



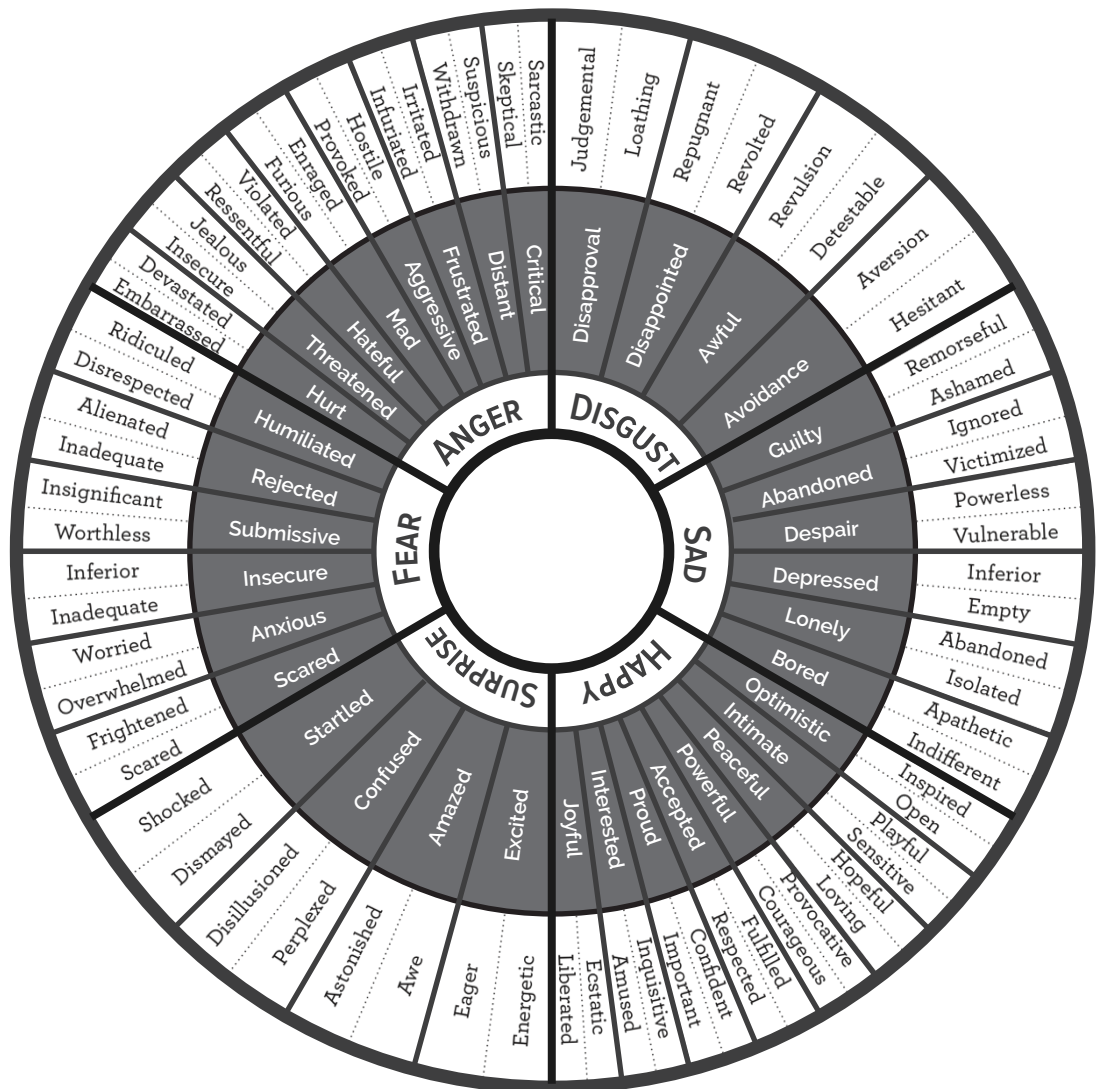
# MINDFULNESS OF EMOTIONS

*"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf."*  
Jon Kabat Zinn

An essential tool for regulating emotions is the ability to recognize and name the emotions as they arise in the moment. Emotional literacy is not something we are taught and this reflects how emotions are generally undervalued and ignored in everyday experience. Even if we are not consciously aware of emotions, they actually drive all our thoughts and behaviours.

One way we can expand our emotional vocabulary is by using the Plutchik Emotions Wheel below. At the centre are 6 Innate Emotions: fear, anger, happiness, sadness, surprise and disgust (Eckman, 1999). Moving outward from the centre we find many nuances and intensities of basic emotions which add colour to our lives.

Take some time to study the range of emotions of this wheel and how they are depicted in the wheel.



By bringing mindful awareness to our emotions, we can learn self-regulate by noticing and labeling them. There is a saying by Dan Siegel that “When you name it, you can tame it.” Research shows that simply naming emotions helps reduce symptoms of anxiety of depression and calms the emotional centres of the brain.

## How to use the Emotions Wheel:

Use the wheel to help expand your vocabulary of emotions when they are happening. When an intense emotion arises, take a moment to label it then turn your attention to how it feels in the body, without trying to change it.

Awareness itself changes our relationship to emotions: we appreciate the pleasant moments, respond wisely to unpleasant experiences, and even notice the more subtle or neutral ones that are usually ignored. In this way, we learn to adopt an open and curious attitude towards emotions, and perhaps even welcome the unpleasant emotions, rather than avoid or react to them. This open stance of mindfulness is what facilitates change.

### Meditation to try: Mindfulness of Emotions

When we examine the range of emotions closely, they can be reduced to the categories of **pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral**. Mindfulness allows us to respond wisely to each one by:

- Noticing and savouring pleasant experiences
- Riding the waves of unpleasant feelings.
- And just simply appreciating the neutral, less intense emotions that also colour our lives.

## RAIN

## A Mindfulness Practice to Welcome Emotions in the Body

The RAIN method is an awareness practice that we can use to shift our relationship to emotions and help regulate them.



**Recognize:** Take a brief moment in your day to stop and recognize what you are feeling in the moment. Use the wheel to help you find words to label the emotions in a more precise way.

**Allow:** Allow the feeling to be there. We don't need to try and change emotions; we can just give them space to be there.

**Investigate:** Now take time to investigate where you are experiencing the feeling in the body. Is there tension, discomfort, a change in breath? Is there a movement of energy, openness, ease in the body? Stay with these feelings for a bit longer than you normally would.

**Nurture:** The last step is to adopt a nurturing stance towards ourselves when difficult emotions arise.

## 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	Describe your Experience	Was this Pleasant, Unpleasant or Neutral?	Emotions	Rate the Intensity of Emotions (0-100%)	Body Sensations
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

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