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J E N S E N

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: YOGA FOR THE MIND

Emotional Literacy

Twelve-Step Action Plan to Emotional Literacy

Emotions are always present, yet it is difficult to define them.

They occur simultaneously on multiple levels – physical, psychological, social, and even philosophical.

On the physical level, heart rate, muscular tension, and actual coloring are associated.

On the psychological level cognition, evaluation, and motivation may be involved.



Quotation

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, nor touched ... but are felt in the heart. ~ Helen Keller

The social level includes the context and the bonds involved, plus group dynamics. The philosophical level includes choice and morality.

Thinking of these levels, and providing specific descriptive terms, facilitates communication between individuals. There are different theories, but a common list of “basic emotions” includes joy, anger, fear, disgust, surprise, acceptance, sorrow, and expectation.

These combine to form thousands of feelings. Increasing the range of vocabulary for recognizing and expressing emotions facilitates understanding and self-management.

Factoid

Of the 750,000+ words in the English language, there are approximately 3,000 words to describe emotions. Surprisingly, there are 1,051 words for positive emotions and 2,286 words for negative emotions.

I suggest we start a campaign for creating new positive emotions words. Do you have one to suggest?

Books and Movies: Older

1. Read The Last Holiday – a terminal diagnosis triggers a timid woman’s life-affirming journey.

2. The Wisdom in Feelings by Lisa Feldman and Peter Salovey – discusses the contributions emotions make to ethical development.

3. Big Fish – a son seeks to know more about his father by reliving the stories and myths he told.

Emotional Literacy Activities

1. Create an emotional scavenger hunt. Have pairs/groups find three things in the house/classroom/office that could be a metaphor for fear, disgust, joy, anger, etc.
2. Pick a feeling word of the day. The challenge is to use the word in conversation as many times as possible during the lunch/dinner hour.
3. In groups of 5-10, ask participants to name emotions one after another for 60 seconds. No emotion can be repeated, everyone must play, and if two people speak at once, the group must start over. No advance strategies are allowed.
4. Brainstorm a variety of words (about 7-10) that describe emotions, feelings, moods, etc. Then ask teams to create a 7-10 sentence fairy tale using the words. The story must begin with "Once upon a time..." and end with "They all lived happily ever after."
5. Hold a campaign for a week to decide which emotion is the most important. Collect examples and votes at the dinner table. Each person can vote only once each night. At the end of the week, count the votes and declare the winning emotion.

Books and Movies - Younger

- [The Ant Bully](#) – a 10-year-old victim of bullying learns compassion and teamwork from the colony of ants he terrorizes.
- [What To Do When You Worry Too Much](#) guides children and parents through techniques used in the treatment of anxiety.
- The [Oceans of Emotions](#) by Nicole & John Clark – Destiny Dragon discovers the power of feelings.



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Website/Post of the Month:

According to the research of Pei Ying Lin, there are at least 21 emotions for which there are no English words. Check out the post of Emily Elert, where she displays Lin's linguistic map. I found it fascinating. For example, the Spanish phrase "pena ajena", as I understand it, is used to describe the feeling for the embarrassment we feel when someone else is being humiliated.

21 Emotions For Which There Are No English Words



Role Models

- Ayman Sawaf is a businessman and author who has made it his life's work to teach about emotions; he is co-author of Executive EQ and founder of the FEEL.org campaign for EL.
- When actress Jamie Lee Curtis became a mom, she published books to help kids understand emotions (see [her website](#)).



Six Seconds Product to Support Emotional Literacy

The [Emotion Cards](#) are an engaging, easy to use, interactive activity. The cards encourage you to Evoke, Explore, Express, Expand the world of feelings. The attractive tin box includes 40 full moon face cards each with highly expressive feeling expressions from the basic feeling categories. [More Info >>](#)