

Tracy Crossley

SUCCESSFUL ON THE  
OUTSIDE;  
NUMB ON THE INSIDE

A BOOK ON HOW TO REMAIN SUCCESSFUL,  
WHILE BEING OPEN, CONNECTED AND  
FULFILLED!

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Numb Will Keep You Ruminating; Never a Winner

# NO CHALLENGE IS TOO BIG FOR YOU. IF THERE IS NO CHALLENGE...

## What's the point? ←

You are a successful individual according to society and perhaps, your parents, friends and others in your world. You have done things most ordinary mortals have not done. And even if you have done the more ordinary, you always put your special spin on it. Your stamp of uniqueness. As a child you paid attention to the environment you were in, and at the same time you looked for a way out. Meaning whether you were in a calm or abusive home, you had a feeling that better existed--a better life, a better feeling or something where you could excel and receive what you would then deserve.



Maybe you're the first in your family to attend college? Perhaps, you are the first to own a company or climb the corporate ladder.....or maybe you had successful parents and knew you wanted to live beyond what they attained or to equal it, so you would be accepted. The interesting part is that none of this may be consciously clear to you. For you may have just felt you were an action taker, knowing risks were part of the package.

# YOU MAY HAVE BEEN SO FOCUSED ON THE END GOAL, YOU DID NOT REALIZE WHAT WAS HAPPENING INSIDE...

...until, another win happens, or even your first big win. Then you felt empty, or listless. You did not feel like you made it somewhere on the inside even if the outside was filled with rewards and accolades. You may have gone from one peak to another, always achieving but feeling emptier or more numb as time goes on. Wondering what you are doing wrong or what is missing. It doesn't make sense. You are successful, so why does life feel like it does? We often unconsciously live up to someone else's idea of success and not our own. It's not anyone's fault, it is part of that information we pick up as children. Do the right thing. Be a good boy or girl (or be the best)...for some it was to grow into amazing so as to avoid criticism or feel like people can treat you poorly. Problem solving 101 for kids--how to get out of pain and how to avoid situations where you feel inferior.

You learn to be **numb**.

**Numb** means intellectualizing everything, so as not to feel any deeply negative emotions.

**Numb** doesn't necessarily work, as anxiety always finds its way in.



## → QUICK TIP

**You have a story or several.**

**Everyone does.**

**Most stories were born to protect you from someone or something that your mind perceived a threat and others were created from motivation. For one day pay attention to your stories. Easy to do, set an alarm on your phone to notice what you are telling yourself. Notice the context--is it happy or is it avoiding what is happening right now.**

Remain successful, while being open, connected and fulfilled!

