



# The Marijke de Jong Podcast

## Episode #2

### Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad

See the show notes at: [www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2](http://www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2)

*Welcome to this podcast that will change the way you think, which will change how you feel, therefore, change what you can do, so you'll get the results you are looking for. And now your host, founder of the Straightness Training Academy, Marijke de Jong.*

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MARIJKE DE JONG: "Hi there. Welcome back to my second podcast. And thanks so much for your patience. I took a while. But I'm back. And today we're going to talk about why we feel bad, mad, and sad, and why we're supposed to experience negative emotions. And that sounds fun, right? So negative emotions. There's real power in negative emotions, they can be really useful and helpful, invaluable, and they can serve us, and they can help you move forward. And that's what we're going to talk about that in this episode.

For example, there's real power in the emotion of 'disgust.' And that's the moment you say, "I've had it". And whether you've had it with something small or something major, the day you say, "I've had it", that may not be the day it ends, but the day begins.

Okay, so let me give you an example. Let me share a personal experience with you from over 15 years ago. So I am 35. And I just made some stupid decisions. And these decisions result in having no house, no job, no money, no car, no relationship, no career. So I'm in my 30s. And I'm hitting rock bottom. And not completely, because I still have a horse and a dog and a suitcase, but that's about it. Thanks to some stupid decisions. And at age 35, I'm broke. You could say that. And being broke is bad, but being stupid is what's really bad, you know. And what's really, really bad is being broke and stupid, right? Nothing much worse than that at the age of 35... Unless you're sick. And I'm really sick and tired of being broke and stupid, because that's about it, you know, that's about as far you can fall at the age of 35: being sick and tired and broke and stupid. That's about the end of the world, you know... Unless you're ugly. And you see, I worried a lot back then in the day, and I was looking in the mirror and I had not enough sleep, and I had these dark circles under my eyes, and I was like, "Look at me: ugly, sick, tired, broke and stupid." That's the ultimate negative life. Right? So that was me one day at age 35. That was the day I said, "Enough. I've had it. I don't want to live like this any more. "

So that was disgust, it's really a really powerful, negative emotion, because in my personal situation, it changed my life. And it helped me turn my life around. And I built the Straightness Training Academy from scratch because of that emotion. So sometimes it doesn't take much to alter your whole life direction. It just takes one negative emotion, okay.

Episode #2: Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad

[www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2](http://www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2)



# The Marijke de Jong Podcast

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And let me quickly give you the three negative emotions that can change your life in one day. So here they are. It's disgust, discomfort and disappointment. And these are really powerful, negative emotions. These emotions can really lead to a change in a heartbeat, and they're an opportunity for transformation, and they really make you stronger, you know. And often our best success comes after our greatest disappointments, right? And thanks to the discomfort you can change like a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly. So, our willingness to be present with disgust and discomfort and disappointment, that is the ultimate ticket to growth and freedom. Because the only thing that can rob us from self-mastery and self-growth and self-actualization, that is resist resisting our negative emotions, or avoiding it, alright?

So, of course, people will say like, "Yeah, but you don't understand the disappointment I've had!" Well, the good news is that everybody has their share disappointments are not special gifts reserved for the poor and the special snowflakes. Everybody has them, you know. There are 1000s and 1000s of people on this planet who have experienced more disappointment and tragedy than we know, and who used it as a stepping stone to what lies ahead. And it made them resilient, and they use their negative emotion as fuel, to overcome troubling times, and to turn around their trauma and reach their dreams and to give back to the world.

So today, we're not going to talk about "how to get rid of negative emotions, so that we can live happily ever after". No, we're not going to do that. We are going to bust the idea "that we should be without negative emotions", and we explore the idea that they can work for us instead of against us, and that's what we're going to talk about today, all right?

So I'm glad you're back. And thanks so much for the feedback on episode number one, and that you liked that very first episode, that's really cool. You sent me all these messages and these wonderful emails, and I appreciate all your reviews, and all the subscriptions, and the shares, and the 2000 downloads. Yeah, everything you guys have done, I really do appreciate it. And it's so cool that you're here for episode number two.

