

Emotional Vomiting Technique

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I created this purging technique because when emotions are highly intense, sitting down, breathing, and quieting the mind can feel next to impossible and can even leave people feeling more frustrated and hopeless.

My clients in therapy, as well as myself, find this technique to be incredibly helpful when experiencing very intense negative emotion and destructive self-talk. Even though your pain and discomfort suck, it is an opportunity to heal and grow if you manage to process and release it in an effective manner. When your body and emotions are in discomfort, they are communicating to you that something is wrong and needs to be dealt with, cleared, or let go of. Here is a quick and easy process to use when the negative emotions and mind chatter are particularly strong and the typical approaches aren't working.

Begin by finding a solitary place... generally I don't want anyone observing me or disrupting me during this process. Take a moment to sit with and notice the intrusive/obsessive thoughts that are causing the emotional discomfort.

Then observe the emotional discomfort and what it feels like. Notice the chatter in your head and what it is saying – especially “core lies” (deep seated irrational beliefs- see article on this).

Take out a pad of paper that is large enough to write for at least 5 to 10 minutes. I suggest either “writing” or “scribbling” rather than “journaling” so that you can express yourself as freely and unedited as possible. “Journaling” is too serious and tends to disrupt the flow of thoughts and emotions you will be releasing. By “writing” I mean putting your thoughts and feelings down on paper in a quick expressive fashion that just flows out of you onto the paper. Don't worry about what is being said or not said. The purpose is to just express, letting the energy flow out onto the page while not being concerned about grammar, content, or editing yourself. You can also use the computer to type out your emotions and thoughts as well. I personally prefer “scribbling” since it allows me to write as quickly as the thoughts come out and it is illegible so no one will be able to read it (because it is usually crazy shit that comes out of me). See the example of scribbling below.

I call this process emotional vomiting because the main purpose is to purge the thoughts and emotional discomfort to the point where you experience noticeable relief. I guarantee if you do it long enough eventually you would become tired or bored with the exercise and shift gears.

Try to be in a quiet uninterrupted space and begin to write/scribble. Write relatively fast to very fast, don't worry if you misspell or if it is legible. Write down what you are saying in your head about yourself, others, or the situation and what your emotions are saying if they could talk. I encourage cussing because for most people this allows for better release of emotion and pain. (Sometimes I have scribbled FUCK, FUCK, FUCK.... while imagining the emotion being released onto the page). Don't worry about what you sound like and allow yourself to become irrational, ridiculous, petty, attacking, being



the victim, etc. Just let the intensity of it out as best as you can and as long as you need until you feel a noticeable shift or release. When you have vented enough, then consider going over what you have written to determine if there are any gems (i.e. insights, wise advice, things you would like to remember) and put them down onto a separate piece of paper or into a journal. These gems can be good guides in helping you to free yourself from what is driving your obsessions, anxiety, depression, etc.

Once you have dropped the emotional upset to a manageable level, then put aside the paper to be discarded later. Then, take a number of very deep breaths from your belly and blow out all of the air with long exhales to the point where it feels like there is no more air in your lungs. There are many different ways to breathe including big sighs, blowing out birthday candles, or a release like a slow leak. I also suggest imaging collecting the discomfort on the inhale into your belly and then imagine releasing it out with the exhale. An option I suggest is practicing the imagination and visualization techniques that I outline in my Release Absorb article.

Once you feel that you have settled in enough, then start to do a basic meditative practice. At first, I'd suggest counting each inhale from 1 up to 10 and then starting over again at 1. You will lose track of counting at times or have the intrusive thoughts come in and interrupt it. When this happens, don't judge yourself or get upset about it – just start over counting at 1. Most everyone is a “poor meditator,” so just accept it as part of the process, let it go, and shift your focus back to counting from 1 again.

Another basic technique is repeating the same word(s) over and over again with the inhale and the exhale. For example, inhale the words “It's OK” and exhale “Let it go” or inhale “Peace” and exhale “Forgiveness.” It's important that you believe these words to some degree so that you can speak it to the part that accepts the truth in your words. I'd suggest doing this for at least 5 to 10 minutes. Another option to consider is moving your eyes back and forth from left to right as you do your meditation to enhance processing the pain and letting go of it. If you can't meditate because the pain is too much or the thoughts keep intruding then go back to writing again until you have enough relief that you can adequately quiet yourself to be able to focus.

