment, and then find at least 3 positives that negate the negatives. This is the 3 to 1 ratio. It is not something we are used to doing – so in order to cultivate the skill takes some practice. This is not about thinking positively and ignoring all the negative stuff going on. Insincere positive thinking, such as telling yourself you feel OK, when you really don't, can lead to false positive emotions which are toxic and appear as blind optimism, fake cheeriness, disconnection from reality.

Thus declared at his trial for Treason, in April 1964. Nelson Mandela's life was spared and he went on to spend 26 years in Robben Island – 18 of those at hard labour. Rather than languishing in self-pity, regret or resentment, he modelled self-respect, respect for others, compassion – inspiring with his resilience and inspiration. He took on the role of teacher, mentor, leader and friend to prisoner and jailer alike. His Long Walk to Freedom involved forgiveness and the generation of hope.

(\*Thriving being equal to 3.0 or more)



As I walked out the door toward my freedom, I knew that if I did not leave all the anger, hatred and bitterness behind that I would still be in prison.

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

$$\text{Thriving}^* = \frac{\text{Frequency of Positive}}{\text{Frequency of Negative}}$$

(\*Thriving being equal to 3.0 or more)

Denying reality and the unthinkable doesn't make it go away, but neither does obsessing or dwelling on it.

### Reflection :

Think of a time when you were overwhelmed, paralysed by some catastrophic event or bad news. The negative thoughts and feelings become overwhelming. Trying to shift to positive thinking typically does nothing, when your mind is spinning out of control into a downward spiral. Stopping and spinning it counter clockwise doesn't work, in fact what is likely to happen is **FEAR + RUMINATION = PANIC ATTACK**. Building a positivity bank account through practicing meditation or gratitude assists us during times of duress.

Apart from instituting muscle building activities into your daily cycle what else can you do?:

- **Take the positivity self test** and check out other resources on Barbara Frederickson's site. [www.positivityratio.com](http://www.positivityratio.com) The 20 question test will give you a read on where you are at with your emotions right now. It is recommended to take the test a number of times over the course of a few weeks. This will provide insight into the extent to which the denominator or numerator of the equation are in your life.
- **Positivity and Negativity Inventory.** Start the day with at least 30 rubber bands in your pocket. As you move through your day, each time you get into a way of thinking that is decidedly negative or positive (a spiral trend) take out a rubber band and place it around either your left (positive) or right (negative) wrist. There is no need to judge yourself – just do it, this activity won't work if you are overly self-conscious. At the end of the day do a tally of rubber bands on each wrist. You may find it is quite hard to get to a 3 to 1 ratio.
- **Choose to shift from reaction to inquiry.** This requires the cultivating of curiosity. Rather than allowing the negative emotion to take control, step onto the balcony and inquire of yourself as to why this emotion is arising at this time? Again no self-judgement as this just increases the negativity if you end up beating yourself up
- **Identify a particular negative habitual emotion you have in your life and apply genuine positivity to it.** Look for the gift or the opportunity. EG. The daily commute is a grind, can you take the opportunity to listen to an audio book of your favourite author? Can you cultivate real interest in your mother in law's life story? Demonstrate gratitude to others who are in your life. Notice their response. This is a practice that seeks to overcome the brain's tendency to treat negativity as if it is Velcro and positivity as if it is Teflon. Look for meaning.
- **Use John Gottman's Learning to your relationship rules.** (3 strategies – 2 that increase the numerator, and 1 that decreased the denominator)
  - Increase positive actions and thoughts during times when there is no conflict going on
  - Look for positive ways to connect when you are in the midst of a disagreement or difficult time
  - Reduce the negative effect during conflict by editing your words and not saying anything you will regret later.

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

Faith = Belief  
Intellect

When in doubt, seek guidance from someone wiser than you.

When we become too attached to our intellect, we can lose connection to the wisdom of the heart. Faith mines the wisdom of the heart, whilst intellect taps the reason of the mind. Belief is where they intersect. Some of us rely either too much on blind faith (which is always smiling) or too much on rational reasoning (which is so often steeped in doubt). Having a balance of both keeps us from going too far down the path or naivete or cynicism. Getting the balance elevates both the mind and the heart.

The equation can be problematic due to the seeming paradox of the two elements. And further than that, faith and belief are often thought of as being synonymous. Richard Dawkins suggests that faith is “belief without evidence” whilst Gregg Braden defines it as “the certainty that comes from accepting what we think to be true in our minds and in our hearts”. Very different perspectives. And George Vaillant suggests that faith also involves trust, whilst belief is really a kind of cognition that leverages our senses. And perhaps faith can be thought of as a belief that also has some skin in the game.

Let’s do an experiment for ourselves. Ask yourself:

- “What do I have faith in?” and then:
- “How does that compare to what I believe in?”

What did you discover?