But before we dive into this episode, I just wanted to let you know that this episode builds on to episode number one. So if you haven't listened to that first podcast, I highly recommend that you go back and listen to that one now because that is the fundament, you know. It's all about using the P.O.W.E.R.S. of the mind and to use our emotions in an empowering way, as emotions are so influential, you know, they can go either way on you. Emotions can build or destroy. And not only the negative ones. We all know the saying "killing with kindness", right? On the other hand, a negative emotion can have a very positive impact on you if we employ the emotion properly. And we need our brain P.O.W.E.R.S. to do that, right?

You see, if you look at our brain, it's very similar to reptiles and animals. And 200,000 years ago, they didn't reset that brain, and redesign it from the ground up for humans, you know. What they did, they just put the medial prefrontal cortex right on top, which means we still have those animalistic tendencies, like fight and flight, so we act out, we blow up and we freak out in a reactive way. But now we also have the ability to express emotions of fear and anger in responsible ways. And thanks to our prefrontal cortex, which is located at the front of our forehead, above your eyes, yeah, thanks to the powers of the mind, we can use our emotions in responsible ways and in an empowering way.

**Episode #2: Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad**

[www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2](http://www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2)



# The Marijke de Jong Podcast

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Alright, now before we dive into the reason why we're supposed to have negative emotions, let's have a look at the spectrum of emotions. And do you know how many different emotions we have as human beings? And some people say 27. And some people say 4000. As, Shakespeare he a sort of invented a lot of subtle variants, you know? So, nowadays, there are 4000 different emotions in the English language. But I did some research and some articles mentioned over 30,000 distinguishable emotions worldwide, can you believe it?

And to manage all these emotions, what we do in our Scholars Program is, we simply use four categories of emotions and these four are bad, mad, sad and glad. And we believe that every emotional shade, like every color, we could say is derived from just these four primary emotions. At least that's how we categorize emotions in the Straightness Training Academy. So that is bad, mad, sad and glad. And that's the map of the territory we use and the map of the emotional landscape. And just to be clear, none of the four umbrella emotions is better than the other. They're just different. And that's really an important thing that I want to make sure I make really clear. There's not this moral judgment. No, they're just different, all right.

And in the show notes, I've included a list of emotions. And that's by no means a complete list. It's just there to give you an idea how we categorize emotions as bad, mad, sad, and glad, all right. And just go to [straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2](http://straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2), and then download the podcast freebie to see the lists, okay? Of course, feel free to swap emotional shades from one category to another because if you're a Westerner, you might value excitement and pride as positive and you consider guilt as a negative emotion. But if you're Easterner, you might value guilt as positive and excitement and pride as a negative emotion. And that's so fascinating, right? Nothing is absolute. There's nothing as THE truth, and all the magic is in the meaning, which means you get to decide whether you label an emotion as bad, mad, sad or glad. So that's really good news, right?

All right, now traditionally, emotions are simply categorized as negative or positive, were the bad, mad, and said variants are part of the negative emotions, and the glad variants are part of the positive ones. And also here, the most important thing that I want to make sure I make really clear is that positive doesn't mean "right", and negative doesn't mean "wrong". And positive emotions are not better than negative emotions. They are simply opposites, like Yin and Yang, alright, so that is very important. And that's how we do it. In the Straightness Training Academy, we swap judgment for curiosity, and we just have a look, like, "Hey, how can we use this".

But we do live in a society that buys into the idea that positive is better, and that happiness is the goal. I mean, what is the last line of every fairy tale? Exactly, it's "...and they lived happily ever after". And also in Hollywood movies, there, they teach us that there are good things and bad things, and the goal is for the good guys to beat all the bad guys, and to get rid of all the negativity, and then the good guys will live happily ever after, and they're going to a positive place where there's only positive things and positive people and there's only positivity and happiness left. Only rainbows, unicorns, perpetual bliss, all that kind of stuff, right. And most of us are raised believing that the goal is to be happy all the time. And we are sold a story that we should be happy all the time. So what we learned as a kid is that happiness is the goal. And we learned and develop this moral judgment, like positive is "good" and "right" and negative is "bad" and "wrong".

