



Mindfulness and Emotions

“Feelings are much like waves. We can’t stop them from coming, but we can choose which one to surf.”

— JONATAN MÅRTENSSON

Theme: With mindful awareness, we can become aware of the range of emotions we experience throughout the day and learn to ride the waves of intense emotions.

Emotions add colour to our lives, yet we often do not notice them until they bring us either pleasure or pain. By bringing mindful awareness to our emotions, we can learn to notice and label them. Labeling our emotions can help us to appreciate the pleasant moments and notice when we may become swept away by unpleasant emotions that take us out of our window of tolerance.

Adopting a Welcoming Attitude to Our Emotions

As you explore the range of emotions you experience, can you adopt a welcoming attitude to all emotions, even those that we prefer to go away? In this way, we learn to welcome all experiences in the “guest house” of our awareness, knowing that they will take up residence for only a temporary period of time and may have something to teach us.

“When you name it, you can tame it.”

— DR. DANIEL SIEGEL

There is a saying that if you name a thought or emotion, you can tame it. Turning towards difficult emotions can make them less intense and more manageable. Labeling helps us to step out of ruminating mind, notice what is happening in the present moment and become more accepting of the full range of our emotions. Research has found that the simple act of naming an emotion calms the emotional centre of the brain. We can learn to ride the waves of intense emotions by developing language to label our emotions and by observing their intensity.

Remember the acronym STOP to help you integrate mindful moments throughout your day (Goldstein, 2012):

- S - Stop and take a pause
- T - Take a breath
- O - Observe what you notice
- P - Proceed with the rest of your day

The Emotions Wheel

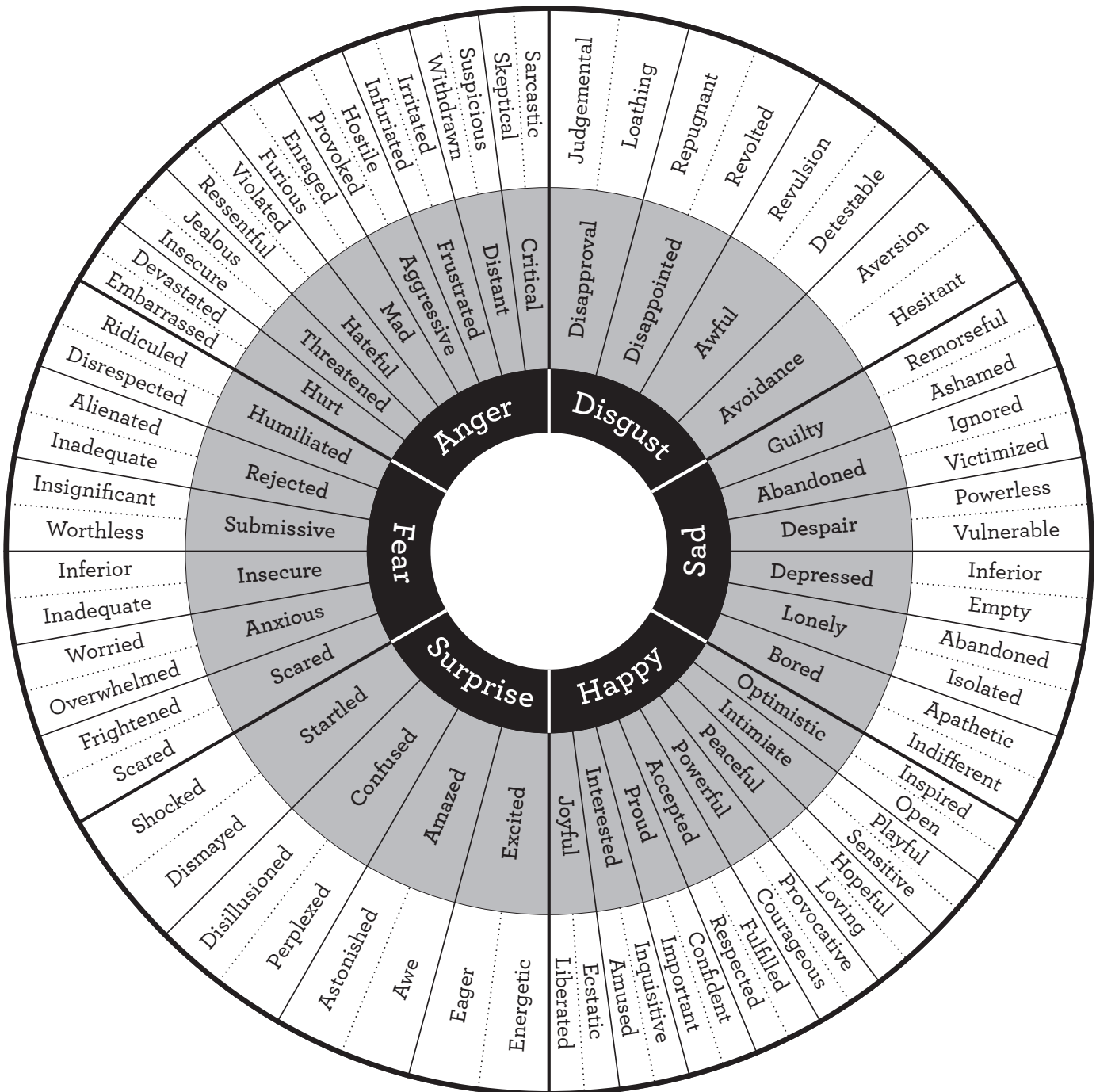
It is said that we have **6 Innate Emotions**: fear, anger, happiness, sadness, surprise and disgust (Eckman, 1999). Within these basic categories, there are many nuances and intensities of emotions that we can describe in different ways. Reflect on the range of emotions that you experience day-to-day using the chart as a guide to labeling them. Notice how you experience those emotions in your body and list some words that describe the physical sensations. Remember that we can experience more than one emotion at a time, but focus on the one that is most prominent for you.

Meditations to try:

Mindfulness of emotions

(track 5)

Standing meditation (track 6)



Mindful Emotions Journal

Over the next week complete the mindful emotions journal. Bring awareness to your level of acceptance of the range of emotions you experience over the coming week.

Day	Experience	Pleasant / Unpleasant or Neutral?	Emotions	Body Sensations	Rate the Intensity of Emotions / Sensations
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

Ekman, P. (1999). Basic emotions. in T. Dalgleish and T. Power (Eds.), Pp. 301-320. *The Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*. Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Plutchik, R. (1980). *Emotion: Theory, research, and experience: Vol. 1. Theories of emotion 1*. New York: Academic Press.

Siegel, 2010. *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation*. New York: Random House.

Goldstein, E. (2012). *The now effect: How this moment can change the rest of your life*. New York: Atria Books.