

The Field Guide to Emotions

A PRACTICAL ORIENTATION
TO 150 ESSENTIAL EMOTIONS

Dan Newby and Curtis Watkins

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WELCOME

Welcome! We hope that you will use this book as a resource to gain greater understanding of emotions and how they impact so much of our lives. In this book, we have offered you our interpretation of what an emotion is pointing us toward and how our body might be shaped around that emotion. Please use this as a starting point for your exploration, not as a truth to be held onto tightly. If anything we say rings true for you and you find it useful, then we have achieved our objective. If anything doesn't ring true for you, please know that each person experiences the world in different ways and allow your experience to be your first guide and our book your second.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my son Andrew, who taught me,
when he was very young, how my anger impacted his world and mine.
For that, I am eternally grateful.

—Curtis

I dedicate this book to my wife Lucy for her wisdom, love,
and all I've learned from her about my own emotions and about
emotions as a territory for exploration and learning.

—Dan

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PREFACE

This field guide emerged out of a shared interest, professionally and personally, in emotions. We, the authors, like all human beings have had emotional challenges. Some may have bordered on illness, but the vast majority stemmed from our lack of understanding of ourselves and others in the emotional domain. From this perspective, the development of our understanding of emotions as a part of being human and not something we get to choose was of deep self-interest. We wanted to live simpler, more coherent lives.

Professionally, we work as coaches and trainers. Our clients live and work in all parts of the world and in a multitude of cultures. We work with lay people, leaders and coaches to help them develop their skills and self-knowledge. One significant aspect of this development is the area of emotions. Since every human has them and because emotions are, as we understand them, “the energy that puts in action,” they are essential for leaders, coaches, and every person to understand and employ in their lives. During more than twenty years of coaching and training, we have discovered that while we’ve all spent a lot of time and energy on intellectual learning, we’ve largely ignored learning about emotions. We tend to address our emotions only when we are deeply uncomfortable, and we often do this by going to a professional for counseling. Although this can be helpful, it does not take the place of widespread learning and application in the emotional field, or what could be called Emotional Literacy.

If you turn back the clock by 100 years, the world would look very different in terms of human literacy. If you went back a bit further, you’d get to a time when very few people were able to read or write. Today around 85 percent of humans are literate, which puts language at their service in powerful ways. It allows us to read texts, emails, newspapers, menus, and road signs. It allows us to write texts, emails, books, research papers, and love

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letters. Literacy is so prevalent that when you enter a restaurant or workplace, it is assumed that you are competent to read and write. Emotions and our knowledge of them stands in the place that language did two hundred years ago. At that time, we were linguistically illiterate; today we are emotionally illiterate. Understanding emotions and learning to use them as a tool is one of the next frontiers in human learning. Emotional competence is steadily growing on the list of competencies required for work, such as the one published by the World Economic Forum. Five years ago, it was absent.

Our claim is that humanity's past interpretation of emotions no longer serves us and, if we want to grow in this area, we need to embrace an interpretation that is practical and useful in everyday situations. We invite you to explore and consider the interpretation we offer in the following pages, and we hope it will reveal hitherto unknown parts of yourself and speed the development of your emotional fluency.

INTRODUCTION

How to use this Field Guide

This book is meant to be used as a reference for coaches, leaders, counselors, or anyone interested in developing their emotional distinctions. It lists 150 emotions covering most human experience. You may not be aware you are experiencing these emotions but, if you spend time reflecting on them, you will probably discover they're all familiar. What may have been missing is a way to articulate them. That is one way this book can be of help.

Because the interpretation of each entry includes the etymological root, the information it provides us, its impulse or predisposition, how the body responds to and helps shape emotions, its time orientation, and other elements, each emotion can be explored in various ways. For instance, every interpretation includes a quote to illustrate and put it in context. Reviewing the column that identifies which emotions open us and which close us may help identify an emotion we are experiencing or one we observe in our clients or associates. In this way, the interpretations are multidimensional and can be explored through many avenues.

