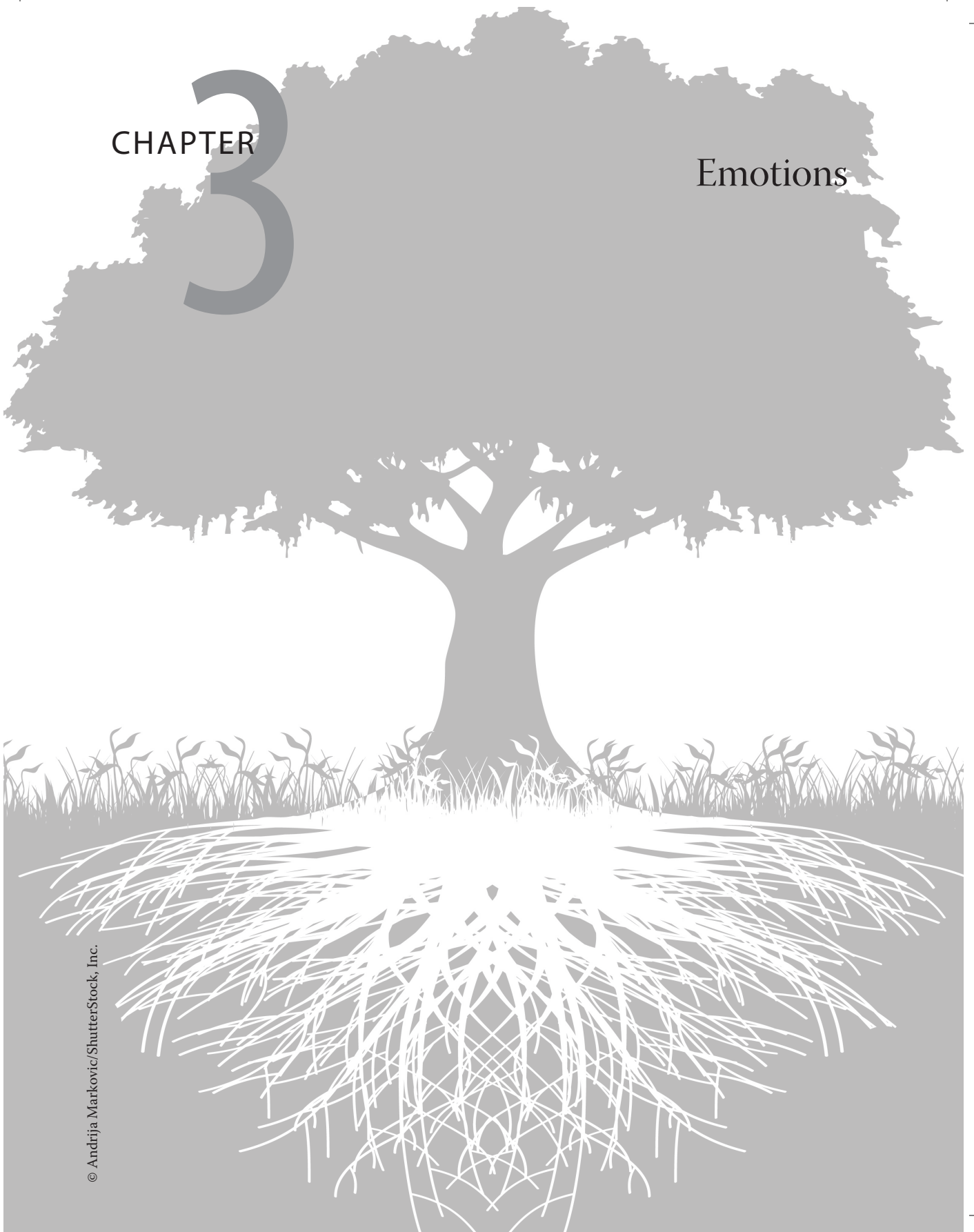


CHAPTER

3

Emotions



Pre-Assessment: Emotions

Mind Mapping

Consider the terms arrayed on the page. For each term, without thinking or editing, write down the ideas, concepts, examples, contradictions, and theories that come to mind. Do not array them in any systematic or orderly manner. Scatter them about the page. Now, draw lines between your additions, indicating that there is a relationship between the terms. If something causes something else, indicate this with an arrow. Relationships may be reciprocal—both cause each other—requiring arrows at both ends. Indicate the strength of the relationship by darkening and thickening the lines; stronger relationships have darker and thicker lines. Most important: There is no right answer. Do not compare with your classmates. What you have is a mind map, your mental representation of the topic. Review to determine if anything has changed following this chapter.

