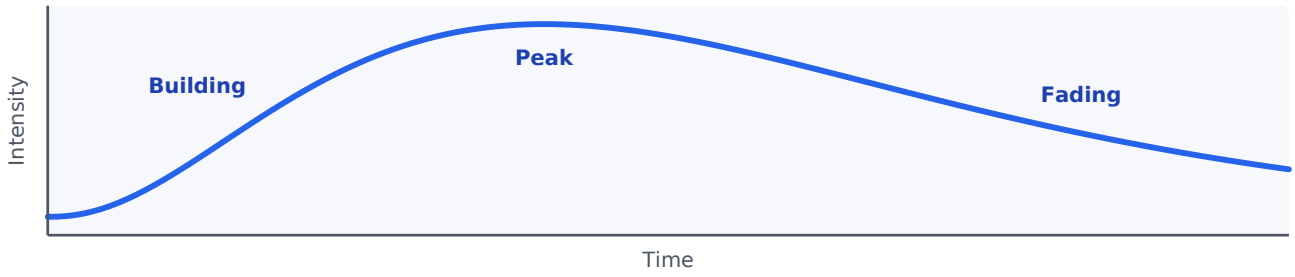
The emotion wave

How a feeling rises, peaks and passes, and what to do while it does.

An emotion is like a wave. It builds, it reaches a peak, and it falls away. Left alone, the body's response to a feeling lasts a surprisingly short time, often a matter of minutes.



What keeps the wave up

- **Feeding it.** Going over what happened, building the case, imagining what comes next.
- **Fighting it.** Trying to push the feeling away, which adds tension and a second feeling on top (anxious about being anxious, ashamed of being sad).
- **Acting on it at the peak.** The thing done in the heat of the moment often creates the next wave.

Riding it

1. **Name it.** "This is anger." "This is sadness."
2. **Find it in your body.** Where is it? What does it feel like?
3. **Breathe and make room.** You do not have to like it. Let it be there.
4. **Do not act yet.** Notice the urge. You do not have to obey it.
5. **Watch it change.** It may rise again before it falls. Stay with it.
6. **Afterwards, decide.** Is there something that needs doing, now that I can think?

Reminders

- "This feeling is not all of me."
- "I have felt this before and it passed."
- "I do not need to fix this right now."

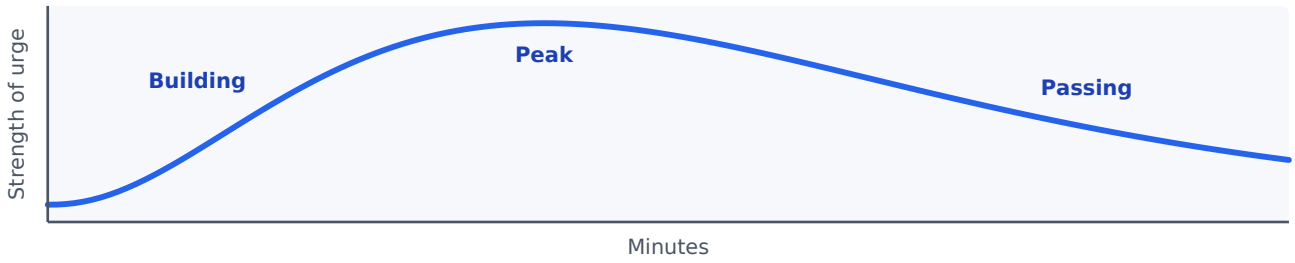
A recent wave. How long did it actually last? What made it bigger or smaller?

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Urge surfing

How to wait out an urge without acting on it.

Urges feel as if they will keep building until you give in. They do not. An urge rises, peaks and falls, usually within 20 to 30 minutes, whether or not you act on it. Each time you ride one out, the next is a little weaker.



How to surf

1. **Notice and name it.** "I am having an urge to..."
2. **Find it in your body.** Where is it strongest? Tight, restless, hollow, buzzing?
3. **Breathe and watch.** Keep your attention on the sensations. Describe them to yourself as they shift.
4. **Do not fight it and do not feed it.** No arguing, no planning how to give in. Just watching.
5. **Rate it** from 0 to 10 every few minutes.
6. **Stay until it drops.** Then turn to something that matters to you.

When	The urge	Start (0 to 10)	Peak	After 20 minutes	Did I act on it?

Urge surfing was developed by Alan Marlatt as part of relapse prevention.

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