



The Root of the Issue

What is it, exactly, that I'm feeling?

Have you ever been angry, but you don't really know why? Or maybe someone hurt your feelings, and the pain keeps building, even though it seemed like a minor issue at the time?

Our emotions, and the root causes of them, can often be difficult to identify. When we are upset, feeling anger, or irritation, and it doesn't seem to be going away, there is often a deeper root to the issue, based in feelings of fear, frustration, or a violation of our values.

Anger is most often rooted in hurt. It's a reaction to being hurt, to hurting ourselves, or to seeing someone else being hurt. Whether it's the current event, or one from the past, there is usually a past feeling of rejection, disconnection, isolation, or misunderstanding that drives the feeling of anger.

To look at your feelings on a deeper level, spend a little time reflecting on where the emotion may be coming from. You can start with these questions and explore other thoughts that come to mind as you reflect, and you will be able to get to the root of the issue!

Root of the Issue Questions

1. What emotion am I actually feeling? Is this anger? Am I hurt? Feeling rejected or isolated?
2. Does the situation justify this feeling? If yes, then good! Feel away! If your answer is "probably not" then let's look at what could be the root.
3. Does this situation remind me of another experience in my life? How so?
4. Does this situation violate a value that I hold most dear in my life? Does it make me feel like I'm going against my integrity and beliefs?
5. Does feeling frustrated or fearful trigger an unresolved experience in my past that has these same feelings?
6. Am I really upset about that other issue, and using this current one as a "scapegoat?"
7. Could these feelings of upset or anger actually be feelings of embarrassment or shame?
8. Does this situation trigger old bad feelings about who I am or my worth? Is it reinforcing an old pattern that isn't true?
9. Is there a situation in my past in which I acted just like this person I'm mad at?
10. Is it possible that I'm really angry at myself - maybe for not speaking up, or for not setting clear boundaries?
11. Does part of this feeling come from not being supported by my loved ones / support network? Does the lack of support cause the emotion to run higher?