

BLOCKED EMOTIONS; MENTAL SUFFOCATION, EMOTIONAL VENTILATION; POWERFUL LIVING

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ABSTRACT

Present research paper is a descriptive study to discuss, understand and analyze emotions, emotional abuse, emotional impact on human beings and emotional repression (blockade). Paper has also critically examined how repressed emotions can cause mental suffocation and the consequences of blocked or repressed emotions. Besides this the concepts of emotional intelligence and competence have also been discussed and studied in the light of effective emotional functioning and powerful living by providing technique for identifying the strongly blocked emotions and workable methods for emotional ventilation especially for blocked negative emotions and suffocated mind.

KEYWORDS: Blocked Emotions, Mental Suffocation, Emotional Ventilation, Powerful Living, Emotional Repression, Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Competence and Negative Emotions.

INTRODUCTION

EMOTIONS

Emotional feelings and their expressions are complex combination of cognitive, behavioural and physiological processes. Emotions are expressed by the collective effort of nervous systems and physical body parts (Carroll E. Izard, 2009). Feeling and expression of emotions among human beings start from birth itself. During babyhood, emotions are expressed as involuntary natural reflex actions by a free flow of sentiments. A baby has no control on the emotional feelings and their expressions but grown up and mature people need to feel and express their emotions as per the social code of their community. While experiencing an emotion generating stimulus, young baby is free to feel and express the consequential emotions without taking care of socio-cultural code and circumstances. Whereas in grown up stage, this type of behaviour is considered as socio-psychological abnormality. So for the normal socio-psychological development of an individual, it is important and needful to acquire emotional intelligence and competence. Emotional competency is the ability to understand, learn, feel, express and release the emotions as per the socio-cultural norms of community in such a way that no mental stress is experienced by individual and also not given to others. During involving, interacting, experiencing and observing certain social circumstances, there are occasions when an individual is under severe emotional pressure to express a particular emotion but social code of the community does not allow the expression, or contrary to this, when situations or circumstances demand from an individual to express particular emotion but expression is not possible because of some personal

or other reasons. Such kind of experience creates emotional and mental pressure. Persistent and repeated pressure on human psyche can struck an individual to the state of emotional blocked and mental suffocation. Non-ventilation of emotional blocked or mental suffocation is the basic cause for mental stress and tension. A prolonged and continuous mental tension is cause of certain mental and physical disorders. Present paper will discuss about, how blocked emotions can create mental suffocation and their effective ventilation can lead to powerful living.

IMPACT OF EMOTIONS ON HUMAN BEING

Emotions control and regulate individual's thinking, behavior and actions. Emotions affect physical bodies in a similar way as body affects feelings and thinking. People, who ignore, condemn, repress or do not express and ventilate their emotions properly, set themselves for psychological and physical disorders. Emotions that are not felt and released but buried within the human psyche and body can cause serious disorder like cancer, arthritis, and many types of chronic illnesses. Negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, negativity, frustration and depression cause chemical reactions in body that are very different from the chemicals released when a person is experiencing and feeling positive emotions such as happiness, contentment, love and acceptance. Emotions have a direct effect on the working of body. Negative emotions stimulate the human glandular system for the release of harmful chemicals (hormones) while positive emotions release useful chemicals in the form of hormones. If negative emotions persist in the psyche of individual for a long-term or chronic, they can affect the chemical balance and other body systems such as the immune, endocrine systems.

Individual cannot check, control or stop the feeling of emotions but can learn how to manage, adjust and live with them. If someone tries to control or repress the emotions they will not be repressed for a long time rather start leaking out. As much as someone tries to control and repress the emotions more pressure will generate for the release of emotions, it is a vicious circle. Expression of strong emotions in public place in modern world is considered as a weakness. People feel uncomfortable with those who express strong emotions. Present day man is part of such a society that taught not to express strong emotions but to control and hide emotions. Free and uncontrolled expression of emotions gives a feeling to be ashamed of or to be afraid of, regardless, man is born with feeling and expression of emotions and he has to live with them having no control so it is necessary to acquire competency know how to live with them, and release them.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is a typical behaviour used by an individual or group, called emotional abuser, to dominate, exploit and encroach the rights of other person or group, called emotionally abused, by using the strong emotions and not giving chance or opportunity to the later to act and express freely. Emotional abuse is just as serious and harmful as physical abuse but is often ignored or minimized because physical violence is absent. Emotional abuse may include any or all of the following type of behaviours:

Rejection	Insulting	Denying
Degrading	Terrorizing	Silent treatment
Ridiculing	Isolating	
Humiliating	Exploiting	

Emotions stemming from emotional abuse are deep and complex, requiring ongoing help from those trained to deal with emotional abuse.

