Learning

Read and annotate How to Identify and Manage Emotions - **Lexile 1000**, from CommonLit (licensed under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license). Respond to the prompt below.

1. Write a letter to your future self, congratulating yourself on how well you managed your emotions during a tough time and benefited from emotional awareness. Use examples from the text to support your answer.
   Must Haves
   - Date
   - Greeting or salutation
   - Body
   - Closure
   - Signature or name

COMMONLIT

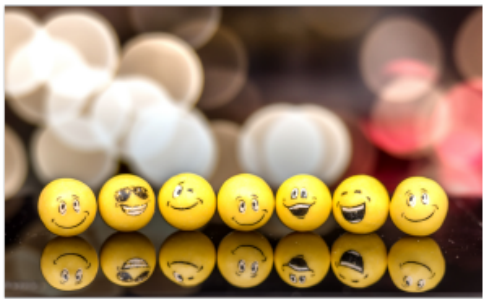
Name: _____ Class: _____

How to Identify and Manage Emotions

By Set to Go
2019

This informational text explores the benefits of emotional awareness and shares tips for managing emotions. As you read, take notes on the benefits of practicing emotional awareness.

[1] What would you think If you saw a teenager or an adult cry and scream when they didn't get their way? You would probably find this behavior strange and childlike. Teenagers and adults are supposed to have a better handle on their emotions than children do. Children tend to immediately express their emotional reactions in an overt[1] and sometimes dramatic way. For example, it is normal for children to cry or complain when they are told they have to eat their vegetables before getting to eat dessert. But as you get older you tend to grow out of crying and complaining when you don't get everything that you want. Adults may act like children at times, but this behavior is usually viewed as bizarre and immature.



"Untitled" by Fausto Garcia is licensed under CC0.

Eventually, children begin to learn more appropriate methods to express their excitement and disappointment. This happens in a few different ways and for a few different reasons. As we grow up, we begin to recognize that the way we express our feelings has an impact on other people. If we scream and cry in school in front of our classmates, we begin to learn that this makes our teachers angry and makes our classmates uncomfortable or nervous around us.

When the people around us have a negative or positive response to the way we express our feelings, we learn from those experiences. If the responses to our emotions are positive, we learn that this is a comfortable environment to share feelings and that we have communicated our feelings in an appropriate way. If the responses to our emotions are negative, we learn to behave differently by expressing our emotions less intensely; we attempt to convey our feelings in a different way, or we choose to manage our emotions privately. We also learn over time that we need to behave and express ourselves differently in different settings. For example, we behave and express ourselves differently in a class or a house of worship than we would when

1. **Overt** ***(adjective)*** done or shown openly; plainly or readily apparent, not secret or hidden

hanging out with friends.

Emotional awareness

Emotional awareness is a skill that impacts the way we think about ourselves, as well as how others perceive us. There are many different emotions you can experience from day to day and even hour to hour. Once you are familiar with your emotions, you will be better at identifying when you are feeling them. We are better equipped to navigate our friendships and other relationships, successes, disappointments, conflicts with others, and much more, when we understand our feelings. This awareness has the potential to affect multiple areas of our lives — our time with family, in the classroom, at a job and time spent with friends.

[5] Emotional awareness is like a muscle. The more you practice using it, the stronger it will get. One way we can improve our emotional awareness is by getting into the habit of noticing how you feel at different points throughout the day. Designate a couple of times a day to check in with yourself about how you are feeling. Did you just get a grade back from a test? Did you just finish catching up with a friend? Have you been busy working on multiple assignments all day? Are you rushing to get to work? How do these, and your own personal experiences throughout the day, make you feel? You can write some of the feelings you notice into a notebook or your phone or simply think them over. Most importantly, carve out some time to notice how you feel.

Noticing emotions in others (and how this makes you feel) can make you a more careful observer. In the normal course of events, we notice and gauge[2] other people's feelings all the time. Not only that, whenever we read a story or watch a show or a movie, we notice things about how the characters are feeling (and maybe even how the story/show/movie is making us feel). So much of this happens without us really thinking about it. But if you take some time to notice these feelings and put them into words it will make you more aware of others and yourself.