Our faith in something can shift when our beliefs about that thing shift. Let’s consider faith in Western Medicine that is based on disaggregating the human form into distinct units, that even has specialisations focused around them. Does the ear, nose and throat doctor see his or her patient purely as those 3 organs, or does he or she see the whole person and the interconnectedness of all aspects of the body? What is the mindset around ‘wellness and prevention’ as opposed to “fixing the malady with modern medicines and surgical techniques?” Depending on your world view is where faith will be placed. When unwell – do we look to the root cause or fix the symptoms.

Faith and belief have become intertwined in popular culture, yet they cousins, not twins. Someone with an overwhelming reliance on intellect may be less likely to live in a place of faith, yet that doesn’t mean that smart people can’t also have faith and it doesn’t mean that those who have faith can’t have high IQs. The Greeks had two ways of looking at life, both essential. That of mythos (myth) that gives metaphorical explanation to that which was hard to understand or explain – including the intangible of life, and that of logos (logic) of life that is how we typically operate from day to day. And today we live in a world awash with logos where myth is considered not true.



# Working with Emotional Equations

$$\text{Faith} = \frac{\text{Belief}}{\text{Intellect}}$$

## Working Through the Equations

There are limits to faith as there are also limits to reason. Faith may not give us all the answers and at time may even be ignorant of the questions. Yet faith enables many to endure the difficulties thrown by life, find mean and and equanimity barely conceivable in a world ruled only by reason. How do we deal with what is unreasonable in life? Call upon faith and if so, faith in what?

We already discovered when we explored regret, that humans in general overvalue the need for knowing, the need for certainty, that generates risk aversion. Faith, however enables us to move beyond that as it provides the view that whatever happens in our life, there is some reason for that happening. Some divine plan. If we look at how placebos work (and there is plenty of evidence for this), their effectiveness is due to the faith that comes from a belief that the 'pill' will cure us. Psychologically its also been shown that there are instances when the level of enthusiasm shown by the medic for a particular treatment predisposes the mindset of the patient toward a more positive outcome.

Where does intellect trump faith alone? I do want the pilots flying me across continents to do a full and thorough safety check of all the plane's mechanics – prior to us heading off down the runway. I would choose the open heart surgery over a course of placebo medicines if it were proved to have 10x greater chance of saving my life. How to we apply this equation in a practical manner in our lives? Have you ever found yourself in an endless mind loop about a troubling situation? (obsessing about the denominator of the equation) ... The "if onlys!" ..... we can get completely trapped in the belief that all problems can be solved purely with reason, logic and pragmatic action.

How to transcend it? Cultivate curiosity about what the lesson in the situation is. Shifting from reaction to curiosity about the bigger picture and my own growth and development through this circumstance. And the next step may seem counter-intuitive but its to do with mixing the curiosity (the belief that there are nuggets in here) with faith that the learning and understanding will come – that the circumstance is not a punishment nor a failure, it is a gift and waiting, allowing, breathing and not pushing will bring forth access to intuition and insight and an answer. Other actions / steps you can take:

- **Celebrate your heart and mind through your relationship with belief.** "I believe that..." is mind speak, "I believe in...." is heart speak. Using both staddles the numerator and the denominator and gives both a place
- **Transcend doubt with the addition of some faith.** Lack of certainty (having all the answers) is a good thing – it denotes humility. Yet sometimes it can become a racking of doubt which is no fun. In this situation surrendering to a faith in something bigger sets us free, whether it is in a higher order or power, the value of love and the human spirit, or that everything happens for a reason etc.
- **Practice don't preach.** Being it. There are stories of how people are bringing compassion into the world at [www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org) that will provide inspiration.
- **Find Enchantment.** There is a quiet place to enter, that soothes the soul, myths, rituals, metaphors, prose, poetry, nature, beyond ourselves. For example the documentary "Amazing Grace"

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

$$\text{Wisdom} = \sqrt{\text{Experience}}$$

How complex does this equation look? Wisdom the square root of experience! Wisdom according to Plato was “the highest of all human things”. It is a search for truth and insight that is then applied to the attainment of a common good. We may think wisdom is only resident in the minds of the elderly or philosophers, but Aristotle believed that practical wisdom was available to us all. This equation depicts Wisdom as a subtractive and not an additive virtue. This is because to be truly wise requires a filter, not just getting lost in piles and piles of knowledge and information. And with the advent of the ‘Information Age’ has wisdom become lost in an overload of information.

Those considered wise have always had a knack for seeing patterns and distilling them into universal truths. Some of us refer to this as gut instinct – and it is. The enteric nervous system consists of 100 million neurons located in the tissue lining of the gut, is what screams at us one thing from intuition, when logic from the mind is telling us something different. There are a wide variety of influences that impact gut instinct, and the most common is that we create our own pattern recognition that is applied based on past experience at an unconscious level.