EMOTIONAL REPRESSSION AND BLOCKADE

When an individual experiences a stressful, painful or difficult emotion there will be tendency to suppress, ignore, avoid or dismiss such emotion and easy way to do this is, either get busy or pretend that nothing has happened. In this type of situation person does not feel and express the emotion properly and it results in emotional blocked. These unexpressed feelings hang about in our nervous, muscular, glandular, digestive systems and/or other vital body organs as buried emotions. These emotions remain buried in body organs and systems until individual brings those emotions out (release out) by feeling, expressing and ventilating them. Emotions that are buried continuously and persistently for a prolonged time can cause psychosomatic, biological, pathological and physical disorders. Following are some of the methods which can be used to avoid feeling of their emotions.

Ignoring the feelings

Pretending something hasn't happened

Overeating

High sugar and fat diet consumption

Drinking alcohol and use of drugs

Adopting compulsive behavior

Excessive sex

Keeping physically and mentally busy

Watching TV and internet accessing

Over working

Non-participation in communication

Over projection of any one of the emotions

False expression of emotions

Expression of emotions is healthy and healing. Emotions that are bottled up for too long create mental suffocation and emotional blockade. For example, it is natural to feel grief and tears at the loss of a loved one. This emotion of grief will be blocked, if it is not felt properly and not allowed enough expression. This emotion of grief will likely to remain deep inside in the human psyche and consequently individual experiences an ongoing sadness, depression, numbness, irritation, anxiety, pressure and fear of unknown, which may be rooted in an experience, person had in the past. There may be sudden unexplained release of tears at unexpected times, or perhaps person is no longer able to weep at all, even when feeling to do so. Person may become intolerant of others and burst out unexpectedly on those who care a lot. All this is because, unexpressed emotions can generate emotional blockade and can drastically affect human behaviour, both negatively and positively (). Emotional blockade is a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects the behaviour and performance of individual.

- Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships.
- Inability to act or react that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- Inappropriate types of behaviour or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms for psychosomatic disorders or fears associated with personal problems.
- Hyperactivity (short attention span, impulsiveness).
- Aggression/self-injurious behavior (acting out, fighting).
- Withdrawal (failure to initiate interaction with others; retreat from exchanges of social interaction, excessive fear or anxiety).
- Immaturity (inappropriate crying, temper tantrums, poor coping skills).
- Learning difficulties (academically performing below grade level).

The causes of emotional blockade have not been adequately determined. Although various factors such as heredity, brain disorder, diet, stress and family functioning have been suggested as possible causes, research has not shown any of these factors to be the direct cause of behavior or emotional problems.

REPRESSED EMOTIONS CAUSES MENTAL SUFFOCATION

Repression and burial of emotions consumes lot of mental and physical energy and creates mental suffocation. Prolonged burial of emotions lowers the overall tempo and suffocates mind and ultimately lead to illness and speed up ageing process. Blocked emotions create mental suffocation, uneasiness, tiredness, fatigue, loss of energy and depression (Karen Lawson 2009). Following are some major symptoms of buried and repressed emotions.

- Low energy level and fatigue
- Stress and depression
- Not interested to talk about personal matters and feelings
- Showing that some specific issue has no significance, whereas from within it matters
- Rarely talking about ones feelings
- Blowing up over minor incidents
- Gut feeling in stomach and tightness in throat

- Expression of anger not at the time of incident happened and on the person with whom emotional issue occurred but on somebody else at a later stage.
- Troubled personal relationships
- Lethargic in working
- Problem in acceptance of self and others
- Wearing the mask of smile and crying from inside

CONSEQUENCES OF BLOCKED OR REPRESSED EMOTIONS

Blocked or repressed emotions can cause major difficulties in the physical, mental, biological, psychological, Interpersonal and sociological interactions and functions of a human being. Blocked emotions can affect the relationships and abilities to grow and develop negativities (Johnson S. 2010). Continuous, persistent and prolonged emotional repression can cause serious mental and physical problems, like cancer, arthritis, chronic fatigue, digestive disorders, bowel problems and neuro-psychic problems. Since repressed emotions can rest in human psyche for a long time so, they can create energy losing holes in the psychic system of an individual. Through these holes psychic energy leaks out to develop fatigue, a sense of vulnerability, and low self-confidence. A repressed emotion can control individual's behavior and reactions of past, present and future events. Individual buries emotions to protect them from embarrassing, pain and difficult to manage situations at the time of their occurrence. Lot of energy is required to bury and to keep the unpleasant emotions blocked. A continuous and multistage burial of emotions develop a state where there isn't much energy left with the individual for other activities. In such a case, energy is being used to keep stuffing these emotions back down to the unconscious human psyche. Once emotions are blocked in the human psyche they use to keep on popping up frequently upto when they are not released knowingly and unknowingly. Individual has to work very hard to keep the blocked emotions stuffed down in the human psyche.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE

