

## DECEMBER 20

*Reexamine all that you have been told . . .  
dismiss that which insults your soul.  
Whatever satisfies your soul is the truth.  
—Walt Whitman*

### ***Honoring Our Feelings***

Do you ever feel ashamed to admit how you feel about something? Do you ever say to yourself, “I shouldn’t feel that way”? Here’s the thing. Feelings aren’t good or bad, positive or negative, or even big or little. They are simply how you feel. If someone accidentally elbows you, you might feel pain. You might recognize and appreciate that the person didn’t intend to stick his elbow in your side, but it still hurts. How you express the pain could differ. Some of us would yell at the top of our lungs. Others might simply say “ouch” and ask the person to remove their elbow. No matter how we express it, though, the feeling of pain stays the same.

Emotions operate similarly. You don’t feel too much or have feelings that are too big. Maybe the way you express them is bigger than you enjoy, but the feelings themselves aren’t too big. I used to think I was too passionate because I saw that my passion turned people off. Yet a friend told me that if I were to diminish my passion, I would lose one of the most positive aspects of my personality. Years later, I began to understand that it wasn’t my passion that turned people off; it was the way I expressed it. As a result, I changed my behaviors, not my feelings of passion. The next time you notice yourself discounting your feelings or feel embarrassed about them, try to remember that your feelings “just are.”

Then determine whether you'd like to change the way you express them.

Notice how you express your feelings today  
and whether you'd like to develop new skills  
that may be more effective for you.



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*The art of love . . . is largely the art of persistence.*

—Albert Ellis

### ***Persisting vs. Demanding***

Persisting is the active attempt to meet our needs by continuing to connect with another. Demanding is the insistence that someone do something to avoid negative repercussions. Let's imagine that you want to go on vacation with a friend. She says she doesn't have enough money. A demand would sound something like this: "You never have enough money. This time you just have to go. It's an opportunity of a lifetime and I don't want to miss it!" Persistence may involve empathizing with her. "You're really worried about money, aren't you? You just don't want to do anything that will hinder your ability to pay your bills?" "No, I don't, and you always plan extravagant trips and I'm scared to spend that much money!" "So, you're worried that I'll plan the trip outside your comfort level?" "Yeah, I'm worried about that." "Wow. I'm glad to hear this because I wouldn't want you to be worried about money on