

Men are put on the back foot when it comes to feeling their feelings. Men's gift of single focus can turn demoralizing when directed inward without finding clarity: "How do I feel... I don't know. I guess that makes me sad, but I don't know if I'm actually sad about that." Public perception is more suspicious of an emotive man than an emotive woman. Popular culture portrays men who are in tune with their emotions as soft and meek (derogatory). An emotional man can be threatening to the erotic charge in heterosexual relationships: feel your feelings, but not Too Much or she'll see you as less of a man.

None of these observations are an excuse for men to avoid doing the work of learning how to feel their feelings. To the contrary, navigating these constraints is a problem to be solved! I heard someone express a desire for a male Brené Brown to speak with conviction to men about feeling their feelings. From my own lived experience, here's what I know about feeling my feelings as a man:

Whenever I am avoiding an experience that would provide progress for something in my life, I'm really avoiding feeling something I don't want to feel. I procrastinated on asking for an update about volunteering at an event both because I didn't want to feel the sadness if I was rejected, and because I didn't want to feel the fear of inadequately performing my duties at the event if I was accepted. So for men who struggle to feel feelings, look at what you're avoiding. Then, do the courageous thing, and feel the corresponding feelings. This is growth, this is progress.

Rather than *express* intense feelings towards the relevant person in my life, I've found that it's more useful to *channel* the feelings by myself, and later talk with a clear and calm mind with the person about the information and insights I uncovered from channeling. There are many ways to channel feelings. My favorite ways are to express feelings through my body: screaming into a pillow, slamming my forearms into a mattress, punching the air, voicing my resentments aloud: "This sucks! I'm so qualified but they rejected me! They don't see the real me!" [The Language of Emotions](#) helped me learn ways to channel my feelings, as well as the messages behind feelings. Anger means a boundary has been crossed. Fear means something needs to be done differently.

I don't judge myself when I channel my feelings. Rather, I'm glad to have ways to access and interface with them! I am human! Who cares if my process looks and sounds weird, no one is watching!

I offer myself love and gratitude in my practice of feeling my feelings. I used to resent myself for seemingly having more limited access to my emotions than most people. I felt like my lows weren't as low as others' lows, but highs were also less high. Now I

question that: does it accurately reflect my emotional experience? If it does, what good does it do to judge myself for that? Why would this difference make me worse than other people?

Patience and curiosity are the most useful mindsets for a man who explores his feelings. If the first signs of progress require weeks or months of showing up, great! Who is this man who is learning how to feel? What might be unlocked, both for himself and the people in his life, as he becomes acquainted with his feelings? What does his unique transformation look like?