
INCREASING YOUR POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Before you picked up this workbook for the first time, you were probably an expert on distressing emotions and you understood what a life filled with them could feel like. Now, however, you understand that many people with overwhelming emotions discount their pleasurable emotions, filter them out, or never take the opportunity to experience them in the first place. As a result, they focus only on their distressing emotions, such as anger, fear, and sadness, and they rarely notice their pleasurable emotions, such as happiness, sunrise, and love.

Maybe that's what you did before, but now you know that it's very important for you to begin noticing your pleasurable emotions. As you continue to use dialectical behavior therapy to improve your life, you'll want to find more ways of experiencing pleasurable emotions, if you don't have enough of them in your life already. This doesn't mean that you'll never experience another distressing feeling. That's impossible. We all have distressing emotions at different points in our lives. But your life doesn't have to be dominated by them.

One very reliable way of focusing on pleasurable emotions is to create pleasurable experiences for yourself. Again, this is a skill that you've already learned in chapter 1, Basic Distress Tolerance Skills, but it deserves to be repeated here. To begin building a more balanced, healthier life for yourself, take some time out of each day to create a pleasurable experience for yourself, and make note of how you felt and what you thought as a result of that experience.

If you need help thinking of pleasurable experiences, use the Big List of Pleasurable Activities found in chapter 1 on pages 15-16. Then use the following Pleasurable Activities Log and the example to record what you did, how you felt, and you thought about the experience. Remember, try to do something pleasurable for yourself every day. You deserve it.