BREATHE

A spiritual care resource created by Kaseman's Spiritual Care Department

The Sea of Life *(by Lucio B. Mutia; a wisdom story from the Philippines)*

On an island, there once was a young man named Francisco who lived in a small town close to the sea. His mother Eugenia was a farmer and a fisherman, and Francisco often accompanied his mother to go fishing.

One day, a worrisome news came: a typhoon (a very strong storm from the sea) was coming and about to crash into their island.

Eugenia called her son: "Francisco, take our bangka (our canoe) out into the sea now! Paddle out into the deep waters and ride the waves."

Initially, Francisco wanted to protest. "Why would I have to go towards the storm on a bangka? Wouldn't that be unsafe? The storm would probably sink it."

However, Francisco didn't have much time to ask and protest, and simply did what his mother had commanded.

He paddled their bangka out into deep waters. And soon enough, the strong winds and giant waves came. Francisco carefully rode the canoe on the crests and troughs of the giant waves.

While riding the waves, Francisco noticed that the bangka had less chances of capsizing and flipping over if it faced the waves head on.

After an hour or so, the storm ceased. Francisco was relieved and started rowing back to the shore. As he arrived on the shore, he was surprised to see that all of the bangkas that stayed on the beach were utterly destroyed, broken into pieces by the giant waves that crashed the shores.

When he got home, he thanked his mother for the wisdom he had received from her. Because of that wisdom, their bangka remained safe and intact and they were able to continue to use their boat to fish.

REFLECTION: Reflect on the wondering questions below with a friend by taking turns in answering each question.

- Which part of the story did you find most important? What resonated with you?
- Which part of the story is about you? Where are you in the story?
- What could the the deep waters could really be?
- What could the shallow waters could really be?
- What deep stormy waters have you ventured into?

Remember, keep on sharing your stories. Keep on listening to each other's stories.

WHAT PART OF THE STORY IS ABOUT YOU?

(Write or draw in the space provided under each picture.)

THE SHORE - YOUR SHALLOW WATERS

What shallow waters that provides a false sense of safety that you automatically return to when you are in danger?

YOUR STORM

What storms in life (big waves) feel overwhelming and are putting you in danger? In what ways are you trying to create balance so your boat won't capsize and sink?

THE DEEP WATERS

What unknown seas (deep waters) are you called to explore so you can learn and grow?

YOUR BOAT

What helps you stay afloat above water? (Name actions that help you cope, or perhaps people in your life)

YOUR GUIDE (Lighthouse)

Name guides in your life who help you steer clear out of danger.

EMOTIONAL SURFING

A TOOL TO INCREASE DISTRESS TOLERANCE

Emotions are like waves. While emotions are not always rational, they always provide information. Instead of struggling for dominance or control over them, our goal here is to take a more curious approach by observing and understanding. This approach is sometimes referred to as "surfing the emotions." The idea is that trying to "control" one's emotions is akin to standing in the ocean and attempting to stop a wave from hitting you. It's impossible. But with enough practice, it is possible to surf the wave, that is, learning to meet the wave swell as it comes, and then letting it pass through. So next time you see an incoming emotional wave off in the distance, remember that there's no need to run from it, control it, or be drowned by it because it is an opportunity to learn how to surf.

NOTICE

Deepen your breath, and then notice the present moment. Notice the incoming emotion: Don't push it down, nor hold on to it.

NAME

Name the emotion – what word would you use to describe it? Be curious but don't jump to conclusions.