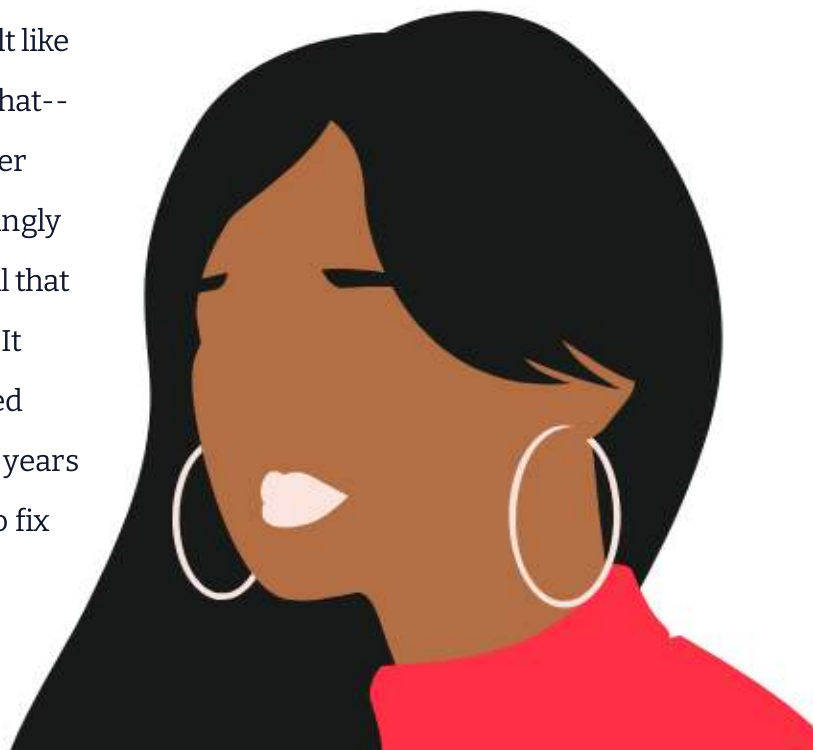
# CARLI ←

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- She was a pediatrician.
- She had no children of her own.
- She would often ask herself if she was a good enough doctor.

Her focus was on being perfect, not just in diagnosis, but in how she interacted with patients and staff alike. Carli was totally checked out of her feelings throughout the day, she would go through the mechanical motions of her job. Sometimes when she stopped for a few minutes, other thoughts would creep in. She would think about medical school bills and want to run screaming, or how she just could not seem to do her billing in a timely manner. She would feel the shame, and intellectually thought it might be self-sabotage, but she had other excuses too. In terms of how she was perceived by others, it was a mixed bag. She had great composure, though some patients thought she was a bit cold. The staff thought she was short and withdrawn, not warm or friendly and would often wonder how she decided to be a pediatrician, they thought couldn't a better career have been anesthesiologist?

Carli had a sneaking suspicion that no one felt like part of her team, but she could not focus on that-- she had to be successful, it was expected by her parents, relatives and community. Her seemingly "got it together exterior," hid the inner turmoil that she knew was there but often tried to ignore. It worked well, unless she was dating. She picked men who had addiction issues or were many years younger and not so successful. She wanted to fix them.



If she could fix someone else maybe she would not feel broken. Dating triggered her insecurities and drove her anxiety through the roof.

She could remain numb until something like dating or a critical patient or superior happened to say something which would take her down the rabbit hole of all of her flaws, her imperfect ways of living and she would beat herself up and compare how she was in life to others who appeared more successful.

- Carli did not feel successful even though she looked the part.
- Carli showed up to do this work.

Carli showed up to do this work, because she feared the other more senior partners in the pediatric group where she worked had a view of her bad habits and she had gone through her latest break-up with another doctor who was addicted to ambien. Carli realized she couldn't have what she really desired, unless she did something different.



# NUMBNESS ↓

## WHAT DOES THE PATTERN OF BEING NUMB LOOK LIKE?

Most people are not aware they are numb, they mistake it for I am “okay.” It is to feel disconnected and cut off from your emotions and for many of us who have had drama or trauma in childhood, it can even feel peaceful. It is the absence of feeling, it can be arrived at in a variety of ways.

There is always a trigger--a situation which may be happening in real time with another person or a situation beyond your control. It can also be a trigger based on something you are thinking about, ruminating on or feel you need to solve but struggle to find the solution.

Be honest with yourself. Many successful people push forth in one area of their life that they feel and believe they can excel in and they tend to “pooh pooh,” other areas. The truth is you may not feel you deserve happiness or success in the simple things or in the things you are too afraid to admit you want. An example is everyone admires your lifestyle, you enjoy it at times, but often feel empty or bored with it and feel deeply connected at moments where you think of settling down. You usually tell yourself a story that minimizes the desire for getting married, as though it is mundane, threatening or just for others. In quiet moments you feel like you want that other life, but you do not even know on a deeper level why you have chosen the life you have--you do not get that it was for the validation of others.

QUICK TIP!

BE HONEST

It was chosen perhaps because it was the right thing to do, or it would bring you happiness or love, or something that says you are worth it! Getting married may not intellectually seem that way, and the idea of it brings up all sorts of scary feelings. It is easier to stay stuck in the story. It actually is not easier, it makes your sense of well-being diminish over time as you resist what you want. BE HONEST The more honest you are rather than telling a story, the more able you are to change and have what you fear you cannot have for yourself. Yes, you probably fear it is not possible for you. The more honest you are with yourself, the clearer you will be about what you truly want.

Remain successful, while being open, connected and fulfilled!

