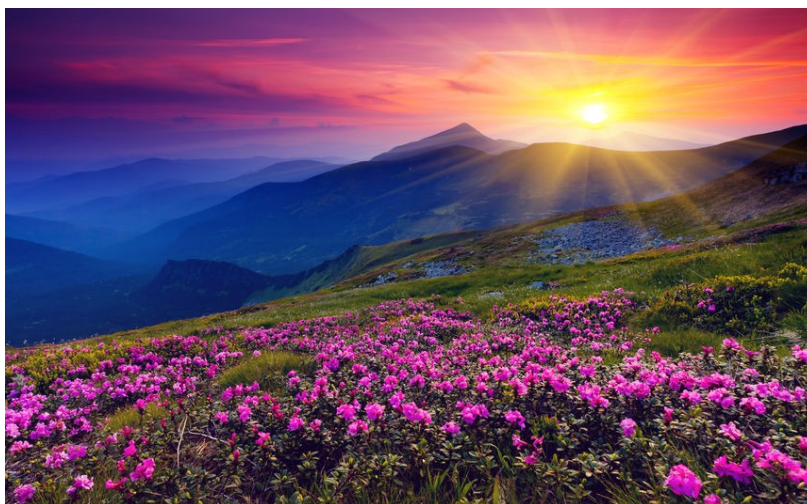


Emotional Clarity

Alova

Abstract: Emotions move us to act. Emotions are not the same as the conditions that stimulated them. Feeling emotions is completely different from acting on them. Repressing emotions, refusing to be conscious of them, does not eliminate them. Accepting all one's emotions, and then shining the light of truth and reason with honesty and patience allows old emotions to clear up and evaporate. Emotional clarity benefits our health, our personal and business interactions, our loved ones, our intuition, and even our spirituality.

1. E-Motion



Human life is rich with emotion. Human emotions have an amazing range and depth. Emotions have given rise to the most exquisite music, cathartic drama and poetry worthy of the Divine; and to cruelty in war and in homes that is even below the level of animals. Emotions move us to reach into our depths and draw up every resource we have.

Emotions motivate our actions.

E-motion stimulates motion.

Motion arises out of e-motion.

Emotions provide valuable and sometimes vital information—about when we're in danger, when the danger has passed, when someone is being devious. Animals know when a predator or potential mate is miles away; our gut is similarly aware of

conditions long before we see the evidence. “Gut feelings” are not just ethereal or mental—they are bodily, visceral. Trillions of microbes in our intestines perform vital functions and are crucial to our immune system. Our gut communicates to us through our emotions. Emotions help us to survive and are inherently good.

Presently, fear motivates human activity more strongly than any other emotion. Fear, the most stubborn of emotions, remains in our memory longest and strongest. The more intense the fear, the stronger the memory. Fear of loss motivates people to act faster and more firmly than desire for gain.



People speak of “good” and “bad” emotions. “Good” emotions can refer to emotions that feel pleasant, or to emotions that are inclined to result in action that is benign, while “bad” emotions can refer to emotions that feel unpleasant, or that are inclined to result in scary or harmful action.

It is very helpful to group emotions into broad categories:

- **Happy** emotions are **uplifting**: contentment, happiness, fondness, gratitude, cheer, confidence, enthusiasm, delight, joy, bliss.
- **Sad** emotions are **deadening**: regret, dismay, sadness, misery, embarrassment, shame, grief, despair, resignation, apathy.
- **Scared** emotions include an element of **alarm**, preparing us for quick avoidance action if necessary: caution, suspicion, surprise, anxiety, fear, dread, fright, shock, terror, panic. Extreme fear or shock can cause temporary immobility, like a deer in headlights.
- **Angry** emotions also include an element of **alarm** and incline us to quick, forceful action. Angry emotions range all the way from irritation, annoyance and frustration to resentment, rage and fury.
- **Hurt** emotions include **pain**. Pain can be physical, but it can also be emotional and not physical. Painful emotions include desire, a discrepancy between what is and what one wants. Jealousy and envy are types of painful desire.
- **Hateful** emotions are different from anger because they do not include alarm, the prelude to our fight-flight response. Hate is colder, inclined toward calculated strategy rather than inflamed outburst. Hateful emotions include **rejection** and range from active dislike (not just absence of liking) to disgust, repugnance, contempt, or hatred.