It's important to understand that every effort to articulate emotions linguistically is only an interpretation. Emotions are not directly visible. We get insight regarding which emotion someone is experiencing by listening to them speak and watching their body and actions. This is true for ourselves as well as for others. For example, we feel a tension in our shoulders and we

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identify it as anxiety. If our thoughts or “the story we are telling ourselves” is consistent with the meaning of anxiety, then we know that is the emotion. In the opening section, we will discuss this point in greater detail, but it is vital to read this field guide? understanding that these are the interpretations of the authors and that yours may sometimes be different. In that case, you will have determined an interpretation that works for you, which we encourage you to do. We welcome your questions, insights, and interpretations. As constant learners, we are always making new connections and refining our interpretations. The ideas you share with us will be part of that process.

There are a number of ways to make use of the following content. One is simply to pick an emotion at random and read through the elements thinking how our interpretation aligns with or informs yours. Another is to select an emotion and, before reading, write your own interpretation or notice which emotions you group with it or confuse it with. You might do the same in terms of time orientation, breath or one of the other somatic aspects. Once you read our listing you can cross-reference to the other emotions mentioned.

As a coach or someone who professionally works with emotions, the field guide can help clarify your understanding of an emotion either before or after a client session. This not only gives you insight into the situation your client is in but expands the emotions available to you.

There is emerging research that shows our ability to name an emotion helps us regulate it. In other words, just being able to put a name on the feeling makes it more available and easier to navigate and work with. This is borne out by the authors personal experience and building emotional literacy is valuable even if for this reason alone.

Enjoy your journey through the rich landscapes you’ll find in this world of emotions.

A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF EMOTIONS

All human beings share certain fundamentals; breathing, sleeping, and eating are three. These are aspects of being human that, to some degree, we have the power to choose how or when to do, but we do not get to choose if we do them. Beyond these, there are other core aspects of being human that we sometimes overlook. One of these is that all human beings have emotions. Emotions are not discretionary. That is to say, we do not get to choose whether or not we will have emotions. We are emotional beings just as we are rational beings. Although we individually relate to and express emotions differently, depending on our character, culture, and experiences, that doesn't change the fact that we all have emotions.

Fundamental to understanding what we are suggesting is that all your beliefs about what emotions are and how they work are interpretations. They may be supported by research and experimentation, and you may have accumulated data to “prove” that the belief you are proposing is the one and only truth, but if you dig deep enough, you will see that the way you understand emotions is an interpretation. What we, the authors, are offering is simply another interpretation of the phenomenon of emotions. We are not claiming it is true, but we are endorsing it as useful and practical. Our years of experience as coaches, teachers, facilitators, and consultants have shown us that lacking an emotional interpretation that we can use in everyday situations hampers our ability to engage in life in many ways. It makes us less effective in most things we do. It's often a source of confusion, because

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if we believe that humans are only rational beings, any event that cannot be explained rationally is not understandable.

If you go to the dictionary for a definition of what an emotion is, you will generally find two statements: “An emotion is a feeling” or “An emotion is an affective state of consciousness.” While both definitions may have validity, neither is particularly helpful for understanding what emotions are, what role they play in our lives, what it might mean when we experience them, or how to navigate them. Our claim is that understanding humans as more than “rational” beings allows emotions and moods to be more fully understood as useful tools.

In this ontological interpretation, an emotion is what the etymology of the word suggests: e-motion. It is “the energy that puts you in motion” or “that which moves you.” We all can notice the energy that urges us to move faster, change position, or say something we consider important. That energy is the emotion. In this case, “action” and “motion” are distinct from “movement.” An emotion such as laziness will make lying immobile on the sofa attractive, which is its particular “predisposition to action.” Emotional energy could show up as a reaction to an experience, which would be an emotion, or it could be more long-lasting, in which case we might call it a mood.