Anger
Sadness
Fear
Happiness

◆ DESIRED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

- Define emotions, mood, and temperament.
- Discuss the myths surrounding emotions.
- Discuss whether you can hide your emotions.

◆ DESIRED PERSONAL OUTCOME

- Gain an enhanced understanding of your emotional world.

What Are Emotions?

DANIEL GOLEMAN, AUTHOR OF THE book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), which brought the idea of emotional intelligence to a larger readership, defines an emotion as “. . . a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states, and range of propensities to act” (p. 289). Emotions have a cognitive component (thinking), a physiological component (biological), and a behavioral component (acting).

What Are the Primary Emotions?

CERTAIN EMOTIONS (FEAR, ANGER, SADNESS, and enjoyment) are recognized around the world, even by preliterate cultures. The conclusion is that evolution has selected these emotions to be hard-wired into our central nervous system. These four emotions, and their variants, can be blended to create innumerable and subtle emotional shadings. Just as artists see shades and hues of color, emotionally astute individuals can understand and describe the shades and hues of their emotional lives. The following provides an expanded vocabulary of emotions (adapted from Goleman, 1995):

- *Anger*: Fury, outrage, resentment, wrath, exasperation, indignation, vexation, acrimony, animosity, annoyance, irritability, hostility, and at the extreme, pathological hatred and violence
- *Sadness*: Grief, sorrow, cheerlessness, gloom, melancholy, self-pity, loneliness, dejection, despair, and when pathological, severe depression

- *Fear*: Anxiety, apprehension, nervousness, concern, consternation, misgiving, wariness, qualm, edginess, dread, fright, terror, and as a pathology, phobia and panic
- *Enjoyment*: Happiness, joy, relief, contentment, bliss, delight, amusement, pride, sensual pleasure, thrill, rapture, gratification, satisfaction, euphoria, whimsy, ecstasy, and at the extreme, mania

Why Are Some Emotions Hard to Describe?

EMOTIONS CAN BE CLEAN AND simple or multilayered and complex. The anger someone feels in seeing a small child abused is a clean and simple emotion. In contrast, the circumstance of receiving a birthday card from a friend makes you happy, while evoking feelings of guilt because you forgot to send him a card, ultimately giving rise to tinges of anger because he still owes you money. This exemplifies a complex and multilayered emotional response. Another example of a complex emotional reaction is a father looking at his just-born baby; he is ecstatic, but in an instant he becomes alarmed, and then fearful as he realizes there is something wrong with the baby. The circumstance of getting angry because you were angry is another example of a complex and multilayered emotional response. Awareness and learning about emotions require that we develop a nuanced vocabulary of emotions.

Are Emotions Functional?

EACH OF THESE FOUR EMOTIONS has functional and dysfunctional aspects to them. In other words, they can be both beneficial to you and detrimental. For example, anger may motivate you to act, or alienate you from other people; fear will alert you to a threat, or interfere with thinking; sadness may motivate you to reevaluate what you want from life, or inhibit you from taking any action at all; finally, happiness can promote positive relationships, or lead you to unrealistically favorable expectations.

Box 3.1 What Are the Myths Surrounding Emotions?

Certain myths are associated with emotions. On examination, these myths are not supported by logic or neurological studies. The myths include:

- *Emotions are inferior to reason.* Emotions are processed at lower points in the brain; however, emotions are biochemically and structurally intertwined with higher levels of the cortex. Emotions are primitive mechanisms for survival, but also the foundation for creativity, empathy, sociability, and boundless self-knowledge.
- *Emotions are dangerous.* Emotions can be painful, but like physical pain they are signals of deeper pathologies. As warnings, they are indispensable if paid attention to.
- *Self-control is a function of stifling feelings.* Self-control does not come from controlling our feelings, but feeling our feelings.
- *Some emotions are good and others are bad.* Many believe anger is an emotion whose time has passed in our civilized world. But righteous anger associated with injustice is invaluable. All emotions are informative.
- *Emotions cloud your judgment.* It is the mental activity associated with avoiding our emotions that clouds our judgment, not the emotions themselves.

Source: Adapted from Segal, J. (1997). *Raising your emotional intelligence: A practical guide*. New York, NY: Owl.

What Are Moods? What Is Temperament?

