

Emotional Management: Part I

By Wei-Chien Lee, PhD, clinical psychologist

Emotions are innate protectors. When we have emotional responses, it indicates that something requires our attention. Just like traffic lights - red means stop, yellow is a warning, and green tells us to go ahead. Emotions are like signal lights, and understanding and responding to these signals is emotional management.

Emotions are signal lights

If we want to understand a different language, we take the time to learn, comprehend, and listen. However, we often don't have the opportunity to learn, understand, and listen to the "language of our heart" - our emotions.

Just as our bodies use sensations like pain, heat, and itching to tell us, "Pay attention here!" our minds use emotions (joy, anger, sadness, surprise, and more) to say, "Pay attention here!" When we experience emotions, we can imagine these are like signal soldiers from our minds running to report, "Commander, there are obstacles ahead. How should we handle them? Please instruct." Emotions are inherent in protecting us. When we have emotional reactions, it means there's something we need to pay attention to. Like traffic lights, red means stop, yellow is a warning signal, and green means proceed. Emotions are signal lights. Managing emotions involves understanding and responding to these signals. When we can listen and understand our emotions, we can grow and progress.

Understanding Emotions: Do You Have these Myths?

Myth: If I have emotions, it means I'm not mature enough.

We feel pain when we're kicked. No matter how mature and wise we are, we will have emotions. Our maturity and wisdom are more related to how we handle emotions (just like when we're kicked, we must decide whether to kick back, shout out, or handle it differently).

情緒管理：認識情緒（上）

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情緒是生來保護我們的。當我們有情緒反應的時候，表示有事情需要我們的注意。像交通燈一樣，紅燈停下來，黃燈警告訊號，綠燈告訴我們往前走。情緒是信號燈，如何了解與應對這個訊號，就是情緒管理。

情緒是信號燈

如果我們想要了解一個不一樣的語言，我們會花時間去學習、了解、聆聽；但是我們通常沒有機會去學習、了解、與聆聽我們「心靈的語言」——我們的情緒。

就像我們的身體會用疼痛熱癢等感受，來告訴我們「要注意這裡喔！」，我們的心靈用情緒（喜怒哀樂難過傷心僥倖）告訴我們「要注意這裡喔！」當我們感受到情緒的時候，我們可以想像這是我們心靈的訊號兵跑來告訴我們「報告長官，前有地雷，如何處理，請指示。」

情緒是生來保護我們的。當我們有情緒反應的時候，表示有事情需要我們的注意。像交通燈一樣，紅燈停下來，黃燈警告訊號，綠燈告訴我們往前走。情緒是信號燈。如何了解與應對這個訊號，就是情緒管理。當我們能夠聆聽了解我們的情緒時，我們能夠成長與進步。

了解情緒：你有這些迷思嗎？

迷思：如果我有情緒，代表我不夠成熟

不管我們如何的健康，我們被踢到的時候還是會痛。所以不管我們如何的成熟與睿智，我們會有情緒。成熟與智慧是跟我們如何處理情緒比較有關，如我們被踢到以後我們，必須要決定是要踢回去，大叫一聲，還是用別的方式處理。

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Myth: Emotions should be simple.

Human emotions are incredibly complex. Emotions are often intertwined, meaning we rarely experience just one emotion. So, many times, describing or understanding our own emotions can be very challenging.

Myth: There are "right" or "should" emotions.

Every emotion is a signal, and everyone's response is different, so there are no right or wrong emotions. Believing in right or wrong emotions can hinder our emotional and mental well-being. Emotions should be understood, not judged.

It means that we should avoid telling ourselves or others, "You shouldn't/shouldn't be angry."

Instead, we can practice asking ourselves: "Why does this situation make me so angry? Is it because of the current situation? Or is it due to accumulated stressors? Or is it because of my current state? Or is it because of my expectations for this person?"

Myth: Emotions are irrational.

Emotions are signals. The size of the signal doesn't mean we are losing control; it's just a signal. When emotions are strong, it's even more crucial to use our wisdom and maturity to decide how to use this signal to take care of ourselves and address the issue.

You might wonder, "Why am I reacting so strongly to something so trivial?" This is a vital question in emotional management. Sometimes our "irrational" reactions stem from not having learned how to handle past wounds and current challenges.

Myth: Emotions are always a genuine reflection of how I feel.

Just like learning a language, sometimes emotional reactions are learned behaviors. Some people learn that they can't cry but can be angry. Others learn they can't feel pain but can suppress themselves. You may have heard the saying, "Once bitten by a snake, you are scared of a rope for ten years."

Sometimes, our emotional sensors see something that looks similar to what hurt us in the past, and they start yelling, "Captain, there's a snake, a snake!" Very often we must recalibrate our emotional sensors or use our wisdom to understand what our emotional sentinels are really reacting to.

