

1. Places We Go When Things Are Uncertain or Too Much

Stress, Overwhelm, Anxiety, Worry, Avoidance, Excitement, Dread, Fear, Vulnerability

Stress, Overwhelm

We feel **stressed** when we evaluate environmental demand as beyond our ability to cope successfully. This includes elements of unpredictability, uncontrollability, and feeling overloaded.

Overwhelmed means an extreme level of stress, an emotional and/or cognitive intensity to the point of feeling unable to function.

Feeling stressed and overwhelmed is about our narrative of emotional and mental depletion—too much going on to manage effectively.

Anxiety, Worry, Avoidance, Excitement, Dread, Fear

Anxiety is characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.

Anxiety can be both a state and a trait.

■ An intolerance for uncertainty is an important contributing factor to all types of anxiety.

Those of us who are generally uncomfortable with uncertainty are more likely to experience anxiety in specific situations as well as to have trait anxiety and anxiety disorders.

Worrying and anxiety go together, but worry is not an emotion; it's the thinking part of anxiety.

Worry is described as a chain of negative thoughts about bad things that might happen in the future.

Avoidance, the second coping strategy for anxiety, is not showing up and often spending a lot of energy zigzagging around and away from that thing that already feels like it's consuming us.

Anxiety and **excitement** feel the same, but how we interpret and label them can determine how we

experience them.

Even though **excitement** is described as an energized state of enthusiasm leading up to or during an enjoyable activity, it **doesn't always feel great**. We can get the same “coming out of our skin” feeling that we experience when we're feeling anxious.

Similar sensations are labeled “**anxiety**” when we perceive them **negatively** and “**excitement**” when we perceive them **positively**.

Dread occurs frequently in response to high-probability negative events; its magnitude increases as the dreaded event draws nearer.

Fear is a negative, short-lasting, high-alert emotion in response to a perceived threat, and, like anxiety, it can be measured as a state or trait.

For **anxiety** and **dread**, the threat is in the future.

For **fear**, the threat is now—in the present.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability feels like **uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure**.

Most of us were raised to believe that being vulnerable is being weak. This sets up an unresolvable tension for most of us, because we were also raised to be brave.

There is no courage without vulnerability. Courage requires the willingness to lean into uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure.

Vulnerability is not oversharing, it's sharing with people who have earned the right to hear our stories and our experiences.

Vulnerability is not weakness; it's our greatest measure of courage

2. Places We Go When We Compare

Comparison, Admiration, Reverence, Envy, Jealousy, Resentment, Schadenfreude, Freudenfreude

Comparison

Comparison is actually not an emotion, but it drives all sorts of big feelings that can affect our relationships and our self-worth.

Comparison is the crush of conformity from one side and competition from the other—it's trying to simultaneously fit in and stand out.

Comparison says:

Be like everyone else, but better.

Fit in, but win

When we compare ourselves with others, we are ranking around a specific collection of “alike things.”

Admiration and Reverence

We feel **admiration** when someone's abilities, accomplishments, or character inspires us, or when we see something else that inspires us, like art or nature.

Reverence, which is sometimes called adoration, worship, or veneration, is a deeper form of admiration or respect and is often combined with a sense of meaningful connection with **something greater than ourselves**.

Admiration fosters self-betterment.

Reverence fosters a desire for connection to what we revere—we want to move closer to that thing or person.

Envy and Jealousy

Envy occurs when we want something that another person has. Envy typically involves two people and occurs when one lacks something enjoyed by another.

Jealousy is when we fear losing a relationship or a valued part of a relationship that we already have. Jealousy typically involves *three* people and occurs when one fears losing someone to another person.

Envy and jealousy result from different situations, generate distinct appraisals, and produce distinctive emotional experiences

Jealousy doesn't seem to be a singular emotion but rather a cognitive evaluation in response to feeling anger, sadness, and/or fear. In other words, we think jealousy in response to how we feel.

Resentment

Resentment is the feeling of frustration, judgment, anger, "better than," and/or hidden envy related to perceived unfairness or injustice.

Resentment is part of the **envy** family.

When we fail to set boundaries or ask for what we need, or when expectations let us down because they were based on things we can't control, like what other people think, what they feel, or how they're going to react.

I'm not mad because you're resting. I'm mad because I'm so bone tired and I want to rest. But, unlike you, I'm going to pretend that I don't need to.

Your lack of work is not making me resentful, my lack of rest is making me resentful.

Instead of thinking, *What is that person doing wrong?* or *What should they be doing?*, try *What do I need but am afraid to ask for?*

Recognize resentment it by a familiar thought pattern: *What mean and critical thing am I rehearsing saying to this person?*

Schadenfreude

Schadenfreude is pleasure or joy derived from someone else's suffering or misfortune.

Involves counter-empathy— our emotional reaction is incongruent with another person's emotional

experience.

When we feel relieved, grateful, or even happy that someone who has done something hurtful, unethical, or unjust is held accountable, that's not schadenfreude and normally doesn't stem from counter-empathy. On the contrary, it can stem from empathy for the aggrieved.

When we hold someone accountable and they respond to that accountability by feeling shame, it does *not* mean we've shamed them.