ACCEPT

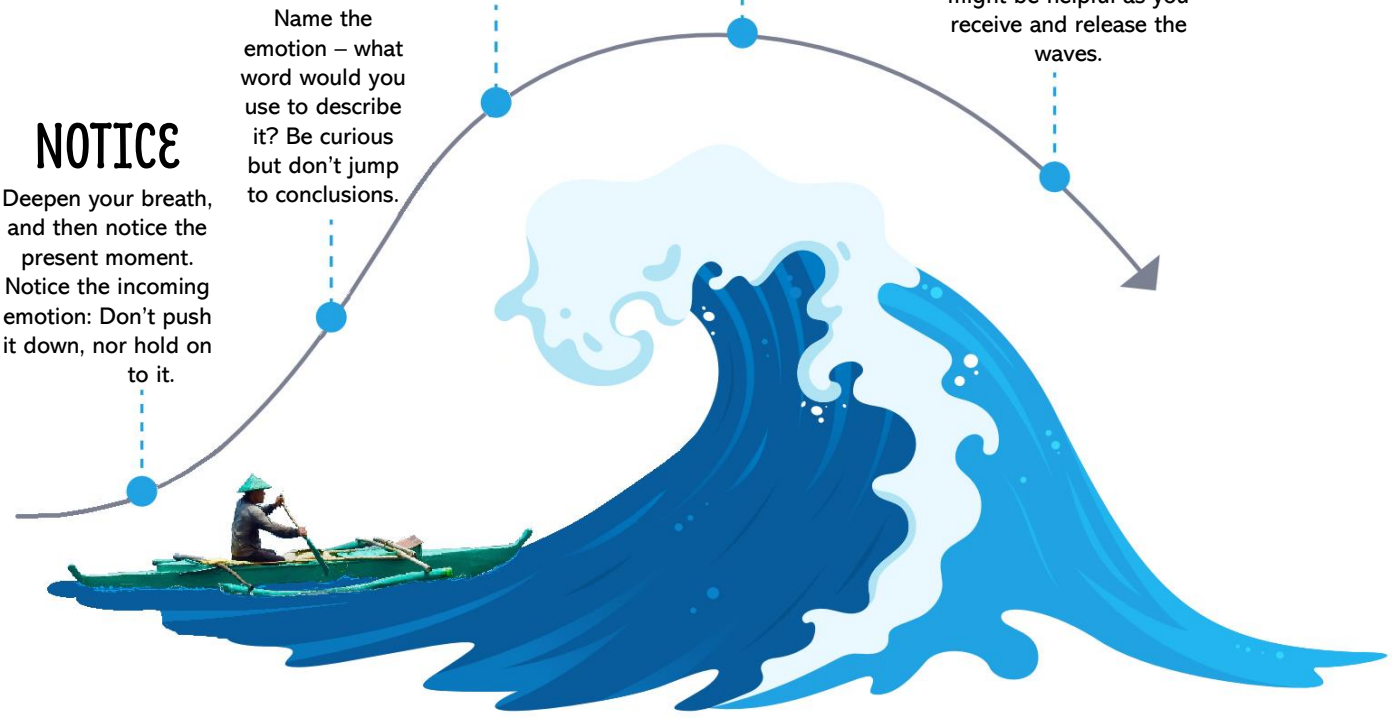
Accept the emotion in the present moment. Just let it be. Remember, this is temporary. Accepting is not equivalent to "giving up" – it simply means releasing the stress that comes with wanting to be somewhere else other than where you currently are.

INVESTIGATE

Investigate with open curiosity: How intense is it? What are the physical sensations? How do you feel inside your body? Again, don't forget that what you are feeling is impermanent.

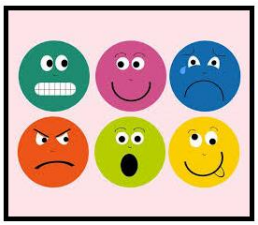
LET IT PASS

Let it pass by releasing. First, notice the thoughts and feelings – don't judge them as good or bad. Then, take a deep breath & visualize yourself floating & a wave coming and passing through. This image might be helpful as you receive and release the waves.



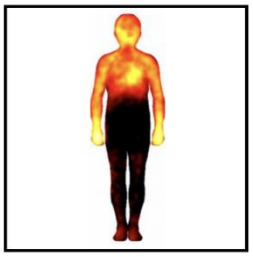
SURFING QUESTIONS

Notice the incoming wave of emotion.
What triggered it?



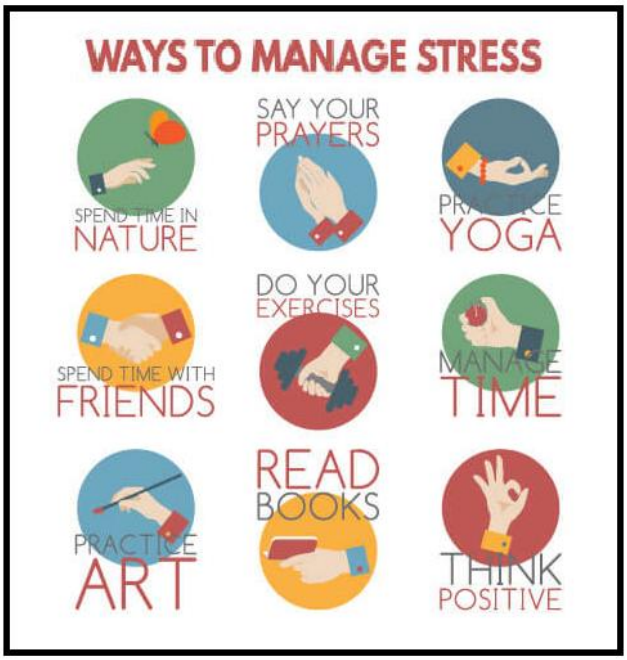
Name: what word can I use to describe it?

What thoughts or judgments come up with this emotion?



How does it feel in my body?
How intense is the sensation?

What actions can I do to be in the present moment?
What actions help me be patient as it passes through?



Coping with future waves:

1. What are the different wave triggers?

2. What strategies or coping tools can I use when a wave comes next time? (example, deep breathing, go for a walk outside).