

Feelings

Having an Encounter
with Yourself

By
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PREFACE

Why should anyone write a book about feelings? I guess the best answer I can give to that question is the fact that I believe that our feelings in life are one of the most important factors involving our success and happiness, How we feel about ourselves, about others, about our job, or our boss, or our spouse, or children, or the weather or whatever, affects our attitudes and our actions to the point that we can readily afford some time to pay attention to feelings and analyze them as well as we can. That is what this book is all about, feelings and how it affects our attitudes and actions.

A lot of books have been written that have to do with building positive mental attitude: *How To Win Friends and Influence People*; *How To Build From Rags To Riches*; and *How To Succeed Without Really Trying*. These so called self-help books have a lot of merit and I have read many of them and put to use a multitude of ideas and philosophies found in them. The one subject that many such books seem to neglect and overlook is the realm of feelings.

These things called feelings have such a direct bearing on the outcome of our lives that I will devote the next 12 chapters to analyzing feelings from a variety of different angles. I am sure that you will reflect to situations where your feelings were good feelings and under control. I am sure other situations will mentally arise when your feelings were running totally out of control: negative, destructive, and working against you and others around you. It has happened to all of us a thousand times or more.

Feelings can run a wide gamut of peaceful, calm waters, type to sheer terror and severe degradation. Frequently, if we know what to look for, we can identify the good and bad feelings. Through promoting the good and eliminating the bad, we can make our over-all life style much better.

An old song says accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative, that is what we plan to do with feelings. We will slowly identify them more accurately and develop an ability to enjoy the

good ones to the utmost and control or even better, eliminate the destructive ones.

In this day and age of pressures, tensions, anxieties, high blood pressure, alcoholism, high divorce rate, suicide, and generalized depression, the only hope for survival is to control ones feelings and accurately manage them through the Chaos to peaceful co-existence with our environment.

Peace of mind is a reward bestowed by our Creator to only a few. Those few have undoubtedly negotiated with their own feelings to arrive at this enviable state of being. Through their own abilities, they are able to perceive and handle feelings. (Plus a little help from the guy in the sky.) All of us have some abilities to handle feelings today. All of us have room for improvement in this regard.

The Authors of this book hope that its contents will help sharpen your perceptiveness of feelings and build your ability to handle them in a most effective way.

Part 1

PLEASE HEAR WHAT I'M NOT SAYING

A few years ago a close friend gave me a paper entitled: Please Hear What I'm Not Saying. I have read it a hundred times or more by now, and each time that I do I learn something new and get a closer insight into another realm of human behavior and feelings.

Please read carefully and slowly the following:

Don't be fooled by me,
Don't be fooled by the face I wear,
For I wear a mask, I wear a thousand masks,
masks that I'm afraid to take off and none of them are me,
Pretending is an art that's second nature with me,
but don't be fooled, for God's sake don't be fooled.
I give you the impression that I'm secure,
that all is sunny and unruffled with me,
within as well as without,
that confidence is my name and coolness is my game,
that the water's calm and I'm in command,
and that I need no one.
But don't believe me.
Please.
My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask,
my ever-varying and ever-concealing mask.
Beneath lies no smugness, no complacence.
Beneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear, in aloneness.
But I hide this.
I don't want anybody to know it,
I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear being exposed.
That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,
a nonchalant, sophisticated facade, to help me pretend,
to shield me from the glance that knows.

But such a glance is precisely my salvation, my only salvation.
And I know it.
That is if it's followed by acceptance, if it's followed by Love,
It's the only thing that can liberate me, from myself,
from my own self-built prison walls,
from the barriers that I so painstakingly erect.
It's the only thing that will assure me of what I can't assure myself,
that I'm really worth something.
But I don't tell you this, I don't dare. I'm afraid to.
I'm afraid your glance will not be followed by acceptance
and love,
I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh,
and your laugh would kill me.
I'm afraid that deep down I'm nothing, that I'm just no good,
and that you will see this and reject me.
So I play my game, my desperate pretending game,
with a facade of assurance without, and a trembling child within.
And so begins the parade of masks.
And my life becomes a front.
I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface talk.
I tell you everything that's really nothing,
and nothing of what is everything, of what is crying within me.
So when I'm going through my routine do not be fooled by what
I'm saying.
Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm saying,
what I'd like to be able to say, what for survival I need to say,
but what I can't say,
I dislike hiding, honestly.
I dislike the superficial game I'm playing,
the superficial, phoney game.
I'd really like to be genuine and spontaneous, and me,
but you've got to help me.
You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble.
You alone can remove my mask,
you alone can release me from my shadow-world

Try to identify any masks that you have worn at some time or another.

