

How to be your own counsellor

The older I get the more I think perhaps Whitney Houston was right when she sang “Learning to love yourself it is the greatest love of all.” It’s interesting where we find wisdom sometimes. Developing a relationship with yourself and understanding your emotional needs and triggers, what drives you is so important when navigating your way through life. Part of this process is encouraging my clients to self sooth, be their biggest advocate and know what to say to themselves when times get tough. Here are some ideas you might like to try in becoming curious about what’s going on below the surface.

- Get in touch with your emotional state, identify emotions that pass through your mind from time to time
- Ask yourself what situation triggered that emotional reaction
- Name the emotion whether it be frustration, anger, sadness, anxiety
- Take a deep breath, say to yourself “I’m going to take that feeling of sadness, put it to the side and breath it out so I can get on with what I’m doing”, as you breath out. Do another breath for good measure
- Start the self soothing, say to yourself “I was triggered but I’m safe and I’m feeling more grounded and calm and I don’t want this to ruin my day. I’m doing the best I can in this situation.”
- Be mindful of the voice inside your head and what it’s saying to you at various times during the day. Know how to shut it down perhaps with the above statement
- Set yourself up for the day with some visualisation so your sub conscious knows what to aim for. When you wake up in the morning visualise how your day is going to go. Say to yourself “I’m going to have a yummy breaky, have a good exchange with people around me, feel grounded and calm all day and enjoy being at work.”

Emotional regulation certainly is a game of inches and sometimes strange moods can’t be shifted and flutter away as mysteriously as they arrived, but it’s good to have tools in the kit for when you want to move through uncomfortable feelings. The brain is a creature of habit. The uncomfortable feeling might not shift the first time but gradually it will start to work and you will feel more in control of your mood.