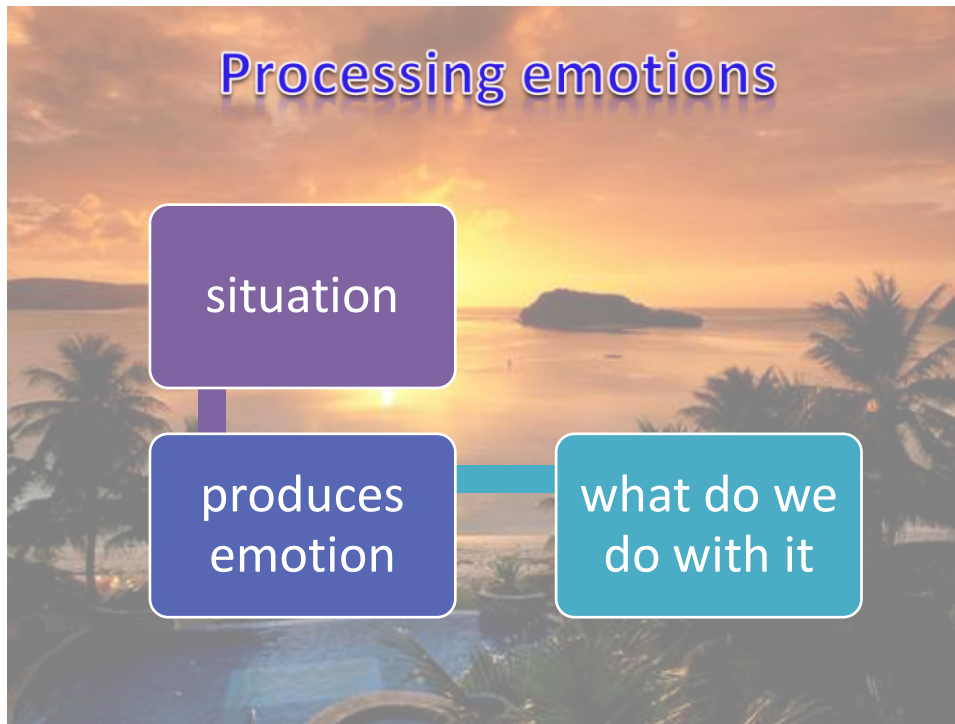


# Processing Emotions



We need to recognise that:

- every situation produces an emotion
- what we do with that emotion will influence how we feel about ourselves
- some people bury that emotion more easily than others

So, we can ask ourselves at any given point, 'What am I really feeling at this moment?' Clearly, there will be times when we are more conscious of our emotions, and perhaps that we 'don't feel right.'

Processing the emotions is stopping, looking at what we feel, asking why we feel it and doing something constructive with that emotion. Our feelings are the emotional equivalent of the nerves in our body. They can bring pain or pleasure but, whereas the physical experience passes, the emotional gets buried within and has an effect.

Imagine that your friend introduces you to someone that they really like. When you are introduced you take an immediate dislike to that person. What are you going to do with that emotion? Assume there is something wrong with you? That you must be an unpleasant individual for even having such negative feelings? But what if you are right? Perhaps you picked up something accurately about that person – and they are really not to be trusted.

What would 'processing emotions' look like in that scenario? If you struggle with low self-worth there is every probability that you will turn it back on yourself and blame

yourself for even thinking negatively. Anyone with the Melancholic temperament is more likely to feel like that. You can imagine the damage that would do!

On the other hand, you could recognise that often your insights have been accurate and that you may well have seen something that your friend has not picked up. Your emotions may be sending you signals that could save your friend – and you – from problems ahead.

The key thing here is that you need to do something definite with the emotion associated with that experience. Don't automatically turn it back on yourself. You may need to share what you feel with someone whose judgement you really trust so you can 'talk it out' and make sure you are being objective. Finally, the emotion needs to be put to rest in the sense that, if you are wrong about the person, well, time will tell. You haven't felt what you have because you are a 'bad person.' If you are right then you have to decide whether to say anything to your friend or not. If it is not wise to share with your friend then at least you have kept your own thinking straight and not turned it all back on yourself. That is processing emotions and those principles can be applied in any situation.

One final, but important, point to make: sharing in itself may well help to take the immediate pressure out of our emotions but it doesn't necessarily, in itself, bring resolution and allow us to go forward in peace. The person we share with needs to be someone who we sense understands us and is stronger than us. Someone who, when he or she speaks, we know we are hearing from them the truth in such a way that it corresponds with, and echoes with, the truth already in our hearts. That is what enables us to put the matter to rest and to go forward in peace.