Emotions are not the same as what stimulated them. Conditions like depressed, betrayed, satisfied ... anything-ed, describe something that happened beforehand. People respond differently to these conditions! Three friends who were verbally abused by a New York City bus driver felt very differently: one felt afraid, another angry, and the third felt sad, nostalgic for New York.

One person who is “depressed” might feel primarily sad, whereas another might feel angry, or hateful. Someone who feels lonely probably feels either sad or afraid. “Betrayed” or “abandoned” might mean angry, sad, hateful, or afraid. “Upset” or “hurt” can also mean angry, sad, hateful, or afraid. So if someone feels “anything-ed,” it is helpful to identify what emotional category the word means for that person.

Emotions change. They normally come and go, float in and out, as long as they don’t get stuck. They can change immediately when we find out new information. A subway traveler was furious that a father made no effort to control his many children who were disturbing the other passengers. When he complained, the father apologized and explained that his wife had just died and they were returning from the hospital. The man’s anger immediately changed to compassion.



Sometimes emotions indicate that we need to do something. If we fail to act, the condition and the emotion in response to it are likely to recur. We can also hold on to emotions by “nursing” them—dwelling on them, deliberately magnifying them and even identifying with them. Otherwise, they pass on.

Some emotions can occur together: hurt and sadness, hurt and anger, envy and hate; but most emotions occur one at a time. An event can stimulate more than one emotion, but they are usually felt one after the other, not in the same instant. **Happiness cannot occur with any other emotion in the same moment.**



Human beings are naturally empathetic. We sense other people’s needs and emotions and sympathize with their problems. Empathy makes us social, and social behavior has enabled humanity to survive. Lack of empathy is pathological.

Some people go further, taking other people’s emotions and problems as their own. They do their best to fix problems they now feel are theirs. This can result in an unhealthy, co-dependent relationship in which the “helper” needs to “help” in order to feel valuable and fulfilled, and the other person neglects to use his or her own will or resources. This can also happen when a parent never lets go of a child being a child, and the child never fully grows into an independent adult.

2. Acting and Suppressing

Everyone has emotions! Many people pretend—to themselves and others—that they don't have or act on emotions. But observant folks around them know otherwise! The entire field of advertising is based on the knowledge that people act primarily on emotions, not on facts or reason. It is emotions that move us to act—whether we admit it or not, and whether or not we are conscious of our emotions or the process.

Feeling emotions is completely different from
acting on those emotions!

It is completely safe and harmless to feel any emotion.

It is not necessarily safe or harmless to act on an emotion!

Many people act on their emotions almost automatically. They think that emotions follow inevitably from an event, and that their actions are just reflexes they can't control. Not true. We are able to control our actions. As toddlers we learn to control our arms, legs, and bladders. Later we learn to control our speech, bicycles, and cars. Being adult and being civilized means being able to control one's behavior and deciding whether or not to act on an emotion, and if so, how and when.



In some cultures and religions, anger and hatred are considered to be bad, and people are told they are wicked if they feel these emotions. In such communities, people are understandably unlikely to admit, even to themselves, that they feel the “bad” emotions. They instead say they are “upset” or “depressed.”



Females are more likely to admit to feeling hurt or afraid, and less likely to admit to feeling angry, because females are taught that it is unacceptable for them to feel angry. Males are more likely to admit to feeling angry even if they are actually afraid or hurt, again due to social conditioning.



People who believe that a particular emotion is bad suppress that emotion. Then they aren't consciously aware of it, even when it is quite strong in their subconscious and gets expressed nonverbally.

Suppressing tears is not advisable, for crying tears is naturally healing for hurt, sadness, and fear. Tears help us to let go of these emotions and are often essential. One might suppress them temporarily in public due to social convention, but it is wise to always make time for private tears if they are needed.