Here are some tips for managing your own emotions:

Identify the feeling

What are you experiencing? Can you name it? If not, can you describe it? Getting familiar with your emotions will help you understand what you are feeling and help you decide how to handle it and communicate it to others.

---

2. **Gauge** ***(verb)*** estimate or determine the magnitude, amount, or volume of

Acceptance

Some people find it very unpleasant when they experience certain feelings; like anger or sadness. And sometimes those people try to avoid even letting themselves be aware of these unpleasant emotions. But, acknowledging and accepting that you feel an undesirable emotion will not make it stronger or more intense. It's important to know that the more we avoid our emotions, the more intense they can become. This often leads to situations when our emotions overwhelm us and we have difficulty managing them. Or at other times, the emotion might express itself in other indirect ways. In any case, it is almost always better to let yourself be aware of how and what you are feeling.

Express the feeling

[10] A few healthy ways to express your feelings include: writing about your experience, this is sometimes called "journaling;" talk about your experience with someone you feel comfortable with; you can cry if you need to, this can feel like an emotional release when you are alone or with someone you trust; or any other activity that allows you to let out your feelings — as long as it is not harmful to you or anyone else.

Use a healthy strategy to take care of yourself

Find an activity that helps you feel better in the moment. This could involve deep breathing, talking to someone you trust for support, taking a nap or a shower, exercising, reading, or going for a walk. Find what works best for you when you are feeling upset. But be aware that what works for you might be different than what works for your friends or peers.

Securing

Read The Effect of Others - **Lexile 1060** from CommonLit (licensed under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license) and answer the questions below. Respond to the prompt below.

1. Write a friendly letter to a friend explaining how you are or are not affected by others. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
   Must Haves
   - Date
   - Greeting or salutation
   - Body
   - Closure
   - Signature or name

COMMONLIT

Name: _____ Class: _____

The Effect of Others

By Exploratorium
2020

This article explains the effect that people can have on others. This concept is called social influence. The author discusses many different forms of social influence that affect human behavior. As you read, take notes on the different forms of social influence.

We spend our lives watching and responding to each other.

"people sitting on stadium" by Emile Guillemot is licensed under CC0.

[1] Spend time in any public space watching the crowds and you'll see examples of what scientists call social influence — the varied ways people change their behavior because of the presence of others. Notice how individuals respond to orders and requests, go along with a group, mirror the actions of others, compete, and cooperate. We are finely tuned to the people around us, relying on each other for cues about how to behave so that we can efficiently navigate our social environments. The influence of others is so pervasive that we can experience it even when there is no real person there: we'll adjust our behavior in response to an implied presence (say, a security camera and a No Trespassing sign) or an imagined one ("What would my mother say?").

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Conformity

You've almost certainly experienced it: unsure what to do in a situation, you look around to see what others are doing, and change your behavior to match.

Most of us don't like to be called conformists (at least in Western societies, where individuality and uniqueness are prized), but going along with the crowd is a natural and often useful tendency. Humans evolved to live in groups; since early on, we've needed ways to smooth interactions, reduce conflict, and coordinate action. For example, traffic flows better — and more safely — if cars all drive in the same direction and pedestrians all cross the street together. Conforming to the group can be a matter of survival.

The tendency to conform has two different roots. Sometimes, in confusing situations, we assume that other people know more than we do, so we follow their lead. That assumption might be right — but often it's not. Say you're walking by a building and see smoke coming out. Do you call 911? If other people look unconcerned, you might decide it's not an emergency. But others may decide not to phone for help because you don't look concerned. Scientists call this potential misinterpretation by a group pluralistic ignorance. It can lead to the bystander effect, where no one from a crowd steps forward to help in a situation where action is needed. It's a paradox: the more people who witness an emergency, the less chance that any of them will act, because they're all conforming to the group's behavior.

[5] The other reason people conform and go along with the crowd is that we all want to be liked and accepted. The desire to fit in is so strong that people sometimes conform to a group consensus even when it goes against their own judgment — at least in public. In private, they're much more likely to follow their own minds.

Compliance

When the pressure from others gets more explicit, conformity blends into another type of social influence: compliance, when we respond to a direct request made by someone else.