Freudenfreude

Freudenfreude is the opposite of schadenfreude—it's the enjoyment of another's success. It's also a subset of empathy.

Shoy: intentionally sharing the joy of someone relating a success story by showing interest and asking follow-up questions.

Bragitude: intentionally tying words of gratitude toward the listener following discussion of personal successes.

Thank you for celebrating this with me. It means so much that you're happy for me.

3. Places We Go When Things Don't Go As Planned

Boredom, Disappointment, Expectations, Regret, Discouragement, Resignation, Frustration

Boredom

Boredom is the uncomfortable state of wanting to engage in satisfying activity, but being unable to

do it.

When we're bored we experience a lack of stimulation, time seems to pass very slowly, and if we're working on tasks, they seem to lack challenge and meaning.

When we have more control and autonomy over the boring tasks, it's more likely that boredom will leave us feeling lethargic. If we have little autonomy and control over the boring tasks, we are more likely to feel frustration.

▮ Boredom is your imagination calling to you.

Discouraged, Resigned, Frustrated

- **Disappointed:** It didn't work out how I wanted, and I believe the outcome was outside of my control.
- **Regretful:** It didn't work out how I wanted, and the outcome was caused by my decisions, actions, or failure to act.
- **Discouraged:** I'm losing my confidence and enthusiasm about any future effort—I'm losing the motivation and confidence to persist.
- **Resigned:** I've lost my confidence and enthusiasm about any future effort—I've lost the motivation and confidence to persist.
- **Frustrated:** Something that feels out of my control is preventing me from achieving my desired outcome.

Frustration sometimes overlaps with anger. With frustration, we don't think we can fix the situation. With anger, we feel there is something we can do.

▮ Feeling discouraged and resigned is about effort rather than outcome.

Disappointment and Regret

Disappointment is unmet expectations. The more significant the expectations, the more significant the disappointment.

Two categories of expectations:

- expectations that are unexamined and unexpressed (aka stealth expectations)
- examined and expressed expectations.

When we've self-examined and shared expectations with someone and we feel they've let us down, it's important to keep the lines of communication open, circle back, and talk about our feelings and move to accountability. *"I let you know how important this was to me..."*

So here's something I know to be true, although it's a little corny, and I don't quite know what to do with it: What I regret most in my life are failures of kindness. Those moments when another human being was there, in front of me, suffering, and I responded... sensibly. Reservedly. Mildly.

4. Places We Go When it's Beyond Us

Awe, Wonder, Confusion, Curiosity, Interest, Surprise

Awe and Wonder

Wonder inspires the wish to understand; awe inspires the wish to let shine, to acknowledge and to unite.

When feeling **awe**, we tend to simply stand back and observe, "to provide a stage for the phenomenon to shine."

Confusion

The concept of *optimal confusion* is key to understanding why **confusion** is good for us and why it's categorized as an *epistemic emotion*—an emotion critical to knowledge acquisition and learning.

Too much confusion can lead to frustration, giving up, disengagement, or even boredom.

Surprise

Surprise is an interruption caused by information that doesn't fit with our current understanding or expectations. It causes us to reevaluate.

We can think of surprise as "a bridge between cognition and emotion." But it's a short bridge! Surprise is the shortest-duration emotion, rarely lasting more than a few seconds.

Surprise is also an amplifier for subsequent emotion, with more surprising events resulting in stronger emotional reactions.

Curiosity and Interest

Curiosity is recognizing a gap in our knowledge about something that interests us, and becoming emotionally and cognitively invested in closing that gap through exploration and learning.

Interest is a cognitive openness to engaging with a topic or experience.

With interest, our mind is open to seeing what's there, but with curiosity, we've acknowledged a gap in what we know or understand, and our heart and head are both invested in closing that gap.

5. Places We Go When Things Aren't What They Seem

Amusement, Bittersweetness, Nostalgia, Cognitive Dissonance, Paradox, Irony, Sarcasm

Irony and Sarcasm

Irony and **sarcasm** are forms of communication in which the literal meaning of the words is different, often opposite, from the intended message. In both irony and sarcasm, there may be an element of criticism and humor.

Sarcasm is a particular type of irony in which the underlying message is normally meant to ridicule, tease, or criticize.

The biggest watch-out with irony and sarcasm:

▮ Are you dressing something up in humor that actually requires clarity and honesty?

Paradox

A **paradox** is the appearance of contradiction between two related components.

While cognitive dissonance pushes us to resolve the tension of conflicting information, paradox challenges us to straddle the tension of two conflicting elements and recognize that they can both be true.

Paradox is not an emotion. Paradoxes can't be fully resolved using rationality and logic—we need to allow the seeming contradictions to coexist in order to gain deeper understanding.

Paradoxes force us to think in expansive ways and lean into vulnerability.

Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is a state of tension that occurs when a person holds two cognitions that are psychologically inconsistent with each other.

Intelligence might be measured not only as the ability to think and learn, but also the ability to rethink and unlearn.

Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a yearning for the way things used to be in our often idealized and self-protective version of the past.

Researchers describe **nostalgia** as a frequent, primarily positive, context-specific bittersweet emotion that combines elements of happiness and sadness with a sense of yearning and loss.