People also “project” their emotions onto others, thinking that other people feel the emotions that they themselves are subconsciously holding inside. This projection leads to enormous errors—misunderstandings, unjust accusations, miscalculations. People who are projecting really believe that what they are perceiving is the other person, when it is really their own insides reflecting on the inside of their glasses. Projection is a universal human tendency. As the saying goes, the guilty see guilt written on the faces of saints. The innocent see innocence everywhere. This happens with emotions also.



The trouble with trying to suppress emotions is that they get expressed anyway. The world realized this years after Jack the Ripper’s horrendous crimes. Most people don’t have such violent eruptions, but emotions do eventually come out anyway. Suppressing them can result in illness. Some people even try to suppress all emotion, but it never really works.



Some people have the benefit of a spiritual philosophy that helps them to release emotions, usually by directing them toward someone whom they revere and have faith in as God or a saint. This is a wonderful tool for emotional clarity if one has such a relationship and is truly able to surrender fully. If one thinks one is surrendering wholeheartedly, but isn’t, the emotions hide and eventually resurface.

Whether we know it or not, we express our emotions in gestures, facial expression, vocal tone, body language, choice of words, syntax, and timing of everything we say or do. We are much more transparent than we realize! People with emotional clarity accurately perceive many things about us that we might not even realize ourselves, since they don’t have unresolved emotional “baggage” of their own to cloud their vision.

Besides the valuable information emotions provide about our environment, it is important to be aware of what our emotions are. Then if we want to express one, it comes out clearly without convolution or confusion; and if we don’t want to express one, it doesn’t lurk around and spurt out when we’re tired or not paying attention. We need to have a clear avenue between our conscious awareness and all of our emotions.

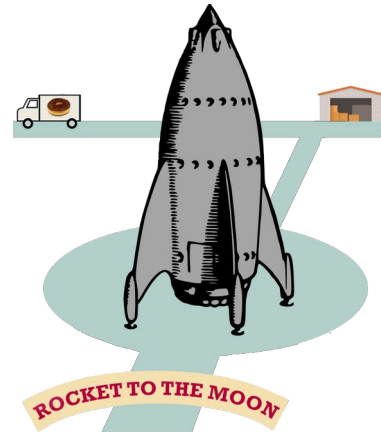
It is especially important to recognize the prominent role of fear in our lives, which factors into most of our decisions. Life is inherently fragile and insecure. Although most of us do not encounter menacing tigers, we are vulnerable to other threats that can completely disrupt our lives without warning—tsunamis, pathogens, sudden death of family members, economic disasters, political instability.

Fear, sadness, and hurt tend to inhibit our productivity and creativity. Burying or denying emotions doesn’t eliminate them, but renders us their victim. Acknowledging emotions helps us to be productive in spite of them.

To see what emotions one has, first look at what one actually does.

The Donut Machine Story

Just outside New York City is a huge Rocket to the Moon. It has a big flashing sign at the entrance that says, "Rocket to the Moon." It looks just like a rocket to the Moon. Inside are many armed guards, scientists with security clearances, and equipment with flashing lights of many colors. It has a budget for a rocket to the Moon which is approved by Congress every year. News reporters write stories about the Rocket to the Moon nearly every week. It has had several scheduled launch dates which have always been postponed so far. It has a Rocket to the Moon Souvenir Shop for tourists.



Do you know what it does every day?

It makes donuts, which the people of New York eat for breakfast.



What is it?

It is a donut machine.

It thinks it is a rocket to the Moon. It looks like a rocket to the Moon. It wants to be a rocket to the Moon. People say it is a rocket to the Moon. But **actually, it is a donut machine.**¹

To find out what someone actually is or wants, look at what one actually does. People always do what they **really** want to do. If they want something but do something else, it's because they wanted the something-else more. What they think they are, what they say they are, and what they want to be are irrelevant.

Look at the donut: what they actually do.