Social scientists have identified various compliance strategies, and you may be using some of them — or have been the target of them — without being aware of it. For example, if someone asks for a very small favor ("Can you tell me how to get to the library?"), and you comply, you're more likely to agree with a second, larger request ("Oh no, that's farther away than I thought — can you spare two bucks for the bus?"). This is called the foot-in-the-door technique. It works because complying with the first request shapes or reinforces our self-image ("I'm a helpful person!"), providing us with a rationale for agreeing to the second request ("That's who I am — I help out when needed.").

Obedience

When pressure from others gets even stronger, it can lead to obedience — when we respond to a demand issued by an authority figure. The world is full of orders given by people who have power over us, either in person (the boss, a cop, your parent) or via written words (as on road signs). The pressure to conform in such situations can be extreme, and obedience can have a dark side. In one famous experiment, a researcher set up a situation where subjects had to decide whether to follow orders to inflict[1] pain on another person. The disturbing results showed how hard it is for people to resist authority.

---

1. **Inflict** *(verb)* to cause

This experiment was done decades ago, in a different social time. Would today's generation, supposedly more critical and less trusting of authority, respond the same way? Scientists recently ran a modified version of the study. The test subjects reacted similarly, confirming the powerful role of social influence.

PEOPLE IN GROUPS

Social loafing

[10] Social influence also plays an important role when people work in groups. Much of this influence is direct or intentional — for example, we often work harder because our co-workers are depending on us to meet a deadline. But sometimes the mere presence of others can shape our behavior: As work groups grow larger, individual group members tend to decrease the effort they put in, especially when their individual contribution can't be identified. This tendency is called social loafing. One of the first people to study social loafing was a French agricultural engineer who noticed that adding more farm workers to a job didn't increase productivity as much as expected. In the early 1900s, he ran a series of simple experiments, having men pull carts either alone or together. In theory, two men should pull twice as much weight as a single man (200%). Instead, he found that together they pulled only 186% of the weight — each man pulled less than he had alone. The more men on the job, the less each one pulled individually.

This tendency has been documented many times since, in various situations. It's affected somewhat by culture and circumstance — for example, workers from societies where interdependence[2] is the norm tend to loaf less than those from more individualistic cultures — but it's still universal. Does this mean that people are slackers? Not necessarily. When many hands are making light work, it's reasonable to ease up a bit — as long as things are kept fair and everyone reduces their effort by the same amount. And there's a certain logic to holding back if you believe your contribution isn't important, or if it can't be seen and recognized.

But when only some people loaf, the whole group suffers and its chances of success decrease. Voting in elections is one example. There are many reasons why people don't vote, but social loafing can contribute to the problem. If you think that enough other people will vote and that the outcome will be fine without your participation, or that your vote doesn't really matter, that might be enough to keep you away from the polls.

Given the potential problems with social loafing, how can we limit it? Social scientists have identified several effective strategies:

---

2. **Interdependence** ***(noun)*** the act of relying on others

- Make personal efforts identifiable
- Ensure each person feels their effort is important
- Highlight that personal efforts will improve group performance
- Increase team spirit

Secured

Read Why Summer Makes Us Lazy - **Lexile 1180** from CommonLit (licensed under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license) and answer the questions below. Respond to the prompt below.

1. Write a friendly letter to a family member explaining how you are or are not affected by summer weather. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

   Must Haves
   - Date
   - Greeting or salutation
   - Body
   - Closure
   - Signature or name

COMMONLIT

Name: _____ Class: _____

Why Summer Makes Us Lazy

By Maria Konnikova
2013

Maria Konnikova is the Russian-American best-selling author of The Confidence Game and Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes*, and host of the podcast* The Grift*. While researching her latest book* The Biggest Bluff*, she also became an international poker champion. In "Why Summer Makes Us Lazy," Konnikova explains the unexpected ways in which the weather can impact both our mood and productivity. As you read, take note of textual evidence that shows the various effects that the weather can have on people.*

[1] In his meticulous[1] diaries, written from 1846 to 1882, the Harvard librarian John Langdon Sibley complains often about the withering summer heat: "The heat wilts & enervates[2] me & makes me sick," he wrote in 1852. Sibley lived before the age of air-conditioning, but recent research suggests that his observation is still accurate: summer really does tend to be a time of reduced productivity. Our brains do, figuratively, wilt.

