



## Wellbeing Insight

### Emotional Agility

Susan David, author of *Emotional Agility*, suggests that curiosity, along with compassion and courage is useful – vital – for emotional agility. ‘Emotional Agility’ she defines as “showing up: facing your thoughts and emotions and behaviours willingly with curiosity and kindness.”

David elaborates: “When difficult or uncomfortable feelings arise, greet them with curiosity: what are they flagging for me? Have compassion for the feelings that arise in me. Have the courage to walk in fear towards what I care about.”

There is so much to unpack here and so much value in doing so. To begin, it is a given here that difficult or uncomfortable feelings will arise. Those of us who have sought to control what cannot be controlled – the random feelings that arise within us as a response to the many variables that life presents – are invited to feel comfort in that given. They are part of living our lives!

To be then invited to greet these feelings with curiosity! Again, my default would not have been curiosity, but aversion, a small voice asking, ‘why me’ and ‘not this again.’ I am delighted that a curious approach, denoting a ‘no blame and no shame’ attitude, is a wholehearted way of proceeding, and as such very welcome.

The open heartedness of the question, “what are they flagging for me?” reminds me of Byron Katie, the American speaker and author, self-inquiry approach. If difficult or uncomfortable feelings arise in me, it is an opportunity to investigate what work they are signalling I need to do, and then if I pay attention to them – be curious about them – I have an opportunity for growth! Add compassion for myself and I can gentle myself forward rather than scold myself backward.

And then to be enjoined, “Have the courage to walk in fear towards what I care about” Wow! It does take considerable courage to walk in fear *towards* what you care about. My instincts would have me walk away, and my fear magnify my desire to follow them. However, I now know that my fear is in fact my visceral response to a situation I *do* care about – it matters to me!

Combining curiosity, inquiry, compassion, and courage in this way, seeking emotional agility, especially in times where resilience is thought to be at a low ebb, is such a worthwhile practice.

Thank you, Susan David.