

Here are my “Six Steps to Manage Emotions”:

1. The minute you feel yourself getting riled up, imagine that you sink into your body and bring your attention to your heart. Just place your attention there—inside of your body as opposed to your head/mental/mind stuff. It can help to physically put your hand there.
2. Next, inhale and begin to take charge of your breathing so that you expand the inhalation, bringing your breath in more slowly ... now do the same thing with the exhale. Do this until you can feel your body relax. Are you tuned into your breathing now? If so, then you are in your body and out of your head. See how easy that was? That was the objective.
3. Now that you have separated yourself from that powerful emotion that had you so riled up, imagine that you can have a conversation with it. Sound weird? It does, but notice how that emotion doesn't have power over you anymore? Ha! That's right! You have just begun to manage it by taking on the managerial role. You are the boss now because you have separated yourself from your emotion. This is key!
As manager of that emotion, drop down into your body and bring your focus to your heart: home base. Ask yourself, “Where in my body am I feeling this sensation?” Locate the area and ask what it needs from you, its manager. “What do you want [Anger, for example]?” “What do you need [Anger, for example]?” Then listen. Be patient. Stay relaxed and open.
4. As its manager, experience the emotion as it tells you what it needs/wants from you. Pretend it's one of your best friends as you listen and meet it with compassion and understanding.
5. Make your decision about the feeling/emotion and the information it gave you. Is there a step or action you need to take? “Okay thanks [Anger, for example] I get it” would be a good start. Then take action; it's probably a personal need you've been ignoring.
6. Final response: Exhale! You can release that emotion! Then breathe a sigh of relief. You are free again! You can go on to the next thing knowing that you have dealt with an emotion that threatened to ruin your day. Good job! You didn't attach yourself to it, did you? It didn't get stuck inside your body and give you a stomach ache or a head ache, did it?

Here is a quicker way to remember (a condensed version):

1. **Heart:** Bring your attention to your heart.
2. **Breathe:** Use your breath to get out of your head.
3. **Converse:** Ask the feeling what it needs/wants.
4. **Experience:** Let yourself feel the feeling and listen.
5. **Decide:** What action is needed?
6. **Exhale:** Release the feeling with gratitude.

Once you get the hang of this, imagine the potential you have to feel good. With practice, this process becomes quick and easy. The possibilities are endless . . . with what you eat, how you exercise, your health, or your new love interest. Once you get the hang of this you will begin to feel better. The more practice you get with listening and attending to your emotional needs, the more trust you will have in yourself. Trusting self = personal freedom! Doubt, fear and anxiety will lessen or go away. Most importantly, you can be self-reliant. You won't be swayed by your emotion or act in a certain way when it's not in your best interest. Your mood will be more positive too. The key is to listen.

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