Emotional Intelligence may be described as ability of an individual to perceive, analyze and manage the emotions for effective adjustment and adaptation according to the need of social code of behavior of the community to which individual belongs. In 1980 Reuven Bar-on developed the concept of Emotional Intelligence. Understanding and Learning of cause and effect relationship of emotional feeling, expression and timely releasing is called Emotional Intelligence (EI). Development and understanding of emotional intelligence is necessary to identify, distinguish and manage one's own and others' emotions for effectual interpersonal relationships and adjustment. Emotional intelligence always leads to emotional competence. Emotional intelligence determines one's potential for learning the behavioural skills of using emotions and emotional competence. Emotional Competence refers to a person's expertise in expressing or releasing their emotions. The concept of emotional competence is rooted in the understanding of emotions as being normal, useful aspects of being human. Anger is a resultant of aggression and equips a person with the strength to repel the aggression. Grief is a reaction to abandonment or feeling unloved and it has the effect of eliciting sympathetic responses from others. Fear is a response to danger and has a clear physiological effect of heightening our senses and speeding up our reactions. Elements of Emotional Intelligence:

- Attention towards Emotional issue
- Sensitive and sentimental involvement in the issue
- Perception development
- Interpretation and understanding emotion
- Identification of emotion
- Feeling of emotion
- Foresightedness for understanding the effect of feeling and expressing the emotion
- Expression of emotion
- Mental flexibility
- Management of emotion
- Impulse control
- Consequences of emotional expression

A growing body of interdisciplinary research has clearly connected the relationship of emotional intelligence to achievement, productivity, leadership, and personal health (Goleman, 1995, 1998; Epstein, 1998; Sternberg, 1996; Gardner, 1993; Weisenger, 1998; Low, 2000; Nelson and Low, 1999, 2003, 2005).

EMOTIONAL VENTILATION

The answer to being healthy in emotionally blocked situation is to begin to carefully explore, express and ventilate the blocked emotions, and thus complete the unfinished emotional process. To do so will change both our feelings and our behaviours. Suppression of emotion is not useful and that educating people to suppress their emotions is part of trying to control them. Emotionally competent people will express their emotion appropriately and as per need of the situation and they will not prefer to suppress their emotions. It is widely believed that if appropriate emotions are not expressed properly and effectively, then a hard and strong sort of memory of such emotions will become part of individual's psyche. Then in future, some later events may spark and ignite the human psyche by triggering off the old emotions resulting in inappropriate, untimely and unexpected emotional feeling and expression.

Releasing of old and blocked emotions is a key feature for emotional intelligence and competence and this is possible by effective emotional ventilation. Emotional competence can lead to improvement in health through avoiding stress that would otherwise result from suppressing emotions. It can also lead to improved relationships since inappropriate emotions are less likely to be expressed and appropriate behaviour is not avoided through fear of triggering some emotion. All the emotions which are felt, expressed, blocked or buried lie at the base of human psyche, and psyche is solely responsible for effective and efficient functioning of an individual. To be fully effective an individual need to be emotionally expressive and free. If situation demands the non-expression of emotion and further forces to block and bury the same, then in such a circumstance warmly opening up and exploring emotional patterns and releasing blocked emotions on some appropriate time, place and before genuine person is necessary. This type of emotional releasing is called emotional ventilation of buried and blocked emotions. For effective emotional ventilation there is need of a workable mechanism, safe environment, range of skills, techniques and network of like-minded people involved in the same processes. Emotional release or ventilation of buried and blocked emotions is a necessary and important

practice that should continue in everyday life for emotional intelligence and competency. Emotional hurt may have been caused in the past, release may be in the present, and the out working of it may still be in the future.

POWERFUL LIVING

Handling emotions well is an art. Emotions are always personal and individual should be very sensitive to them because emotions deserve good care and if cared properly, add a great deal of happiness, pleasure and colour to life. Caring for emotions usually means feeling and expressing them freely i.e. enjoying the happiness to the full, or feeling sadness as appropriate. Sometimes, however, emotional expression is not immediately possible, it may be socially inappropriate, for example, to get angry with the boss, or to be angry with a sick baby who has kept you awake all night. In such a state problem arises; what do you do with anger? How one can cope with this kind of strong emotion, before it creates the health problem of high blood pressure or other.

