



MY EMOTIONS

“Letting my feelings breathe”

Have you ever been in a room filled with people, and you started to feel uncomfortable, but you didn't know why? Have you ever gone back home for a holiday family get together and you noticed that you were feeling uncomfortable, but you didn't know why? Have you ever felt so panicked that you had trouble breathing?

God designed each of us to have dependency issues. We need God to find purpose and meaning in life. We need air to breathe. We need people in our lives in order to feel connected. We need a ministry, or work to do, in order to feel like we are making a difference in our world.

God also created each of us to have a full range of emotions. In other words, we have lots of different feelings. Feelings aren't good or bad. They just are feelings. And **each of our feelings needs to breathe**. We express our feelings in many different ways: talking, laughing, crying, writing, praying, venting, acting, reacting, wishing, embracing, distancing, arguing, fighting, playing...

Becoming “emotionally healthy” is a process of learning to identify, own, express, and take responsibility for each of our emotions. When we take more responsibility for our feelings and actions, then we can take more responsibility for our lives. People who are “unhealthy emotionally” tend to lack good emotional boundaries. They tend to blame other people for their emotions and problems. They try to make other people feel bad when they feel bad. Some would say “misery loves company.”

Feelings are important because they can let us know when something fits or is “right” for us. Feelings also can let us know when something doesn't fit or is “wrong” for us. Feelings can tell us when something is good for us, or they can signal danger.

In order to grow in emotional health, we must develop friendships, and be in environments, where people express their emotions without being threatened, made fun of, attacked, or rejected. In unsafe environments, we tend to deny, bury, or act out our feelings. We begin to lack the confidence to freely express ourselves. We pull away from people and seek other ways to make ourselves feel okay. And our lives can become an ongoing struggle to do something to make us feel good about ourselves when we really don't.

- **What's one change we can make in our group that will allow us to feel safe and free to express our feelings when we are together?**
- **What's one feeling you're good at expressing?**
- **What's one feeling that's hard for you to express?**
- **Have you ever had a friend you could share everything with?**

The safest place and person to turn to with all our emotions is Jesus Christ. He actually invites us to come to him with all our emotions and problems. Will one of you find a Bible and close this “health talk” by reading Matthew 11:28-29.

“Health Talks” are designed to help us learn to talk and deal with one another in ways that build understanding and a healthy, growing, supportive, Christian community.