Mask 1 _____

Mask 2 _____

Mask 3 _____

Have you ever pretended to be something that you are not?

NO YES If yes, try to give at least one good example.

Are you ready to begin a new life? A more direct way to be?
If so, read on.

Part 2

A WAY TO BE

A great orator, speaking many years ago, used a phrase, “To be or not to be, that is the question.” This great proclamation stimulated the thoughts contained in this chapter.

Someone once said that everybody has got to be somebody. The way that I look at it, everybody has “A Way To Be.” Some people may choose to be sophisticated, others may choose to be deceitful and still others may be very plain and simple.

The varieties of A Way To Be are as numerous as there are human beings alive today, because no two persons are exactly alike and no two persons have the identical “Way To Be.”

The most important factor that I see is adopting A Way To Be. Choose a way that is closest to your true feelings, yourself, and your position in life.

Many people elect to have A Way To Be that is not really themselves. If we choose to be sophisticated and really we are more of a simple and plain type, then it usually shows through and people realize that we are putting up a front, we are pretending to be something that we really are not and it generally creates an inner conflict. This inner conflict can produce tension and anxiety. None of us can be comfortable with lies, and that is really what it is.

A little girl once wrote a letter to a magazine that went this way:

“The other night I lay awake wondering-

Who Am I? What purpose do I serve in life?

What am I like? Am I really me?

I thought about it, and I discovered that

when you're my age you can't really answer these questions.

People say, 'Be yourself!'

But I don't know who I am. ”

Jennifer, Age 13

Seed Time Magazine

Like Jennifer, have you ever asked yourself, “Who am I?” or, “Am I comfortable being the person that I am?” Many people are trying to be somebody that they think others will admire and look up to. Others are trying to be something that they are not because they are afraid of reality. Others are trying to be something just because it is the IN THING.

A popular story years ago was called *The Three Faces of Eve*. This was about a young woman who acted out three totally different rolls. We all do this to a certain degree. Sometimes we are the person we really are, sometimes we are the person we want others to think we are, and sometimes we are the person that we want to be but know we can never really achieve, and it goes on and on.

It is a sure bet however, that we will be the most comfortable when we are who we really are because this is experienced without tension or anxieties.

Thinking about this yourself, I am sure that when you think of the times that you have been really relaxed and enjoyed yourself the most have been times when you were just plain you. Times when you could do whatever you wanted to, whenever you wanted to do it, without having to worry about what other people might say or think about you.

For the sake of self-preservation, when we think about our own Way To Be it is probably best to pick the way that is closest to what we really are. The President of the United States puts his trousers on the same way I put mine on, and nobody has any more right to breathe the air on this earth than anybody else. In picking a way to make it, an honest way, make it a way that you can be proud of, a way that you know you can live with comfortably, because if it is not truthful it is going to be hard on the nervous system. People today are killing themselves with tension and anxieties – many are complicated by trying to be something that they really are not.

Think about your Way To Be today. Do you like it? Is it really you? Do you find it comfortable? If not, why not begin to develop A New Way To Be? The best way to start is to memorize the following statement:



*It is easier to act your way
to a new feeling
then it is to think your way
to a new action.*



NOW READ THAT AGAIN!

It is not easy to grasp the exact meaning of this statement at first. It takes time and living experience to find its true meaning. Think back to the times that you were seemingly the most comfortable about yourself, maybe when you were on vacation in the mountains where you wore an old pair of Levi's and a favorite old shirt or blouse. Think about how you thought about yourself during those days, think about the relaxed muscles of your body and how well you slept at night, and also how well you enjoyed

After a few days or weeks of trying to establish the best way for you, the next step is to think carefully about all of the people you know and try to pick out one or two with whom you feel the most comfortable. These will be people whom you know well, who are not a threat to you in any way, and who will help you to know yourself even better. Slowly begin discussions with them about this thing called: A Way To Be. Ask them to read this book on feelings and begin quiet chats with them as to how we can all benefit by seeing ourselves as others see us.

Stimulating some relaxed feedback from others is one of the best ways to find out about ourselves and to help build our own confidence. If we know that others care about us, we develop a feeling of support. “No man is an island” is a favorite cliché, and it is true that none of us function well without having someone who we know really cares about us. Try to seek out these people in your life and open up to them, slowly at first, because this is an uncommon thing in our society. A few may back away from you and that is normal, but persist with those who seem comfortable with the new level of communication and before long these individuals will likely respond by becoming more open to you also.

In the space provided, list the names of anyone whom you feel could help you learn more about yourself:

One of the most exciting things about exploring for a new and better way to be is to be able to take someone along with you. This is part of the reason for listing the names of the people you feel close enough to become involved with, in regards to discussing each others feelings.