RUNNING OR AVOIDING CAN KEEP YOU NUMB. IF I DO NOT HAVE TO EXPERIENCE A CERTAIN SCENARIO, THEN I BELIEVE I HAVE CONTROL OVER WHAT I FEEL. I MAY AVOID DATING, OR DATE AND AVOID GETTING CLOSE. I MAY BE IN A RELATIONSHIP AND AVOID CONFRONTATION, OR EXPERIENCING EMOTIONAL INTIMACY OR ANY INTIMACY. I CAN RUN OR AVOID BECAUSE OF THE STORIES IN MY HEAD THAT GIVE EXCUSES AND REASONS AS TO WHY I NEED TO JET THAT HAVE ZERO TO DO WITH WHAT I REALLY FEAR. I COULD BE SO USED TO RELYING ON THESE STORIES AND REASONS THAT I DO NOT QUESTION IT AND REMAIN ON AUTOPILOT TO TRY AND MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO OF NO FEELING INSIDE.

— Tracy Crossley

- Other ways to tell you avoid, one is to pay attention to how when the sh\*t hits the fan you are scrambling mentally to get everything back to where it was so you can go back to being numb.
- Another way is how long can you stay somewhere when you have the urge to bolt? Wanting to literally run away when it is not a life-threatening situation is key to understanding that you are not reacting to what is happening, but what may have happened in the past. When you shut down all feelings and intellectualize. Imagine your significant other wants to talk about an ongoing issue, you either find it frustrating or as though they blame you. All feeling is drained from your body and you are in your head intellectualizing what is happening. You are making them inferior and you superior so that you feel in control. In this space of “supposed” control, you are superior and feel the sense of nothing inside of you that is alarming to your well-being.
- Shutting down feelings is a way of suppressing emotion and thinking rather than feeling. The feelings remain unresolved and ready to be triggered again.



# CARLI ←

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- Carli started to pay attention to her desire to be numb, to not have emotions.
- She realized that she was afraid, ALL THE TIME.
- She looked back on childhood when her overbearing father demanded perfection from her.

Carli worked hard to get into the top college and medical school. She would overeat and then over-exercise to get rid of the anxiety and feelings of being inferior because she felt out of control. Before taking new actions in her life, she needed to ensure that someone would notice and be able to validate her achievement. She could not bear to fail, because it would be the same shame as not achieving what her dad wanted as a child. She felt on dates that men expected her to have it together, to be tough and knowledgeable, she never thought about being warm and open. She did not know how since she had never learned from her childhood models. Going on dates meant to be emotionally numb for Carli, this way she would not get attached and could be distant enough to control her emotions.



This worked until she would meet a guy who seemed to speak her language intellectually and she felt she had known him her whole life. It was difficult for her to stop herself from getting attached to the idea of an “us,” even if he showed little interest after the date in getting together. As we worked together Carli realized unavailable men reminded her of dad, but that she also craved their attention and approval. Men who liked her, she was not interested in and this became a central focus on our work. Getting Carli to stop the patterns keeping her miserable and safe in her personal life started with changing the patterns of becoming numb out of habit.

