

ABCs of SELF (Safe Experience of Living Freely)

Help you remember -- **you are enough.**

- ✓ **Acknowledge** feelings: All feelings are okay. All behavior isn't. Give yourself permission to feel what you are feeling without judgment or talking yourself out the feelings. Don't react. Instead, take a few deep breathes and then choose one or more "C" shovels to find a more productive solution.
 - ✓ **Breathe**: When we are in a stressful situation, we tend to take shallow breaths. This doesn't allow enough oxygen to get to the brain and the nervous system. The body needs the oxygen to help regulate the emotion. Deep belly breaths help start off the process of feeling safe in SELF.
 - ✓ **"C" shovels**: Once you have acknowledged the feeling(s) and taken a few belly breaths, use one or more of these "C" shovels to shift perspective and deepen your sense of safety in the moment.
1. **Curiosity**: Ask questions. The word *curiosity* can be traced back to the Latin root *cura* -- meaning care and concern. Imagine yourself as a young child, full of wonder and awe. Ask questions. Never make assumptions about the situation. Be curious. What are some questions you can ask yourself about this situation? What are some questions you can ask of the other(s)?
 2. **Courage**: Be Brave. The word *courage* can be traced back to the Latin root *cor* — the same root as the word *heart* (coronary). Take a deep breath and ask your heart what it wants in this situation. How can you be brave and face the situation? Can you let go of expectations and detach from outcome while staying true to your heart?
 3. **Compassion**: Let love lead. The word compassion can be traced back to the Latin root *com* -- meaning with or together, and *pati* meaning to suffer. Having empathy and compassion for self and others tames the fear a bit and helps love come to the forefront. What does compassion look like in this situation? How can love lead the way here?
 4. **Connection**: Come together. The word connection can be traced back to the Latin root *com*-- meaning together and *nectere* meaning to bind or tie. We are biological wired for connection. The most important connection being to our SELF. Take a deep breath and connect to yourself. Give yourself permission to be with YOU. Then ask yourself what you can do to connect to the other(s) involved.