



I would love to hear from you and will reply to letters which, if we print them, will remain anonymous. Your details will be treated confidentially. Email me at harleysttherapy@gmail.com or ring me on 07760 669246. Take a look at my website at www.harleystpsychotherapy.com

Core emotions are a set of seven different emotions: Joy, fear, disgust, excitement, sexual excitement, anger and sadness.

Core emotions are linked to the middle part of our brain and are our survival emotions, provoking us to action. They are not controlled consciously and also have physical reactions.

We cannot 'think' through these, we have to fully experience them to be released so that we can comfortably move on.

Sometimes in childhood, one or more of these emotions can be (usually inadvertently) shut off by the actions of a parent or major care giver. For example a little boy maybe told: "Boys don't cry". A little girl maybe given the message: "Anger is not acceptable", therefore giving the message that anger, or sadness is not allowed.

So if the little boy hurts himself or is hurt either physically or emotionally and the parent/ caregiver tells him: "Don't be soft/a fairy/a girl" or "Man up" or is simply ignored; he could learn that sadness or hurt is not an accepted emotion and crying is not accepted behaviour. There is no point, because it is not validated by the parent acknowledging it by saying: "Oh that must have hurt you, poor you, you are upset" or by hugging. This would give the little boy permission to feel the very natural feeling of wanting to cry when hurt or sad. He could then recover and realise that the hurt/sadness subsides and he can carry on as normal, no harm done and that he is resilient. That hurt and tears are nothing to be afraid of.

If core emotions are inhibited in childhood, this is when we subconsciously use defence as a form of protection. We brush away the painful emotion and keep busy. Sometimes inhibitory emotions can stop us from going to the core emotion: guilt; shame; anxiety.

Natural emotions which become stuck are uncomfortable to experience. You know when you



Core emotions and how to unlock them

King's Lynn-based psychotherapist and counsellor **Amanda Jayne** revisits the subject of feelings and how important it is to investigate them thoroughly so they do not become stuck causing us stress/depression/anxiety.

stop yourself crying and think about something else? When you veer away from talking about something painful as it feels too overwhelming? When you exercise or work too much to stop thoughts drifting nearer to the difficult core emotion? The tendency is to shut it off and try to avoid feeling it.

The grown up girl who isn't allowed to feel anger will never let herself be angry later in life. However, what will happen is that she will become resentful and passive-aggressive. For her, this is also uncomfortable and can lead to anxiety or depression as her core emotion has been suppressed.

The key to releasing stuck core emotions is ideally through therapy. However, with bravery and trust in

your own resilience you can learn to process these and release them.

Whenever you feel uncomfortable, sit quietly and turn your attention inwards. Try to find a word or image for the emotion that you are experiencing. When you hit the right one, you may feel tearful and this is when we tend to opt out. Don't. Stay with it and try to find a time in your early life where you felt the same. If you are sobbing or angry or are feeling the emotion strongly, acknowledge it. While you are doing that do not punish yourself but treat yourself with empathy.

Once you have managed this, you will feel relief. You will have processed the stuck emotion and you will feel stronger. **LI**