Both moods and emotions have the following specific attributes:

- **Emotions are simply “the energy that moves us”:** This is a practical interpretation that allows us to value and use them as tools in daily life. When we understand they are our “fuel for action,” we see the emotional domain as one worth learning about.
- **Emotions (and moods) are nondiscretionary:** By our nature, emotions are present and are part of our makeup. Every human experiences emotions and moods.
- **Emotions (and moods) are a legitimate domain of learning and knowing:** Whereas previously we believed that learning was primarily intellectual (using language as the carrier of information), our onto-

A New Understanding of Emotions

logical interpretation is that emotions and moods are equal to intellect as domains of learning, knowing, and wisdom.

- **Emotions (and moods) are learned through immersion:** Emotional learning is different from intellectual learning, which happens through insight. Emotional learning occurs through immersion in emotional energy, whether by spending time with our own emotions or by being immersed in the energy of others' emotions.
- **Emotional learning has its own pace:** While cognitive learning happens almost instantaneously, learning in the emotional domain happens over a much longer period of time. It isn't unusual for emotional learning to take weeks or months to take root.
- **We are never not in an emotion:** This is horrible grammar, but it emphasizes the fact that there is never a moment when emotions are not present. We may not be aware of them or able to name which emotions are present, but they are there nonetheless.
- **Emotions can only be known by interpretation:** One can never see emotions directly but can only know them by interpreting how the body senses or displays them, or by the language we use to describe them (which is also a somatic function). Given that, it means that linguistically we can give any particular emotion an interpretation but not an absolute definition.
- **Each emotion or mood predisposes us to a specific action or inaction:** In each distinct emotion or mood, our body is inclined to react in a specific manner. That doesn't necessarily mean we will act in this way, but that the emotions will make us want to act in a particular way.
- **Every emotion is connected with a story or narrative in a co-creative way:** In other words, emotions exist to provide information about our interactions with the world. When I feel ambition, I also am living the story that "there are possibilities for me in life, and I am going to go after them." When I am in the story that "It isn't fair" or "I shouldn't have to," the emotion of resentment is present.

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- **Emotions and moods often have a time orientation:** Some emotions are concerned with or focus on the past, some on the present, and some on the future. In some cases, the difference between two emotions is nothing more than this. Regret is the belief that life would have been better if I had made a different choice in the past. Uncertainty is the story that I may make a choice that creates a future I don't like. Peace, serenity, and happiness are concerned with the present. Being aware of this time orientation can help us see if we are living in the present or are more drawn to the past or future.
- **Emotions are not inherently “good” or “bad”:** Each emotion can help us or hinder us. When we label emotions as “good” or “bad,” we try to avoid the bad ones and get more of the good ones. A more useful question is whether an emotion is serving us in a specific situation.
- **Moods and emotions do not occur one at a time:** We often have several emotions or a combination of moods and emotions in a particular moment. These may be of a similar nature but may also seem paradoxical, such as when we have a love-hate relationship, or we are happy for another's success but also envious of it. One does not contradict the other. Both are telling us something about how we see the relationship.
- **Every emotion takes care of a specific human concern:** Emotions are often thought of as purposeless or as if they simply exist to make us uncomfortable. We believe each emotion developed to take care of a specific human concern. Every emotion exists for a purpose. Loyalty takes care of the groups to which we belong. Guilt takes care of our private identity. Anger tells us what we believe is unjust and gives us the possibility of correcting it.
- **We are not our emotions:** We experience our emotions, but they do not define us. Just as our thoughts are something we can consider and choose not to embrace or believe, our emotions offer us an understanding of the world around us, and thus they are a source of potential understanding. There is a distinction between “us having an emotion” and “an emotion having us.”

A New Understanding of Emotions

- **Emotions are triggered; moods are not:** The distinction we draw between moods and emotions ontologically is that emotions are triggered by an event, whereas moods are pervasive energies. What this means is that emotions are provoked by an experience, whereas moods shape the experience we are having. If people live in the mood of fear, they will see the world filled with danger, and that will shape their behavior. If the mood is resentment, they will see the events that happen to them as unfair, because the mood is the lens through which they assess their experience. Put another way: Moods exist before the experience; emotions follow the experience.
- **The existence of emotions is logical:** It may seem paradoxical, but the existence of emotions is logical. If we understand the purpose of our cognitive skills to be the gathering and sorting of information, it is logical that we would need a mechanism to weigh the value of that information. This is the role emotions play in the ontological model.
- **Our emotions are the result of how we're made plus what we've learned:** The eternal "nature vs. nurture" question is evident with emotions and moods. Certainly, we humans are wired in a particular biological way to have the capacity for emotions and individually to the way we process them. And there is a growing body of work that demonstrates how we learn in the emotional domain and how emotions are a part of the learning process.

