



# Psychotherapy and Life Coaching

for Children, Teens, and Women

September 2011

## Remembering 9/11

As I was contemplating the anniversary of 9/11, I was having difficulty explaining or finding the right analogy to understand being mindful of emotions without being ruled by them. Suddenly, it hit me like a bolt of lightning! The analogy is fairly commonplace. She has a sunny disposition. He seems to have a dark cloud over him. They have a stormy relationship. The

weather influences the moods of many of us and is in many ways similar to our moods.

Just like moods, the weather can be unpredictable. However, all we can do is be aware of the weather and make adjustments. Look outside and at a weather forecast, listen for thunder or approaching storms, take actions

*(Continued on page 2)*

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*(Continued from page 1)*



as needed, and proceed with your plans for the day. If it's chilly, take a jacket. If it's raining, take an umbrella. If it's sunny, wear shorts. The weather may change, but you can only make decisions based on the information that is currently available to you. We know from the State Fair that even a strong gust of wind can result in the loss of lives, and strong emotions can be equally destructive if we are unaware of them or not taking action to express them appropriately. Neither weather nor emotions are to be ignored, for there will be consequences, but the actions we take because of them will often be a slight shift or change. Be aware of the weather, but, except in extreme circumstances (e.g. tornado or hurricane), go ahead with your plan for the day, knowing you may get cold or wet or uncomfortable. We notice the weather, but the majority of the time, we do not let it determine whether we go to work or school. Most of the time, emotions are to be noticed but not determine our

course of action. In the event of severe conditions, we seek safe shelter, and severe emotions call for the same response.

As the anniversary of 9/11 approaches, many emotions may surface. Like the weather, we cannot completely predict nor control what will happen for us on this day of remembrance. We can do as President Obama suggested, and lend a helping hand to others, even if it is simply calling someone who needs to hear a friendly voice. We do this not to avoid our emotions, but rather to honor them. Be aware of your moods, take actions as needed, and proceed with your plans, unless serious situations call for a safety plan.

Obviously, anyone who was present at the events of 9/11, lost a loved one during 9/11 or in the military, or continues to have loved ones in the military or involved in service fields, such as police officers and firefighters, will need a safety plan. Safety



*(Continued on page 3)*

*(Continued from page 2)*

will vary by individual, but it usually involves being in a safe place, being around people who are supportive, and taking care of oneself.



We give our children age-appropriate help in understanding the weather and what consequences their choices

will have. It makes sense for us to do the same with regard to emotions and, especially, the events surrounding 9/11. The link below provides information and activities to help parents TEACH their children with exercises to Talk, Express, Act, Connect, and Help.

[www.apa.org/news/press/releases/nick-news.pdf](http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/nick-news.pdf)

This weekend, as we each remember 9/11 in our own way, take time to take care of yourself and your loved ones. Surround yourself with supportive and caring people. Stay safe. If you find yourself experiencing severe

emotions, seek appropriate help.

For further information about grief, see my May 2011 newsletter about grief, now posted on my website on the Contact page: [www.psychotherapyandlifecoaching.com](http://www.psychotherapyandlifecoaching.com)