**Episode #2: Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad**

[www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2](http://www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2)



# The Marijke de Jong Podcast

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Also, in our culture, in everyday life, feeling good is the goal. So we tell people to have a good morning and a nice day and good evening. But one day there was this guy who entered the insurance company where I was working in my 20s. And my colleague said, the usual “Good morning!” and this guy reacted like “Good morning? Good morning? It's not a good morning at all!” And I think we can all relate to this, right? Sometimes it's simply just not a good morning. And not because something horrible or terrible happened. No, just because some everyday challenge, like, you were being caught in traffic, or you received some negative feedback, or you couldn't catch your horse in the field, you know, we all face those everyday difficulties that are part of life.

And therefore an important piece in our lives with our horses, is the ability to handle negative emotions, which most of us are not very willing to do, right. And when you ask most riders, “What do you want for you and your horse?” What do most people say is, “I want to be happy”. That's what they say, right, “I want to be happy”.

And the idea is being reinforced by social media where it seems like everybody's happy and successful, and everybody's having a good time with a happy family and a happy life and happy horses, all captured and happy pictures, and everybody on Facebook and Instagram and Tik Tok is happy and positive all the time, everybody but us...

But the reality is that none of us is able to live up to these ideals, all right, so you see happy birthdays, happy holidays, happy Christmas, Happy New Year, happy weddings, happy anniversaries. And it all comes with high expectations of perfect positive people enjoying celebrations and living happily ever after, right?

But the reality is that we're not happy all the time. In reality, both positive and negative emotions are part of the human experience. And it's like Yin AND Yang and positive AND negative and winning AND losing and light AND dark. That's the human condition we all share. We didn't come to the planet to be happy all the time, right? I mean, does it fit your life experience? I think you collected quite some evidence over the years, you know that it's not possible to be happy and positive all the time. Just look at the course of your own life and the journey with your horse, with ups and downs, and successful times and hard times, and the good, the bad and the ugly. So already your own life experience busts the idea that we shouldn't have negative emotions.

So, yeah, let's make a note of that number one, that busts the idea that we should be happy all the time: which is your own life experience. But you and I know that feeling negative emotions is as much part of the human condition as feeling positive emotions, and sadness is just as much part of the human experience as happiness.

And I don't know about you, but besides that, I AM not happy all the time. I don't WANT TO feel happy all the time. And I don't want to feel 100% happy when I'm around my horses, you know, and I don't want to feel positive about everything that happens with my horses. I mean, I'm giving the full spectrum of emotions to feel both positive and negative. And when certain things happen with my horses, I really want to feel a negative emotion. So I want to feel sad, you know.

**Episode #2: Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad**

[www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2](http://www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2)



# The Marijke de Jong Podcast

---

Like a few weeks ago, my horse Maestro, he was rolling on the ground, and he slipped into a ditch. So we were absolutely not happy about that. And instead, we were shocked and worried, which were very useful negative emotions in that moment, as it pushed us in positive action. And it fueled us to get him out of there, ASAP, you know. And so with four people, we were able to get him out of the ditch really fast, and only then we felt glad that we were in time, and that we have great neighbors, and that we could get him back on his feet.

So this is the thing, you know, if we would have been happy all the time, we've had to be sort of sadist, you know. That is someone who derives pleasure from when a horse is suffering in a ditch. But if you're like that, they come and take you away, right? So therefore, if you experience a negative emotion, if you're capable of feeling bad, mad and sad, that's actually good news, right? It means that you're not a sociopath. In fact, you're just a normal human being experiencing the human condition with the full spectrum of negative and positive emotions.

So this podcast is not about how to become a sociopath and how to feel happy all the time, no matter what. No, it's about how to be human. And it's not about how to be half human with only positive emotions, and resisting and avoiding the negative ones. No, it's about being fully human with both positive and negative emotions. And it's about how to accept and allow and use those emotions in an empowering way.

