

There are many different emotions that we often view as negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, sadness, shame, guilt, or loneliness. When it comes down to it, negative emotions are neither good or bad. The truth is that negative emotions are sometimes helpful and sometimes not. Because negative emotions can sometimes be intense and uncomfortable, it's easy to lose sight of some ways negative emotions can help us. This lesson involves learning to view negative emotions as visitors, not intruders, and understanding ways negative emotions actually help and guide us in everyday life.

Learning Point # 1 → *Intruder or Visitor?*

Negative emotions are like visitors. It can be helpful to view negative emotions as visitors, rather than intruders. Just like a visitor may come to visit our house and then eventually leave, negative emotions also visit us and then eventually pass by or leave. Also, just like visitors, negative emotions sometimes bring us helpful information or guidance when they visit. In other words, sometimes negative emotions visit us for a reason or purpose. They are trying to tell us something important or guide us in some way.

- For you personally, what could be the benefits of viewing negative emotions more as visitors, rather than intruders?

Learning Point # 2 → *Connecting Us To Others*

Negative emotions help us connect with others and get support. When we are upset, it often shows in our expressions and behavior, which then makes other people more likely to notice this and then reach out to support us. So, negative emotions can act as a “signal” to other people by telling them that we need help or support, especially during moments when we need it the most.

Or, negative emotions can often motivate us to take initiative to reach out to other people and this ultimately helps us feel better and get the support and help we needed in the first place. So, when we are upset, it's really important to reach out to others and to express our feelings. Remember, we ALL need support and we all depend on other people.

- From your perspective, how can negative emotions help you connect with and get support from other people in your life?

Learning Point # 3 → *Personal Values*

Negative emotions guide us in understanding our personal values. For example, being sad can help us slow down, rest, and reflect on something that is important to us. Feeling shame or guilt can motivate us to pause, reflect on who we are and who we want to be. Feeling angry can motivate us to act on something we feel passionate about or protect something we care about. Feeling nervous can help us realize there is something coming up we really care about. When we have negative emotions, we can pause and ask: *“What might these feelings trying to tell me about my personal values? What do I really care about here?”*

- In your own life, do you think that negative emotions guide in you understanding your personal values and what is important to you in life? If so, how?

Daily Practice

Your brain is like a muscle. DAILY PRACTICE makes it strong.

Research studies show that daily practice...

- Makes your brain healthier and stronger
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Increases positive emotions

Recommendations for Daily Practice

- Set aside a little time every day to do ONE lesson or exercise. The lessons focus on *learning* key concepts. Exercises focus on *strengthening* your skills.
- The key is to CHOOSE what works for you. Develop a personalized practice of your own. If you miss a day, no worries. You can always get back on track the next day
- An exercise that goes well with this lesson is the **Emotion Mindset Exercise**, which is available in the *Self-Reflection Category* of the Exercises section at *MindfulCoping.com*

Plan for Your Daily Practice

	What date/day of week will this be for me?	What Lesson or Exercise will I plan to do on this day? <i>(Tips: Consider repeating the “Viewing Emotions as Visitors” lesson or trying the Emotion Mindset Exercise)</i>	When and where will I practice?
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

Keep in mind, the Mindful Coping Program is designed to be FLEXIBLE. Don't worry about doing the lessons or exercises in a particular order. You can go through the lessons and exercises in any order you prefer.
