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7 Main Emotions © 2025-09-09

Orange Belt Question: What are the seven Main Emotions?

Orange Belt Succinct Answer:

Mad, Sad, Glad, Afraid, Confused, Ashamed, Lonely

Why These Principles Are Important:

- When I name others' emotions, I unblock their ears and help ease the intensity of the emotions. I also help them get on the path of attaining their goals/interests.
- The more skill I have acknowledging my own emotions, the more I will respond in life-giving ways to life's various situations.

Explanations of the Orange Belt Succinct Answer:

- Technically, "emotions" are the physiological sensations in our body and "feelings" are the words we use to summarize those sensations. In Dojo we use the words "Emotions" and "Feelings" interchangeably.
- Emotions are not positive or negative. They are indicators. Emotions are indicators of whether my goals/interests are being met or thwarted. Goals/interests are indicators of my deep values. So, much like I pay attention to my car dashboard indicators to know what maintenance is needed, I can pay attention to emotions to help identify mine and others' conscious and subconscious goals/interests and values. Identifying goals/interests and values allows me to evaluate them and move toward attaining them, rather than limp along or break down (like what happens to a car when the stereo is turned up to cover dashboard warning sounds and tape is put over indicator lights so they won't be annoying).
- One way to conceptualize healthy interaction with emotions is to recognize the emotion exists and give it as much attention/energy as it merits. Troy Walling came up with the metaphor of a raft guide and client. As they are going through a rapid, the client is consumed by fear and excitement because of the looming wave. The client may not even hear the screams of the other clients and probably is not thinking about anything other than the wave. That is an appropriate response for the client. The raft guide, with years of training and experience running this river, has enough fear and excitement to be "game on" ensuring the clients have a good experience and stay safe; however, the raft guide also has plenty of energy and attention remaining to notice interesting fish in the water, an eagle in the sky, and be thinking about what to fix for dinner. That is an appropriate response for the



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raft guide. With practice and training, the client could also learn to have more energy and thought reserves in the face of an adrenaline challenge.

- A way to conceptualize giving emotions as much attention/energy as they merit is to acknowledge many emotions are chemicals dumped into the bloodstream; so, they are not going away until the chemical completely dissipates. A wise way to interact with adrenaline is to think, “This situation is challenging, and adrenaline has entered my bloodstream; so, I am going to feel scared/nervous/etc. for a while, and that is OK. I can continue speaking/driving/etc. even with the adrenaline in my system.” Sometimes wisdom requires ceasing activity to allow time for the intensity of the emotion to fade. For instance, after a car wreck it might be wise not to drive for a couple days, after a spouse dies it is probably wise to avoid activities that require focus, etc.
- A way to process emotions - P.A.U.S.E. - Be PRESENT to the emotion, ALLOW the emotion (what’s happening in my body?), Use UNDERSTANDING (name/identify), STAY with it (at least 90-seconds is ideal), Be ENGAGED (be self-compassionate, pretend you would be talking to a friend about what they are experiencing and use the same verbiage for yourself).
- See the [EMI Listening Sheet](#)
 - Most people have an extremely limited emotions-words vocabulary. The [EMI Listening Sheet](#) has 168 of them listed in seven columns from “a little” intensity to “a lot” of intensity.
 - I do not have to name an emotion if the intensity of the emotions in the conversation is low. However, to get and maintain skill, it is wise to do it every time because I do under duress what I have practiced the most. If I want to be able to name emotions in tense situations, I need to have practiced naming emotions thousands of times outside tense situations.
 - Many people, especially men, frequently present emotions in the Mad column. I need to challenge myself to name the underlying emotions in the other columns.
- [Free Video 9, 4:15-6:05](#)
- [Muddling Along or Unity: Confessions of a Recovering Jerk, pp. 73-74](#)

Illustrations of the Principles:

- [Free Video 9, 4:15-5:00 \(Unblocks Ears\)](#)
- [Muddling Along or Unity: Confessions of a Recovering Jerk, p. 73 \(Unblocks Ears\)](#)