



a monthly newsletter from Carol McKay, Life Coach  
Helping people create happier, more passionate lives!

## Sorting Out Our Emotions

I noticed recently I'd been feeling a little blue. A little down. I couldn't really pinpoint any particular reason...it didn't really make sense. Life is good, things are fine. Since I know that happiness is a choice, I tend to be able to lift myself up pretty easily. Yet, there I was, feeling a little dreary.

It felt like a good time to do a little investigation. "What's the root of this dreariness?" I asked myself. Suddenly I realized what was going on. My beloved Giants had lost 7 games in a row, a tailspin not regularly seen amongst the ranks of World Series Champions. When the cameras scanned the dugout, the faces were long, the brows furrowed. They didn't look like my usual jovial, smiley pranksters. They looked dreary, just like I felt. Interesting.

Had I PERSONALLY lost 7 games in a row? Well, no.

Did I play a large role in the losses? Well, no.

Had I missed a play at the bag, or popped out in 10 straight at-bats? Well, no.

But, I felt the dreariness as though I'd stepped onto the field and botched a grounder or threw the ball away myself!

And, it made me think how often the emotions we choose to feel don't REALLY belong to us. I might read a tragic story in the newspaper, or learn of a beloved celebrity's passing, and feel sad all day. I might see an ugly message on social media, and suddenly feel angry and hostile. I might learn of another person's struggle, and actually begin to experience the struggle myself.

Are we really so sponge-like that we can instantly take on other people's emotions as our own? It seems like it's more than just empathy when it actually affects moods, dispositions and attitudes.

You'll hear people talk about "boundaries" regularly. Personal boundaries are what help prevent us from absorbing every emotion that comes along. When we let our boundaries down, we can feel overwhelmed by the waves of emotion generated by others.

So, how do you keep your boundaries? What do you do to help you be clear about whose emotions are whose?

Obviously, it's tricky. I find myself losing track of my boundaries often. It seems, as it is with most things, the way to change behaviors is to shine a light on them. When I notice any feeling – positive or negative, happy or sad – I constantly work on asking myself, "Whose feeling is this, anyway." Often, that single question guides me to my truth.

## PLAYTIME

When you notice yourself full of emotions, whether big or small, start by asking if the emotion makes sense. It's usually pretty easy to tell if the emotions belong to you just by looking at the events in your life.

If the emotions don't seem like they belong to you, ask the question:

"Whose feeling is this, anyway?"

Can you pinpoint where the emotion originated? If so, mentally see yourself handing that emotion back to wherever it originated. Or pushing it back. Or throwing it back. Just get rid of it! We all have enough challenges managing our OWN emotions without taking on the emotions of the world.

*Whew...that's quite a weight off your shoulders, isn't it?*