迷思：情緒應該是簡單的

人的情緒是非常複雜的。常情緒都是連在一起的，也就是說我們很少只有一種情緒。所以很多時候描述或者了解自己的情绪是非常困難的。

迷思：有「正確」「應該」的情緒。

情緒是訊號，每個人的反應都是不一樣，所以沒有正確或不正確。覺得有正確或不正確情緒的時候，會阻礙我們身心健康的發展。情緒是要被了解，而不是被批判 (judged) 的。

因此我們在生活中，要避免對自己或別人說，「不應該/不要生氣」，我們要練習問自己：「為什麼這件事情讓我這麼生氣？是因為現在的事情呢？還是有很多累積的事情？是因為我現在自己的狀況？還是我對這個人的期望？」

迷思：有情緒就是不理智

情緒是信號。訊號的大小，並不代表我們失控。情緒大時，更要用我們的智慧與成熟決定我們要如何用這個訊號來照顧自己與處理問題。也許你會覺得『這種小事為什麼我反應這麼大？』這是情緒管理的必要的問題。有時候我們的「不理智」的反應，來自於我們沒有學到怎麼處理過去的傷痕與現在的難處。

迷思：情緒一定是我的真實感受

就像學習語言，有時候情緒反應是學來的。有些人學到他不能哭但是可以生氣。有些人學到他不能痛苦但是可以壓抑自己。

我們都聽過『一朝被蛇咬，十年怕井繩』。有時候我們的心靈訊號兵看到跟過去嚴重傷害我們的東西很像，就會大叫『長官，有蛇！！』所以很多時候我們必須要重新校正我們心靈的訊號，或是用我們的智慧看一下我們的訊號兵到底在反應什麼東西。

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Why are there emotional fluctuations?

People's emotions fluctuate, and ways of dealing with emotions are influenced by various factors:

- Learning: How emotions are expressed & managed is influenced by learning and experiences.
- Genetics: Just as people have sensitivities to physical pain, the sensitivity of emotions is also related to genetics.
- Physical Health: Factors like illnesses, lack of sleep, and high stress levels can make it challenging to control emotions.
- Mental Health: When someone's mental health is compromised, emotions can be harder to manage.
- Sleep: Poor sleep quality can affect emotional control and fluctuations.
- Interpersonal Relationships: Interactions with others, including experiences of being hurt or neglected, and societal values can impact emotional responses and fluctuations.

Emotional management goals

The goal of emotional management is definitely not the absence of emotions but rather the choice of appropriate and healthy ways to process emotions and deal with issues.

Practice: Think back to the last time you had difficulty controlling your emotions. What were the reasons that made it difficult to control your emotions? Did you use different coping methods?

Examples:

External Factors

- Being scolded by someone outside.
- Lost my wallet.
- Didn't eat for a whole day.
- Haven't had a good night's sleep for several days.

Psychological Factors

- Feeling very depressed.
- Feeling misunderstood.
- Feeling mentally exhausted.
- Negative thoughts: should, always, blaming.

Historical Factors

- This isn't the first time.
- In the past, it had bad results.
- He never helps!
- How many times do I have to say for him to understand!

Coping Methods

- Don't speak first.
- Tell him I'm not feeling well and ask if he can help.
- Change my own way of thinking.
- Find time to rest.

[To learn more, you can watch the recording of the webinar on emotion management here.](#)

為什麼有情緒起伏？

人的情緒一定會有起伏，每個人的情緒的大小跟處理的方式，受很多因素的影響。

- 學習：情緒怎麼樣表達和處理，和學習和經驗有很大的關係。
- 基因：就像人對疼痛的敏感度是不一樣的人對情緒的敏感度跟基因其實是有關係的
- 身體健康狀況：比如說感冒，或是睡不好時，我們的情緒起伏比較難控制。壓力大時，情緒比較難控制。和心理健康也有關，當心理不健康的時候，情緒很難控制。
- 睡眠：睡眠質量不好的時候會影響到我們的情緒控制與情緒起伏。
- 人際關係：此外被傷害被忽略，社會價值觀等。

情緒管理的目標

情緒管理的目標絕對不是沒有情緒，而是選擇適合而且健康的方式消化情緒以及處理問題

練習：回想上一次你情緒不好控制的時候，有哪些原因讓你情緒不容易控制？有沒有不一樣的應對方法？

例子：

外在因素

- 在外面被人罵
- 錢包掉了
- 一天沒吃飯
- 好幾天沒睡好覺

心理因素

- 很鬱悶
- 覺得自己被誤會
- 自己已經心裡很累了
- 負面想法：應該、總是、老是、責怪

歷史因素

- 這不是第一次
- 以前這樣的事發生時有很不好的結果
- 他總是不幫忙！
- 我要說多少次他才懂！

應對方法

- 先不要說話
- 告訴他我心情很不好可不可以幫忙
- 改變我自己的想法
- 找時間讓自己休息

[了解更多情緒管理的方法，請觀看講座錄影](#)