Wisdom is about distilling down the complexity of life, with all its distractions, to what’s at the core. At the heart of wisdom is simplicity. Let’s look at how this equation works by unpacking mathematics of the square root:

- $3 \times 3 = 9$  (3 squared = 9) ;  $9 \times 9 = 81$  (9 squared = 81) ;  $81 \times 81 = 6561$  (81 squared – 6561). The numbers escalate very quickly when you multiply the answer by itself again. And at the root of all of these numbers is 3.
- After 3 square roots we shift from 6561 through 81 through 9 to 3.
- Taking this as a metaphor, it shows us that there is some simple truth that lies at the root of some messy life situation. Life experience is the result of a multitude of tiny actions, each of which contributes to the larger whole.
- Wisdom, however seeks to find the truth that lies at the centre
- Wisdom is being able to see that the complex (the sum of our experiences), has at its heart something that is central to our existence (the 3) and the way we approach our experiences.
- It is challenging to look to the root cause. And our mindset is that life is one long series of additions.
- The Wisdom equation says the opposite. That in fact when faced with the odds against us, we need to edit and simplify rather than add.

As experience gets larger, wisdom increases but in slower increments. This is experienced as a plateau. We have occasional jumps associated with new insights and lessons. We are struck by an AH-HA and our wisdom is enhanced through instantaneous transformative breakthroughs. So in order to cultivate wisdom we need to also nurture the ability to create insight.

# Working with Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

$$\text{Wisdom} = \sqrt{\text{Experience}}$$

These could be experienced as a few really big insights over a life time, or it could be the accumulation of many smaller insights. Like evolutionary leaps, the garnering of wisdom can also take unpredictable and revolutionary leaps. It is worth our while looking at what insights are before we move on – how they happen. Insights tend to arise when there is a combination of data or disparate people or situations in some way that was previously unimaginable. Shifting out of the known, and into new and novel contexts often triggers the right side of the brain and makes new and unique connections.

Things that can be done consciously to generate insights and feed wisdom:

- **Use the Serenity Prayer as a daily practice.** “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference”. It takes wisdom to discern what is constant and what is a variable in life, accepting the constants and challenging the variables. Saying this prayer of a morning and through out the day uplifts us through difficult times.
- **Explore your Experience.** With a piece of paper, list the most profound experiences or experiments that have happened in your life – go for 10 of them.
  - What was the lesson learned from each one?
  - What wisdom was created that can be leveraged today?
- **Fix situations, not people.** Taking a step back to de-personalise situations. Resist blaming messes on one person or the interaction of a few people – there will be other dynamics such as the system, lack of clear communication or roles, lack of alignment and a range of other possible contributing factors. Culture and operating philosophies drive behaviours and how people show up, and the decisions they make (or don’t make). Look deeper.
- Explore what activities generate insight for you. Experience fuels wisdom, and it is insight that allows quantum leaps in wisdom. Recall a time of a great insight – a flash and ask:
  - What were you doing at the time?
  - What is the ideal habitat for promoting insight?
  - How do you re-create that space?

So in a world awash with instant gratification and quick fixes, lowest common denominator thinking and the pursuit of profit and efficiency rather than happiness, wisdom becomes our sanctuary of sanity. Wisdom is our inbuilt editor that retains the wheat and discards the chaff. It is also the antidote to decline, where we have the opportunity to make sense with less.

# Creating your own Emotional Equations

## Working Through the Equations

Emotions can be riddles. Let's look at a story – a metaphorical tale about emotions and ego, that comes from ancient time.

**In this story the human is made up of four parts. A coach, horses, a coachman, and a master being carried inside the coach. The coach represents the body, carrying us through life. The horse represents emotions and passions, pulling us energetically in different directions unless properly harnessed. The coachman is the ego, and while the master is sleeping it is the coachman who decides where to go. The master represents the authentic or the real self, the higher self. The master cannot play any role in the journey until awakened. Once awakened, it is the masters role to take charge of the coachman, to tell him where to go and what to pay attention to.**

In the context of Emotional Equation, one of the fundamental questions to ask is :

- “Who is taming and directing the emotional horses in my life?”
- Is it the never sleeping, external coaching (the ego) or is it the master, the evolved inspired part of you, that is too often napping in the coach?

The ego isn't necessarily bad, it can be an expert at managing our emotions and body for a short period for maximum short-term gain. The coachman is in charge when emotions are racing and pulsing – whether I'm feeling happy or unhappy. The ego reacts, and the soul responds. And experience of a thought creates a reaction that leads to an emotion arising. The reactions are so habitual that we don't even notice that we've become an emotional robots.

When the master is at the helm, emotions aren't reactions that appear automatically but are responses to the state of beingness. Meaning less focus on the short-term and self interest. The force of our emotional response, indicates the extent to which the world has a grip on us. If the ego is at play in your emotional equations, then they will be like a weathervane or windmill that sifts as the wind moves direction. When the master is in charge, the emotions are choiceful and aligned with our bigger self, our higher purpose, our values and legacy.