

# EMOTIONAL HIJACKING

A TINY GUIDE



SOURCE MATERIAL BY  
**MEGAN  
SAXELBY**

**CREATING  
A CULTURE  
OF DIGNITY**

# EMOTIONAL HIJACKING

is the experience of being captured by your emotional reaction in response to stimuli: things you sense or experience around you.



*Like those times  
when it feels like  
your emotions take  
control and you  
freak out and  
blow up.*



Your thinking and behavior  
become guided by **self-  
protective, default  
responses.**

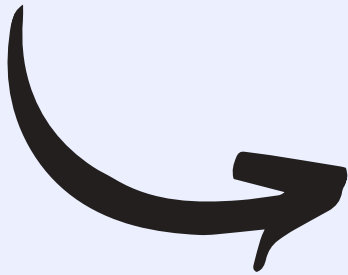
It's fast thinking, not  
slow thinking.



# What happens during **EMOTIONAL HIJACKING?**



When your brain feels threatened your instinctive, self-protective wiring tells you to defend yourself.



Your brain processes physical threats and emotional threats the same way. If you feel humiliated, you can feel threatened in the same way as if someone hit you.

In that moment, you don't stop and think. You don't care about others. You just react. **You get emotionally hijacked.**



# Getting Hijacked is hard!

**It's confusing.**

**It's usually embarrassing.**

You may feel anger and frustration, but you may also be feeling shame, vulnerability, distress, humiliation, fear, or sadness.



You can hurt others without even thinking about it.

**It's overwhelming.**



# What do you do after?

Try not to let shame eat you alive if you have messed up, hurt someone's feelings, or done something that embarrasses you.

Shame wants you to feel awful.

Tell shame to be quiet, take a rest, go on a long vacation, and not come back.



**When we're upset, we can't think straight.**

Signals for strong emotions create Neural Static and **makes things fuzzy.**

Your brain is **capable of profound change**, but it isn't easy.

You have to be patient, self-aware, and practice training your brain to respond the way you want, especially when you get really upset.







Say out loud "It happens to everyone."

**You're not a bad person, you had a bad moment.**

Feel your feelings, but don't let them own you.

Remember humans are complicated, but don't ignore hurt you may have caused. Plan to repair it.

If you admit your vulnerability it makes things easier.



# Hijacking isn't all bad.

Your brain can signal you to disconnect from someone who hurts you. It can also flood you with empathy, love, and compassion.

It can connect you with others and help you feel comfort and safety.

**Fun Fact:** you can also get hijacked by positive emotions! Think about a time you were overwhelmed with excitement.



**YOU MATTER.**

**YOUR EMOTIONS MATTER.**

**OTHER PEOPLE MATTER.**