Nostalgia is more likely to be triggered by negative moods, like loneliness, and by our struggles to find meaning in our current lives.

Nostalgia can be a tool for both connection and disconnection. It can be an imaginary refuge from a world we don't understand and a dog whistle used to resist important growth in families, organizations, and the broader culture and to protect power, including white supremacy.

Rumination = involuntary focus on negative and pessimistic thoughts, focuses on the past or on things about ourselves that we're stuck on. So not the same as worry, which is about the future.

Reflection = highly adaptive and psychologically healthy

It's important to reality-check our nostalgic ideas by uncovering and examining the tradeoffs and contradictions that are often deeply buried in all of our memories:

Were the comfort and safety of that past existence real? If so, were they at someone else's expense?

Bittersweet

Bittersweet is a mixed feeling of happiness and sadness.

Not the same as ambivalence (when we're unsure whether we're happy or sad), it's feeling both at the same time.

Feeling bittersweet may be more frequently experienced or recognized by people who have a more nuanced ability to interpret their emotional states.

Amusement

Amusement is pleasurable, relaxed excitement.

Amusement differs from happiness in that happiness is a general sense of pleasure, whereas amusement appeals specifically to one's sense of humor.

Distinguish amusement from other positive emotions, like contentment, gratitude, interest, joy, love, or pride:

1. An awareness of incongruity (there's something unexpected about what causes us to be amused —we weren't expecting that punch line or that behavior or that timing);
2. When we feel amusement, we feel playful with those around us.

6. Places We Go When We're Hurting

Anguish, Hopelessness, Despair, Sadness, Grief

Grief

Three foundational elements of grief:

Loss — Death and separation = tangible losses. Others include loss of normality, the loss of what could be, and the loss of what we thought we knew or understood about something or someone.

Longing — Longing is not conscious wanting; it's an involuntary yearning for wholeness, for understanding, for meaning, for the opportunity to regain or even simply touch what we've lost. Longing is a vital and important part of grief, yet many of us feel we need to keep our longings to ourselves for fear we will be misunderstood, perceived as engaging in magical or unrealistic thinking, or lacking in fortitude and resilience.

Feeling lost — Grief requires us to reorient every part of our physical, emotional, and social worlds = a painful struggle to adjust to a tangible change.

Each person's grief is as unique as their fingerprint. But what everyone has in common is that no matter how they grieve, they share a need for their grief to be witnessed. That doesn't mean needing someone to try to lessen it or reframe it for them. The need is for someone to be fully present to the magnitude of their loss without trying to point out the silver lining.

Acute Grief occurs in the initial period after a loss. It almost always includes strong feelings of yearning, longing, and sadness along with anxiety, bitterness, anger, remorse, guilt, and/or shame. Thoughts are mostly focused on the person who died and it can be difficult to concentrate on anything else.

Integrated Grief is the result of adaptation to the loss. When a person adapts to a loss grief is not over. Instead, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to their loss are integrated in ways that allow them to remember and honor the person who died. Grief finds a place in their life.

Complicated Grief occurs when something interferes with adaptation. When this happens, acute grief can persist for very long periods of time. A person with complicated grief feels intense emotional pain. They can't stop feeling that their loved one might somehow reappear and they don't see a pathway forward. People often think this is depression, but complicated grief and depression are not the same thing.

Disenfranchised Grief is a less-studied form of grief: grief that "is not openly acknowledged or

publicly supported through mourning practices or rituals because the experience is not valued or counted [by others] as a loss.” Examples of disenfranchised grief include loss of a partner or parent due to divorce, loss of an unborn child and/or infertility, the multitude of losses experienced by a survivor of sexual assault, and loss of a loved one to suicide.

Sexual assault survivors suffer from numerous losses, many of which are invisible to others. Some of these losses include loss of one’s prior worldview, loss of trust, loss of self-identity and self-esteem, loss of freedom and independence, loss of a sense of safety and security, and loss of sexual interest.

Sadness

Feeling **sad** is a normal response to loss or defeat, or even the perception of loss or defeat. Owning our sadness is courageous and a necessary step in finding our way back to ourselves and each other.

1. Sadness and depression are not the same thing.
2. Sadness and grief are not the same thing.
3. There are positive aspects to sadness. Acknowledging and naming our own sadness is critical in the formation of compassion and empathy. We want to be held by or feel connected to someone who has known that same ache, even if what caused it is completely different.
4. There’s a reason we love sad movies. We like to feel connected to one another. Sadness moves the individual “us” toward the collective “us.” Sadness leads to feeling moved, which in turn leads to enjoyment.

Hope, Hopelessness, and Despair

We experience **hope** when:

1. We have the ability to set realistic **goals** (*I know where I want to go*).
2. We are able to figure out how to achieve those goals, including the ability to stay flexible and develop alternative **pathways** (*I know how to get there, I’m persistent, and I can tolerate disappointment and try new paths again and again*).
3. We have **agency**—we believe in ourselves (*I can do this!*)

We develop hope not during the easy or comfortable times, but through adversity and discomfort. Hope is forged when our goals, pathways, and agency are tested *and* when change is actually possible.