3. Subconscious → Conscious

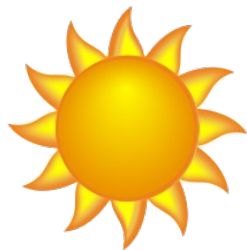
In more primitive times and cultures, people were, and are, very aware of their emotions. Everyone understands and accepts that people are motivated by emotions. However, in today's intellectual, technological societies, people are trained to pay attention to thought and intellect and to ignore or disdain emotions. Admitting emotions is often socially embarrassing, even for children.

¹ From the original oral story by Reuven Bar-Levav, MD.

People therefore banish their emotions down into the subconscious. They are often so reluctant to admit their emotions that they couch them in socially acceptable logic, eventually believing the charade themselves. They have a hard time describing their emotions when they want to. (The broad categories are helpful—often someone can identify the category of an emotion fairly easily.)



“Emotional intelligence,” which is actually innate, became rare enough in modern societies that it was identified and studied as a special trait, its many benefits described. People who are unaware of their own emotions are impaired in almost any situation. People who are aware of other people’s emotions have significant advantages—in the workplace, in the home, in groups, in business, in war and in peace.



The first step in clearing the avenue between our conscious awareness and our emotions is to **accept all emotions**. **Acting** out all emotions is not acceptable, but **feeling** them is. Emotions may be illogical or unreasonable—but they are still acceptable feelings. Suppressing or rejecting emotions because we don’t want to have them, we don’t want to feel them, or because we think they’re bad, illogical, or unimportant, only shoves them underground into our subconscious, where they reside until they have a chance to express themselves.

Emotions are often illogical or unreasonable—but they are what they are anyway. Susie might feel jealous of her classmate, even though her classmate is troubled with insurmountable problems. Although Susie knows her own life is much easier, she might **feel** jealous anyway. Robert may feel angry that he wasn’t chosen, even though he realizes that the person who was chosen is better. Robert might **feel** angry anyway. Someone might **feel** incompetent, despite evidence that one is extremely competent. Or one might **feel** competent, despite evidence that one is incompetent.

Accepting all our emotions means admitting—to ourselves—that we have whatever emotions we have, without shaming or condemning ourselves for feeling any of them. We might shame or judge ourselves if we **act** on an emotion, but not if we just feel it. We accept ourselves fully. We are kind to ourselves.

This step is essential. If we reject or condemn ourselves because we have a particular emotion, our own house is divided. Our thought and actions become confused as a result of our inner divide: I feel ... but I don’t. A conflict inside us reduces our integrity and renders us less effective in life.



We cannot reject any of our emotions, just like we cannot reject a part of our body. We can reject a parent's behavior, but we cannot reject the DNA they gave us. Our old emotions are already inside us. We can clean house and eliminate them with love and truth, but denial and rejection—pretending there's no dust, or sweeping it under the carpet—do not make our house clean. Instead, denial and rejection hinder our cleaning process by forcing the dust and debris into deep cracks and hidden compartments that are difficult to access and unlock.

Emotions are primitive. Animals have them. Emotions come with our bodies. They have a logic all their own, different from the logical principles of intellect. Emotions form part of the compass of our inner guidance system. They provide an important tool for our growth of body, mind and spirit. They motivate us to progress and show us directions in which we might want to grow.

It is our emotions that inform us when someone or something is trying to deceive or manipulate us, to pressure or steer us toward an agenda without our being conscious of it. Our emotions feel when advertising or propaganda are in action.

The ability to be deceived and manipulated is perhaps humanity's greatest weakness. ***For humanity to progress it is crucial that we clear out old emotions and make what is subconscious more conscious.***

Someone with even modest emotional intelligence perceives accurately many things about people that they don't realize are evident. This is no magic. It's simple. It's natural. It's innate. Emotional clarity simply involves cleaning our own house.



4. Cleaning House

Cleaning one's own house is often uncomfortable, often painful. It takes time, heart and patience. It's not like cleaning a physical house which we can do with any type of mop or cleaning solution, and with any attitude. A physical house gets clean whether we do it peaceably or angrily, with joy or with disgust.

