

HEALING APPROACH TO FEELINGS FR. GABRIEL HÜGER SAM. FLUHM

Feelings Are Valuable Signals

They show our unfulfilled, hidden needs (e.g. the need for appreciation, intimacy, love, quiet, security, development, insight etc.)

Feelings Show Us the True Motives (“Why have I done this?”)

By observing our feelings we unmask our true motives and reasons as to why we do something and why not. Our motive often is the quest for our own honour/reputation, being attached to things/persons, selfishness or hidden pride. Way too often they determine our decisions; very seldom the glorification of God resp. the wellbeing of the neighbour.

Feelings Call For Repentance

Feelings call on us to repent, to get rid of bad ties and to protect ourselves from looming dangers.

Feelings Are Not Yet A Sin (CCC 1771-1775)

“The principal passions (referring to affections or the feelings) are love and hatred, desire and fear, joy, sadness, and anger. In the passions, as movements of the sensitive appetite, there is neither moral good nor evil. But insofar as they engage reason and will, there is moral good or evil in them.”

The way we approach the feelings thus decides whether the morally neutral feelings lead to the evil or the good.

Suppression of Unpleasant Feelings

In childhood, man is often taught to suppress unpleasant feelings. They are considered as indecent, and often so-called “negative“ feelings are wrongly seen as weaknesses or even as sins. Therefore, one is afraid of expressing and admitting one’s feelings: I feel livid, angry, rejected, annoyed, envious, jealous, in love, insecure, anxious, depressive, etc. in this or that situation.

(One example: The board game “Ludo“ – In this game one directly or indirectly learns to suppress one’s feelings of disappointment and anger. Thus, this feeling may be discharged into reactions of revenge or other uncontrolled emotions.)

Fatal Consequences of the Suppression of Feelings

* The suppressed feelings restrict our freedom and we become dishonest and mendacious (we put on masks).

* We build up protective walls: withdrawal (cf. with tortoise), anger, rebellion, manipulation, toughness, coldness, dominance, addiction to criticism, sarcasm, cynicism, knee-jerk reactions, defensive mechanisms.

* We repress the so-called negative feelings into our subconscious mind; there, they escape our control, revolt and ask to be discharged.

- This may become manifest in exhaustion, insomnia, headaches and different diseases (psycho-somatic diseases, which have no biological cause).

- They may lead to outbursts of rage and evil words.

- They build barriers and increase conflicts among people.

- The evil spirit also likes to enter into suppressed feelings: it makes use of our fears as well as our tendencies to accuse other people or oneself. Prayers of renunciation are helpful (e.g. "I renounce the spirit of anger, hatred, envy, of uncleanness, sadness, etc.") or in serious cases the blessing of deliverance by a priest.

Practical Help: Diary of Feelings

To observe the feelings and to use them for the good, we need silence, self-observation (examination of conscience every evening). One writes down feelings which one has experienced during the day:

"I felt....(name of the feeling), when I (situation) etc."

Or one observes the dreams of the previous night. It is not so much the contents which is important but rather the feelings we had and which make us "get out of the wrong side of the bed".

* By naming the feeling we bring it from the subconscious to the conscious mind and it loses its negative impact.

* We gain back control over the repressed feelings.

* We must accept that there are ugly, threatening or shaming feelings in us; by accepting them and surrendering them to Jesus, a change happens in our life: "Jesus, I surrender my feeling of anger, hatred, envy, of uncleanness, fear.... to You."

* We may then ask ourselves: "Which is the underlying need of the feeling?" Thus, we liberate ourselves from the wrong opinion about ourselves and realise the true image of ourselves.

* We may also ask ourselves: "Where in my past life have I felt something similar and repressed/suppressed it?"

- By this I realise if the source of these feelings are current situations or events from the childhood. (Recommendation: In the case of hurts from the childhood please use the Folder "Prayer for the Healing of Emotions".)

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Spiritual Counselling: Expression of the Feelings

The monks already distinguished between confessing one's sins to a priest in the confession, and, on the other hand, telling one's feelings to the spiritual counsellor, in order to be able to better know the will of God in this way.