While hope is not an emotion, hopelessness and despair are emotions.

Hopelessness arises out of a combination of negative life events and negative thought patterns, particularly self-blame and the perceived inability to change our circumstances.

Despair is a sense of hopelessness about a person's entire life and future. When extreme hopelessness seeps into all the corners of our lives and combines with extreme sadness, we feel despair.

Martin Seligman's 3 Ps: personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness.

Personalization: When we experience despair and hopelessness, we often believe that we are the problem and forget to think about larger issues and context. Realize that outside factors play a role in our struggles.

Permanence: Thinking that our struggle will never end is built in to the experiences of despair and hopelessness. Build resilience by thinking about the temporary nature of most setbacks.

Pervasiveness: Sometimes, when we're struggling, we fall into the trap of believing that whatever we're up against has stained or changed every single thing in our life. Nothing good is left.

Anguish

Anguish is an almost unbearable and traumatic swirl of shock, incredulity, grief, and powerlessness.

The element of powerlessness is what makes anguish traumatic. We are unable to change, reverse, or negotiate what has happened.

7. Places We Go With Others

Compassion, Pity, Empathy, Sympathy, Comparative Suffering, Boundaries

Compassion, Pity, Empathy, and Sympathy

Compassion is the daily practice of recognizing and accepting our shared humanity so that we treat ourselves and others with loving-kindness, **and we take action** in the face of suffering. Compassion includes action. It's not just feeling, it's doing.

The most effective approach to meaningful connection combines compassion with a specific type of empathy called **cognitive empathy**

'Near enemy' is a useful Buddhist concept referring to a state of mind that appears similar to the desired state—hence it is 'near'—but actually undermines it, which is why it's an enemy." "Far enemies" are the opposite of emotions or experiences—the far enemy of compassion might be cruelty. What's interesting is that near enemies are often greater threats than far enemies because they're more difficult to recognize.

The **near enemy** of **compassion** is pity.

Pity sets up a separation between ourselves and others, a sense of distance and remoteness from the suffering of others that is affirming and gratifying to the self.

Compassion recognizes the suffering of another as a reflection of our own pain: "I understand this; I suffer in the same way." It is empathetic, a mutual connection with the pain and sorrow of life.

Compassion is shared suffering.

Pity involves four elements:

- a belief that the suffering person is inferior
- a passive, self-focused reaction that does not include providing help
- a desire to maintain emotional distance
- avoidance of sharing in the other person's suffering.

Another enemy of compassion is despair. Compassion does not mean immersing ourselves in the suffering of others to the point of anguish. Compassion is the tender readiness of the heart to respond to one's own or another's pain without despair, resentment, or aversion. It is the wish to dissipate suffering.

Empathy is an emotional skill set that allows us to understand what someone is experiencing and to reflect back that understanding.

There are at least two elements to empathy: **cognitive empathy** and **affective empathy**.

- Cognitive empathy, sometimes called perspective taking or mentalizing, is the ability to recognize and understand another person's emotions.
- Affective empathy, often called experience sharing, is one's own emotional attunement with another person's experience. Affective empathy is a slippery slope toward becoming overwhelmed and not being able to offer meaningful support.

Meaningful connection requires a combination of **compassion** and **cognitive empathy**.

Theresa Wiseman's Attributes of Empathy:

1. **Perspective taking:** What does that concept mean for you? What is that experience like for you?
2. **Staying out of judgment:** Just listen, don't put value on it.
3. **Recognizing emotion:** How can I touch within myself something that helps me identify and connect with what the other person might be feeling? Check in and clarify what you are hearing. Ask questions.
4. **Communicating our understanding about the emotion:** Sometimes this is elaborate and detailed, and sometimes this is simply, "Shit. That's hard. I get that."
5. **Practicing mindfulness:** This is not pushing away emotion because it's uncomfortable, but feeling it and moving through it.

Sympathy and pity are first cousins. Sympathy is the near enemy of empathy.

Empathy Misses

1. **Sympathy versus Empathy** *I feel sorry for you*
The person who responds with sympathy ("I feel so sorry for you") rather than empathy ("I get it, I feel with you, and I've been there"). The subtext of this response is distance: These things don't happen to me or people like me.
2. **Judgement** *You should feel shame*
The person who hears the story and actually feels shame for you. The friend gasps and confirms how horrified you should be. Then there is an awkward silence. Then you have to make this person feel better by convincing them that you're not a terrible person.
3. **Disappointment** *You've let me down*
The person who needs you to be the pillar of worthiness and authenticity. This person can't help you because they are too disappointed in your imperfections. You've let this person down.
4. **Discharging Discomfort with Blame** *This feels terrible. Who can we blame? You?*
Because shame is visceral and contagious, we can feel it for other people. This person

immediately needs to discharge the discomfort and vulnerability of the situation by blaming and scolding. “What were you thinking?” Or they may look for someone else to take the fall: “Who was that guy? We’ll kick his butt.”

5. **Minimize / Avoid** *Let's make this go away*

We minimize and avoid when we want hard feelings to go away. Out of their own discomfort, this person refuses to acknowledge that you’re in pain and/or that you’re hurting: “You’re exaggerating. It wasn’t that bad. You rock. You’re perfect. Everyone loves you.”

