

Cheat Sheet: The 5 Principles of Feelings based on Dr David K. Reynolds book *Constructive Living*

In Morita Therapy, we learn that while we cannot "will" ourselves to be happy or calm, we can always choose our next action. Use these five principles to navigate your internal "weather."

1. Feelings are Uncontrollable

- **The Reality:** You cannot directly control your feelings by sheer willpower.
- **The Practice:** Stop trying to "fix" or "ignore" your anxiety. Trying to force a feeling to go away is a waste of your mental energy.

2. Feelings Must be Accepted

- **The Reality:** Feelings are natural phenomena—like the rain or the wind—and they must be recognized as they are.
- **The Practice:** Since you aren't responsible for the feelings that pop into your head, you don't need to feel guilty or "bad" for having them.

3. Feelings are Functional Signals

- **The Reality:** Your emotions are often sending you signals about reality-based tasks.
- **The Practice:** Instead of drowning in fear or sadness, use those feelings to identify what needs to be done. If you're anxious about a deadline, the "signal" is to start the work.

4. Feelings are Changeable

- **The Reality:** No feeling lasts forever; they naturally fade, fluctuate, and change over time if left alone.
- **The Practice:** Practice endurance. Remember: "Unpleasant doesn't mean bad". You can coexist with a feeling until it passes.

5. Feelings are Indirectly Influenced by Behavior

- **The Reality:** While you can't "snap out of it," your actions eventually "beckon" new feelings.
- **The Practice:** Take purposeful action regardless of your mood. Often, the confidence or calm you're looking for only arrives *after* you've started doing the work.

The Bottom Line: "Uncontrollable feelings, controllable behavior." Focus on the "doing," and the "feeling" will eventually take care of itself.