

## Emotional Constriction

Emotional Constriction is a way I have a viewing our range of feelings and what happens when we become emotionally paralyzed and shut down.

Imagine your feelings as if they are along a number line like this:

-10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8 +9 +10

Imagine the feelings on the left as those that you feel uncomfortable with (negative) and those on the right as those that you really enjoy (positive). If you think of intense anger as a -10 (because you don't like it, or it's been trained out of you, or you get negative feedback about it when you express it) and you then constrict down to a -9 in order to shut down the experience of it, what can also happen is that you eliminate your ability to feel pleasurable experiences on the far right, because the far right now has a maximum of +9.

So, let's say you also cut out some sadness you feel discomfort with. Then your ability to feel good constricts down to a +8, and your life experience is now this:

-8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8

If you keep this up, you get neutral, numb, constricted, powerless, and potentially emotionless.

And then your life can end up looking like this, or worse:

-4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4

The **secret** to remaining emotionally healthy and not constricted is to allow for *all* experiences of *all* feelings at *all* levels.

As long as you aren't harming yourself or someone else with your expression, you can feel everything, and you can avoid constriction—on both ends.

Courtesy of:



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