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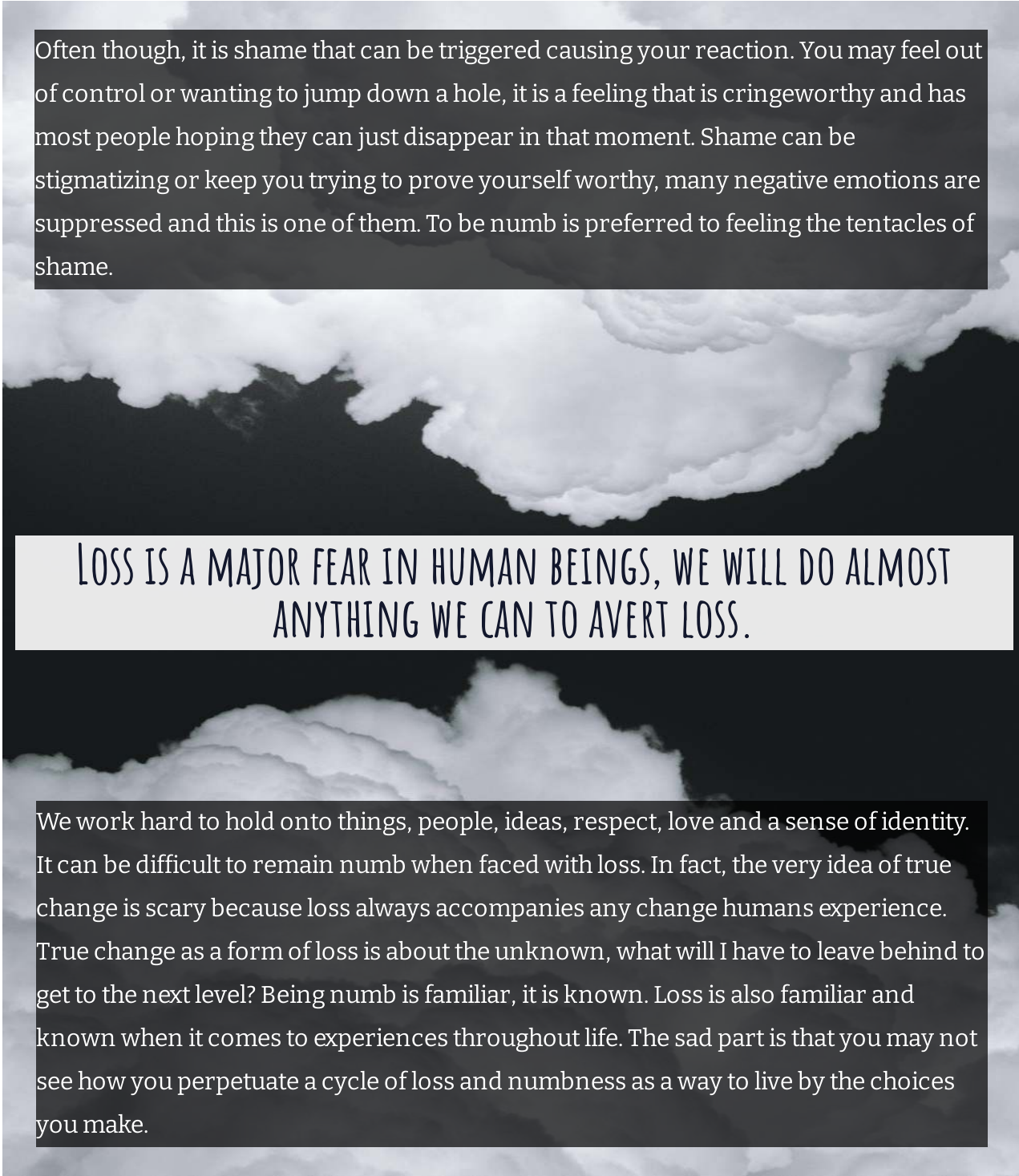
# AS A CHILD YOU LEARNED THE DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES TO BEING NUMB.

No child likes to feel unpleasant emotions or pain. It was how you coped; it was a strategy that became your go-to reaction. A go-to reaction is on autopilot, so when you are triggered, you automatically head in this direction. As stated previously, the strategies are temporary in how they succeed, but it does not stop you from trying over and over again. If numbness is the goal because you believe it is “peace,” you will have a very limited view of what is possible for you in terms of actions to take when triggered. That is why to disconnect emotionally is on autopilot, the unquestioned results of the strategies to stay numb may have you believing you can control how others view you.



The idea that we have any control over how others perceive us, love us or don't like us is just not true. Even though it may have been shown to you that this does not work, you may keep trying to remain in control of the perception of others. Being numb brings up the lack of trust you have of your own ability to emotionally regulate. This lack of trust also comes along with emotional intelligence (EQ). Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, use, understand and manage your emotions. Emotional regulation is the ability to manage or control your emotional state. If you do not trust you can handle your own emotions, you will choose the road to being numb rather than the road to EQ. You may purposely try to avoid triggers that position you to possibly lose your sh\*t, or to take you out of a numb space, because you fear you cannot manage your feelings.

