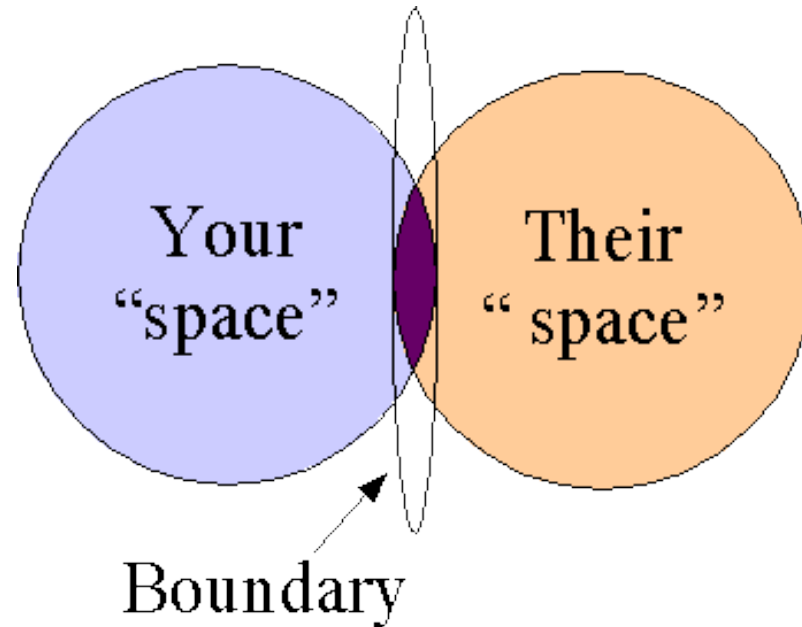


ELIMINATING TOXIC INFLUENCES

Certain people and situations in life can trigger us to feel badly about ourselves or engage in destructive behaviors. Identifying the toxic influences in our lives and taking steps to create boundaries or a new life without them can improve mental and physical health over time.



Fast Facts

- An average of 80% of Americans have experienced emotional abuse. [[1](#)]
- Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of U.S. employees have, or have had a toxic boss according to a 2018 survey from Monster.com [[2](#)]
- Toxic friends are common. 84% of women and 75% of men report having a toxic friend at some point. [[3](#)]

Traits of Toxic People

Manipulation.

Toxic people are often very good at manipulation. They may seem to be genuinely interested in your company and getting to know you at first, but will eventually use the knowledge they gain about you to try and get you to do what they want. They will often twist your words or make you feel guilty to get their way.



Traits of Toxic People

They make you feel bad about yourself.

Insults are the most direct way that toxic people can make you feel bad, but most of the time the ways they affect your self-esteem are more subtle. When you are feeling happy or proud of yourself, they will find ways to “rain on your parade” or downplay your achievements. They might also act like they are smarter than you to make you feel dumb or insignificant.



Traits of Toxic People

Being judgmental.

Everyone can be judgmental from time to time, but a toxic person is judgmental almost all of the time. They see things in black and white and criticize anything that they don't agree with or approve of, instead of considering the circumstances or the feelings of other people.

Instead of judging
people by their past,
stand by them
and
help prepare
for their future.

Traits of Toxic People

Negativity.

Some people just can't seem to see the good in life. They will find something bad about everything and aren't able to find joy in anything. Being around someone like this can make it hard for you enjoy yourself and be positive. Sometimes it can be easy to confuse the symptoms of depression for negativity, so it is worth having a conversation with someone to determine if they need help getting through depression or if they are truly being toxic.



Traits of Toxic People

Passive aggression.

These behaviors are a way that people express their discontent without having a conversation about their problems. This type of hostility is less obvious than anger and can be shown in a number of different ways.

Some forms of passive aggression include snide comments, sabotaging the efforts of other people, and purposefully doing something or not doing something to make things inconvenient for someone or get them upset.



Traits of Toxic People

Self-centered.

Toxic people care mostly about themselves. They don't think about how their actions affect others and believe they are better than everyone else. Someone who is self-centered is focused on getting what they want and is unlikely to compromise or consider another person's point of view.

Self-centered people are little solar
systems within themselves and they can't
see beyond that



- Martin Luther King Jr

Traits of Toxic People



Difficulty with anger management.

Someone who has trouble managing their anger will make you feel like you are walking on egg shells every time you are around them.

The littlest thing can trigger them into a fit of rage, and often nasty, hurtful things are said while they are in this mental state. There may be apologies the day after, but often they are insincere and the toxic person will repeat their angry, hurtful behaviors soon after.

Be Well

Healthy vs Unhealthy

Understand what is healthy and unhealthy for you. Be willing to build and create healthy space.



Be Well

Own Your Voice.

