

If you only have a minute: Rooted and Unwavering is all about connecting deeply with ourselves, others and our service in the world. How can recognizing and dealing with strong feelings before they spill out help us connect more fully with others and our purpose?

What Do You Do With Big Feelings?

By Esther Groves and Hylke Faber

Is stress really a bad thing? Well, if you're Ashley Reid, Founder and CEO of Wellist, you might not think so. Ashley believes that stress is simply your body's way of giving you the energy to tackle a problem. By reframing the narrative from "I'm frazzled right now" to "I care about this going well," she gratefully accepts that her body is giving her the energy to connect deeply with herself to solve a problem. She has learned to notice when strong feelings are present and to "metabolize" or process them before they "spill out" onto others, especially those she is close to. "When I'm depleted and scared, it leaks out to the people I'm most connected with," she admits.

Ashley remembers a time when her team organized a high-stakes event for 50 people, but due to scheduling issues, only 20 signed up. Ashley was convinced the event was going to be a disaster and cause her to lose all credibility. Her closest colleague, based on past experiences, was just as confident it would be a success and was not worried at all. In the end, according to participant feedback, the event went much better than expected. "My life has shown me you don't know the whole story at any given moment," Ashley says.

But Ashley knew she had allowed her stress to spill out onto those around her in ways she was not proud of. It took some time alone and an after-action review with her team to process the experience. During the review, the team considered: "What did we intend to happen? What actually happened? What have we learned?" "After this," she says, "we thought about doing another event to use what we learned - to grow in our trust and in our performance."

Ashley has developed healthy ways to recognize and manage the stress in her life. She prioritizes her sleep, which in turn impacts her drinking, exercise, and the ways she copes. As an athlete, she frequently uses her Peloton to work through what she refers to as "big feelings." Additionally, she writes in her journal, reads inspiring authors, confides in her inner circle, and takes retreats for meditation and solitude. In these ways, she takes care of her "inner landscape" and comes back to serenity, ready for the next moment.

"Before I let anything come out of my mouth, I need to be clear inside." – Ashley Reid