Alright, number two, that busts the idea that we should be happy all the time: that is having a horse. That is the number one experience in life that busts the idea that we should be happy all the time. I mean, when your horse has a colic, or a hoof abscess, or whatever injury, you don't want to be happy, right? And here's the thing: How long does a horse live? I mean, much shorter than us, right? A domestic horse lives around 20 to 35 years. So in a way, by starting a relationship with a horse, we set ourselves up for sadness, right? Now, of course, there are exceptions. Like, according to the Guinness World Records, there was this horse Old Billy. He is the oldest horse to have ever lived. And he was born in the UK in 1760. And he took his very last breath on November 27, 1822. So he reached 62 years old. And that's unbelievable, right? And therefore, some of you will question that you might think like, "Was Billy really 62 when he died?" Well, the evidence for him having achieved this great age is in fact quite good because there was this squire his name was Henry Harrison, and Henry was 17, when he began to train Billy as a plough horse, when Billy was just three years old. So when Billy died, Henry had known him for 59 years, can you believe it? And for those of you who want to see more evidence, well, Billy's head and skull is now on display in the Manchester Museum. But okay, let's not go too much off topic here.

So back to the question. On average: How long does horses live? Well, 20 to 35 years, depending on the breed and many other factors, of course. So in a way, we could say that when we buy a horse, or most of the time, it's the other way around, when a horse adopts you as a human, you're opening up yourself to negative emotions, because you most likely will live longer than your horse, right? So when having a horse, on the one hand, we sign up for happiness, and having this deep emotion, this deep, unconditional love for our horse. But on the other hand, we know there comes a time that we have to say goodbye and experience, sadness and grief. And a lot of you already experienced this, me, myself included. So I think that welcoming both happiness and sadness in our lives is part of the unique experience here on Earth. And it's part of living a full, rich, meaningful life together with our horses. And I think most of us go into having horses, knowing that we're going to feel bad and sad. And we're still all in.

**Episode #2: Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad**

[www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2](http://www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2)



# The Marijke de Jong Podcast

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So, of course, we can stay safe and never enter into a relationship with a horse, to avoid all the negative experiences and negative emotions. But here's the thing, it will be a comfortable, but very small life, and it will be a very limited life. and we wouldn't call it flourishing, right? You see, without having a variety of unique and personal experiences with our horses, both positive and negative, well, we couldn't live this more extraordinary life, right? And we're going to miss out on the opportunity of being fully alive. And we can not optimize our knowledge and skills, or actualize our potential. And without a horse, we miss out on the higher life of togetherness, and we miss out on a rich, responsible and meaningful life. So that is the alternative, right?

So that's why we say "Go for it!". We go all in. And this holds true for really anything that's happening in our lives, from having relationships with people, from starting a new job, from building a career, from raising kids and horses, all those things that give our life meaning they come with challenges and negative feelings. And it's natural. It's normal.

Now, someone says, "Yeah, but...", "Yeah, but why bother? A new horse, a new job, a new career, setting goals, making plans... Why do that? Why take on all that? And why bother with achieving our dreams, all those challenges that make us feel uncomfortable, why do that?" And I would say, "Why not?" I mean, if you've got the talent and the skill and the opportunity, why not put it all together and see if you can evolve to the next version of yourself to live a more extraordinary life.

And that's the goal in the Straightest Training Academy: self-mastery and self-actualization. And there's nothing that we teach that says you're supposed to be happy and positive 100% of the time. I mean, when certain things happen on your personal path to mastery, you want to be able to choose from the full range of useful emotions, right, and not only the positive variants. And I believe that experiencing discomfort and disappointment and disgust, it's as much part of our Straightness Training journey as feeling comfortable, and content and confident. Because all these seemingly negative emotions can be very useful and powerful. And they help us evolve and grow and contribute to the world.