In your meditative space, listen for the voice of wisdom. Your voice of wisdom has a different quality than the ego. It is calm and sure,

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: David Cummins, PhD is a licensed psychologist practicing in Boise, ID. Feel free to contact him if you have any thoughts you would like to share. You can read more of his life changing and mind bending blog posts at www.davidcummins.net

rather than driven and impulsive. It also feels very different in your body than ego/false-self based thoughts. I've been amazed at how many times quieting my body and mind has opened up the part of me that is wise and effective. These insights are gems to consider writing down, remembering, and putting into action. In this space you are more intelligent and insightful because you have shifted out of an intelligent monkey mode into an intelligent human mode of thinking. It is also a good space to come up with a plan of action. The way I can tell really good Self advice is that I feel the truth of it when I hear it.

Here is a quick summary of the steps:

Observe the emotional pain and related negative thoughts as something that is not you but that you are experiencing

Create a space where you can write everything out without any form of interruption.

Write or type out what the negative thoughts and the emotional pain is saying as quickly as possible. Go wild with it and really express the emotion onto the paper. Cuss, hate, allow yourself to be the victim, attack, etc. Let out the worst of it until you notice a shift.

Write down the gems and put paper away to be thrown away/destroyed later.

Keep writing/typing until you get enough relief that you can have some success at meditation. This shift should feel noticeable before moving on.

Focus on breathing and focusing technique to release the energy and settle the mind and body.

If you can't meditate because the pain is too much or the thoughts keep intruding then go back to writing again until you have enough relief that you can quiet yourself.

Listen for the voice of wisdom and write down the insights that will help you to heal and overcome your pain. Create a plan of action that will have a productive outcome for the issue you are dealing with.

Other things that may assist in the processing:

Pay attention to your body and emotions. They are your allies trying to help you see what is wrong in the present or the past so that you can fix, heal it, and stop reliving it.

Learn to sit with the discomfort. It is actually not as bad as part of you believe. Sitting and not reacting give you control and power over it. Eventually it will pass. The worst of your moments has already passed, so will this.

If you are feeling very driven by the negative thoughts and discomfort, SLOW DOWN!!! and do not give into them (i.e. the ego). Remember, whenever we give into these impulsive/reactionary thoughts and feelings we almost always create the exact opposite of what we want. When has anyone made a

good decision while in panic or rage. You actually become smarter the more you calm down.

Box yourself in so that you have limited exposure to what triggers you. If you are hoping for a phone call, then turn your phone off for a couple of hours, if you are hoping for an email then close the email account for a couple of hours. Then go for a walk, work on a project, do something kind for someone, etc. This gives a sense of control and makes the urges more manageable/fleeting.

Ask your body what it needs. Sometimes it is because we are sick, hangry, tired, or dehydrated. Drink water, take a nap, and eat foods high in protein and fat. Nuts, meat, and cheese work well.

Physically release the energy by shaking it out. Imagine having sticky mud on your hands and trying to shake it off while imagining the negative emotion being released through your hands. Other forms of physical exercise are great at rebalancing the system. Use what works for you.

Reduce/avoid caffeine, sugars, carbohydrates, drugs, and alcohol.

Avoid quick and unhealthy releases such as soothing with food, drugs and alcohol, sex, TV, or other cheap methods of temporary relief and distraction. Temporary relief keeps the negative thoughts and emotions going longer!!!!!! These cheap approaches don't cure anything and actually prolong the problem and create more problems for you to deal with.

Release the physical and emotional energy. Shake your body, move, stomp your feet on the floor, tear up paper, cuss, scream, allow yourself to be a bit crazy in a safe place.

Notice the emotions, breathe, see if you can shift the physical feeling with your imagination, and realize that all emotions, urges, negative thoughts, etc. always pass eventually. Breathing and quieting help them to pass faster.

Question the rationality of your thoughts. Is your ego/false-self lying to you and are you believing the lies? Quite likely you are!

Movement is important, don't just stew in your shit because it will only entrench you.

Walking meditation – walk slower or faster than usual with healthy breathing while saying to yourself whatever you are seeing at the time (i.e. tree, sky, house, car,) to help get you out of your head and irrational emotion. You have to stick with it for awhile and go with what makes your body feel better.

Take time to sit in your shit. Remember: Your pain sucks, but if you let it drive your emotions and actions it will typically just make things worse. You have the choice to empower the negative thoughts and feelings or not through your actions. This is an opportunity to heal, grow, and free yourself from it if you choose to face it and process it.