➔ **Fear is a driver for numbness, especially when shame is a feeling you try to avoid at all costs. You may fear your reactions or how you feel about your reactions will come in the form of shame.**



Often though, it is shame that can be triggered causing your reaction. You may feel out of control or wanting to jump down a hole, it is a feeling that is cringeworthy and has most people hoping they can just disappear in that moment. Shame can be stigmatizing or keep you trying to prove yourself worthy, many negative emotions are suppressed and this is one of them. To be numb is preferred to feeling the tentacles of shame.

LOSS IS A MAJOR FEAR IN HUMAN BEINGS, WE WILL DO ALMOST ANYTHING WE CAN TO AVERT LOSS.

We work hard to hold onto things, people, ideas, respect, love and a sense of identity. It can be difficult to remain numb when faced with loss. In fact, the very idea of true change is scary because loss always accompanies any change humans experience. True change as a form of loss is about the unknown, what will I have to leave behind to get to the next level? Being numb is familiar, it is known. Loss is also familiar and known when it comes to experiences throughout life. The sad part is that you may not see how you perpetuate a cycle of loss and numbness as a way to live by the choices you make.

➔ **Being numb is not just about avoiding confrontation as mentioned earlier.**

## BEING NUMB IS ABOUT THE:



BAIT

**AND**



SWITCH

...someone wants to have a serious conversation you fear will be emotional, so you are funny, or you change the subject, or you strategically attack the other person. The point is to do whatever it takes to remain numb and not experience being out of control again or losing, or even receiving. It is hard for people who are used to being numb on the inside to receive from others. Even though you work for extrinsic motivation you are not necessarily comfortable with people valuing you for you. You might be okay with them valuing your actions, gifts or words, but for them to think you are great just because you breathe? That takes a lot of work to feel those uncomfortable feelings, so you would prefer to give and be numb, or even believe people owe you and that way you in your mind ensure you are numb. Keeping the focus off you at all costs is key to being numb, even though you want some form of validation, you do not want too much.

You do not want people to have expectations of you that you cannot live up to. You want to have control over that in a major way. If you remain under the radar and independent there is a feeling of freedom, even if you over-perform. You believe that you have control of this, again because you believe you control how people see you. The truth is you want the spotlight, but you do not want all that comes with it and so the focus with all the responsibilities that come with it may have you anxious. It is why the desire to be numb is key. Rescuing and fixing others is an awesome accompaniment to numbness, it keeps you so disconnected from yourself that the lives of others are actually more important than your own. Being numb requires you to have a form of connection that is actually a disconnect from your true self. You may think your altruistic tendencies make you feel okay, but if you do not give that attention to yourself as well and feel anything but nothing...then you are doing it to remain numb.

# THE DESIRE TO BE SUPERHUMAN! YES, YOU ARE A WONDER MAN OR WONDER WOMAN, NO ONE BUT YOU CAN DO IT!



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WHAT IS THE FEELING YOU CANNOT ESCAPE?  
LONELINESS, ISOLATION, DISCONNECTION, DEPRESSION, EMOTIONAL  
BURNOUT, ANGER, FRUSTRATION, ANXIETY, AND SO ON. EVEN IF YOU  
"NUMB OUT," THESE ARE THE FEELINGS WAITING FOR YOU WHEN YOU  
GO TO SLEEP, WAKE UP AND AT MOMENTS WHEN YOU ARE TRIGGERED.  
THOSE TIMES OF DAY ARE WHERE YOU ARE EITHER TIRED OR YOUR  
DEFENSES MAY BE DOWN. YOU DO NOT WANT THEM CREEPING IN TO  
RUIN YOUR DAY OR YOUR NIGHT.

- Tracy Crossley

Unfortunately, when the trigger is out of the bag you tend to go from reacting to ruminating on situations that drive you crazy, either through your action or others.

It never alleviates the feelings and again, may get you to numb but you cannot remain there permanently.

Breaking this cycle is key to emotional well-being, happy relationships, feeling in control of your emotions and feeling inner peace no matter what is going on in your life.