Don't allow others to take your voice. You matter. Your voice matters.



Be Well

Allow yourself to feel.

Sometimes there are societal pressures that encourage people to shut down their emotions, often expressed through statements like, “Big girls don’t cry,” or “Man up.”

These outdated ideas are harmful, not helpful. Everyone has emotions—they are part of the human experience—and you have every right to feel them.

How are you feeling?



Happy



Joyful



Content



Silly



Sad



Angry



Scared



Worried



Confused



Surprised



Hurt

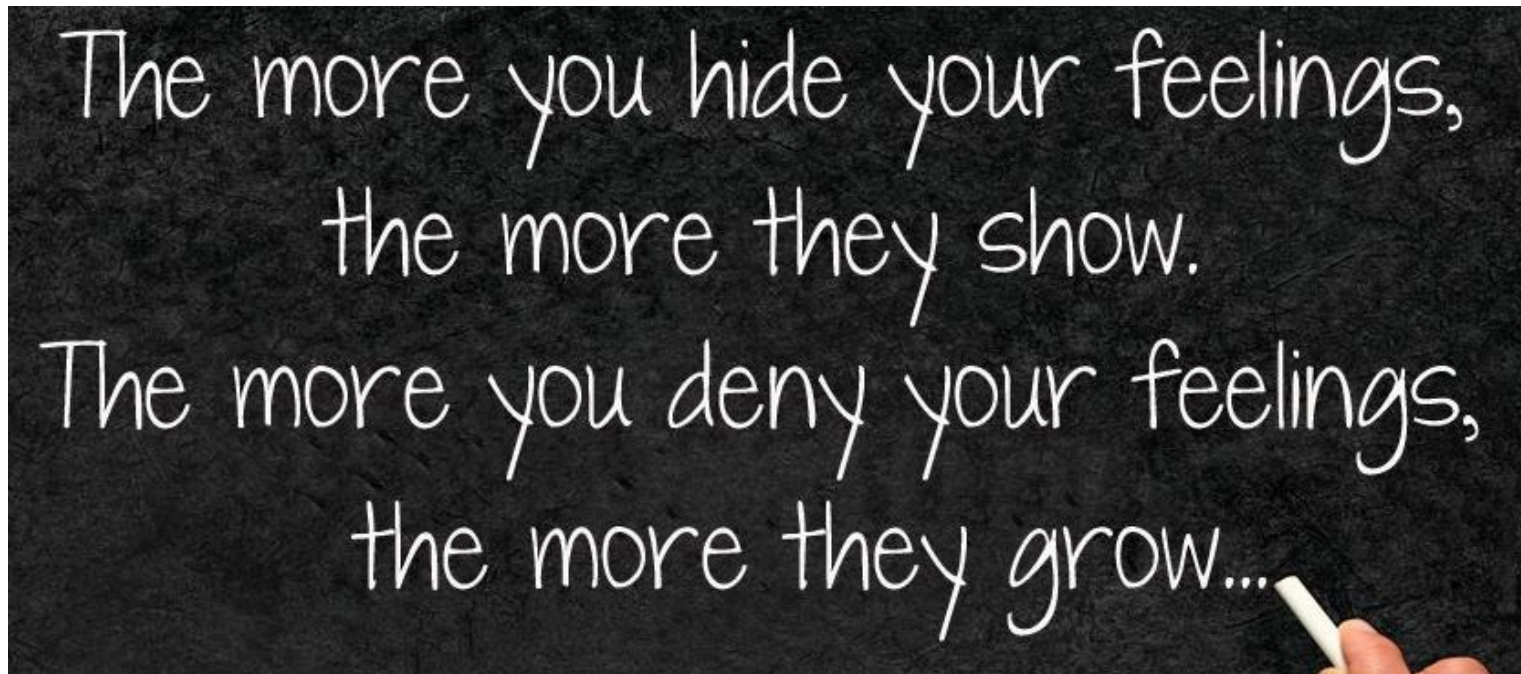


Embarrassed

Be Well

Don't ignore how you're feeling.

