

# PENGUINS and SELF-COMPASSION

How I learned to embrace my emotions



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In my early 20's I really struggled to navigate my emotions. When I was angry or upset, it just felt overwhelming, so I would just try to turn it off.

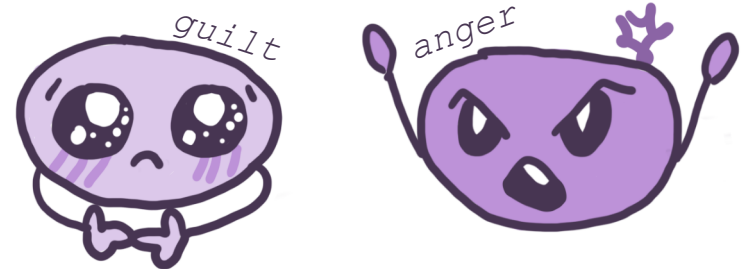


Eventually, I learned that this was not healthy, so I cultivated tools to help me become friends with my feelings. It took a lot of **therapy, radical self acceptance, and penguins.**

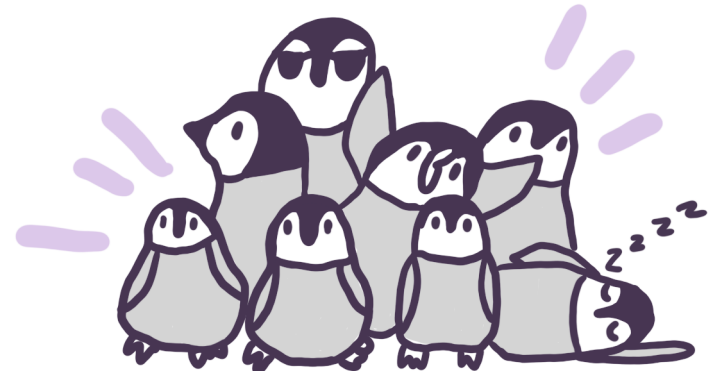
One technique to navigate feelings is personifying them. Separating your feelings from yourself can help you experience them in a more neutral way. Some people like to imagine an **inner child**.



Some people like to imagine the emotions as **their own entity** they can talk to.



I like to imagine them as **a pile of baby emperor penguins.**



When I cried, I felt like I was too emotional and often beat myself up. So instead, I'd imagine there was a **baby penguin in front of me crying.**



**How could I be mean to a baby penguin?**

It is just a tiny little guy who is feeling lost or confused or scared. I would comfort the little penguin and try and sit with it as it expressed its emotions.

In my brain, each emotion is a little penguin. The penguins are my friends, and I love them. I do my best to take care of and understand each day.



In the end, I found accepting how I felt and embracing the emotions made them way easier to navigate. It didn't make me feel any less sad or angry, **but it did make that sadness or anger something that wasn't scary anymore.**

Your feelings are **real and valid**, and often are the result of the things you have been through for better or worse. You can't stop them from following you.

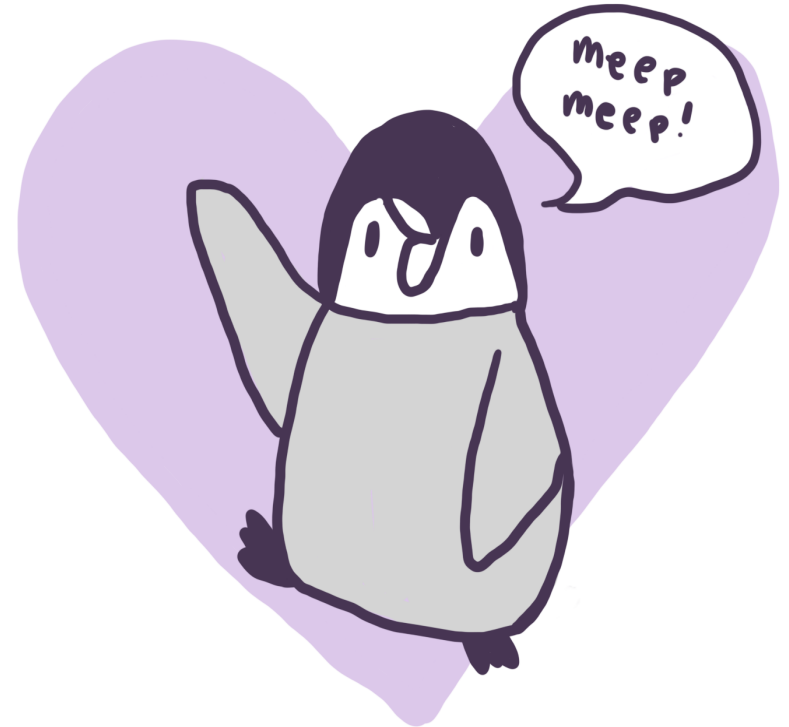


Ignoring them will never lead to understanding.



Acknowledge, listen, feel, and embrace your feelings.

There are still some days where I struggle however, the penguin metaphor has stuck. It has become a helpful tool in my life to **remind myself to be more self compassionate.**



Always be kind to your little penguins!