So that's number three, that busts the idea that we shouldn't have negative emotions. It's duality. I mean, without disgust, there's no delight, right? And if you're never unhappy, which you actually know when you would be happy? That's the whole thing. It's the opposites that makes it come all alive, right? Sadness on the one side and happiness on the other side. And if you're never sad, how would you know about happiness? We need both right? Discomfort and comfort. And disappointed on one side and feeling satisfied on the other side. We need the opposites, the duality, the contrast, the Yin and the Yang. The opposites are part of the deal. It's how everything in the Universe is set up, right: night and day, eb and flow, Yin and Yang, light, and dark. So the goal is to use the contrast, the positive AND the negative, the balance of both, you know, just in order to live an extraordinary life, and evolve to the next version of ourselves. So in the Straightness Training Academy, the goal is not to be happy and to eliminate negativity and negative emotions. The goal is to build upon our negative experiences, and to learn from it, and to use negative emotions as fuel for change and transformation. And this way, our Straightness Training journeys keep flowing and we keep moving and growing, all right.

**Episode #2: Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad**

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# The Marijke de Jong Podcast

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Now, here's the next one: number four that busts the idea that we should be happy all the time, and that we should be without negative emotions: I don't know about you, but more often than not, my primitive brain is not only focused on positivity. It's more like the news, you know, when we turn on the news, we don't necessarily focus on lots of good news. And also, our inner crocodile tends to see the bad news, it likes the drama. And that's because our brain stopped growing 200,000 years ago. As I already said, we didn't get a brand new brain when we evolved, we just kept a sort of adding. So we have kind of a higher level brain over a more primitive brain. And the higher part is the human brain. In the Academy, we call that brain our "Sherlock Holmes". And the lower part is the survival brain and that we call our "inner crocodile", and our inner crocodile still thinks that we're in danger every five minutes. And he definitely will bust the idea that we shouldn't have any negative emotions. So the inner crocodile, that's number four.

And it's really easy for our inner crocodile to get focused on the worst case scenario. And we have, what the scientist and the psychologist tell us, we have a negativity bias. Because back in the old days, when we were walking on the African savanna, and there happened to be a sound in the bushes next to us, it made sense for us to think that that was probably a tiger, you know. And we were much better off to assume the worst than to go "It's probably nothing, it's just the wind", or it's maybe a bird. See, if we got that wrong, well, the consequences of it actually being a tiger, they were deadly, right? And it literally meant that we weren't going to survive if we were only focusing on the negative, right? So expecting the worst and that we are in danger, that was part of our survival strategy. And in our pursuit of staying alive, we have negative thoughts. And we're supposed to have negative emotions. That's what brought us here. So we can clearly see how negativity served us for the last 200,000 years, and our brain is still wired that way.

You see, back in the Stone Age, the main goal was to stay alive and negative feelings were considered to be very useful because they were part of a simple, but important feedback mechanism. And it goes like this. Feeling good, if something felt good, we kept doing it. And if something felt bad, we stopped doing it. And that's really an important thing that I want to make sure I make really clear, that back in the day, we simply used feelings as important signals to survive. And feeling positive was only half of the part of the feedback mechanism. And the other part was very important too, the negative emotions, as feeling bad encouraged us to do something about a troublesome situation, you know.

You see, life was pretty dangerous for us as cave people. We had to survive lions and bears and spears from other tribes who wanted to take our land and resources. And we had to survive thunder and lightning and falling rocks. So just existing, just living was a serious job. And just surviving was a 24/7 challenge with getting food and water and better shelter and weapons, while at the same time getting rid of predators and enemies and dealing with the forces of Mother Nature. And to do so, our caveman ancestors, all they knew was that sometimes they felt good, and sometimes they felt bad, and that was all that they ever needed to know to survive.

And it's the same with our horses, right? If something feels good, they keep doing it. And if something feels bad, they stop doing it. And that's why we can train them so easily as we just step into their survival mechanisms.

**Episode #2: Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad**

[www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2](http://www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2)



# The Marijke de Jong Podcast

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I mean, “operant conditioning” is a sort of invented by Mother Nature. And I know BF Skinner gets the credit for creating the term “operant conditioning”. But animal trainers have been around for centuries. And they've always been effective in teaching falcons, and elephants, and pigs, and dogs and horses, based on this feedback mechanism. It's simply “learning from consequences”. So our horses learn: When we do this, it has a consequence. And the consequence is that it either feels good, or it feels bad. And when it feels good, they keep doing it. And when it feels bad, they stop doing it.