"Man in red top lying on lawn field" by Sam Solomon is licensed under CC0.

One of the key issues is motivation: when the weather is unpleasant, no one wants to go outside, but when the sun is shining, the air is warm, and the sky is blue, leisure calls. A 2008 study using data from the *American Time Use Survey* found that, on rainy days, men spent, on average, thirty more minutes at work than they did on comparatively sunny days. In 2012, a group of researchers from Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill conducted a field study of Japanese bank workers and found a similar pattern: bad weather made workers more productive, as measured by the time it took them to complete assigned tasks in a loan-application process.

When the weather improved, in contrast, productivity fell. To determine why this was the case, the researchers assigned Harvard students data entry on either sunny or rainy days. The students were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: before starting to work, they were either shown six photographs of outdoor activities in nice weather, such as sailing or eating

1. **Meticulous** ***(adjective)*** very careful about doing something in an accurate and exact way
2. **Enervate** ***(verb)*** to weaken the energy or strength of

outdoors, or were asked to describe their daily routines. The researchers found that participants were less productive when they'd viewed pleasant outdoor photographs. Instead of focusing on their work, they focused on what they'd rather be doing — whether or not it was actually sunny or rainy outside (though the effect was stronger on sunny days). The mere thought of pleasant alternatives made people concentrate less.

But each season has its share of attractive days — and a skier's mind would likely have many opportunities to wander in the dead of winter. There's evidence, however, that in summer, our thinking itself may simply become lazier. In 1994, Gerald Clore, a pioneer in researching how ambient[3] mood-altering phenomena affect cognition[4] and judgment, found that pleasant weather can often lead to a disconcerting[5] lapse in thoughtfulness. Clore's team approached a hundred and twenty-two undergraduates on days with either good or bad weather and asked them to participate in a survey on higher education. The better the weather, the easier it was to get the students to buy into a less-than-solid argument: on days that were sunny, clear, and warm, people were equally persuaded by both strong and weak arguments in favor of end-of-year comprehensive exams. When the weather was rainy, cloudy, and cold, their critical faculties improved: in that condition, only the strong argument was persuasive. Clore and his colleagues concluded that pleasant weather led people to embrace more heuristic-based thinking[6] — that is, they relied heavily on mental shortcuts at the expense of actual analysis.

[5] Summer weather — especially the muggy kind — may also reduce both our attention and our energy levels. In one study, high humidity lowered concentration and increased sleepiness among participants. The weather also hurt their ability to think critically: the hotter it got, the less likely they were to question what they were told.

The shift toward mindlessness may be rooted in our emotions. One common finding is a link between relative sunshine and happiness: although people who live in sunnier places, like Southern California, are no happier than those who live in the harsher conditions of the Midwest, day-to-day variations in sunshine make a difference. People get happier as days get longer and warmer in the approach to the summer solstice, and less happy as days get colder and shorter. They also report higher life satisfaction on relatively pleasant days. The happiest season, then, is summer.

A good mood, generally speaking, has in turn been linked to the same type of heuristic, relatively mindless thinking that Clore observed in his pleasant-weather participants. On the flip side, a bad mood tends to stimulate more rigorous analytical thought. Weather-related mood effects can thus play out in our real-life decisions — even weighty ones. In one recent project,

3. **Ambient** ***(adjective)*** completely surrounding, in a way that is often peaceful and relaxed
4. **Cognition** ***(noun)*** the process of understanding; knowledge
5. **Disconcerting** ***(adjective)*** upsetting; causing confusion and uncertainty
6. mental assumptions that allow for quicker decision making in place of slower, more detailed thought processes

the psychologist Uri Simonsohn found that students were more likely to enroll in a university that was famous for its academic rigor if they visited on days that were cloudy. When the weather turned sour, he concluded, the value they placed on academics increased.

There's a limit, however, to heat's ability to boost our mood: when temperatures reach the kind of summer highs that mark heat waves all over the world, the effect rapidly deteriorates. In a 2013 study of perceived well-being, the economist Marie Connolly found that on days when the temperature rose above ninety degrees, the negative impact on happiness levels was greater than the consequences of being widowed or divorced.

