

Building Emotional Self Awareness

The goal of this exercise is to expand your ability to name your emotions. A good emotional “vocabulary” and steady self-reflection will help us become more conscious of our emotions. We cannot develop empathy for other people’s feelings until we understand our own! And we definitely can’t manage emotions we are not aware of!

This document contains an extensive list of emotions for you to review. You may also add any words which are more typical of how you explain things, but be sure they would work in a sentence such as: “I feel _____ right now”.

At least once each day for two weeks keep a journal where you write down the emotions you felt that day. Most of us have MANY different emotions during a day. We can also feel more than one emotion at any given time!

You can use the sample worksheet on the next page if you like . . . just make copies so you have one page for each day.

Remember: This first step is just to strengthen your emotional self-awareness. Don’t worry about WHY you have the feelings – at least initially. The first step is just to notice what you are feeling and put a word to it – name it. And especially don’t worry about how to “make them go away” or “fix them”! Just notice them for now.

Emotions Described: I feel _____ or, I am feeling _____.

Worksheet instructions

- list as many emotions as you can describe
- don’t worry if they seem to contradict each other...that is normal (we can be sad and happy at the same time)
- notice over the course of a day if there is a lot of variation, or if you are repeating one feeling over and over
- notice of the course of several days if there is a lot of variation or if you are repeating one feeling over and over
- if you are repeating one word over and over, and you want to know why you might be feeling that way, try to get to the bottom of it by using the “Five Why’s Technique.” For example, if you are repeatedly saying “I am angry” try to determine why by asking “Why” at least 5 times. So you might say, “I am angry because my boss yelled at me.” Why does that make me angry? “Because I feel disrespected.” Why does that make me angry? “Because I am a human being and I deserve to be treated with respect, dignity and kindness.” Why does that lack of



kindness and respect make me angry? “Because too many people in my life treat me that way . . .” (Now we’re getting somewhere!)

- Once you ask “Why” 5 or more times, look at the list of words again. You might be able to add another word to describe your feelings. Maybe you are angry AND sad...or angry AND stuck (or misunderstood, or resentful, or even vengeful). Putting a finer point on defining what we are feeling brings us closer to understanding ourselves and our options.
- **Please consult a qualified therapist or counselor if you find that you have persistent feelings of sadness, anger or thoughts which scare you.**

Worksheet: Emotional Self-Awareness

Look at the list of emotions on the next few pages to help you complete this form. Use more than one word to describe your emotions if you can. If needed, adjust the statements to fit you more appropriately.

When I woke up this morning I was feeling _____ and _____ and _____.

While I was commuting to work/school I was feeling _____ and _____ and _____.

When I first got to work/school I was feeling _____ and _____.

By mid-morning I was feeling _____ and _____.

At lunch time I was feeling _____ and _____.

By mid-afternoon I was feeling _____ and _____.

While commuting home I was feeling _____ and _____.

When I first got home I was feeling _____ and _____.

An hour later I was feeling _____ and _____.

After dinner I was feeling _____ and _____.

As I was preparing for bed, I was feeling _____ and _____.

List of Emotions
(continued on next page)

Abandoned	distressed	lazy	serene
Abrasive	dogmatic	left out	shaky
Accused	doomed	light	shy
Adventurous	doubtful	like a failure	silly
Alert	drained	livid	skeptical
Aloof	eager	loved	sleepy
Angry	elated	loving	snobbish
Anticipation	embarrassed	mad	spaced out
Anxious	energetic	manipulated	spoiled
Apathetic	enthusiastic	manipulative	still
Appreciated	envy	mean	stoic
Appreciative	excited	melancholy	strange
Apprehensive	exhilarated	mellow	stressed
Argumentative	explosive	misunderstood	strong
Arrogant	fearful	motivated	stubborn
Ashamed	flexible	needy	stuck
Attacked	focused	nervous	stunned
Aware	forgiving	nothing	sullen
Balanced	forgotten	offended	supported
Betrayed	frantic	open	supportive
Blamed	free	oppressed	suspicious
Blissful	friendly	optimistic	sweaty
Boastful	frustrated	outraged	tender
Bored	fulfilled	panic	tense
Calm	furious	paralyzed	terrified
Careless	glowing	paranoid	threatened
Centered	goofy	patronizing	timeless
Cheated	grateful	peaceful	timid



List of Emotions (continued)

Childlike	greedy	perplexed	tired
Clever	grieved	pity	tranquil
Closed	happiness	playful	trapped
Cold	hard	proud	uncertain
Compassionate	harmonious	pushy	uneasy
Complacent	harsh	quiet	unfocused
Complete	hatred	rebellious	unforgiving
Compulsive	heartbroken	receptive	unlimited
Conceited	helpless	reckless	unloved
Confused	hesitant	regret	upbeat
Connected	hopeful	rejected	useless
Considerate	hopeless	remorse	vengeful
Contemptuous	horrified	resentment	vicious
Creative	hostility	resilient	violent
Critical	hot	resistant	visionary
Dead	humble	respected	vulnerable
Decisive	hungry	righteous	wanton
Defensive	hyper	rigid	warm
Defiant	hysterical	rude	weary
Delighted	ignored	ruthless	whole
Demanding	inhibited	sad	wicked
Depressed	insecure	scared	willful
Desolate	invincible	scheming	willing
Devastated	invisible	secretive	wonderful
Discouraged	irrational	secure	worried
Disgusted	jealous	selfish	worthless
Disrespected	joyful	self-sufficient	wounded