So our horses are really like our caveman ancestors. They use positive and negative feelings, simply as important tools, as useful signals, and helpful guide posts. And it's what keeps horses and humans alive and safe. It keeps us alive and safe. And that's why humans and horses aren't extinct species, right? Thanks to this simple but important feedback mechanism.

So feelings in itself weren't good or bad. They were simply useful. And feeling bad, was not *bad*, it was simply *useful*. So that is very important to realize. For example, back in the day, when you faced a mammoth, or someone from another clan, you desired to feel anger, just to motivate yourself to defend yourself and to stay alive, right? See, the anger resulted in better performance on this confrontational task. So feeling angry was really, really helpful. And it was really a useful negative emotion. And although our cavemen felt this negative emotion, they thought about it in a positive light, and the negative emotions had a positive outcome.

So that's number four. That busts the idea that we should be without negative emotions, and that we shouldn't feel bad, mad and sad, and that we should be happy all the time. It's our primitive brain. It's our inner crocodile.

So let's recap this quickly. The four things that bust the idea that we should be happy all the time, and that we should be without negative emotions.

The four things that busts those ideas is:

1. Number one, it's your own life experience.
2. Number two is having a horse and not being a sadist.
3. Number three is the duality and the need for opposites and contrast in your life.
4. Number four is having a primitive brain that uses feeling bad as valuable feedback, and that uses negative emotions to create positive outcomes.

So no matter how much we aim for positive feelings, we're supposed to experience negative emotions, it's normal, it's natural, we need it. And we aren't hard wired to feel glad and laugh and dance all day long, you know. Instead, we are still wired to focus on possible danger and to stay alive. And therefore it's not normal and natural to be 100% happy and positive all the time.

So when we experience a negative emotion, nothing has gone wrong. And it doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. It just means: you're a human being with a human experience. And you're a human being with cavemen ancestors that inherited the idea of safety first. And you're a human being with still a primitive brain inside that focuses on negativity and uses negative emotions as protection. So nothing has gone wrong here. And the only thing that goes wrong is when we label negative emotions as . And that's what prevents us from showing up fully in the world today.

Episode #2: Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad

[www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2](http://www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast2)



# The Marijke de Jong Podcast

I mean, what if you picked up a book, and the First Chapter said: Everybody's happy. And Chapter Two said: Everybody's happy and everything is fine. Chapter Three: Everything is just fine. Chapter Four: Everything is still just fine. Well, is this an empowering book? Is it useful? Would you finish the book? And the answer is: "no". It's empty, you know, what kind of book is this? The book of your life story and the journey with your horse, it's not going to be like this. It's going to be filled with the full experiences of the highs and the lows, and the positives and the negatives, and the ups and the downs. And it has lots of drama, but it has lots of useful, helpful valuable life lessons in it.

So an important conclusion we can make here is that when it comes to negative emotions, it's not a matter of *good* or *bad* or *right* or *wrong*. The question is:

- Is the negative emotion useful?
- Is it helping you?
- Is it productive?
- Is it powerful?

You see, I truly believe that negative emotions can really serve us if we **learn the skill to accept and allow and employ negative emotions in an empowering way**. And that's what we do in the Scholars program. There we learn all the tools to manage and master our energy and emotions, so that our emotions help us move forward, all right?

Now one of the tools we use is the six P.O.W.E.R.S. of the mind, which we spoke about in episode number one. So if you haven't listened to that first podcast, I highly recommend that you go back and listen to that one now.

Because if you can **express your emotions in a responsible way**, if you intelligently apply your emotions in a way that they can work for you, well, there's no telling what can happen in your favor. It really could turn your life around and that of your horse!

But more about that in the next episode. To be continued. So talk to you soon, okay? Bye."

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Episode #2: Why We Feel Bad, Mad & Sad

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