



The Wellbeing Edit

Volume 3: December 2022

BE AN EMOTIONAL SCIENTIST

How are you?

As we head into December and the festive season we can find ourselves feeling emotionally conflicted. It can be a magical time but it can also be a time of unpleasant feelings. Back in September I shared the work of Professor Marc Brackett with you and in particular the importance of the question 'how are you'? I want to share a little more of his work with you today.

Marc explains that when it comes to our emotions (and those of others) we can fall into either the position of scientist or judge. The emotional judge makes quick decisions based on just a little information about how they or others are feeling. However, the emotional scientist is curious and investigates feelings, wanting to understand better and more deeply.

The importance of being an emotional scientist is that it allows us to deeply understand feelings and this improves our ability to regulate. Often when we think about regulation, we think about shifting the unpleasant feelings but we mustn't forget that regulation is also about sustaining or bringing about more of the pleasant feelings.

Marc offers a really simple framework for helping us to be emotional scientists - **RULER**

Recognise
Understand
Label
Express
Regulate

I'll say a bit about each of them...

Recognise: this is about noticing the presence of a feeling, the general sensation of something pleasant or unpleasant.

Understand: getting curious about why this might be, why now?

Label: recognising was broad and general, labeling is about getting nuanced and specific. Sometimes this can be tricky, sometimes it's hard to label the feeling but this is a really important part of the process.

Express: expressing our emotions is a co-skill, it's best done with others who will listen. Sometimes this means we need be brave and a bit vulnerable.

Regulate: with all this insight we can take actions that help to shift, sustain or enhance those feelings.

The strategies for regulating our emotions are endless and the real key to becoming an emotional scientist is becoming more aware of and consistent with our strategies - what works and what doesn't work?

Some questions to reflect on:

- What are your go-to strategies?
- What do you do to handle the heavy, unpleasant feelings?
- Which ones work the best?
- Are there things you do that you know set you up well for handling the challenging feelings?
- What helps you 'in the moment'?
- Are there any new strategies you might try?

The more you can practise the skills of being an emotional scientist the easier it becomes and the more agile your emotional regulation becomes. This is the same for using RULER to support the emotional regulation of others too - this might be your pupils, your colleagues, parents and carers, your family or friends.

How are you feeling?

What are your emotional regulation strategies?

How are they working for you?

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[87 emotions and feelings](#)

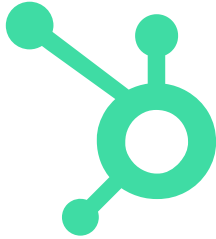


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[What to do when joy feels far away by Sophie Cliff](#)

INSIDE STEPPING STONES



Find out more about what Stepping Stones has to offer by completing the short the [pre-engagement module](#).

Deepen your knowledge with Education Scotland this month with our curated selection of [Professional Learning Activities \(PLA\)](#) in the Discover & Connect Section.

And as part of the DYW Professional Learning offer, Skills Development Scotland are leading a session on [Developing Metaskills](#) on Thursday 8 December.

The General Teaching Council Scotland have an excellent wellbeing [hub](#) of resources and advice.

Please forward this to a friend or colleague if you think they might find it find it useful too.

Until next time...

Sarah

[& the Stepping Stones team]



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