



“The Feeling”

Fortunately, some people who will read this will not understand what “the feeling” is, which is actually a very good thing, because “the feeling” is a not such a good thing. Others, sadly, who have felt “the feeling” will know exactly what their personal version of “the feeling” is once they hear more about it. So, you are better off if you don’t know what “the feeling” is. But if you do know, maybe this can help?

What is “The Feeling”?

“The feeling” is a different experience for everyone. “The feeling” actually is not just one feeling, but it is a conglomerate of many different troubling feelings and other unsettling thoughts that can blend together ominously to surround a person like a dark cloud rolling in over a sunny day. “The feeling” can be any unique combination of negative emotions and thoughts including (but not limited too) – *Examples below*

Anger – Fear – Discouragement – Disappointment – Self Doubt – Insecurity – Self Loathing – Worry – Dread – Sadness – Regret – Confusion- Discomfort – Doom – Tension – Burden – Suspicion – Uneasiness – Indecision – Overwhelmed and Unappreciated

As stated earlier each person’s unique experience with “the feeling” includes a very personal array of a portion of the above feelings in any given combination, often depending upon the timing and what is going on in life at any given time. “The feeling” is both mysteriously dark but strangely intimate for each person who feels it.

“The feeling” can appear at any time. You can be watching a movie and all of a sudden, “the feeling” comes over you. You can be driving your car, or walking down the block, at work, or out on a date or even sitting around laughing with friends, when out of nowhere, “the feeling” can enter your stream of consciousness. Something negative may happen and you may feel the feeling coming on slowly, yet at other times you may be feeling just fine and then: Boom! – “The feeling” crept up on you and took over. “The feeling” can be like an evil monster that comes to visit your consciousness every now and then, sometimes when you expect it and other times completely unforeseen and unpredicted – but always unwelcomed.





“The Feeling” and Addiction

It is unlikely that anyone has ever scientifically studied “the feeling” (but they probably should). If scientists did research more into “the feeling” they likely would discover that many people who use or abuse drugs and alcohol do so to escape “the feeling” Just having a few hours or even a few minutes to be free of “the feeling” or to send it away for a time, could be a driving force to get high, to forget, to clear away “the feeling” from your brain for a little while so you can just be you and be okay for a time. If you have felt “the feeling” surely you can understand.

The problem is, however, that doing drugs isn’t a long term answer to rid yourself of “the feeling”. In fact the longer you do drugs in an effort to escape, the worse “the feeling” can become. It’s a lot like using a credit card to pay your bills. A credit card temporarily pays the bills but in the long run you only accrue more and more bills until you have so much debt that you have no credit left and there is so much to pay, that you run out of credit and then it will take years to pay it all back. It works the same when you get high to escape “the feeling”. Getting high works in the short run, but it takes more and more to get high to get rid of “the feeling” which then costs more money and takes up more time only causing more stress, fear, and dread, anxiety which only then makes “the feeling” come back even stronger and more often. People spend years trying to run from “the feeling” with drugs and alcohol but “the feeling” never truly goes away, it just waits for you when you are broke, tired, confused and overwhelmed again, which inevitably happens repeatedly when you are caught up in this vicious cycle.

Breaking Free from “The Feeling” Naturally

Sometimes when people first stop using substances, they may feel good for a while but then they may get stumbled if “the feeling” comes back in spite of a period of no longer using. That is why the process of getting better is more than just stopping using, but it is about *positive change*. Breaking free from substance use issues is an essential part of the puzzle but there is so much more important, challenging but extremely rewarding work to do. The change process is what finally makes “the feeling” go away. For some people, even when you are doing the right thing, “the feeling” may peek its ugly head back in to your brain every once in a while. But when you develop the tools and you have the right plan in place, you can learn to escape the feeling without having to run to a drink, a pipe, a needle or a line to get that quick fix to try to get away. When you finally take the time to *listen and learn*, and then *practice and apply* what you need to do, you can break free from “the feeling” and finally let the sun shine in your life through good times and in bad, through struggles and through triumphs. You can find lasting shelter from the black cloud that is “the feeling”

Questions for Discussion

- 1. Can you identify with the idea of “the feeling”?**
- 2. What is “the feeling” like for you?**
- 3. How have you used/misused substances in an effort to cope?**
- 4. Have you found yourself in a negative cycle as described above?**
- 5. What has helped you?**
- 6. We all want to feel better- but for you personally, what is your hope?**

Next – Review and Discuss: *How to Fight “The Feeling” and Win*



How to Fight “The Feeling” and Win:

Since “the feeling” is unique for everyone, then the process of healing and changing is unique as well. Consider some important aspects of overcoming, “the feeling”



To the degree that you are able: Stop surrounding yourselves with negative people who feed the feeling – People that put you down, beat you, cheat you, or stab you in the back only serve to feed “the feeling” and keep you in a negative state of mind. The same is true with people who surround themselves with drama, gossip, chaos, fighting, dissension, and deception. Breaking free from negative people can be difficult at first but in the long run it’s like a breath of fresh air.

Stay busy – “The feeling” is drastically more likely to creep in when your mind is not occupied. Being productive alone is not the answer to the feeling, but it sure does help to have a structured life with responsibilities, things to do, daily goals and places to be on a consistent basis



Surround yourself with support. Yes it is true that good friends can be hard to find, but they are worth the search. Focus on quality over quantity as a few trustworthy friends can be much more valuable than a dozen acquaintances. People who are encouraging and who offer positive advice and feedback can help drive “the feeling” out of your head and they can be there for you when you feel “the feeling” creeping back into your head.

Spirituality and purpose – “Spirituality” can be viewed as a dirty word these days as many people are turned off from negative past experiences. If you find this to be a struggle, just keep it simple and remember that regardless of your beliefs, the search for meaning and purpose on some level is the start of spirituality. How deep you go with it depends upon you however anyone who chooses to completely ignore the quest for meaning and purpose in life is doing their selves a disservice. Focusing on finding meaning and purpose in life surely helps keep “the feeling” at bay. A life without goals, quests, searching, learning, inspiration, investigation, exploration and understanding is prone to becoming stagnant, shallow and even empty

Medication – If part of the reason you may be feeling “the feeling” is because of a chemical imbalance, there is no shame in taking medication (as prescribed or recommended by a qualified professional, not the corner drug dealer, or the internet) Mental health issues such as depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, Bipolar and other mood disorders, often can be helped by the right medication regimen. The same is true with Medication Assisted Treatment for substance use disorders, as some find that MAT is a difference maker for them when it comes to the closing the revolving door of relapse. Medication alone is often only just a part of the puzzle as other life changes are needed, however considering medication has given many individuals a needed boost in their personal fight to overcome “the feeling” especially when mental health, withdrawal, or serious craving is a struggle

Learn and practice, physical and mental self-healing – Last but certainly not least, developing the knowledge, skills and tools to take care of yourself mentally, emotionally, and physically on both a day to day and also a long term basis is essential to healing yourself from “the feeling”. Whether it is through therapy, self-help, reading, exercising, self-esteem building, coping, or any combination of ways to improve your mind, body and spirit that work for you is critical to this process. Once you learn the skills you need to practice and master them. It can be challenging but is so worth it in the long run.

There’s a reason for the spaces between each suggestion above. After you have reviewed and discussed these as a group, go back and come up with your plan for most if not all of the areas above in order to increase both peace and progress in your life