EMOTIONS THAT ARE MUTED BUT persist for an extended period (a day or two) are moods; in contrast, the tendency towards a specific mood over a very long time is temperament. For example, I might feel ecstatic for a few moments if someone compliments me, be in a good mood the rest of the day due to the compliment, and stay naturally happy and content for many days at a time because that is my basic disposition or temperament.

What Is the Biology of Emotions?

POETS BELIEVE EMOTIONS TO BE intangible. In fact, as neuroscientists know, they are tangible; they are conveyed via biochemical transmitters and recorded in neural pathways. The human brain is an organ whose primary interest is survival. To that end, quick and immediate emotional responses (without thinking) to danger in the environment are useful. Think of the surprise appearance of a snake on a path; the feeling of fear is almost instantaneous. Being quick, these emotional responses are reactionary, often sloppy, and not necessarily completely accurate or appropriate. Emotional responses typically last for only a few seconds before the thinking response kicks in. It is only a small garden snake. No need to panic. The emotional mind reacts to the present as if it were the past. If someone has a bad experience learning to swim she may still have brief moments of fear prior to entering the water, even though she knows how to swim. Or, if a father was loud and abusive to his child, then this child may have brief moments of fear later in life when authority figures arrive.

What is the physiological mechanism for these responses? The senses pick up changes in the environment that are routed initially to the lower brain. At the same time, these sensory changes are routed to the mid-brain, which is the seat of our emotions, via a short and direct pathway, and also to the cerebral cortex, the source of higher order thinking, via a longer pathway. This is why one can have an emotional response without “thinking,” such as when someone says, “I was so angry I just lost it.” The implication of this is that at least for a brief moment our emotions can be in control causing us to be out of control. Our physiology guarantees this. Our physiology also guarantees that by taking a moment or two and allowing the higher elements of our brain to take command we can control our emotions. Emotions operate in the range of our conscious awareness, whereas moods operate at the fringe of our conscious awareness. Finally, some emotional responses are outside the realm of conscious awareness.

What Do I Learn from My Emotions?

EMOTIONS CONTAIN DATA. SPECIFICALLY, EMOTIONS contain data about people—you, other people, social situations, and interactions. Emotions provide real-time feedback about what is going on around you.

Can I Ignore My Emotions, or Hide Them?

EMOTIONS AFFECT EVERYTHING YOU DO. You can be mindful of them, you can suppress them, but you can't ignore them. Emotions work in ways not yet completely understood. Even presumably highly rational decision processes are influenced by your emotional state. Positive and negative moods impact how you decide. Many situations demand that you control or suppress your emotions. The simple fact is that although you can sometimes camouflage your emotions, with more regularity than you suppose, some people read your emotions regularly and all people read your emotions occasionally.

Why Do I Always React the Same Way?

IF ADDICTION IS DEFINED AS something you can't stop, then each of us is addicted to our emotions. Every morning, we all get up and put on our own familiar and comfortable emotional coat. Even though the emotion may be negative and not self-serving, it is the one we choose on a daily basis. This emotional addiction is based on the fact that neurons that fire together create neural networks. These networks reflect the experienced patterns of our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. This explains why, on a daily basis, you tend to feel like a victim, or slightly sad, or optimistic. This explains why similar situations and people always evoke the same emotional response. There is no rule that says if a driver cuts you off in traffic you must get angry. It is only your neural network responding as it always does to this circumstance. Paradoxically, negative emotions like anger and sadness can be strangely comforting due to their familiarity. Though you might be addicted to specific emotional patterns, you can, with conscious effort, change these patterns.

Emotions at Work

THE FOLLOWING IS A SAMPLE scenario related to emotional intelligence involving RPG (recent pharmacy graduate):

RPG loved the babies. She could hardly wait to get to work each day in the NIC unit. But the work was high stress, demanding all of her clinical

faculties. There simply was no room for error when dealing with a human life that came in a 500-gram package. RPG remembered the day the physician turned to her and said, “We have about 20 minutes to dose this baby, or it will die.” One of her colleagues recently had miscalculated an insulin dose for a baby by a power of 10—the baby died. Now, the pharmacist went through her days with a distant glare to her eyes. She was talking of leaving the profession. The circumstance was tragic on multiple dimensions.

