

THE FEELING WALL

A place for everything you feel — even when it doesn't make sense.

Feelings are rarely as tidy as an emotion chart makes them look. We can love someone and be furious with them. We can feel relieved after a loss and then guilty about the relief. We can be proud and frightened, lonely and desperate for space, grateful and resentful — all at the same time.

The Feeling Wall is somewhere to put those emotional contradictions without deciding that one of them must be wrong. You are allowed to notice what is present before you understand why it is there.

You do not have to justify a feeling

Feelings are information, not instructions. Feeling angry does not require you to act angrily. Feeling jealous does not make you a bad person. Feeling numb does not mean you do not care. The wall separates **having a feeling** from deciding what to do with it.

Why feelings can be difficult to name

Sometimes we learned early that certain emotions were unacceptable. Sometimes the body reacts before words arrive. Stress, trauma, grief, masking, sensory overload and exhaustion can all make emotional identification harder. You may know only that something feels 'too much', 'wrong', 'heavy' or 'off'. That is enough to begin.

Try starting here

*I feel... I think I should feel... I don't want anyone to know I feel... Underneath the anger might be...
Part of me feels... while another part feels... I cannot find the word, but it feels like...*

PUT IT ON THE WALL

Write the feeling exactly as it arrives. One word, several feelings, a contradiction, a physical sensation or 'I don't know' all count.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Feelings that often get hidden

Jealousy. Resentment. Relief. Shame. Envy. Rage. Disappointment. Loneliness. Fear. Guilt. Grief. Emptiness. Confusion. Irritation. Vulnerability. Pride. Hope. Numbness. Naming them is different from acting on them.

Mixed feelings belong here too

Try writing two truths together: *I love them AND I need distance. I am happy for them AND this hurts me. I wanted this change AND I am grieving what I lost.*

WHAT BOUNCED BACK?

Choose one feeling from the wall and become curious about it rather than interrogating it.

Where do I notice it?

Scan gently through your jaw, throat, shoulders, chest, stomach, hands and legs. You might notice pressure, heat, cold, buzzing, heaviness, tension, restlessness, nausea, tears, tiredness or nothing obvious.

What happened just before it?

Was there a conversation, memory, sensory experience, expectation, rejection, uncertainty, demand, comparison or change? Sometimes the trigger is clear; sometimes it is cumulative; sometimes you will not know.

Is there another feeling underneath or beside it?

Anger may sit with hurt. Anxiety may sit with uncertainty. Shame may sit with fear of rejection. Numbness may appear when everything has become too much. Rather than searching for one 'real' feeling, make room for layers.

What might this feeling be pointing towards?

Perhaps rest, safety, reassurance, information, autonomy, connection, fairness, expression, privacy, predictability, recognition or a boundary. This is an invitation to explore, not a rule that every emotion has one fixed meaning.

Ask, rather than assume

If this feeling could speak without being criticised, what might it want me to know?

My bounce-back notes

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

FEEL IT WITHOUT LETTING IT DRIVE

Making space for an emotion does not mean giving it control of what happens next.

You can acknowledge 'I am furious' and still choose not to send the message yet. You can acknowledge fear and still take a carefully considered step. You can recognise guilt and then decide whether something needs repair or whether guilt appeared because you set a boundary.

What does this feeling need right now?

EXPRESSION	Write, cry, speak, move, create or simply acknowledge it.
COMFORT	Warmth, familiarity, sensory regulation, reassurance or rest.
BOUNDARY	Notice whether something repeatedly crosses a limit.
ACTION	Choose a practical step only if one would genuinely help.
CONNECTION	Consider sharing this with a safe person.
TIME	Allow the feeling to exist without solving it today.

Complete only what feels useful

The feeling I most need to acknowledge: _____

What I notice in my body: _____

What I may need: _____

What I do not need to solve today: _____

Closing the wall

When you have finished, deliberately move your attention away from the page. Look around the room. Notice where your body is supported. Unclench anything you can comfortably soften. Choose a familiar sensory or grounding activity. Emotional reflection can be tiring; stopping is part of using the tool.

You can feel something deeply without having to become that feeling.

WHEN FEELINGS FEEL TOO BIG

The wall is a self-reflection tool, not a requirement to sit alone with overwhelming distress.

If an emotion is escalating rather than settling, you can stop. If you are experiencing thoughts of harming yourself or somebody else, feel unable to stay safe, or are in immediate danger, seek human support promptly. In the UK, NHS 111 can provide urgent mental-health support, Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123, and 999 or A&E; should be used in an emergency.

A message from Maggie

We are often taught to explain our feelings before we are allowed to have them. We apologise for being angry, judge ourselves for jealousy, hide relief because we think it looks uncaring, or say 'I'm fine' because the real answer feels too complicated.

I wanted this wall to be somewhere you do not have to perform the acceptable emotion. You can put down the feeling you actually have — including the one that contradicts everything else you feel.

You may understand it today. You may understand it six months from now. You may never find a perfect explanation. What matters here is giving yourself permission to notice it before deciding what happens next.

Further reading

Atlas of the Heart — Brené Brown

Permission to Feel — Marc Brackett

The Happiness Trap — Russ Harris

Emotional Agility — Susan David

Clinical notes and sources

The exercises are informed by approaches involving emotion identification and labelling, interoceptive awareness, cognitive defusion, acceptance and emotion regulation. The resource deliberately avoids presenting emotions as having one fixed meaning or prescribing a universal response.

Important: This resource is for information and self-reflection. It is not a diagnosis and does not replace individual medical, psychological or crisis care.