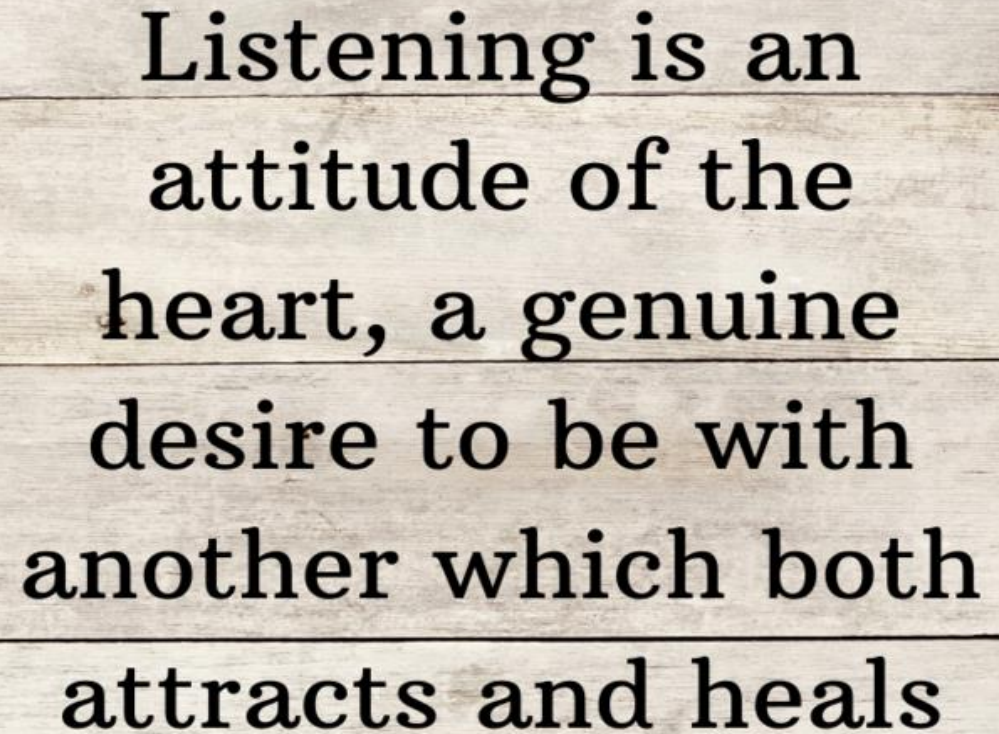
Most of us have heard the term “bottling up your feelings” before. When we try to push feelings aside without addressing them, they build strength and make us more likely to “explode” at some point in the future. It may not always be appropriate to process your emotions at the very moment you are feeling them, but try to do so as soon as you can



Be Well

Talk it out.

Find someone you trust that you can talk to about how you're feeling. You may find that people are eager to share about similar experiences they've had or times that they have felt the way that you are feeling. This can be helpful, but if you're really only interested in having someone listen, it's okay to tell them that

A quote by L. J. Isham is displayed on a background of horizontal wooden planks. The text is centered and reads: "Listening is an attitude of the heart, a genuine desire to be with another which both attracts and heals".