6. **Comparing / Competing** *If you think that's bad!*

This person confuses connecting with you over shared experiences with the opportunity to one-up you. “That’s nothing. Listen to what happened to me one time!”

7. **Speaking Truth to Power** *Don't upset people or make them feel uncomfortable*

You hold someone accountable for language, comments, or behavior that marginalizes or dehumanizes others, and it causes discomfort or conflict. When this person observes this or hears your story of what happened, they respond with, “I can’t believe you said that to your boss!” or “I can’t believe you went there!” or “You can’t talk about that stuff with people” versus an empathic response of “That must have been hard—you were really brave” or “It’s hard to stand up for what you believe in—thank you.”

8. **Advice Giving / Problem Solving** *I can fix this and I can fix you*

Sometimes when we see pain our first instinct is to fix it. This is especially true for those of us whom people seek out to help with problem-solving. In these instances, rather than listen and be with people in their emotion, we start fixing.

Comparative Suffering

Fear and scarcity trigger comparison. Pain and hurt are not immune to being assessed and ranked. Sharing how we feel—even complaining—is okay as long as we piss and moan with a little perspective. Hurt is hurt, and every time we honor our own struggle and the struggles of others by responding with empathy and compassion, the healing that results affects all of us.

Boundaries

Boundaries are a prerequisite for compassion and empathy. We can’t connect with someone unless we’re clear about where we end and they begin. If there’s no autonomy between people, then there’s no compassion or empathy, just enmeshment.

What’s OK and What’s Not OK

Too often we forget about the “what is okay” part, and that leads to unnecessary disconnection.

When people set a boundary with us, we can feel that they're denying us our right to our thinking and feeling. When we explain up front what's okay, we move the focus to where it belongs: This *expression* of your feelings or thinking is the problem.

- It's okay to be pissed. It's not okay to raise your voice and pound on the table.
- It's okay to change your mind. It's not okay to assume that I'm okay with the changes without talking to me.
- It's okay to disagree with me, but it's not okay to ridicule my ideas and beliefs.

8. Places We Go When We Fall Short

Shame, Self-compassion, Perfectionism, Guilt, Humiliation, Embarrassment

Shame

Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love, belonging, and connection.

Shame thrives on secrecy, silence, and judgment.

The antidote to shame is empathy. If we reach out and share our shame experience with someone who responds with empathy, shame dissipates.

Self-Compassion

Three elements: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness.

- **Self-kindness vs. self-judgment:** Self-compassion entails being warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring our pain or flagellating ourselves with self-criticism. Self-compassionate people recognize that being imperfect, failing, and experiencing life difficulties [are] inevitable, so they tend to be gentle with themselves when confronted with painful experiences rather than getting angry when life falls short of set ideals.
- **Common humanity vs. isolation:** Self-compassion involves recognizing that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience—something that we all go through

rather than being something that happens to ‘me’ alone.

- **Mindfulness vs. over-identification:** Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, receptive mind state in which one observes thoughts and feelings as they are, without trying to suppress or deny them. We cannot ignore our pain and feel compassion for it at the same time. At the same time, mindfulness requires that we not be ‘over-identified’ with thoughts and feelings, so that we are caught up and swept away by negative reactivity.

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is a self-destructive and addictive belief system that fuels this primary thought: If I look perfect, live perfectly, work perfectly, and do everything perfectly, I can avoid or minimize the painful feelings of shame, judgment, and blame.

Shame is the birthplace of perfectionism. Perfectionism is not striving to be our best or working toward excellence. Healthy striving is internally driven.

Perfectionism is externally driven by a simple but potentially all-consuming question: *What will people think?*

One of the biggest barriers to working toward mastery is perfectionism. Achieving mastery requires curiosity and viewing mistakes and failures as opportunities for learning. Perfectionism kills curiosity by telling us that we have to know everything or we risk looking “less than.”

Guilt

Guilt is an emotion that we experience when we fall short of our own expectations or standards. With guilt, our focus is on having done something wrong and on doing something to set things right, like apologizing or changing a behavior.

Remorse, a subset of guilt, is what we feel when we acknowledge that we have harmed another person, we feel bad about it, and we want to atone for our behavior.

Humiliation

Humiliation is the intensely painful feeling that we’ve been unjustly degraded, ridiculed, or put down and that our identity has been demeaned or devalued.

Humiliation is most similar to shame in that we feel fundamentally flawed. But the most relevant distinction is that humiliation arises because someone else pointed out our flaws, and we don’t feel we deserved it. The entire key to understanding humiliation is that when it happens to us, it feels

unjust.

Embarrassment

Embarrassment is a fleeting feeling of self-conscious discomfort in response to a minor incident that was witnessed by others.