Always remaining focused on a problem and trying to come up with a solution is a precarious position.

# → WHERE DO YOU BEGIN TO BREAK THE CYCLE?

*Start here with making yourself the focal point.*

*Awareness.*

*Self-awareness to be specific. Everything begins with awareness, if you do not know what happens inside of you then you cannot do anything about your circumstances. Becoming aware of your triggers is key. You may not be able to have awareness right off the bat, because you are busy reacting to the trigger. It will take a few times, but just paying attention to where your focus goes will and the mental, physical and emotional responses coming out of autopilot makes a difference.*

**AWARENESS**

**Answer the question: Now that you are aware you have triggers; what are your triggers? Write them down to track them.**

**1ST  
STEP**

**When you are triggered by something, become aware of what the reaction is that you have to the trigger. Answer the questions: How do you react?**

**Do you get angry and lose all sense of time and place? Do you withdraw and feel the walls closing in? Do you feel a shock of shame and react in a defensive manner? There are a variety of ways you can react—even quietly, numbing out as though nothing is happening to you.**

**2ND  
STEP**

**At this stage just shifting your focus to being aware of what is actually happening inside of your reaction to a trigger is a huge hurdle, this starts to break the pattern.**

**BECOME  
AWARE**

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## → NEXT STEPS:

*Feeling it. Now, what if you became aware of what triggered you and witnessed your response? This observation is showing you something about yourself. You are now moving into more awareness and closer to being emotionally aware of what is happening inside of you to create a reaction. Many times, a reaction comes from how you believe or need things outside of you to be. The reaction can be from not accepting things as they are in reality, but you have no control to change it or make it different. It can have you in your head thinking rather than feeling. This is where many of us go “numb,” because we are so focused on keeping things under control aka not feeling what is happening that we do not realize it. Not feeling things has been a lifelong thing.*

### FEELING

**Feel it. The key to feeling it is to put your focus on your body. Put your inwards, not on anything outside of you. Plant both feet on the ground when triggered, don't move—JUST FEEL IT. It may feel like waves passing through you. It is best if you can focus on tightness or pain in your body—stay with the reaction.**

### FOCUS

**You can handle it, even though the impetus may be to go numb, as the fight or flight takes over. Ride the feeling the shorter it will be in the future. If you find you are able to do it for a few minutes and it is too difficult, then try again next time you are triggered, each time you can do it allows you to interrupt the pattern. By feeling it, you will have other clues as to where your reaction stems from, it is always located in the past. Do you withdraw and feel the walls closing in? Do you feel a shock of shame and react in a defensive manner? There are a variety of ways you can react—even quietly, numbing out as though nothing is happening to you.**

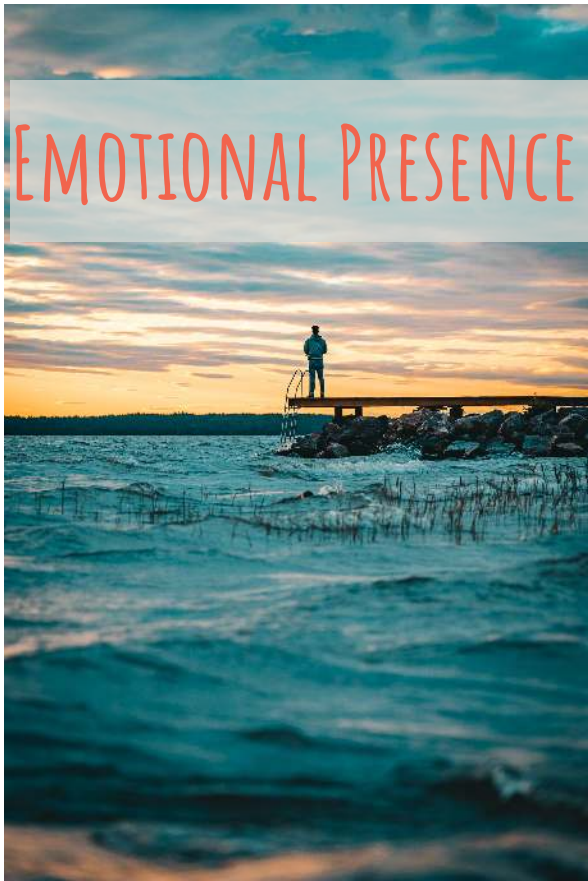
### NOTICE

**Unless you had a life-threatening incident happening right now. It is never from the actual circumstances of the moment. It is why many of us have inappropriate responses to current events. To feel actual motivation rather than a reaction that is on autopilot is a deeper level of feeling. Many people have trouble doing this on their own. For the purpose of this process in moving out of being numb and becoming present, we are staying at the benefit of step one in how to feel your feelings.**

