

# EMOTIONS: THE BASICS

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What every eight-year-old should know, and most adults have never been taught, about the emotions that run our lives.

## Basics #1

### YOUR NEEDS AND WANTS

This topic explains what your feelings are, how to use them to help yourself, and how to overcome the ones that get in your way.

This information applies to every second of your life and every decision you will ever make.

Learning to apply the concepts in these few short pages can go a long way toward improving your life!

Keep these pages close at hand and use them regularly.

### YOUR ENERGY AND YOUR FEELINGS

We get our physical energy from taking care of our bodies well – not perfectly, and not obsessively. We only need to eat, sleep, and exercise well enough in order for our feelings to give us all of the information we require about our needs and wants, and all the energy we'll need to address them.

Feelings are actually energy surges which tell us, very specifically, what we want or need.

When our feelings are strong enough to grab our attention, we can be certain that we'll have sufficient energy to handle things.

### YOUR NEEDS

Needs are about survival. We would die if we didn't get what we need.

An adult needs the same things an infant needs. We need: food, air, space, exercise, temperature control (avoiding being too hot or too cold), and to eliminate waste efficiently.

We also need attention or "strokes" from each other. We don't need anything else!

### YOUR NEED FOR ATTENTION OR "STROKES"

A "stroke" is a unit of recognition. When we receive a stroke, we are being noticed by someone.

Infants need strokes to survive. Adults want strokes so much that getting attention (just being recognized) is the strongest want we will ever experience in our lives.

## FOUR KINDS OF STROKES

TYPE OF STROKES	THE ATTENTION COMES FROM:	EXAMPLE:
<i>Conditional Positive</i>	People who like something you did.	"I like how you did that."
<i>Conditional Negative</i>	People who do not like something you did.	"I don't like that about you."
<i>Unconditional Positive</i>	People who like the whole you.	"I love you!"
<i>Unconditional Negative</i>	People who do not like the whole you.	"You are worthless!"

Get good at understanding... and deeply absorbing... the first three.

And be sure to powerfully turn down and throw away all the "Unconditional Negative Strokes" you ever receive!

### THE FIRST SIGN OF DISCOMFORT

Some people ignore their needs. They live in pain and may die from it. Most of us don't ignore our needs. We notice our need but then

we wait while the discomfort turns to pain.

Don't wait!

Get good at noticing the very first feeling of discomfort! Avoid emotional problems by taking care of your physical needs at the first sign of discomfort!

**TRIGGERS FOR FEELINGS**  
Feelings are triggered by reality or fantasy. (It's always one or the other, never both.) **REALITY**

comes to us through our senses. If we can see it, hear it, taste it, smell it, or feel it on our skin, then it is real.

**FANTASY** is all mental activity – including thoughts, memories, dreams, ideas, etc. Fantasy doesn't come TO us, it comes FROM us – from our own brains.

If we only think it, it might be true or it might be false – but it is not real!

**FEELINGS WE CREATE**  
 Feelings that start in our brains rather than in our senses are unnecessary and optional, because they are not real. If we create painful feelings, we will need

to change how we think in order to feel better. If we create pleasurable feelings, that's great – as long as we remember we are only imagining.

Sometimes we create feelings which are so strong that they hide our real feelings from our senses. When we do this, we are out of touch with reality, and in real danger of making serious mistakes.

**Basics #2:**  
***YOUR NATURAL FEELINGS***

**THE NATURAL, REAL FEELINGS**  
 Feelings that start in our senses are natural responses to the real world.

When we notice real anger, or sadness, or scare, we notice that something is wrong in our lives.

When we notice real joy or excitement, we notice that something is right in our lives. Natural feelings are always trustable. Learn what they are saying to you. Use them well.

**TYPES OF FEELINGS**

There are 5 natural and necessary feelings: EXCITED, SAD, MAD, GLAD, SCARED.

There are many other unnatural and unnecessary feelings – and all of them cause problems. Guilt, shame, and imagined fear are by far the most common and troublesome of these. ("The Basics #3" is about these.)

**THREE HUGE QUESTIONS THAT AFFECT OUR FEELINGS**

When any feeling starts, we are immediately faced with three huge questions, and we tend to automatically answer them in less than a second:

1) Will you admit to yourself what you are feeling? If you don't, you'll feel "out of touch" or "crazy" or uncentered.

2) Will you express the feeling either alone or with someone else? If you don't, you are giving up the chance for relief.

3) Will you take action to improve things? If you don't, you are giving up the chance to improve your future.

When we are having problems, we need to slow down this automatic process so that it takes longer than a second or two. This will allow us to think through each step instead of relying on old habits.

<b>THE FIVE NATURAL FEELINGS</b>			
Use this information so you will always know what you want and feel.			
<i>THE FEELING:</i>	<i>WHEN YOU FEEL IT:</i>	<i>WHAT TO DO FIRST:</i>	<i>WHAT TO DO NEXT:</i>
<i>SADNESS</i>	When you've LOST something, or when something important is MISSING from your life.	Feel it through thoroughly, to notice how important the loss was.	Work to replace what you've lost or what is missing.
<i>ANGER / MAD</i>	When there is a BLOCK between you and what you want.	Feel it through thoroughly, to notice how powerful you are.	Work toward getting past the block powerfully, wisely, and safely.
<i>FEAR / SCARED</i>	When your EXISTENCE is threatened.	Feel it immediately – in a second or less – and notice the danger.	Tune into your senses (what you see, hear, smell, taste or feel) and protect yourself!
<i>EXCITEMENT</i>	When you are ON YOUR WAY to something you want.	Feel it through thoroughly, to notice how good you feel about what's coming.	Enjoy it for the fun of it!
<i>JOY</i>	When You've GOT What You Want.	Feel it through thoroughly, so you notice how happy you are and how good you are at getting what you want.	Enjoy it for the fun of it!

