

Emotional Literacy: Reconnecting with Ourselves and Others

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Introduction

All learning is emotional. Yet, what exactly are emotions? Where do they originate from? And why are they essential for establishing connections? Emotional Literacy allows us to become aware of feelings and, more importantly, needs. Behavior is driven by how our needs are satisfied, yet most of us have no awareness of our needs. Learning how to recognize needs and relate them to feelings and behavior is essential for building connections

What divides us?



Many of our interactions happen in the Conflict Zone. If you are looking for connections, make feelings and needs your comfort zone. Conflicts are never about needs. Conflicts arise from the strategies we choose to satisfy our needs.

How are you doing?

Feelings when Needs are met

GLAD: happy, hopeful, joyful, proud, delighted, encouraged, elated, confident, relieved, optimistic, touched, wonderful, pleased, overjoyed, satisfied, fulfilled

EXCITED: amazed, amused, inspired, exuberant, astonished, breathless, cheerful, eager, ecstatic, energetic, engrossed, enlivened, enthusiastic, thrilled, exhilarated, fascinated, inspired, intense, upbeat, intrigued, involved, jubilant

PEACEFUL: tranquil, calm, clear, content, absorbed, quiet, expansive, serene, blissful, satisfied, relaxed, secure, composed, carefree, comfortable, pleasant

PLAYFUL: energetic, effervescent, zestful, alert, refreshed, stimulated, impish, alive, giddy, animated, adventurous, enthusiastic, curious, inquisitive

LOVING: affectionate, appreciative, compassionate, friendly, nurtured, trusting, amorous, helpful, sensitive, tender, warm, glowing, radiant

RESTED: relaxed, alert, refreshed, alive, rejuvenated, invigorated, energized

THANKFUL: grateful, appreciative, gratified, moved, honored, recognized

Feelings when Needs are not met

SAD: lonely, heavy, helpless, gloom, grief, distant, sensitive, apathetic, down, despondent, discouraged, distressed, dismayed, disheartened, despairing, disappointed, anguished, concerned, depressed, overwhelmed, unhappy

SCARED: afraid, fearful, terrified, apprehensive, nervous, panicky, jittery, alarmed, frightened, horrified, anxious, anguished, shocked, petrified, terrified, jealous, surprised, unnerved, skeptical, intimidated, suspicious

MAD: angry, aggravated, agitated, exasperated, furious, enraged, infuriated, hostile, bitter, pessimistic, upset, resentful, disgusted, disgruntled, annoyed, disappointed, aroused, displeased, unglued, blazing mad, seeing red

CONFUSED: frustrated, worried, perplexed, baffled, hesitant, troubled, torn, embarrassed, apprehensive, bewildered, detached, disturbed, reluctant, unsteady, uneasy, disoriented, dazed, disorganized

TIRED: exhausted, fatigued, lethargic, indifferent, inert, listless, lazy, beat, overwhelmed, fidgety, helpless, heavy, sleepy, withdrawn, spiritless, bored, apathetic, drowsy, spent, drained, worn out, weary

UNCOMFORTABLE: pained, uneasy, hurt, guilty, irked, impatient, miserable, restless, embarrassed, ashamed, irritated, awkward

Most of us learn that feelings result from other people's actions. Take control by recognizing that feelings are the result of how your needs are fulfilled: I feel...because my need for...has been met/not met.

What do you need?

All eight billion people have the same ~300 universal needs. Gandhi and Dr. King based the principles of nonviolence on this premise.

Universal Needs (selection)

AUTONOMY

Freedom – Choice – Self-Empowerment
Authenticity – Individuality
Vision – Dreams – Goals – Hope

SELF-EXPRESSION

Creativity – Innovation – Inspiration
Reflection – Analyzing – Thinking – Clarity
Discovery – Learning – Growth – Competence – Mastery

INTERDEPENDENCE

Trust – Reassurance
Respect – Fairness
Equality – Tolerance – Justice
Consideration – Inclusion – Mutuality – Contribution
Communication – Attention – Being Heard – Understanding
Support – Cooperation – Participation – Partnership – Community
Acknowledgment – Recognition – Validation – Appreciation

RELATIONSHIPS

Connection – Belonging
Compassion – Empathy – Presence
Sharing – Giving – Caring – Nurturing
Consistency – Predictability
Emotional Safety – Family – Friendship – Companionship
Acceptance – Affection – Admiration – Love

INTEGRITY

Self-Worth – Self-Respect – Dignity
Honesty – Values
Purpose – Meaning

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Air – Food – Water
Rest – Sleep – Health – Rejuvenation
Warmth – Touch – Intimacy

SAFETY

Shelter – Protection from Diseases
Security of Home and Loved Ones
Peace – Harmony – Comfort
Dependability – Stability

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Humor – Play – Fun – Joy
Passion – Pleasure
Exercise – Movement
Celebration – Mourning

SPIRITUAL

Honor – Gratitude – Grace – Flow
Structure – Ritual

Needs are the driving force beneath our behavior. They often compete for our attention. We rank and rearrange them, continuously changing their priorities along the way.



Try creating your own current need stack.

To understand someone's behavior, look at the needs that drive it. If we judge someone as "baffling," a "difficult person," or an "enemy," we have not explored the person's needs yet.

Connect

Need-oriented Communication



We all share the same needs. Connecting with needs enables mutual understanding.

Connect to yourself = Self-empathy

Ask yourself: How am I feeling? Explore the why: which of my needs are fulfilled and which are not? Seek strategies to address unmet needs. If solutions elude you, tend or mourn the unmet needs.

Connect to others = Empathy

Look beneath a behavior and ask or guess what the other person might be feeling. What needs are they trying to fulfill? Seeing their needs will enable you to connect empathically.

This app might help clarify feelings and determine the underlying needs



Further Reading

Marshall Rosenberg: Nonviolent Communication
Thom Bond: www.compassioncourse.org
Joe Brummer: www.joebrummer.com
Ike Lasater: www.ikelasater.com
Liv Larsson: www.livlarsson.com
Miki Kashtan: www.mikikashtan.org
Dian Killian: www.workcollaboratively.com