

SIT WITH IT

I am going to invite you to do something completely counter-intuitive. Instead of avoiding a negative emotion and trying to get rid of it as quickly as possible, I am going to ask you to do the exact opposite – sit with it. Find a comfortable, quiet space where you won't be interrupted.

01

Accept

Go to a difficult emotion you feel about something that's happening in your life. As soon as you are aware of this emotion, take a moment and accept it; you can even state (internally or externally) 'I feel angry' or 'I feel sad'. The key here is not to try and escape from it or push it away – this is what often happens, and that is why the pause is helpful here. Identify the emotion and write it down.

02

Allow

Once you have taken the big steps of accepting and identifying the emotion, next (and this is usually the frightening bit we don't do) let it run through your body. Allow yourself to feel it. Go to where it is in your body – and although it will feel scary, know that nothing bad is actually going to happen to you. You may experience the emotion as a tight feeling in your chest, an ache in your stomach, a constriction in your throat, but however you do, really let yourself go there, give it your full attention. Notice it and be curious: what colour is it?

What is its texture? Is it moving? Is it solid or made up of many different particles?

Once you have done this, breathe down into it, and allow the breath to fill it up with new, fresh air. Notice what happens to it: what happens to the shape, the texture, its density? While you are doing this, your brain will try and pull you away – this is all normal, but just keep coming back to where you are consciously focusing your attention.

It is the act of going there and staying there (versus avoidance or suppression) that is important. Courage and patience is required – but it is worth it, I promise you.

When you have done this successfully, you will ultimately feel that shift, that dissipation, that sense of calm.

03

Ask

What is this emotion telling me? What is the message?

What's possible from here?

What is the one thing I need to accept about this situation?

TIME TO WRITE

What is one thing I can do about this situation?

All emotions are messages from the body. The next time you receive one of these messages, I ask that you try this process, and in doing so choose another way to feel and be.