

The  
LANGUAGE  
of  
EMOTIONS  
Workbook

A Practical Guide  
to Reveal the Wisdom  
in Each of Your Feelings

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# Hello Reader!

I'm glad you're here, and I'm glad to welcome you to the magnificent world of emotions. I've been exploring, studying, researching, and working with the amazing intelligence inside the emotions for many decades, and I'm happy to share their wise and healing nature with you.

However, I understand that you may not think of emotions in this way. You may have experienced emotions as problems, either in yourself or in the behavior of others. You may have learned that certain emotions are negative and unnecessary or that other emotions are positive and should be felt as often as is humanly possible.

But if you're like most of us, you haven't learned the most important things:

1. What emotions are
2. Why emotions arise
3. How emotions work
4. How to work with all emotions skillfully

Most of us have had a very poor emotional education, and when emotions are present, we often don't know what to do. Even in our everyday language, you can see that we don't really know how to connect with emotions in ways that work.

For instance, when you think of the word *emotional*, what comes to mind? Are emotional people deeply wise, or are they irrational? Are they grounded and focused, or are they unstable? Are emotional people trustworthy, or do you want to distance yourself from them?



When you or others are called **emotional**, what does that mean? Take a moment to jot down some of the qualities an emotional person might possess.

For most of us, the word *emotional* has a negative meaning, and when we call someone (or ourselves) emotional, it's not a compliment! The experience of feeling and displaying emotions has been turned into a problem, and that's not helpful to anyone, because emotions are vital parts of our ability to think, decide, act, dream, and love. Emotions are essential to our ability to relate to ourselves, to others, and to the world around us.

And this word *emotional* is pretty sloppy, because we may not even know which emotions we're talking about. Are we noticing anger in emotional people, or are we seeing sadness, joy, anxiety, envy, panic, happiness, or shame? Which emotions are present, or does it even matter?

Actually, it matters a lot because emotions are a necessary part of everything you are.

## **Understanding Emotions Is Essential to Your Health and Well-Being**

Every thought, every choice, every relationship, every dream, every failure, every triumph, every decision, and every action you take is directed by your emotions. Because of this, understanding them and learning their language is essential.

And here's the most remarkable thing: your emotions are not problems! Your emotions arise to help you *deal with* problems, and they bring you gifts and abilities such as boundary setting (anger), intuition (fear), motivation (anxiety), relaxation (sadness), and healthy self-esteem (contentment).

Each of your emotions contains wisdom, benefits, and skills that you can't get anywhere else, and each of them is important. When you can learn the language of your emotions, you can change your life.

## **Welcome to *The Language of Emotions Workbook!***

This workbook complements my book *The Language of Emotions*, and it explores seventeen unique emotions and the Empathic Mindfulness practices that come from my applied work, which is called Dynamic Emotional Integration<sup>®</sup> (or DEI for short).

With these ideas and practices, you can learn how to access the information and intelligence inside each of your emotions. This workbook also includes self-care and communication practices to help you develop a healthy emotional life, healthy relationships, and healthy empathy.

## How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is yours to use in whatever ways work for you. You can read through from beginning to end and complete each of the activities and reflections, or you can skip around based on your needs and interests.

I've created many different ways for you to understand and work with your emotions, including questions, exercises, mindfulness practices, and art practices. Of course, if a specific way of engaging with this workbook works best for you, please rely on your own way of learning.

This workbook can help you learn how to work directly with your own emotions, which are essential aspects of your deep intelligence and your capacity for healing. You'll learn to ground and focus yourself, identify and regulate your emotions, understand yourself and others more deeply, and access your own unique emotional wisdom. And, as you may already know, when you can work with your emotions, they may bring unresolved situations or wounds into your consciousness to help you address and heal them. This can be a relief, and it can also be disorienting or distressing sometimes. It's important to know that nothing is wrong with you or your emotions if this happens; this is often a sign of healing.

However, if your emotions feel overwhelming, please visit my online learning community, [empathyacademy.org](https://empathyacademy.org), and reach out to a DEI professional there, or to your local crisis hotline, your doctor, or an emotionally respectful counselor or therapist. You can also find bonus practices for this workbook at [karlamclaren.com/LoE-workbook](https://karlamclaren.com/LoE-workbook) or by scanning the QR code below.

Thank you for taking this time for yourself, and thank you for bringing more emotional awareness, stronger relationships, and healthier empathy to our waiting world.

Here's to being emotional in ways that truly work!

*Karla*



## PART 1

# Introducing the Wisdom in Your Emotions

All of your emotions are essential to your well-being.

Each one brings you a specific kind of intelligence to guide your thoughts and actions – and you can learn to work brilliantly with every emotion you have.