ACCEPTANCE

The Emotion is.....

ETYMOLOGICAL ROOT

From Latin *acceptare*, “take or receive willingly”

WHAT WE THINK OR SAY

“It is so even though I may not agree, endorse, or like it.”

ITS IMPACT ON OUR OPENNESS TO OTHERS

Neutral to opens us

OUR REACTION OR IMPULSE FOR ACTION IS...

To be at peace with what is

RELATED EMOTIONS

Serenity, calmness, peace, contentment

ITS PURPOSE IS TO...

Help us align with reality

THE TIME ORIENTATION OF THIS EMOTION IS...

Present

HOW THIS EMOTION CAN GET IN THE WAY

When fully in acceptance, we have no impulse or capacity to act, which can cause us to miss important aspects of life.

EMOTIONS WE CONFUSE IT WITH

Tolerance, which means “to put up with something until it changes.” Acceptance has no such condition.

HOW IT FEELS OR MOVES US

We feel still, without a need to take action.

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT FEEL

Relaxed and engaged

HOW OUR BREATH MIGHT BE

Low in the belly, slow pace, nostril breathing

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT SHAPE ITSELF

Chest is open, belly long and relaxed

QUOTE

“Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don’t resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like.”—Author unknown

ADMIRATION

The Emotion is.....

ETYMOLOGICAL ROOT

From Latin *admirari*, “to wonder at”

WHAT WE THINK OR SAY

“I would like to do things the way that person does them.”

ITS IMPACT ON OUR OPENNESS TO OTHERS

Opens us

OUR REACTION OR IMPULSE FOR ACTION IS...

To emulate or copy

RELATED EMOTIONS

Envy, infatuation, jealousy, adoration

ITS PURPOSE IS TO...

Identify role models

THE TIME ORIENTATION OF THIS EMOTION IS...

Future

HOW THIS EMOTION CAN GET IN THE WAY

If admiration becomes worship, it can lead to infatuation, and we lose the benefit of admiration.

EMOTIONS WE CONFUSE IT WITH

In envy our focus is on “having what the other has”; in admiration it is on “being or doing as the other does.”

HOW IT FEELS OR MOVES US

We look up to another and look for ways we can act or become like them.

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT FEEL

Light, tendency to move up and forward

HOW OUR BREATH MIGHT BE

Higher in the chest, more rapid pace, but not fast

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT SHAPE ITSELF

Open chest, smiling, grounded

QUOTE

“I have always been an admirer. I regard the gift of admiration as indispensable if one is to amount to something. I don’t know where I would be without it.”
—Thomas Mann

ADORATION

The Emotion is.....

ETYMOLOGICAL ROOT

From Latin *adorare*, “speak to formally, beseech, ask in prayer”

WHAT WE THINK OR SAY

“I feel divine love.”

ITS IMPACT ON OUR OPENNESS TO OTHERS

Opens us

OUR REACTION OR IMPULSE FOR ACTION IS...

To treat with utmost respect or to worship

RELATED EMOTIONS

Affection, admiration, desire, love, passion

ITS PURPOSE IS TO...

Look to a higher power or treat others as such

THE TIME ORIENTATION OF THIS EMOTION IS...

Present

HOW THIS EMOTION CAN GET IN THE WAY

In adoration we can become disconnected from reason and prudence.

EMOTIONS WE CONFUSE IT WITH

Adoration, strictly speaking, addresses our feelings toward a higher power. Emotions such as infatuation, affection, and love are generally directed toward other humans.

HOW IT FEELS OR MOVES US

We pray or ask for guidance.