Conversely,[7] the effects of heat on our brains aren't entirely negative. Many of the behaviors that psychologists study follow a so-called inverted-U pattern: as one factor steadily increases, a related behavior improves, plateaus, and then starts to deteriorate. A famous example of this is the Yerkes-Dodson curve, which charts the effect of stress on how well someone performs a given task. If we experience too little stress, or too much, our performance suffers. Like Goldilocks, we want to get it just right. Similarly, our cognitive abilities seem to improve up to a certain temperature, and then, as the temperature continues to rise, quickly diminish. An early study suggested that the optimal temperature hovered around seventy-two degrees Fahrenheit. A more recent review of the literature shows a target of twenty-seven degrees Celsius, or roughly eighty-one degrees Fahrenheit. (An important caveat, however, is that neither of these studies take humidity or sunshine into account, two major factors when it comes to assessing the influence of summer weather on behavior.)

[10] Maybe best of all, blistering heat does give us a perfectly good reason to eat ice cream: studies have shown again and again that blood glucose levels are tied to cognitive performance and willpower. A bite of something frozen and sweet, boosting depleted glucose stores,[8] might be just what a brain needs as the temperature spikes.

Konnikova, Maria. "Why Summer Makes Us Lazy." Annals of Technology, The New Yorker, © July 21, 2013. https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/why-summer-makes-us-lazy

7. **Conversely** ***(adverb)*** in an opposite way
8. Glucose is the main source of fuel for our bodies' cells. When those stores are reduced, we can be left feeling exhausted and unfocused.

Accelerated

Read Why Summer Makes Us Lazy - **Lexile 1180** from CommonLit (licensed under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license) and answer the questions below. Respond to the prompt below.

1. Write a formal/professional letter to the author of the text explaining how you are or are not affected by summer weather. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
   Must Haves
   - Date
   - Greeting or salutation
   - Body
   - Closure
   - Signature or name

COMMONLIT

Name: _____ Class: _____

Why Summer Makes Us Lazy

By Maria Konnikova
2013

Maria Konnikova is the Russian-American best-selling author of The Confidence Game and Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes*, and host of the podcast* The Grift*. While researching her latest book* The Biggest Bluff*, she also became an international poker champion. In "Why Summer Makes Us Lazy," Konnikova explains the unexpected ways in which the weather can impact both our mood and productivity. As you read, take note of textual evidence that shows the various effects that the weather can have on people.*

[1] In his meticulous[1] diaries, written from 1846 to 1882, the Harvard librarian John Langdon Sibley complains often about the withering summer heat: "The heat wilts & enervates[2] me & makes me sick," he wrote in 1852. Sibley lived before the age of air-conditioning, but recent research suggests that his observation is still accurate: summer really does tend to be a time of reduced productivity. Our brains do, figuratively, wilt.

"Man in red top lying on lawn field" by Sam Solomon is licensed under CC0.

One of the key issues is motivation: when the weather is unpleasant, no one wants to go outside, but when the sun is shining, the air is warm, and the sky is blue, leisure calls. A 2008 study using data from the *American Time Use Survey* found that, on rainy days, men spent, on average, thirty more minutes at work than they did on comparatively sunny days. In 2012, a group of researchers from Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill conducted a field study of Japanese bank workers and found a similar pattern: bad weather made workers more productive, as measured by the time it took them to complete assigned tasks in a loan-application process.

When the weather improved, in contrast, productivity fell. To determine why this was the case, the researchers assigned Harvard students data entry on either sunny or rainy days. The students were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: before starting to work, they were either shown six photographs of outdoor activities in nice weather, such as sailing or eating

1. **Meticulous** ***(adjective)*** very careful about doing something in an accurate and exact way
2. **Enervate** ***(verb)*** to weaken the energy or strength of

outdoors, or were asked to describe their daily routines. The researchers found that participants were less productive when they'd viewed pleasant outdoor photographs. Instead of focusing on their work, they focused on what they'd rather be doing — whether or not it was actually sunny or rainy outside (though the effect was stronger on sunny days). The mere thought of pleasant alternatives made people concentrate less.