## What Are Emotions and Why Do They Arise?

My favorite definition of emotions comes from sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild, who wrote this in her book *The Managed Heart*:

*Emotion, I suggest, is a biologically given sense, and our most important one. Like other senses – hearing, touch, and smell – it is a means by which we know our relation to the world, and is therefore crucial to the survival of human beings in group life. Emotion is unique among the senses, however, because it is related not only to an orientation toward **action**, but also to an orientation toward **cognition**.*

So, emotions are senses that help you think, understand, and act. They help you know your world, and they help you make sense of what you feel and perceive.

### Sensing Your Own Emotions

Your emotions help you make sense of yourself and the world, each in its own way. Your emotions are an essential part of you, and each one contains a vital piece of your intelligence and your ability to think and act.



Think of a time when you felt joyous. What were you sensing? What was your joy telling you about the situation?

Now think of a time when you felt angry. What was your anger sensing, and what was it telling you about the situation?



Since most of us have learned that emotions are problems (or that they create problems), we can have a difficult time learning how to work with them. Luckily, your emotions are working to help you at all times, and you can learn to identify them by the skills they bring to you.

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Your emotions don't **create** problems.  
They arise to help you **deal with** problems.  
Learn their language, and you can change your life.

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Let's explore the skills and intelligence inside five of your emotions and see how you're working with them right now.

## Discovering the Emotional Skills You Already Have

Each of your emotions arises for specific reasons, and each emotion brings you skills, benefits, and forms of intelligence that you can't get anywhere else. Your responses to the statements below will help you identify some of the wisdom and skills that are already working for you in five essential (but often misunderstood) emotions.

How to find your score: As you read each statement below, choose the response that describes how you feel about it and note the number associated with your response. In each subsection, you'll add up your responses to find your score for that particular emotional skill.

Higher scores for each emotion may mean that you already have access to the skills and benefits of that particular emotion, while lower scores may mean that you have some confusion about or difficulty accessing that emotion at this time.

In either case, skip forward to each emotion's section to learn more about its essential place in your life. The principles and practices in this workbook will help you develop a full range of emotional skills so that you can access the benefits and wisdom in every emotion you have.

4

Always

3

Depends on the  
situation, but  
usually

2

Depends on the  
situation, but  
sometimes

1

Rarely

---

## } Your Emotional Skills: Boundaries }

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel heard and respected in my relationships with others.              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I am comfortable speaking up for myself, even during conflicts.          | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. I can identify and separate my own emotions from the emotions of others. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

**Your score for questions 1-3** \_\_\_\_\_

Questions 1-3 focus on the wisdom and skills in your **ANGER**

Low Score: **3** | High score: **12**

**THE HEART OF ANGER:** Many of us have felt (or learned) that anger is always a problem, but at its heart, anger helps you set and restore healthy boundaries around yourself and the things that you value. Anger helps you create a private and defined space for yourself, your thoughts, your dreams and ideas, and especially your emotions.



How easy is it for you to set clear boundaries in your relationships?

} **Your Emotional Skills: Motivation** }

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. I have good time-management skills,<br>and I follow through on my plans and<br>commitments.                | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I tend to be good at organizing my ideas,<br>my tasks, and my physical space.                              | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. When I think of large projects or places<br>I have to get to at a specific time, I feel<br>pretty relaxed. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

**Your score for questions 4-6:** \_\_\_\_\_

Questions 4-6 focus on the wisdom and skills in your **ANXIETY**.

Low score: **3** | High score: **12**

**THE HEART OF ANXIETY:** Anxiety is nearly always presented as a negative emotion (or even as a form of mental illness), but at its heart, anxiety helps you gather the energy and motivation you need to plan and complete your projects and meet your deadlines. Anxiety is a forward focused emotion that motivates and organizes you, and it's essential for pretty much everything you do.



How do you feel about your ability to motivate yourself and get things done?

} **Your Emotional Skills: Instincts** }

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. I am comfortably aware of my surroundings, and I tend to be relaxed about changes. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I tend to remain calm and focused in emergencies.                                  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. I tend to trust my own instincts about what's right for me, and I act on them.     | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

**Your score for questions 7-9:** \_\_\_\_\_

Questions 7-9 focus on the wisdom and skills in your **FEAR**.

Low score: **3** | High score: **12**

**THE HEART OF FEAR:** Fear is usually treated as a sign of cowardice, but nothing could be further from the truth. At its heart, fear contains your instincts and intuition about the present moment. Without your fear, you simply wouldn't know where you are or what's going on. Fear is a present focused emotion that can help you connect to your intuition and instincts about yourself and your world.



How connected do you feel to your instincts and intuition?