This can be expanded upon, if you wish, by getting a small group of people together to extend this philosophy one step further, by developing a study club or informal group. Meetings of this group can help trap and expand ideas beneficial to all. If you wish, the group can find a good encounter leader and delve even deeper into feelings and human relations. In addition to the group efforts, one can expand his own awareness by further individual study. A list of suggested additional references is found in the back of this book.

Everybody has got to be somebody and everybody has to have A Way To Be. The choice is up to you. Select your way very carefully, because you will most certainly develop along these lines.



*Be very careful
with what you want out of life,
because you will
most certainly get it.*



As you begin your project to find A New Way To Be, keep in mind that this is not a common process in our present socio-economic world. You may run into a few difficulties. Don't become discouraged by people or situations that tend to force one into conforming to the accepted way of doing things. You will run the risk of people thinking you are Way Out or weird, but the rewards of finding yourself in this crazy mixed up world are worth the risks and difficulties along the way.

Be yourself and be happy, because no one has the right to impale their values on you. Life is what happens to you while you are planning for the future.

A New way To Be may help you to achieve a very special reward in life: a thing called Peace of Mind.

Peace of Mind

by

Joshua Loth Liebman

a great Jewish leader and author

“Social peace can never be permanently achieved so long as individuals engage in civil war with themselves. Peace of mind is the gift God reserves for his special protegees. Talent and beauty He gives to many. Wealth is commonplace. Fame not rare. But Peace of mind is His final merit of approval, the fondest sign of His love. I know now that the sum of all other possessions does not necessarily add up to peace of mind; yet, on the other hand, I have seen this inner tranquility flourish without the material supports of property or even the blessings of physical health. Peace of mind is not something that can be bought in bottles, or applied like a cosmetic to the surface of the skin.”

Part 3

FATHOMING YOUR FEELINGS

One of the best ways to try to get better tuned in to your own feelings is just by observation of your everyday life. Feelings are the things every day of your life is built out of – from early morning to late at night.

A modern expression of the younger generation is, “Is he for real?” When thinking about feelings, we must be sure that they are real. If not, they are misleading and will throw us further off course than if we didn’t try to fathom our feelings at all.

One of the nicest things I have seen written on the subject of feelings is Margery William’s “What Is Real?”

WHAT IS REAL?

“What is REAL?” asked the rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery tender, before Nana came to tidy the room.

“Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?”

“Real isn’t how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”

“Does it hurt?” asked the Rabbit.

“Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are Real you don’t mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up?” he asked, “or bit by bit?”

“It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be

carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real, you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand." *The Velveteen Rabbit*

The last line covers it all, "Once you are real, you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand." Correctly tuned in feelings can build understanding, and erroneous feelings build tension, animosity, and ultimately war and murder.

Speaking of war and murdering, read the following letter from the Didier Company of Berlin, 1941.

"We acknowledge the receipt of your order for five triple furnaces including two electric elevators for raising the corpses. We suggest using a simple metal forklift for transporting the bodies into the furnaces; we do not believe a conveyor apparatus is indicated. Revised plans for the new installation of cremation ovens, coal-fired are attached. We are able to unconditionally guarantee their effectiveness and durability as well as our use of finest materials and our faultless workmanship."

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What are your feelings at this very moment? Reflect again to the situation in Auschwitz, 1941. Seems impossible doesn't it? But we all know it is not. In fact, most adults alive today can remember those years. They don't need to rely on a history book, it actually happened, only in a different part of the world.

Feelings are a part of us everyday. These feelings give us direction for good or for evil. Sydney J. Harris, a well-known journalist said it well when he wrote this: "One man can make a vast difference for evil – but he can't make much of a difference for good. This is a truth of history and human nature which we are still unwilling to accept as we naively continue to hope. Those who we see as the "important" and the "decisive" leaders in history were almost always bad men.

(Harris then talks about Hitler, and Stalin, he wonders at the magnitude of achievement they would have had as “good men.”) Leaders ultimately exercise their control over us by manipulating the levers of our lower nature, not our higher; by inflaming us, not by comforting us; by exciting our anger, not by eliciting our charity; by hate, in short, not by love. Evil is the active, dynamite principle in the political order; virtue is passive, hopeful and doomed to eventual disappointment.”

And so it goes... Evil is active and virtue is passive. That is the way it has always been with mankind and I suspect that it will stay that way. The battle goes on – the struggle between good and bad.

List some of your present and past feelings, write them down carefully and read them through a few times,

Good feelings I can remember having...

Bad feelings I can remember having...

The people who have brought about the greatest changes in the world are not those written up in history books.