Emotion	Explained	Example
Shame	I am bad. The focus is on self, not behavior. The result is feeling flawed and unworthy of love, belonging, and connection. Shame is not a driver of positive change.	You get back a quiz and your grade is F. Your self-talk is <i>I'm so stupid</i> .
Guilt	I did something bad. The focus is on behavior. Guilt is the discomfort we feel when we evaluate what we've done or failed to do against our values. It can drive positive change and behavior.	You get back a quiz and your grade is F. Your self-talk is <i>Going to the party instead of studying for this quiz was so stupid (versus I'm so stupid)</i> .
Humiliation	I've been belittled and put down by someone. This left me feeling unworthy of connection and disgusted with myself. This was unfair and I didn't deserve this. With shame, we believe that we deserve our sense of unworthiness. With humiliation, we don't feel we deserve it.	The student sitting next to you sees the F at the top of your quiz and tells the class, "This idiot can't even pass a quiz in here. He's as stupid as they come." Everyone laughs. You feel dumb and enraged.
Embarrassment	I did something that made me uncomfortable, but I know I'm not alone. Everyone does these kinds of things. Embarrassment is fleeting, sometimes funny.	Your teacher is handing out quizzes and you come back from the bathroom with toilet paper stuck to your shoe.

9. Places We Go When We Search For Connection

Belonging, Fitting In, Connection, Disconnection, Insecurity, Invisibility, Loneliness

Belonging

Belonging is a general inference drawn from cues, events, experiences, and relationships, about the quality of fit or potential fit between oneself and a setting. It is experienced as a feeling of being accepted, included, respected in, and contributing to a setting, or anticipating the likelihood of developing this feeling.

It a practice that requires us to be vulnerable, get uncomfortable, and learn how to be present with people without sacrificing who we are.

Belonging is not passive and simply about joining or “going along” with others. When we sacrifice who we are, we not only feel separate from others, but we even feel disconnected from ourselves.

Belonging uncertainty is the term sometimes used to describe questioning one’s social belongingness. Belonging uncertainty can be high among members of marginalized groups, and this can have real consequences.

Authenticity is a requirement for belonging, and fitting in is a threat.

Connection

Connection is the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.

Disconnection

Disconnection is social rejection, social exclusion, and/or social isolation. These feelings of

disconnection share the same neural pathways with feelings of physical pain.

Authenticity is a requirement for connection, and perfectionism (a type of fitting in) is a threat.

Insecurity

There are three types of insecurity:

1. **Domain-specific insecurity** occurs when we are insecure about a specific domain or resource in life, for example, food insecurity, financial insecurity, or a lack of physical safety. Combating domain-specific insecurity is about access and resources
2. **Relationship** or **interpersonal insecurity** occurs when we don't feel we have a supportive and trusting relationship. It can happen either in a specific relationship or as an overarching feeling about all of our relationships. It makes us feel uncertain about being loved, trusted, protected, and valued.
3. **General** or **personal insecurity** occurs when we are overly critical of our weaknesses. This may include being overly critical of our body image or our performance at work. The opposite of personal insecurity is **self-security**, which is the open and nonjudgmental acceptance of one's own weaknesses.

Invisibility

Invisibility is a function of disconnection and dehumanization, where an individual or group's humanity and relevance are unacknowledged, ignored, and/or diminished in value or importance.

Loneliness

Loneliness is the absence of meaningful social interaction—an intimate relationship, friendships, family gatherings, or even community or work group connections.

10. Places We Go When The Heart Is Open

Love, Lovelessness, Heartbreak, Trust, Self-Trust, Betrayal, Defensiveness, Flooding, Hurt

Love

We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honor the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness, and affection.

Love is not something we give or get; it is something that we nurture and grow. We can love others only as much as we love ourselves.

Shame, blame, disrespect, betrayal, and the withholding of affection damage the roots from which love grows. Love can survive these injuries only if they're acknowledged, healed, and rare.

Lovelessness

bell hooks teaches that the injustice and systemic oppression that we see in the world today stem from a deep, collective **lovelessness** and calls for an ethic of love.

hooks writes,

Refusal to stand up for what you believe in weakens individual morality and ethics as well as those of the culture. No wonder then that we are a nation of people, the majority of whom, across race, class, and gender, claim to be religious, claim to believe in the divine power of love, and yet collectively remain unable to embrace a love ethic and allow it to guide behavior, especially if doing so would mean supporting radical change. **Fear of radical changes leads many citizens of our nation to betray their minds and hearts.**

Heartbreak

Heartbreak comes from the loss of love or the perceived loss of love. Disappointment doesn't grow into heartbreak, nor does failure. It hurts in a different way because heartbreak is always connected to love and belonging.

Trust

Trust means choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person's actions. Trust is more of a cognitive assessment than an emotion, but trust can bring up a lot of emotions, especially hurt and defensiveness.

Distrust means that what is important to me is not safe with this person in this situation (or any

situation).

What constitutes trust = **B.R.A.V.I.N.G**

- **Boundaries:** You respect my boundaries, and when you're not clear about what's okay and not okay, you ask. You're willing to say no.
- **Reliability:** You do what you say you'll do. **At work, this means staying aware of your competencies and limitations so you don't overpromise and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.**
- **Accountability:** You own your mistakes, apologize, and make amends.
- **Vault:** You don't share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, *and* that you're not sharing with me any information about other people that should be confidential.
- **Integrity:** You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them.
- **Non-judgment:** I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgment. We can ask each other for help without judgment.
- **Generosity:** You extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words, and actions of others.