Emotions, however, are not as inert as dust. They have a mind of their own. They do not change or disappear by means of force or will power. Force and will power are effective in controlling our limbs and bladder, but not in healing or transforming our emotions.

Trickery also does not work. We can cajole a child into eating with imaginary airplanes or false promises, but our gut is too smart for that. Emotions come into existence for a reason, even if the reason is faulty, and often remain after the reason expires. In order to clean our emotional house, we must allow our emotions to have a "voice" that we "hear" and accept. Then we can respond gently, in simple ways, not necessarily with words.



The essential cleaning supplies for our emotional house include acceptance, honesty, gentleness, patience, and understanding. We need a healing attitude, as we would have toward a child with a hurt finger, or a child who has made a hysterical mountain out of a molehill.

Our first tool is truth. Gently shining the light of truth on anything that is based on untruth causes the untruth to evaporate. Untruth can take the form of a misperception, a misunderstanding, a portion but not all of the truth, or an outright lie that we accepted.



Our second tool is reason—gentle, simple reason. Our gut grasps plain truths put together with plain logic, not knotty, convoluted arguments of philosophers or theologians. Our gut knows the basic point and is not distracted by tangents or complex rationale. It is not fooled by excuses or rationalization. It is not in awe of slick, intellectual logic.



Imagine that Mike was humiliated as a teenager for not being a good athlete. He is now a father, fully competent in his field, but the old wound still hurts when he remembers it. Mike knows that physical strength and athletic ability are not the only or most important qualities in life, but he still **feels** inadequate. He makes his own son lift weights and practice sports.

Mike has now has proven by experience that athletic ability wasn't important for his success. He can heal this wound by taking himself back to when he was humiliated. He can let his present knowledge shine gently onto his teenage feelings, staying until the hurt and humiliation change to happiness and confidence. He can remind himself of his many successes in life and feel good about them. This cannot be done with any pressure or urgency. It need take only a minute or two.

Afterwards, Mike will probably be more objective in encouraging his own son to pursue activities his son is interested in, rather than in activities unconsciously designed to counteract his own hurt feelings.

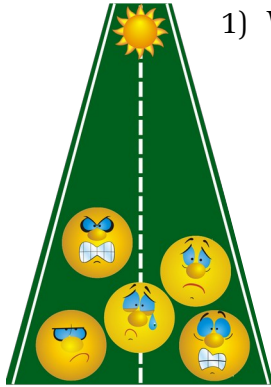
This cleaning process does not require wallowing in old emotions. It does not usually require professionals. It does require that we be honest with ourselves, that we accept whatever we find, and often that we accept unpleasant truths about ourselves and about other people that we're reluctant to see.

If one was abused or subjected to mind-control programming before around seven years of age when one becomes able to observe and evaluate independently, one might need external or professional assistance. Before our own observing and reasoning ability develops, we accept as truth what we are told by adults, especially parents and teachers. If such messages are fundamentally untrue, such as, "This abuse is your own fault," one requires another authority to dispute the original message, state the truth, and affirm it with facts, reason, and appropriate actions.

5. The Many Rewards of Clarity

Emotional clarity brings multifarious rewards.

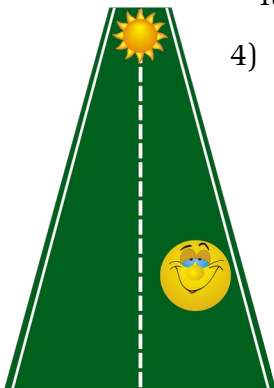
When our house is clean and there is a clear avenue between our awareness and our emotions:



1) We are aware of our emotions and can choose consciously and wisely when, where, and how to express them. We don't act on our feelings automatically. We detect emotions that could be harmful early, and have plenty of time to control whether and how we express them outwardly, whether we act on them. Emotions don't just spurt out.

2) We understand ourselves better. We are aware of our own needs and desires, and can take steps to meet them before they become overwhelming.

