

Learning to Stress Well.¹

How are you feeling right now?

By Mary Elaine Kiener

Have you ever found yourself gazing up, watching the clouds pass by? Perhaps, lying on your back in the cool green grass or on a sandy beach, on a lazy summer afternoon with a beloved companion--to see who could conjure up the most fascinating descriptions for cloud patterns. Maybe as recently as this afternoon, noticing storm clouds brewing in the western sky.

No doubt, you found that the sky's landscape constantly shifts from one moment to the next--some times swiftly, while other times far more leisurely. Our feelings function much like clouds--ever moving while shape-shifting, depending on their surrounding environment. Yet, so often for many of us, our feelings seem so firmly attached to us that they begin to feel like who we *are*.

In his book, *The Sedona Method*, Hale Dwoskin explores what it means to “let go” of feelings that keep us from being happy. The first of 5 different ways of letting go or “releasing” (and the one most often associated with the Sedona Method) is to simply “Choose to let it go”. It consists of three basic questions: 1) Could you let it go? 2) Would you let it go? 3) When?

The beauty of this simple release is that it helps us pause to gain some perspective, while remembering that we are *not* our feelings. And it really doesn't matter whether our response to those questions are “yes”, “no” or even “never”. The mere act of pausing offers the possibility of a choice, which often is enough to allow the release to occur of its own accord.

A simple practice we can invite into our daily lives is to pause now and again to just check in with ourselves. And then (no matter whether the response is positive or negative) to bring a gentle, interested curiosity rather than a stern interrogation. This can be part of a daily sitting meditation practice, in which we allow feelings to float up and away like clouds passing through the sky or smoke up through a chimney. It can even be done in a single moment, one breath at a time, throughout the course of each day.

On my refrigerator at home, I have a little “feelings” poster as a gentle reminder to pause and check inside. The poster includes a range of both words and facial expressions, so that one by one, I can invite a sense of “Is THIS how I feel right NOW?” [By the way, it's also a helpful tool when I find myself craving unhealthy snacks!]

Would you like a copy for your refrigerator? Send me an email and I'll get it right out to you! And for those pesky feelings that keep coming back? Next time, we'll explore how our “thinking” often plays a part with all of that.

www.askmehouse.com / me@askmehouse.com

¹ Kiener, M.E. (2015, June). Learning to stress well. How are you feeling right now? *Sibyl Magazine. For the Spirit and Soul of Woman*. Retrieved from www.sibylmagazine.com.