

# The Information and Gifts of Emotions

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Whether our clients say it or not, how they *feel* about what they bring to us for coaching plays an essential role in the coaching itself.

That said, it isn't always straightforward as to how to coach our clients around their feelings. Some clients discount the importance of their feelings, some clients don't have ready access to their feelings, and others simply don't have a language for what they feel.

By request, we created this primer for you to facilitate coaching your clients around emotions. Share the context below and the downloadable emotions guide with your clients to help them understand the role emotions play in their lives, the importance of accessing them, and a language to use to identify and talk about them.

## The Information and Gifts of Emotions

Emotions provide us with access to information that no other dimension of our experience provides. If we ignore or deny our emotions, we lose vital information that is essential for understanding and making meaning of our lives. Additionally, each emotion comes with a gift that provides us with what we need to maintain a healthy life and quality relationships.

Naming our emotions while we are experiencing them allows us to shift from processing our experience through our 'reptile brain' to our 'rational brain,' providing us a greater degree of control. Neuroscientists like to say about emotions, "Name it to tame it!" Being conscious of, and naming, our emotions can move us from being at the mercy of our emotions, to being in control of ourselves and our impact on others.

The emotions we each experience are unique to us and are shaped by our DNA, as well as our past relationships and experiences. The same exact situation will provoke different emotions in different people. As a result, our emotions provide us with insight into how we are making meaning of a situation. When examined, our emotions can create awareness of what is our interpretation versus what *is*.

Helping your clients understand how their emotions provide a key to insights into what motivates them, triggers them and holds them back has the potential to shift every conversation you have into more meaningful territory.

## 7 Categories of Emotions

While there are hundreds of shades of emotions, we at Learning in Action have identified seven categories of emotions (five distressing and two positive emotions) that provide distinctly unique information.

Within each category of emotion exists a range of emotional intensity, from high intensity to low, all in the same emotional family (e.g. Anger Family of Emotion: High Intensity = Outrage; Low Intensity = Annoyed). Each emotion is placed in the context of relationships: with co-workers, with neighbors, with family, with friends.

**For each of the seven key emotional categories, the emotions guide provides:**

1. An image of how the emotion shows up on the face.
2. The information the emotion provides us that no other dimension of our experience provides.
3. The gift of the emotion and how our lives and relationships are better because of it.
4. The risk to ourselves and our relationships of under accessing the emotion (when we don't feel it or don't feel it much).
5. The risk to ourselves and our relationships of over accessing the emotion (over indulging it, not letting it go, or getting stuck in it).
6. A list of feeling words for each emotion's family of words.
7. Notes to add a bit of explanation for each of the seven emotions.

Use this tool to help identify and name emotions (**particularly those experienced in relationship**) and to understand the information and gift of each emotion. It handily complements our [EQ Profile](#), and it equally stands on its own.

We hope you find this to be a helpful tool for you and your clients.

[Click Here for the Emotions Guide](#)