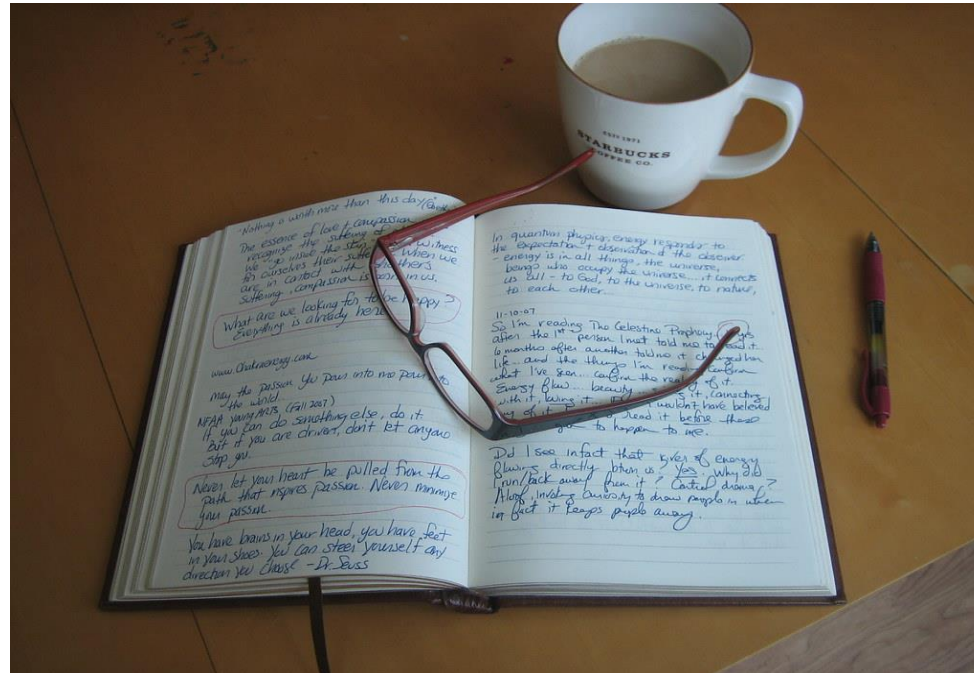
Listening is an
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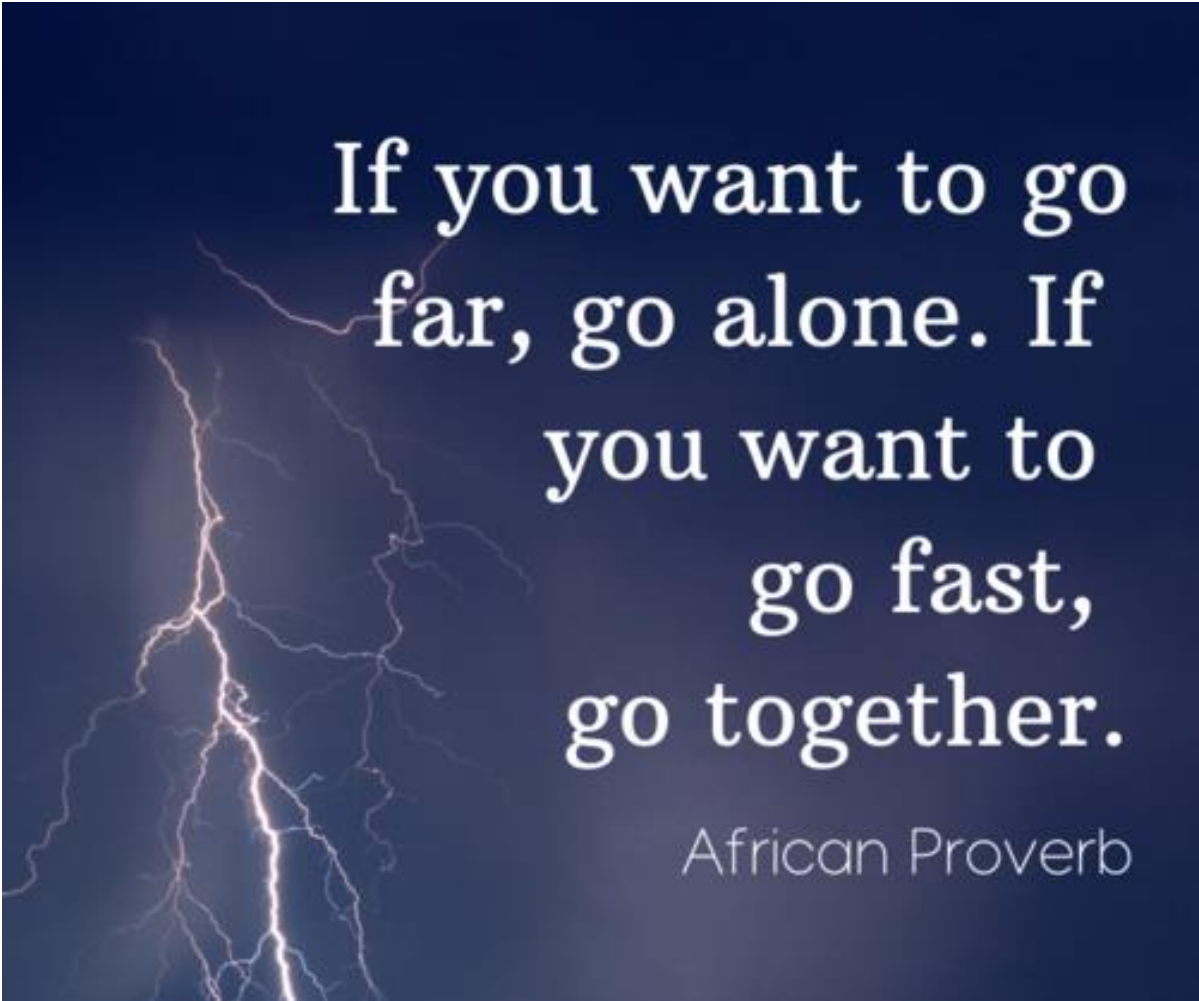
L. J. Isham

Be Well

Try journaling.

Each night write down at least 3 feelings you had over the course of the day and what caused them. It doesn't need to be a "Dear Diary" kind of thing. Just a few sentences or bullet points to help you practice being comfortable with identifying and expressing your emotions.





If you want to go
far, go alone. If
you want to
go fast,
go together.

African Proverb



Sources

1. Carney, M.M., Barner, J.R. (2012). Prevalence of partner abuse: Rates of emotional abuse and control. *Partner Abuse*, 3(3), 286–335.
2. <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/signs-not-cut-out-for-management>
3. <https://www.today.com/health/toxic-friends-8-10-people-endure-poisonous-pals-1C9413205>
4. <https://mhanational.org/eliminating-toxic-influences>
5. Living Compass www.livingcompass.org