But each season has its share of attractive days — and a skier's mind would likely have many opportunities to wander in the dead of winter. There's evidence, however, that in summer, our thinking itself may simply become lazier. In 1994, Gerald Clore, a pioneer in researching how ambient[3] mood-altering phenomena affect cognition[4] and judgment, found that pleasant weather can often lead to a disconcerting[5] lapse in thoughtfulness. Clore's team approached a hundred and twenty-two undergraduates on days with either good or bad weather and asked them to participate in a survey on higher education. The better the weather, the easier it was to get the students to buy into a less-than-solid argument: on days that were sunny, clear, and warm, people were equally persuaded by both strong and weak arguments in favor of end-of-year comprehensive exams. When the weather was rainy, cloudy, and cold, their critical faculties improved: in that condition, only the strong argument was persuasive. Clore and his colleagues concluded that pleasant weather led people to embrace more heuristic-based thinking[6] — that is, they relied heavily on mental shortcuts at the expense of actual analysis.

[5] Summer weather — especially the muggy kind — may also reduce both our attention and our energy levels. In one study, high humidity lowered concentration and increased sleepiness among participants. The weather also hurt their ability to think critically: the hotter it got, the less likely they were to question what they were told.

The shift toward mindlessness may be rooted in our emotions. One common finding is a link between relative sunshine and happiness: although people who live in sunnier places, like Southern California, are no happier than those who live in the harsher conditions of the Midwest, day-to-day variations in sunshine make a difference. People get happier as days get longer and warmer in the approach to the summer solstice, and less happy as days get colder and shorter. They also report higher life satisfaction on relatively pleasant days. The happiest season, then, is summer.

A good mood, generally speaking, has in turn been linked to the same type of heuristic, relatively mindless thinking that Clore observed in his pleasant-weather participants. On the flip side, a bad mood tends to stimulate more rigorous analytical thought. Weather-related mood effects can thus play out in our real-life decisions — even weighty ones. In one recent project,

3. **Ambient** ***(adjective)*** completely surrounding, in a way that is often peaceful and relaxed
4. **Cognition** ***(noun)*** the process of understanding; knowledge
5. **Disconcerting** ***(adjective)*** upsetting; causing confusion and uncertainty
6. mental assumptions that allow for quicker decision making in place of slower, more detailed thought processes

the psychologist Uri Simonsohn found that students were more likely to enroll in a university that was famous for its academic rigor if they visited on days that were cloudy. When the weather turned sour, he concluded, the value they placed on academics increased.

There's a limit, however, to heat's ability to boost our mood: when temperatures reach the kind of summer highs that mark heat waves all over the world, the effect rapidly deteriorates. In a 2013 study of perceived well-being, the economist Marie Connolly found that on days when the temperature rose above ninety degrees, the negative impact on happiness levels was greater than the consequences of being widowed or divorced.

Conversely,[7] the effects of heat on our brains aren't entirely negative. Many of the behaviors that psychologists study follow a so-called inverted-U pattern: as one factor steadily increases, a related behavior improves, plateaus, and then starts to deteriorate. A famous example of this is the Yerkes-Dodson curve, which charts the effect of stress on how well someone performs a given task. If we experience too little stress, or too much, our performance suffers. Like Goldilocks, we want to get it just right. Similarly, our cognitive abilities seem to improve up to a certain temperature, and then, as the temperature continues to rise, quickly diminish. An early study suggested that the optimal temperature hovered around seventy-two degrees Fahrenheit. A more recent review of the literature shows a target of twenty-seven degrees Celsius, or roughly eighty-one degrees Fahrenheit. (An important caveat, however, is that neither of these studies take humidity or sunshine into account, two major factors when it comes to assessing the influence of summer weather on behavior.)

[10] Maybe best of all, blistering heat does give us a perfectly good reason to eat ice cream: studies have shown again and again that blood glucose levels are tied to cognitive performance and willpower. A bite of something frozen and sweet, boosting depleted glucose stores,[8] might be just what a brain needs as the temperature spikes.

Konnikova, Maria. "Why Summer Makes Us Lazy." Annals of Technology, The New Yorker, © July 21, 2013. https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/why-summer-makes-us-lazy

7. **Conversely** ***(adverb)*** in an opposite way
8. Glucose is the main source of fuel for our bodies' cells. When those stores are reduced, we can be left feeling exhausted and unfocused.