### FEEL IT

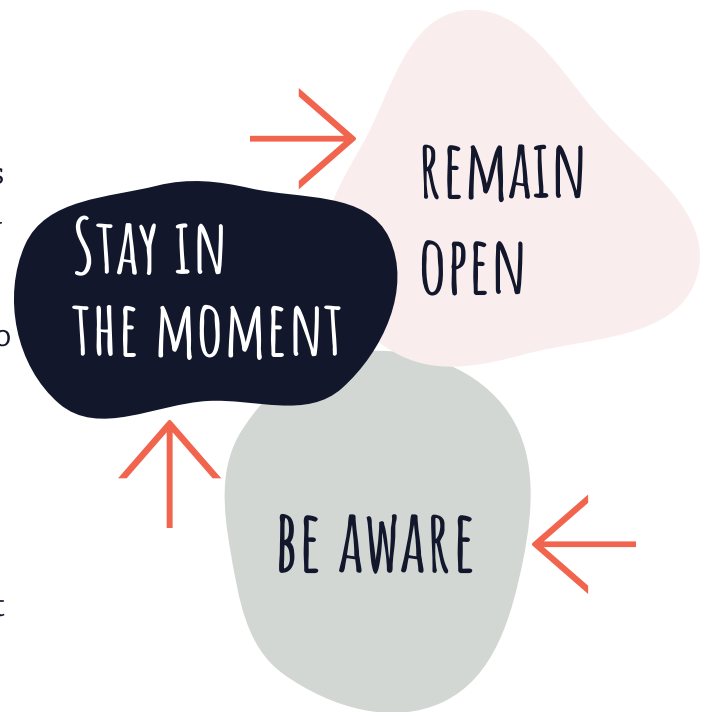
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Staying in the moment with your feelings while remaining open requires emotional presence. Emotional presence means allowing yourself to feel in the moment, being here and aware of what is going on and not suppressing them. This is a form of emotional regulation. Awareness is a must, or you will miss the opportunity to bring all components together. Emotional presence is the ability to stay in the moment you are physically in, not in the past or future, but here. In a triggered moment, we usually head to the past first, since we are reacting to something which already happened. To bring yourself here, it is to combine awareness of what is happening now and feel it, while not numbing yourself. Be easy on yourself, no need to be an overachiever, as that will hold you back. It is not the mentality of achieving necessary, it is the ability to have the courage to surrender to the moment.

Being emotional present includes the openness to be present to what is happening right now without attaching to an outcome. Most of the time people tend to say or do things based on what they perceive an outcome or results to be. This is not genuine and does not alleviate any heavy feelings or bring you closer to regulating your emotions and stopping numbness from taking over. To be open is to be without a story in your mind about what you think is occurring, in other no judgment. It is to allow things to unfold naturally without trying to control the situation. In letting go of trying to steer a conversation or thought to familiar territory, you are in an uncomfortable position. It is a powerful position to let go, to be emotionally present and it is the only way you can experience the present moment. Otherwise, you are elsewhere and if you are not here nothing changes. You are continuing to be numb to what is transpiring right now.