- * By expressing the feelings one becomes aware of them.
- * Thereby the person starts to describe, to understand better and to discern what lives in him/her.
- * Expressing the feelings gives us relief and reassurance; it takes away the negative impact of the feelings.
- * It protects us from dramatising negative feelings (which may become manifest in discouragement, sadness and despair)
- * It keeps us from trivialising their importance (which may become manifest in anxieties and the escape from oneself).

Categorisation of the Feelings

The proposed categorisation of the feelings is not judgmental. It allows us to name the feelings without awakening inner resistance, which arises whenever we confess to feelings which we call “bad” or for which we were punished in our childhood.

1. **Feelings of anger:** bad mood, annoyance, restless tension, impatience, irritation, indignation, resistance, trouble, hostility, hatred, reluctance, vengefulness, contempt, suppression.
2. **Feelings of fear:** insecurity, falling out of balance, restlessness, fear, anxiety, embarrassment, lostness, indecision, stage fever, panic; irritated, perturbed, threatened, disconcerted, distrustful, horrified.
3. **Feelings of sadness:** disappointed, at a loss, melancholic, in low spirits, humiliated, rejected, sad, lost, weary, worried, hurt, hopeless, depressive, miserable, sinful; feeling of void.
4. **Feelings of confidence:** good mood, free, unattached, satisfied, optimistic, happy, enthusiastic, serene, delighted, relieved, successful, secure, familiar.
5. **Feelings of love/attachment:** sympathy recognition, gratitude, to respect/like/appreciate someone; to remain under someone’s spell, fascinated, in love; love, feelings of togetherness, attachment, belonging, devotion, adoration.

Please note: The whole lecture on the topic “**Healing Approach to Feelings**” (in German) by Fr. Gabriel Hüger is also available as Audio-CD (against a voluntary donation). You can also find it under the heading “Lectures” on www.segenskreis.at (download or order).

Path of Healing

1. Call your feelings by their name

“In me there is this feeling ... in this situation ... “ (e.g. anger, hatred, fear, rejection, sadness, joy, being in love, attachment etc. – see the list of feelings under the previous item.)

2. Humbly admit: “Yes, Jesus, in me there is this feeling “

Do not repress the truth! Admit: “Yes, dear God, this is how I am!” and surrender your feelings to Jesus: “Jesus, I surrender to You with this feeling...; take care of everything! “ (Rosary of Abandonment by Don Dolindo Ruotolo, see below.)

3. Make use of the authority of Jesus

In the name of Jesus, resolutely renounce negative spirits which have taken control over your world of feelings (e.g. “In the name of Jesus I renounce the spirit of fear, of hot temper, of self-pity, of uncleanness etc.”) and ask Jesus for forgiveness.

4. Ask the Holy Spirit for the opposite virtue

Walk on the redeeming path of praise, of thanks, of the word of God or a prayer of blessing. Ask the Holy Spirit e.g. when you are angry to give you meekness, when in uncleanness, cleanliness, when anxious, courage etc. and make use of the corresponding words of God (e.g. psalm verses).

Prayer Assistance for the Healing of Feelings

Rosary of Abandonment (Don Dolindo Ruotolo)

Oh God, come to my assistance - Lord make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. - As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Fervent prayer: Lord, may Your name be sanctified and Your will be done!

1st Decade:

Oh Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (on the 10 beads of the "Hail Mary", instead of it)

Glory be to the Father...

Fervent prayer: Oh Jesus, Your will be done and Your name be sanctified!

2nd Decade:

Oh Mother Mary, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Fervent prayer: Oh Mary, my Mother, come to my assistance!

3rd Decade: see 1st Decade

4th Decade: see 2nd Decade

5th Decade: see 1st Decade

In Conclusion: **Our Father** is prayed.

Following these reflections it is recommended to pray/contemplate the **Prayer for the Healing of Emotions** according to Fr. Hans Buob and Jean Pliya.

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LITERATURE USED IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Catechism of the Catholic Church – Vatican

www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015