Session 5: Emotions as Data

1. Homework Exercises

Unlocking Your Emotions as a Vital Source of Data

In this session, we explored how emotions are not just random reactions but contain valuable data that can provide insights into your needs and values. Throughout this session, you have practiced extracting and interpreting emotional data. For this session's homework, you will complete an exercise that builds on this practice by reflecting on your emotions, extracting the data, and planning future actions to help you live more in line with your values and better satisfy your needs. You should complete this once daily between now and our next session.

Exercise 1

In this exercise, you will record experiences of pleasant, unpleasant, and mixed emotions. Between now and our next session, take time each day to reflect on your emotions and think about what they signal about your needs and values. Choose a quiet time and place to do this without interruptions or distractions. Please read the instructions carefully before starting the exercise.

Exercise Guidance & Instructions

As you work through this exercise, keep these instructions, guidelines and suggestions in mind.

Step 1: Identify and label the data

Ensure you record instances of pleasant emotions, unpleasant emotions, and mixed emotions. In the space labeled 'Situation,' describe what happened and write down the emotion(s) you experienced in the space labeled 'Emotions (data).'

In the space labeled 'Category,' write down if you would categorize your emotions as either pleasant, unpleasant, or mixed.

Step 2: Quantify the data

On a scale of 1 (lowest intensity) to 10 (highest intensity), how would you rate the intensity of this emotion? Write your score in the space labeled 'Intensity.'

Step 3: Extract the data (needs)

Take some time to think about the specific situation and the emotions you experienced as a result; what were these emotions telling you about your needs in that moment?

Remember, pleasant emotions may indicate that certain needs have been met, while unpleasant emotions may signal that certain needs are not being satisfied. Also, the more intense the emotions, the stronger the underlying message. So, highly-rated pleasant emotions might indicate that significant needs have been fulfilled, while highly-rated unpleasant emotions might signal that important needs are being neglected or unmet.

Look back on the examples of the common needs provided earlier in this session of your workbook. While needs can be many and varied, the examples provided can help you as you start looking at the data in your emotions.

Think about what your emotions were signaling about your needs in this scenario and write your responses in the space labeled 'What does the data say about my needs?

Step 4: Extract the data (values)

Think about the specific situation and the emotions you experienced as a result; what were these emotions telling you about your values in that moment?

Remember, pleasant emotions can inform you that you are living in ways that honor your values. Unpleasant emotions may signal that your behavior or circumstances do not align with what's important to you.

To help you complete this step, look back on the common values examples provided earlier in this session of your workbook. Like needs, values can be many and varied, they can also change over time. However, the examples provided will help you as you start looking at the data in your emotions.

Think about what your emotions were signaling about your values in this situation and write your responses in the space labeled 'What does the data say about my values?'

Step 5: Take action

Finally, consider your 'next step'—the action(s) you can take to satisfy your needs and values with the data in mind. For instance, your next step might be to continue with or increase actions that meet your needs and match your values, or you might adjust or stop certain actions to better satisfy unmet needs and values. Ask yourself: What is the one thing I can do to satisfy my needs and values, even just a little bit?

For example, if the data says that your need for social connection is being met because you feel happy and fulfilled after spending time with friends, your next step could be to schedule regular meet-ups. If the data says you feel guilty because you value generosity but declined a friend's request for help, your next step might be offering help when you are less busy.

Day 1

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Analysis

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Exercise 2: Session Reflection and Looking Ahead

What did you get out of this session? Take a moment to reflect on what insights you gained and what you have learned about emotions, emotional intelligence, and yourself.

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