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# QUICK TIP

**Look for the rules that keep you stuck in being numb. You can catch your rules by listening to your self-talk. Your rules support negative beliefs, in fact they work toward providing evidence that they are true. In putting all your energy and effort into what you intuitively know you can be successful at, I guarantee you have a ton of rules about what you can't have (which may be what you really want for yourself).**

**If you fear being alone or that you can never have a partner who loves you for you, look at the rules that support that belief. Words like can, can't, should, shouldn't, will, won't, have, have not and so on are always in a rule.**

"I can't date someone from a certain location"; "I will only date on Thursdays between the hours of 5-8pm and after that I am out!" "He or she will have to show their interest before I trust them or show mine." These numbing out words do you no favors. You could change it to "He or she will NOT have to show their interest before I trust them or show mine." How scary is that? It makes you feel. It stops you from being numb and feels risky. It is risky, because it is outside of what you normally do and that means you are changing. Pay attention to the words in your head when focusing on an area you feel you have no luck in changing your circumstances.

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**Emotionally Risky Action (ERA)**—is defined as taking a risk which has the power to make you feel emotionally uncomfortable or even out of control. It means you have no idea what the outcome will be, but the action is meaningful to you. You are matching your words, actions and motivation. As you take the ERA, your willingness to accept the discomfort w/change, feel your feelings and not self-abandon while staying open to consequences will change your life. To change a pattern on the spot-- the awareness, feeling, presence and action need to line up in that moment. This can happen when you have been applying awareness to your reactions from the triggers creating it...the more aware you are the easier it is to go into the feeling, be present emotionally in the moment and even take an action which may feel counter-intuitive. You find once you get through the discomfort of making this choice and following it with action that you are no longer a prisoner of the situation.



RISKY

ACTION

In fact, you will see it makes you open in more situations than just this one where you had previously been numb or highly reactive. You now have started developing a muscle of true confidence, value and empowerment. You are not acting against anyone or as a victim to the situation, in fact you have taken full responsibility for your choice in being there. To take ERA it is a risk, as you may lose what you felt you could not do without even if it was toxic. If you find yourself there the key is to not scramble to get everything back to the familiar. It is to allow, to accept and emotionally let go of the desire that is motivated extrinsically to try to change things back to the familiar. Many people do this unconsciously and do not realize their actions are not ERA, but empty, because the goal is normalcy. This is the most rewarding space to live in and to continue to up-level and have the life you want.



Remain successful, while being open, connected and fulfilled!

→ This is the most rewarding space to live in and to continue to up-level and have the life you want.

Doing this on your own is a tough nut to crack! We highly recommend reaching out to [happiness@tracycrossley.com](mailto:happiness@tracycrossley.com) so that you make the change you are wanting to make.

→ The patterns to be broken of how your fearful beliefs operate will need to be addressed and challenged. You can FEEL amazing and rock this life in a whole different way!! Having help to transform from numb to emotionally intelligent is a big step.

Usually, you will need help to work on the fear that holds you back. Yes, fear. Fear is what stands in the way in many of its disguises.

→ With a person who can see inside of you because they know what negative beliefs, and their unconscious patterns are--it will heighten and quicken your transformation. They know what to look for and can give you guidance. The help we offer is to people who are ready to make this change, please contact us if that is you and if not, please check out my free podcast.

— *Tracy Crossley*

# CARLI ←

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- Carli started to date Thom. He is an accountant. He is consistent and has no problem sharing how he feels or what he wants.
- Carli finds this confidence exciting.
- In the past, she would have run from it. Now she found herself oddly curious.



Her work with me helped her to stop the “over indulging,” in her life. She started to feel more valued internally, which had her standing for herself more and gaining respect from others where she had not in the past. Her relationship with her parents was changing too. She no longer felt compelled to perform or to hide out, she was honest and did not let their reactions bother her. This was a big step. Her internal well-being felt a lot more relaxed because she would ask for help when needed or she would communicate authentically and people felt closer to her--she was warmer. She was not awkward in certain citations anymore, because she trusted she would be okay. She feels happier and realizes all the time she spent being numb is not how she wanted to spend the rest of her life, as it felt like lost years to her.

# NUMB WILL KEEP YOU RUMINATING; NEVER A WINNER

This is the riskiest and most rewarding work you will ever do; it is the way to win in life from the inside out. You can have all the riches in the world, but until you overcome your inner state of lack nothing will change.



You do this work, and you will break your pattern of being numb. Emotional well-being, fulfillment, deep connection and happiness will be your everyday state.