3) We can ask for what we need or want without being inhibited by feelings of shame or unworthiness.



4) We don't "project" our feelings or motives onto other people as much, because we're aware of what's ours and see more clearly what really belongs to others. We are less likely to blame others for what we're responsible for, and less likely to blame ourselves for what other people are responsible for.

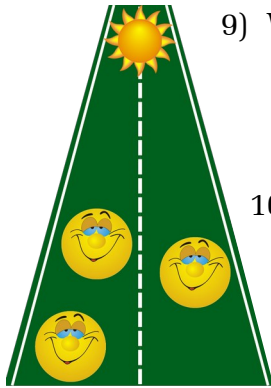
5) When we are violated, we feel it instantly and can take action to reverse or heal the situation, rather than letting it fester or taking vengeance later.

6) We are clear to interact with anyone in any way we choose, free of expectations or entanglements due to unresolved issues in the past.



7) We understand much better what other people say and do, without adding our own interpretations, assumptions, or imagination. We have less bias. We know the areas in which we are less objective, and we can take precaution in judging those matters.

8) We have less stress because we have fewer internal conflicts, less to cover up. Integrity comes naturally. We have less need for unhealthy coping mechanisms such as lying, alcohol, drugs, or acting out.

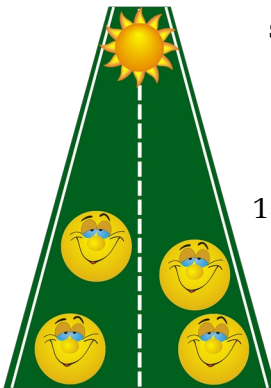


9) We perceive much more accurately other people's emotions, motives and needs. We utilize this information when interacting with them personally and in business, improving our chances of successful and amicable relationships.

10) People with innocent motives tend to trust us more because we understand them, while people with malevolent motives try to hide more because we understand them.

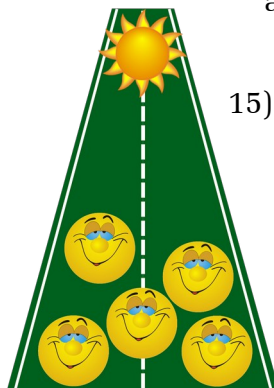
11) We are better leaders, better able to inspire and motivate.

12) We don't have as much old, heavy emotional baggage—from childhood traumas, humiliating failures, broken relationships, disappointments, disillusionments, ancient wounds. We are lighter, in mind and in spirit. We feel happy more often because there are fewer conflicting emotions to interfere with our natural joy.



13) We are less likely to suffer from illness that results from buried emotions. Suppressed emotions are held in the body and contribute to all sorts of diseases, from chronic pain and heart disease to cancer and obesity.

14) We are more fully available to people we care about, better able to provide moral support, better able to anticipate their needs and discern their likes and dislikes.



15) We are less susceptible to being manipulated by people, advertising, and propaganda because we can easily sense when and how someone is trying to steer us unconsciously or against our will.

16) We are more intuitive. Our intuition has a clearer path, unobstructed by fear or desires. It is less distorted by emotions, confusion or bias.

17) We are better able to sense accurately our "inner voice," including our conscience and our internal guidance system.

18) We are spiritually more perceptive, better able to discern truth from untruth, accurate from inaccurate, just from unjust.

It almost sounds like heaven, compared to the plethora of personal and inter-personal complications that fill our lives. Being emotionally clear does not solve all the world's problems, or our own, and doesn't touch other people's problems, but it does help us to see more clearly and to navigate with a freer and happier disposition.

It's well worth it!

Artist acknowledgements: Leonid Tit (mountain scene) @ 123rf.com; Ala Charnyshova (smileys), Iuliia Kolesnikova (man running, grandmother, businessman) @ dreamstime.com; Liftarn (mop, bucket), Firkin (rocket), PinkJellyfish (donut), Anonymous (house), Ivak (sun), unknown artists (broom, sponge) @ openclipart.org; unknown (warehouse) @ publicdomainvectors.org.