This art of handling emotions in a healthy way should be an on-going process of life as feeling and expression of emotions in life is a continuous process. Emotional ventilation processes should not be postponed for a long time. Emotions should be given a mechanism and a safe environment where exploration and expression of emotional processes and behaviours, buried and hardened in the deep psyche of individual or otherwise, can take place. Individual should have safe environment, place and people to ventilate their emotional blocked where they can feel and express their pain, sadness and anger. Ventilation of mental suffocation caused by blocked emotions is necessary for the stress free, healthy and powerful living. Blocked emotional release or ventilation commonly flushes out the deep buried emotion from human psyche and relieves individual from stress, depression and other psycho-physical disorders by generating a specific feeling of elation and inducement of insight with an 'Aha' kind of experience. It is useful for the emotionally blocked people to actively celebrate this new awareness, and to plan how to integrate it into life. Different kinds of activities can be used to heal the hurts caused by the emotional blocked. Some of such activities are given here under. These activities may help transmute spiritual 'pain' or other feelings by making sense of them in a greater context.

- Meditation
- Yoga
- Prayer
- Playing and listening music,
- Drawing and painting,
- Dancing,
- Participating in religious activities
- Crying, laughing and expressing other emotions in the controlled environment under the supervision of qualified and expert person and
- Other forms of creative and non-creative activities which can help individual to release and flush out the blocked emotion
- Performance and involvement in the rituals or ceremonies of individual's like and taste

METHOD TO CONTROL EMOTIONAL BLOCKED

To control the blocked of emotions one has to decide how to proceed in dealing with the situations involving emotional interactions. Following are some of the questions one should ask to self while deciding about the response which would suit best to a particular emotional situation. Each situation is different and generates a typical emotional state.

- What is this situation?
- Whether there is actually any role for me in this situation?
- If yes, then what exactly is your role? Or if not then try to stay away without hurting personal and other's emotions.
- Whether I am participating in this situation with/ without my full consciousness?
- If yes, then whether, I am really reacting to this situation only, or my response is partially a consequential reaction of some past emotional experience as well?
- Whether the feeling and expression of emotions opted by me in the present interaction are relevant to the situation or not?
- If yes, then, whether precipitation, feeling and expression of emotion in present situation should be minimum, optimum, maximum or unwanted.
- Whether I shall be able to involve in the emotional issues without feeling and expressing strong emotions?
- Shall, I be able to talk about my feeling with counterpart?
- Is a direct approach the best way to proceed?
- What would be the consequences of dealing directly with the person/ situation?
- What do I expect from this situation/ discussion?
- Are my expectations realistic?
- Should I discuss this with someone before doing anything?

Maintenance of presence of mind, alertness and consciousness during involving in emotional interactions is very difficult, so while being a part of emotional situation, it is not possible to ask all the above mentioned questions. But a regular practice with available degree of alertness and presence of mind will help individual to develop a healthy tendency to effectively manage the emotional interactions. By asking these questions it will be decided whether a direct approach is the best or not, and if so, individual is ready to involve and practice at the present time and circumstances.

METHODS FOR VENTILATING NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

There are a number of ways one can begin to release the negative emotions.

1. Scream as loudly as one can at a lonely place or in such a well closed room where beside the emotionally blocked person no-one is present. While Screaming, shout the words 'I hate', 'I am angry' etc or whatever individual is feeling to express. Keep on doing this as long as it feels right from inside to individual. If possible cry, allow you to cry for the feelings which can be flushed out by a cry.
2. If screaming is not possible and loud expression of emotions is not feasible in reality then do the same activity mentioned above at Sr. No. 1 in imagination by feeling that mentally you are screaming and doing the same as mentioned above, to ventilate out the buried and

blocked emotions to shade out the rage, hurt, and pain. Imagine it and imagine it. See it, and hear it, and especially, feel it as deeply as one can.

3. Take a pillow and keep hitting it with a stick or hit the pillow itself with chair, bed, or something else with the feeling that you are hitting that person who has hurt you or given pain to you. Every time you hit that pillow say the words “I hate”, ‘I am angry’ or “I am frustrated” or whatever feeling you want to express for feeling better from within.
4. Manage a punching bag, hang it and spare some time to keep hitting that punching bag for releasing the blocked and buried negative emotions.
5. Take your fists and keep pounding a table saying, “I hate” and just keep doing it.
6. If you like to write, write about your anger, hate, hurt, pain, loss, fear and other blocked emotions and share it with someone whom you feel confident and faithful.
7. Sit in a comfortable chair, close your eyes, put your head back, and relax as best as one can. Do the exercise of deep breathing for number of times by concentrating on your breath. It may take many months to transmute an emotion in this way, but it is a powerful technique to release emotions.
8. When individual’s emotions are putting high degree of mental stress and person is facing difficulty in reducing the intensity of pain and mental pressure, then in such a situation try to detach and stay away from the emotional issue. Detaching and not participating in this type of emotional interaction can help the individual to move through very difficult situations without taking the emotional stress and abuse personally.

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