HOW TO FIND EACH FEELING IN YOUR BODY	
1st	Remember a time when you felt each feeling very strongly.
2nd	Recall what was going on when you felt the feeling so strongly. Remember it in enough detail so that you actually start to feel the feeling again.
3rd	Notice where, in your body, you feel each emotion. (Find your "sad spot," your "angry spot," etc.)
4th	Describe what you feel in your body. Use adjectives like tight, weak, empty, heavy, light, etc.
5th	REMEMBER what you learn by doing this. Do this exercise over a few times if needed.

You will need this information to know who you are and what you want and to make every decision you will ever make.

**Basics #3:  
UNNATURAL FEELINGS**

ABOUT GUILT

Since guilt is not a natural, necessary emotion, it blocks and wastes our energy.

***Guilt is a cover-up for which anger, which leaves us feeling sad.***

We wonder: "Why am I so sluggish and irritable?"

On the surface we feel:  
SAD or DEPRESSED

We've been telling ourselves things like:

"I shouldn't be angry. I should be understanding."

"That person didn't mean to hurt me."

"I'm too sensitive."

"I should just take the mistreatment."

"I don't deserve better."

Down deep we feel: ANGRY

Make A Conscious Choice:  
Will I admit to myself that I'm angry or will I keep feeling guilty and be depressed?

BE PROUD OF YOUR ANGER!

It's there to protect you. Let it do its job!

ABOUT SHAME

Since shame is not a natural, necessary emotion, it blocks and wastes our energy.

***Shame is a deep belief in our own worthlessness. It comes directly from being shamed as a child.***

We wonder: "Why don't I seem to care what happens to me like other people do?"

On the surface we feel: VERY SAD and "HOPELESS."

We've been telling ourselves things like:

"I'm no good. I just don't feel worthwhile."

"I wonder what's wrong with me, but most of the time I just don't care."

"I might as well have a drink (or a drug, or take a big risk)."

Down deep we feel:  
MOSTLY SAD, BUT  
FEARFUL & ANGRY TOO.

Make A Conscious Choice:  
Will I keep believing those people who shamed me or will I treat myself well and be happier?

***Know that anyone who shamed you was wrong!***

ABOUT IMAGINED FEAR

Since imagined fear is not a natural, necessary emotion, it blocks and wastes our energy.

***Imagined fear is a feeling we create to cover deeper feeling which bother us more.***

We wonder: Why am I afraid?  
Why do I always ask: What if?  
Why don't I stop scaring  
myself?

On the surface we feel: FEAR

We've been telling ourselves:  
I hate being afraid.  
I wish I could do what other  
people do, and not be afraid.  
I wish I'd stop thinking about  
every single bad thing that  
could happen.

Down deep we feel:  
USUALLY SAD.  
SOMETIMES SHAME

Make A Conscious Choice:  
Will I always feel scared or  
will I face and overcome my  
deeper bad feelings?

***Face what you feel that  
bothers you more!***

You will get past the deeper  
feelings. But creating fear can  
last forever!

***All other created feelings  
that feel bad.***

It is possible to create any  
feeling – and any created  
feeling that feels bad  
will block and waste our  
energy.

All imagined feelings are  
habitual feelings we create  
to cover deeper, real feelings  
that bother us more.

We wonder:  
Why do I keep feeling this  
same feeling all the time,  
even when I know it's not  
necessary?

On the surface we feel:  
THE CREATED FEELING.

We've been telling ourselves:  
I hate feeling this all the time.  
I wish I'd feel and do a wider  
range of things like other  
people do.  
Why can't I stop making  
myself feel this way?

Down deep we feel:  
***Real feelings that seem too  
much to handle.***

Make A Conscious Choice:  
Will I keep feeling this way  
or will I face and overcome  
the deeper bad feelings?

***You can overcome the  
deeper feelings alone or  
with help, but the habitual  
feeling you are creating  
could go on forever.***

Face the feelings that bother  
you more!

Stop covering them with your  
"favorite" bad feeling!

These three topics contain the most important information I have for you.

I originally wrote "The Basics" around 1985. I refer to these concepts many times every day in my work with others and in dealing with my own dilemmas.

I sincerely hope you will keep this information readily available and use it frequently.

Use it whenever you feel stuck in bad feelings, when you want to feel more joy and excitement, and when you feel the healthy urge to look inward.

***I WISH YOU THE RICHEST, HEALTHIEST, HAPPIEST LIFE YOU CAN ARRANGE!***

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Tony would like very much to hear your thoughts and experiences as you apply the information provided here. Please send your comments to Fair Shake, and I'll pass them on to Tony! I will then send his responses back to you, if you would like to hear what he thinks.

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Tony shares more great insights at [www.HelpYourselfTherapy.com](http://www.HelpYourselfTherapy.com)