Self-trust

Self-trust is normally the first casualty of failure or mistakes. We stop trusting ourselves when we hurt others, get hurt, feel shame, or question our worth.

How to use the **BRAVING** tool to think about self-trust:

- B—Did I respect my own boundaries? Was I clear about what's okay and what's not okay?
- R—Was I reliable? Did I do what I said I was going to do?
- A—Did I hold myself accountable?
- V—Did I respect the vault and share appropriately?
- I—Did I act from my integrity?
- N—Did I ask for what I needed? Was I nonjudgmental about needing help?
- G—Was I generous toward myself?

Betrayal

Betrayal is so painful because, at its core, it is a violation of trust.

It happens in relationships in which trust is expected and assumed, so when it's violated, we're often shocked, and we can struggle to believe what's happening. It can feel as if the ground beneath us has given way.

It's possible to heal betrayal, but it's rare because it requires significant courage and vulnerability to hear the pain we've caused without becoming defensive. The only way back from betrayal is accountability, amends, and action.

Defensiveness

Defensiveness is a way to protect our ego and a fragile self-esteem.

In order to try to limit our exposure to information that differs from how we think of ourselves, we get defensive and over-justify, make excuses, minimize, blame, discredit, discount, refute, and reinterpret. Defensiveness blocks us from hearing feedback and evaluating if we want to make meaningful changes in our thinking or behavior based on input from others.

When I get defensive, I often get tunnel vision and start planning what I'm going to say instead of listening. But I have found some ways to disarm my defensiveness. My strategy is to subtly open my palms, even if my hands are just hanging by my side or on my lap, and actually say, "I'm sorry. Can you say that again? I really want to understand." It's pretty effective.

If I'm having a really hard time, I might say, "I'm sorry. I'm feeling overwhelmed. I'm going to get a glass of water. Can we sit down in ten minutes and start again?"

Flooding

Flooding is a sensation of feeling psychologically and physically overwhelmed during conflict, making it virtually impossible to have a productive, problem-solving discussion.

This is why it is so important that I be able to identify when I am feeling this and request a break until I can calm down.

Hurt

Hurt is a combination of sadness at having been emotionally wounded and fear of being vulnerable

to harm. When people feel hurt, they have appraised something that someone said or did as causing them emotional pain.

Most behaviors that result in hurt feelings are not intended to be hurtful; they typically involve actions that are thoughtless, careless, or insensitive. However, the more intentional an action is perceived, the more hurtful it feels.

11. Places We Go When Life Is Good

Joy, Happiness, Calm, Contentment, Gratitude, Foreboding Joy, Relief, Tranquility

Joy

Joy is an intense feeling of deep spiritual connection, pleasure, and appreciation. It is sudden, unexpected, short-lasting, and high-intensity. It's characterized by a connection with others, or with God, nature, or the universe. Joy expands our thinking and attention, and it fills us with a sense of freedom and abandon.

The relationship between joy and gratitude is an upward spiral:

1. Trait gratitude predicts greater future experiences of in-the-moment joy.
2. Trait joy predicts greater future experiences of in-the-moment gratitude.
3. And dispositional or situational joy predicts greater future subjective well-being.

Happiness

Happiness is feeling pleasure often related to the immediate environment or current circumstances. Happiness is stable, longer-lasting, and normally the result of effort. It's lower in intensity than joy, and more self-focused. We feel a sense of being in control. Unlike joy, which is more internal, happiness seems more external and circumstantial.

Calm

Calm means creating perspective and mindfulness while managing emotional reactivity.

Calm people can bring perspective to complicated situations and experience their feelings without reacting to heightened emotions.

Cultivating and maintaining calm takes a lot of self-questioning, mostly centered on breath, perspective taking, and curiosity.

1. Calm is an intention. Do we want to infect people with more anxiety, or heal ourselves and the people around us with calm? Anxiety is contagious. Intensity and reactivity only breed more of the same. Calm is also contagious. **Nothing is more important than getting a grip on your own reactivity.**
2. Do we match the pace of anxiety, or do we slow things down with breath and tone?
3. Do we have all the information we need to make a decision or form a response? What do we need to ask or learn?

Or a simpler algorithm:

1. Do I have enough information to freak out? **The answer is normally no.**
2. Will freaking out help? **The answer is always no.**

Contentment

Contentment is the feeling of completeness, appreciation, and “enoughness” that we experience when our needs are satisfied. Contentment is a low-arousal positive emotion, along with peace, tranquility, and satisfaction.

Gratitude

Gratitude reflects our deep appreciation for what we value, what brings meaning to our lives, and what makes us feel connected to ourselves and others. While gratitude is an emotion, if we want to experience its full power, we must also make it a practice.

Gratitude is good for us physically, emotionally, and mentally and is correlated with:

- better sleep
- increased creativity
- decreased entitlement
- decreased hostility and aggression
- increased decision-making skills

- decreased blood pressure.

Positive emotions wear off quickly because our emotional systems like newness, novelty, and change. We adapt to positive life circumstances so that before too long, the new car, the new spouse, the new house—they don't feel so new and exciting anymore.

