

Do You Know How You Feel?

That's the million-dollar question isn't it?

You're at church, at a bar, out with your kids at the grocery store or park, grabbing some coffee by yourself for a mental break, or on a plane rushing home for a family emergency. For whatever reason you have that look on your face that tells the world either:



You're not in the mood.

Something has gone wrong on a massive level for you.

Picture this.

Stephanie lives a thousand miles away from the small town she grew up in. She left home several years ago because her small town was just too small for the wanderlust she was born with. Unfortunately, her adoptive mother has several medical issues, and taking care of their mother falls to Stephanie's sister who was also adopted and stayed in that small town.

Stephanie has a difficult relationship with her mother and carries a lot of different emotions. 6 years ago, Stephanie's mom had a quadruple by-pass and today she's on a long list of medications. Yesterday, Stephanie's sister Chris called to tell Stephanie that their mother had some sort of black-out episode at the local grocery store.

This is worrisome because Stephanie knows that some of her mother's medications causes dizziness and tiredness. Anyway, Chris rushed their mom to the E.R. where they completed an MRI and diagnosed her as having experienced a Delirium.

Before the doctors were done with her mom's CT scan though Stephanie was already on a plane headed home. The whole affair terrified Stephanie for a lot of reasons.

Sitting on the plane as the pilot launched his passengers into the air above the clouds, the passenger next to Stephanie leaned over and asked:

Are you alright? Is something wrong?

Emotions and Feelings

We tend to use the words emotions and feelings interchangeably even though these are two distinctly different phenomena. Emotions are our brain's biochemical reaction to changes in our body. It's our survival mechanism.

Fight or flight can be described as an emotion because our brain reacts with fear in when our bodies are put in danger. Feelings are our reactions to emotions, and they're usually subconscious.

We literally cannot control our emotions and feelings. So, just put that notion out of your head. We can, however, learn to identify and work with the emotions and feelings we have once we experience them. We can also learn to regulate our emotions and feelings but only if we can correctly identify them.

What's going on emotionally and physically inside your body is portrayed to you through feelings

Some feelings might be the mood you're in, or how you feel after an exhilarating workout. Basically, what's going on emotionally and physically inside your body is portrayed to you through feelings.

- Excitement
- Shame
- Empathy
- Mood and changes of mood
- Tiredness
- Anxiety

Also, even though emotions and feelings are technically different, some intercross. We might think of contentment and joy as happiness. Contentment and joy are momentary feelings that we experience as a result of our emotional happiness.

How do you feel?

So... How do you feel?

Do you know?

Understanding how you feel starts like anything else. You have to have a baseline. Your baseline comes from the feelings you're already familiar with, and not in denial about. Take tiredness for example.

You know when you're tired right?

We all do. Some of us try to push through it for whatever reason, but we all know what this basic feeling is. It's our bodies telling us to sleep.

Stephanie felt terrified that she might lose her adoptive mother. She also felt something else that she knew came from the anxiety of the situation. The flight, and the long days that

followed created feelings off stress and anxiety for an individual who was used to ignoring her own needs and unfamiliar with closely examining them.

Ask yourself how you feel. When you can answer that question truthfully, and with ease, you've found a feeling you're familiar with, understand, and might even be comfortable with. Use those moments to explore your mind-body connection. We all have moments in our lives when we don't know how we feel. If Stephanie took time to explore her mind-body connection and asked herself how she truly felt before rushing to take the trip, her decision may have been different. Can you relate? Why do you think she felt so anxious?