

Compartmentalizing Emotions

by [Christine Sarno-Doyle](#)

We utilize on a daily basis all sorts of compartments and departments to organize the facets of daily life.

Order depends upon the efficient sorting, tagging, grouping and the allocating of resources. When our successes outnumber our missteps, we thrive.



Using compartments to manage the emotional facets of our daily life seems a natural extension of this concept. Effectively sort, tag, group and allocate our time and energy to successfully manage our spectrum of emotions.

The concept isn't new but as someone who's worn her heart on her sleeve all of her life it is unique. As a young adult, I experienced emotions and reacted to them. I was never taught how to differentiate between feelings and therefore deal with them effectively. What I experienced was a mishmash of emotional energy and life in perpetual crisis mode.

We're either aware of the energies our emotions yield and manage them to generate a positive result. We live emotion-to-emotion unable to decipher between them and thus are controlled by them [me]. Or, we live recklessly through them with total disregard of their power and influence.

- It is understood by this author that the continuum of life challenges and individual capacities to cope run the gamut of human existence. I do not suggest we are all created equal in this regard. I do suggest that with knowledge many can learn to manage emotional energy in productive ways and thus be better served as a result. -

One day I picked up a book entitled *Feelings* and read it cover to cover. There they were in bold type each a chapter title describing in easy-to-read language how to recognize and differentiate between them. How best to deal with them. I read more. Other books offered in-depth accounts and spoke to their complexity.

Anger, for example, is a defensive mechanism that masks vulnerable emotions such as sadness and fear. Sadness exposes helplessness, defenselessness. Fear exposes insecurity, our feeling of being unable to cope adequately with what we are facing. We choose anger because vulnerability frightens us. Anger gives us an illusion of control. The opposite side of that coin is feeling sadness or victimization instead of healthy anger. Anger turned inward can result in depression. So, it's advantageous to know what we're facing, what we are feeling and why.

Denying emotions doesn't work even if one thinks one is capable of doing so. Blocked emotions manifest themselves in truly remarkable and insidious ways. Sorting through them becomes more and more difficult as time passes. A topic for another time.

It's very interesting and enlightening: Emotional Intelligence. I highly recommend its study.

Examining uncomfortable feelings enables us to grow and evolve turning adversity into motivation. Lemon into lemonade if you will.

We don't have trouble with comfortable emotions, do we? No need to dissect anything here. Is there? Yes. Examining what brings us joy encourages us to make wiser choices relative to how we invest our time and live our lives.

Reject Pollyannaism, this is not positive thinking. Positive thinkers recognize good and bad, acknowledge negative emotions, let them surface, allow time to heal, and learn. Pollyannaism is an avoidance principal that cripples it observers leaving them oblivious to life lessons. Do not be oblivious. Feel. Introspection allows for incredible growth.

Our emotions are made up of many feelings. They can be intense and complex, comfortable and uncomfortable. Compartmentalizing my emotions enables me to feel it all and not succumb to one.

Today, when I experience multiple feelings at the same time, I do not experience them as a mishmash of energy. I am able to distinguish, recognize and feel each individually. Happy and sad at the same time, anger and gratitude at the same time, because that is how life happens. Fearful, doubtful, courageous and determined. I feel all of it, and get on with my life.