Gratitude makes us appreciate the value of something, and when we appreciate the value of something, we extract more benefits from it; we're less likely to take it for granted.

Gratitude allows us to participate more in life. We notice the positives more, and that magnifies the pleasures you get from life.

▮ Instead of adapting to goodness, we celebrate goodness.

Foreboding Joy

Foreboding joy means being afraid to lean into good news, wonderful moments, and joy. It means waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Joy becomes foreboding when we lose our tolerance for vulnerability.

Joy is frightening because we believe if we allow ourselves to feel joy, we are inviting disaster.

We start dress-rehearsing tragedy in the best moments of our lives in order to stop vulnerability from beating us to the punch. We are terrified of being blindsided by pain, so we practice tragedy and trauma. But there's a huge cost.

When we push away joy, we squander the goodness that we need to build resilience, strength, and courage.

Everyone who shows a deep capacity for joy has one thing in common: they practice gratitude.

▮ In the midst of joy, there's often a quiver, a shudder of vulnerability. Rather than using that as a warning sign to practice imagining the worst-case scenario, the people who lean into joy use the quiver as a reminder to practice gratitude.

Relief

Relief is feelings of tension leaving the body and being able to breathe more easily, thoughts of the worst being over and being safe for the moment, resting, and wanting to get on to something else.

The sigh of relief is real. Sighing serves as a type of reset button for our body. It not only signals relief to our body, but it enhances relief, and it reduces muscle tension.

Tranquility

Tranquility means the absence of demand and no pressure to do anything. Tranquil environments are needed to counter mental fatigue and attention depletion.

Four essential elements of a restorative environment:

1. a sense of getting away
2. a feeling of immersion
3. holding attention without effort
4. compatibility with one's preferences.

There are auditory and visual components to tranquil environments, including elements of nature and low levels of noise. Settings that induce high tranquility include fields and forests and large bodies of water; urban settings tend not to induce tranquility.

There's a difference between feeling content and feeling tranquil. With contentment, we often have the sense of having completed something; with tranquility, we relish the feeling of doing nothing.

12. Places We Go When We Feel Wronged

Anger, Contempt, Disgust, Dehumanization, Hate, Self-Righteousness

Anger

We feel **anger** when something gets in the way of a desired outcome or when we believe there's a violation of the way things should be. We believe that someone or something else is to blame for an unfair or unjust situation, and that something can be done to resolve the problem.

1. Anger often masks emotions that are more difficult to name and/or more difficult to own.
2. Anger is a very effective emotional indicator light that tells us to pull over and check things out.
3. Anger, in response to experiencing or witnessing injustice, pain, and struggle, can be a powerful catalyst for change. But, by definition, a catalyst *sparks* change, it's not *the* change.

Contempt

Contempt means we look down on the other person and we want to exclude or ignore them.

Contempt says "I'm better than you. And you are lesser than me." Contempt is one of the most damaging of the four negative communication patterns that predict divorce. The other three are criticism, defensiveness, and stonewalling.

Disgust

Disgust is a feeling of aversion towards something offensive.

With contempt, we look down on the other person and we want to exclude or ignore them. With disgust, the feeling is more physical—we want to avoid being "poisoned" (either literally or figuratively)

Dehumanization

Dehumanization is the psychological process of demonizing the enemy, making them seem less than human and hence not worthy of humane treatment.

Hate

Hate is a combination of various negative emotions including repulsion, disgust, anger, fear, and contempt

Self-Righteousness

Self-righteousness is the conviction that one's beliefs and behaviors are the most correct.

- Righteousness: we are appropriately reacting to a true injustice, we are trying to do the right thing.
- Self-righteousness: we feel morally superior to others and are trying to convince ourselves or others that we are doing the right thing.

Moral outrage in response to injustice can be classified as righteous anger when motivated by a "true" concern about injustice, whereas when moral outrage is self-enhancing, it is self-righteous anger.

13. Place We Go To Self-Assess

Pride, Hubris, Humility

Pride

Pride is a feeling of pleasure or celebration related to our accomplishments or efforts.

Hubris

Hubris is an inflated sense of one's own innate abilities that is tied more to the need for dominance than to actual accomplishments. It is negatively correlated with self-esteem and positively correlated with narcissism and shame-proneness.

The higher the hubris, the lower the self-esteem.

The higher the hubris, the higher the narcissism and shame-proneness.

Narcissism

Narcissism is the shame-based fear of being ordinary.

For the narcissist, positive views of the self are too essential to leave to the whim of actual accomplishments, for they are what prevent the individual from succumbing to shame and low self-esteem.

Instead, narcissists come to experience a globalized 'hubristic' pride, characterized by feelings of

arrogance and egotism, which is distinct from the more achievement-based and pro-social ‘authentic’ pride.”

Humility

Humility is openness to new learning combined with a balanced and accurate assessment of our contributions, including our strengths, imperfections, and opportunities for growth.

| I’m here to get it right, not to be right.

Humility isn’t downplaying yourself or your accomplishments -- that’s modesty, not humility. It’s also not low self-esteem or meekness or letting people walk all over you.

| Pride can be good for us, hubris is dangerous, and humility is key to grounded confidence and healthy relationships.