The hardest part of the job was coming to work and reviewing the list of babies for the day. RPG would inquire about baby so and so and be told she had gone to the seventh floor. It was the expression used by the staff to say the baby had died. The first year had not been too difficult. But now, RPG found she could not cope with her emotions regarding these babies, their circumstances, the impact on the parents’ lives, and the increasing fear of making a fatal mistake. Sometimes, RPG found her hands shaking or her voice quivering as she worked through calculations or talked with the staff. Yesterday, she had gone home and yelled at her dog—she had never done that before. RPG found herself crying inappropriately at movies or while reading sentimental greeting cards. A dark gloom had settled over RPG’s life that she couldn’t shake. Talking with her friends, they noticed how she had changed in the past months. Her customary smile had turned to a lemony pucker of a frown. RPG was no longer having a good time at work.

How would you recommend RPG handle the situation?

Assignment: What Do the Practitioners/ Others Say?

BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS EMOTIONS based on any *one* of the following:

- A discussion with your colleagues, or others, on how they feel and what they know about emotions
- An article on emotions, either from the research literature or any other source
- A movie/television program/YouTube video about emotions
- A book on emotions (literary, historical, psychological, or any other source)



EXERCISES



The following exercises are intended to increase your mindfulness regarding your emotions. Mindfulness is the ability to be aware of your thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, and actions—in the present moment—without judging or criticizing yourself or your experience (McKay, Wood, & Brantley, 2007, p. 64). Mindfulness helps you gain a clearer understanding of your emotional world, the first step on the path to effectively managing your emotions.

◆ **Who Are My Emotional Role Models?**

Our attitudes towards our emotions are derived from our earliest caregivers, typically family. Those we meet during childhood and adolescence shape our emotional world. Take a few moments to identify your emotional role models by answering the following questions:

Who were my emotional role models? _____

What was their emotional style? _____

What did I learn from them? _____

Source: Adapted from Spradlin, S. E. (2003). *Don't let your emotions run your life*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

◆ **What Are My Emotional Triggers?**

All of us have people and situations that provoke strong emotional reactions. Take a moment to consider what your emotional triggers are.

Describe a time you lost control of your emotions. _____

What was the precipitating event? _____

Is there a pattern to when you lose control of your emotions?

What things cause you to lose your composure? _____

◆ **Describe Your Emotions**

What does it feel like to be in love? _____

What does it feel like when you break up with someone? _____

What does it feel like when someone breaks up with you? _____

What were your feelings when your father came home from work?

What are your feelings when your boss comes in? _____

What were your feelings when you came for the interview for pharmacy school? _____

What emotions would you feel if you made a fatal medication error?

◆ Emotional Catalogue

Use **Table 3.1** to keep a record of your emotions for a week, the events that caused them, their length, and their impact on the day.

TABLE 3.1 Emotional Catalogue

| Date | Emotion | Circumstances (what happened, what was going on that day) |
|-----------|---------|---|
| Monday | | |
| Tuesday | | |
| Wednesday | | |
| Thursday | | |
| Friday | | |
| Saturday | | |
| Sunday | | |

Based on this log, do you see any patterns? Are these patterns helpful, or not?

◆ **Temperament**

Describe your predominant emotional temperament in one word.

Check with family and friends to see if they agree.

◆ **Personal Learning Plan: Emotions**

These steps can be compiled on a single page containing the following:

- What prompted me to develop this plan?
 - What is the general area for improvement?
 - What is the specific issue for improvement?
 - Why is this important to me?
 - How do I generally act in these areas?
 - What are my goals?
 - What prompted this effort?
 - What strategies are required?
 - Who/what is necessary to meet my goals with this strategy?
 - How will I measure the success/failure of this effort?
 - How long will I focus on this effort?
 - How will I reflect and capture a lesson from this effort that can be generalized to other circumstances?
-

Based on your responses to the exercises, write a one-paragraph description of yourself as it relates to emotions.

◆ **WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU IN THE CHAPTER?**

With several of your classmates, discuss the idea/ideas that are most likely to effect a change in your values, attitudes, or behaviors. Be succinct—no more than two sentences.

♦ REFERENCES

- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Dell.
- McKay, M., Wood, J. C., & Brantley, J. (2007). *The dialectical behavior therapy skills workbook*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.
- Segal, J. (1997). *Raising your emotional intelligence: A practical guide*. New York, NY: Owl.
- Spradlin, S. E. (2003). *Don't let your emotions run your life*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

♦ SUGGESTED READINGS

- Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (2004). *The emotionally intelligent manager*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Epstein, S. (1998). *Constructive thinking: The key to emotional intelligence*. Westport, CT: Praeger.