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT FEEL

Energized and full

HOW OUR BREATH MIGHT BE

Long, slow, and deep

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT SHAPE ITSELF

Head lifted, chin tilted back just a bit, chest open

QUOTE

“The adoration of his heart had been to her only as the perfume of a wild flower, which she had carelessly crushed with her foot in passing.”

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

ADVENTUROUSNESS

ETYMOLOGICAL ROOT

From Latin *adventura*, “(a thing) about to happen”

WHAT WE THINK OR SAY

“I’m ready for a new experience.”

ITS IMPACT ON OUR OPENNESS TO OTHERS

Opens us

OUR REACTION OR IMPULSE FOR ACTION IS...

To explore

RELATED EMOTIONS

Ambition, enthusiasm, curiosity, intrigued

ITS PURPOSE IS TO...

Get us exploring in the world

THE TIME ORIENTATION OF THIS EMOTION IS...

Future

HOW THIS EMOTION CAN GET IN THE WAY

If we frequent the emotion of adventurousness, we may miss the value of routine.

EMOTIONS WE CONFUSE IT WITH

Boldness is required when a situation holds danger and is therefore associated with courage; adventurousness is looking forward to the next thing expectantly.

HOW IT FEELS OR MOVES US

We try out new things or go new places seeking new experiences.

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT FEEL

Engaged, flushed, alert

HOW OUR BREATH MIGHT BE

Faster paced, in upper chest

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT SHAPE ITSELF

Moving forward, eyes wide open, chest open, pelvis and femurs wide

QUOTE

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. Security does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than exposure.”—Helen Keller

AFFECTION

The Emotion is.....

ETYMOLOGICAL ROOT

From Latin *affectionem*, “a relation, disposition; a temporary state; a frame, constitution”

WHAT WE THINK OR SAY

“I like this person and would like to remain close.”

ITS IMPACT ON OUR OPENNESS TO OTHERS

Opens us

OUR REACTION OR IMPULSE FOR ACTION IS...

To demonstrate liking or loving through action

RELATED EMOTIONS

Love, passion, desire

ITS PURPOSE IS TO...

Bring us close to others

THE TIME ORIENTATION OF THIS EMOTION IS...

Present

HOW THIS EMOTION CAN GET IN THE WAY

We can experience affection for people who do not have our best interests at heart, which can put us in danger.

EMOTIONS WE CONFUSE IT WITH

Infatuation, which comes from a root meaning “foolish,” whereas affection is the state of enjoying another’s company.

HOW IT FEELS OR MOVES US

We show we enjoy being in the presence of another person.

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT FEEL

Calm

HOW OUR BREATH MIGHT BE

Even, resting breathing rate medium slow, medium depth

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT SHAPE ITSELF

Open, leaning toward others

QUOTE

“You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.”—Buddha

AGGRAVATION

The Emotion is...

ETYMOLOGICAL ROOT

From Latin *aggravatus*, “to render more troublesome,” literally “to make heavy”

WHAT WE THINK OR SAY

“This is troubling.”

ITS IMPACT ON OUR OPENNESS TO OTHERS

Closes us

OUR REACTION OR IMPULSE FOR ACTION IS...

To bear the burden and continue on

RELATED EMOTIONS

Ire, frustration, resentment

ITS PURPOSE IS TO...

Show us what troubles us

THE TIME ORIENTATION OF THIS EMOTION IS...

Present

HOW THIS EMOTION CAN GET IN THE WAY

Aggravation can slow us down and make a chore of what we need to accomplish.

EMOTIONS WE CONFUSE IT WITH

Frustration tells us we think “this could be simpler or faster,” whereas aggravation occurs when we have the feeling we are slogging through mud. There may not be a faster or easier way; it is just difficult.

HOW IT FEELS OR MOVES US

We often complain about the difficulty of the situation or burden we feel.

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT FEEL

Tense, flushed

HOW OUR BREATH MIGHT BE

High in the chest, medium rapid

HOW OUR BODY MIGHT SHAPE ITSELF

Leaning forward, closed fists perhaps

QUOTE

“If you have a job without aggravation, you don’t have a job.”—Malcolm Forbes