



**Be Brave.
Make Space.**

**Learn
More**



Hi! I'm Coach Margie

I'm glad you're reading the Brave Space newsletter. My newsletter is written to share information and support for people who need it.

**Hello Margie,
This week's newsletter is about thoughts and emotions.**

"Why are you "so" emotional?"

I don't know about you, but I heard that way too much when I was working in the corporate world. Why *am* I "so" emotional? *Am* I "so" emotional? *What is* "so" or "too" emotional, anyway?

Well, it turns out that being "emotional" isn't a bad thing (spoiler alert!). In fact, emotion is a necessary part of making good decisions. Wait, what?

No worries, I will explain. It involves ancient philosophy, some pretty cool research on gambling, and brain science. Now I'm not a philosopher, a researcher, or a neurologist, so my explanation will be basic. It's ok, though. I've included links for those who want to go beyond basic.

Philosophy:

It turns out that one of the deepest themes in psychology and philosophy is the conflict between reason (thinking) and emotion. For example, in [Plato's Analogy](#), the human mind is described as a chariot, and the guy driving the chariot is using reason (logic, thoughts), while trying to reign in the horses, which represent passions (emotions).

The core idea is that reason and logic (thinking) are good and reliable ways of getting to an accurate understanding of the world around us. Emotion, on the other hand, is irrational and leads us to act too quickly and make mistakes in our thinking. **Translation: Thinking, good. Emotions, bad.**

It's pretty obvious to me that the business world took a page from Plato's Analogy. But hold on

a hot minute! Let's hear from the researcher and the neurologist.

Research:

Antonio Damasio's [Somatic Marker Hypothesis](#) is a theory that assumes emotions are actually *needed* to make good decisions. In fact, emotional responses—which are observable physical responses (changes in heart rate, sweaty palms etc.)—actually *motivate us* to make a decision, by allowing us to stop analyzing and just choose. **Translation: Using our emotions prevents analysis paralysis.**

If you want to get in the weeds of the theory, click on the link to read the entire research. There's an interesting study in it about how people made risk decisions using their emotions while gambling. More on that later.

Neuroscience:

Dr. Luiz Pessoa, a well-known neuroscientist, wrote the book [The Cognitive-Emotional Brain](#), which explores the relationship of reason (thought) and emotion in the brain. In short, Dr. Pessoa believes that emotion is special and important—and helpful. What really matters is the *context*. What are we trying to accomplish? If we're doing something basic, like memorizing information without caring about any emotional content involved, then yes—emotions can distract us and make it harder to keep our focus on the information. But in other tasks (like making decisions), emotion can be important. For example, in Damasio's gambling experiments, participants paying attention to their emotional information helped them play better. Well, there you go. **Translation: Thoughts, good. Emotions, good depending on what you're trying to accomplish.**

Tying It All Together:

If we think back to Plato's rational thinking chariot driver trying to steer the horses of passion, we should probably look at it in one of two ways, depending on the context. Sometimes we need to steer the horses away from danger (thinking only)—but sometimes the horses alert us to something our rational minds missed (thinking and emotion).

What This Means For You

All of this talk about thoughts and emotions got me thinking about how reason, logic, feelings, and emotions can either help us or derail us with our efforts to change our relationship with alcohol. Is the decision to change how much we drink a logical thought decision, or is the decision infused with emotion?

For example, "I need to quit. It's affecting my health.", is a decision based on logical thought. But then, "I need to quit. It's affecting my health and I'm scared." is a decision involving both thought and emotion.

Guess which version I hear more often from clients? Definitely the latter. When we realize we need to change our relationship with alcohol, it's rarely or never a simple decision based on logic and reason. We feel bad. We feel ashamed. We feel broken. We feel weak. I know I did. All of it and then some.

Does anyone start drinking with a thought like, "I think I'll start over-using alcohol today." Umm, that's not one I've ever heard. Most people who over-use alcohol do so because they are

emotionally addicted to it. Research from [SAMSHA](#), The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, states that only about 10% of people with alcohol use disorder (AUD) are physically addicted.

Here's where I'm going with this. The decision to start drinking, continue drinking, and eventually over-using alcohol, is tied to our feelings and emotions about alcohol. So, only cutting back or stopping drinking will never solve the problem of why we over-use alcohol. It's not until we deal with our thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and emotions about alcohol that got us started and ultimately emotionally addicted, that we free ourselves from the emotional addiction.

And that's what makes the TNM methodology, the coaching method I use, successful. It doesn't stop at the behavior change goal (whatever that goal is for you). We address the emotional reasons and feelings about drinking alcohol. The goal is to make alcohol small and irrelevant. Because when there is no desire, there is no temptation.

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Thanks for taking a ride on my thought-emotion roller coaster today! Special thanks to this blog [post](#) on Psychology Today that got me thinking. Tell me what you think! Let's connect on social so you can drop a comment there for me. You can click on the social buttons below to go straight to my pages. Or send me an email and I'll respond as soon as possible.

Sending you lots of love,

Margie

Margie, would you like some help changing your relationship with alcohol?

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Let's talk about how my coaching helps people find freedom from alcohol and see if we're a good fit to work together! Click the **Schedule a Free Call**, or the **Email Me** button. □

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You choose the day and time we talk. Our call will be confidential, free and there's no pressure to sign up.

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