



*Today's Suggested
Topic is...*

**Dealing
With
Emotions...
Sober**

Step Twelve

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

THE joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word. Here we turn outward toward our fellow alcoholics who are still in distress. Here we experience the kind of giving that asks no rewards. Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety. When the Twelfth Step is seen in its full implication, it is really talking about the kind of love that has no price tag on it.

“The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety” by Bill Wilson

I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA -- the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance -- urges quite appropriate to age seventeen -- prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.

Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse! Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy, and good living -- well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious -- from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream -- be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden "Mr. Hyde" becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones -- folks like you and me -- commencing to get results. Last autumn [several years back -- ed.] depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer..."It's better to comfort than to be the comforted." Here was the formula, all right. But why didn't it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence -- almost absolute dependence -- on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself of God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependency meant demand -- a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute demand" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

Spiritual calculus, you say? Not a bit of it. Watch any AA of six months working with a new Twelfth Step case. If the case says "To the devil with you," the Twelfth Stepper only smiles and turns to another case. He doesn't feel frustrated or rejected. If his next case responds, and in turn starts to give love and attention to other alcoholics, yet gives none back to him, the sponsor is happy about it anyway. He still doesn't feel rejected; instead he rejoices that his one-time prospect is sober and happy. And if his next following case turns out in later time to be his best friend (or romance) then the sponsor is most joyful. But he well knows that his happiness is a by-product -- the extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return.

The really stabilizing thing for him was having and offering love to that strange drunk on his doorstep. That was Francis at work, powerful and practical, minus dependency and minus demand.

In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.

Thus I think it can work out with emotional sobriety. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety.

Of course I haven't offered you a really new idea -- only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine.

Mind, body, emotions
and spirit are
intimately
interconnected. Change
one and all the others
change.



Exercise, physical activity,
and nutrition.
Treat your body right.



Exercise, physical activity,
and nutrition.
Treat your body right.



BODY

Increase your mental agility
Read, problem-solve;
challenge yourself.



MIND

SPIRIT



EMOTIONS



Exercise, physical activity,
and nutrition.
Treat your body right.



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MIND

SPIRIT



EMOTIONS

Handling your emotions.
Learn new tools.
Raise your emotional intelligence



Exercise, physical activity,
and nutrition.
Treat your body right.



BODY

Increase your mental agility
Read, problem-solve;
challenge yourself.

MIND



SPIRIT

Relax. Meditate.
Trust in something
bigger than yourself.



EMOTIONS

Handling your emotions.
Learn new tools.
Raise your emotional intelligence



Feed all Four

Exercise, physical activity,
and nutrition.
Treat your body right.



BODY

Increase your mental agility.
Read, problem-solve;
challenge yourself.



MIND

Relax. Meditate.
Trust in something
bigger than yourself.



SPIRIT

Handling your emotions.
Learn new tools.
Raise your emotional intelligence.



EMOTIONS

Feed all Four

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and nutrition.
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BODY

Increase your mental agility.
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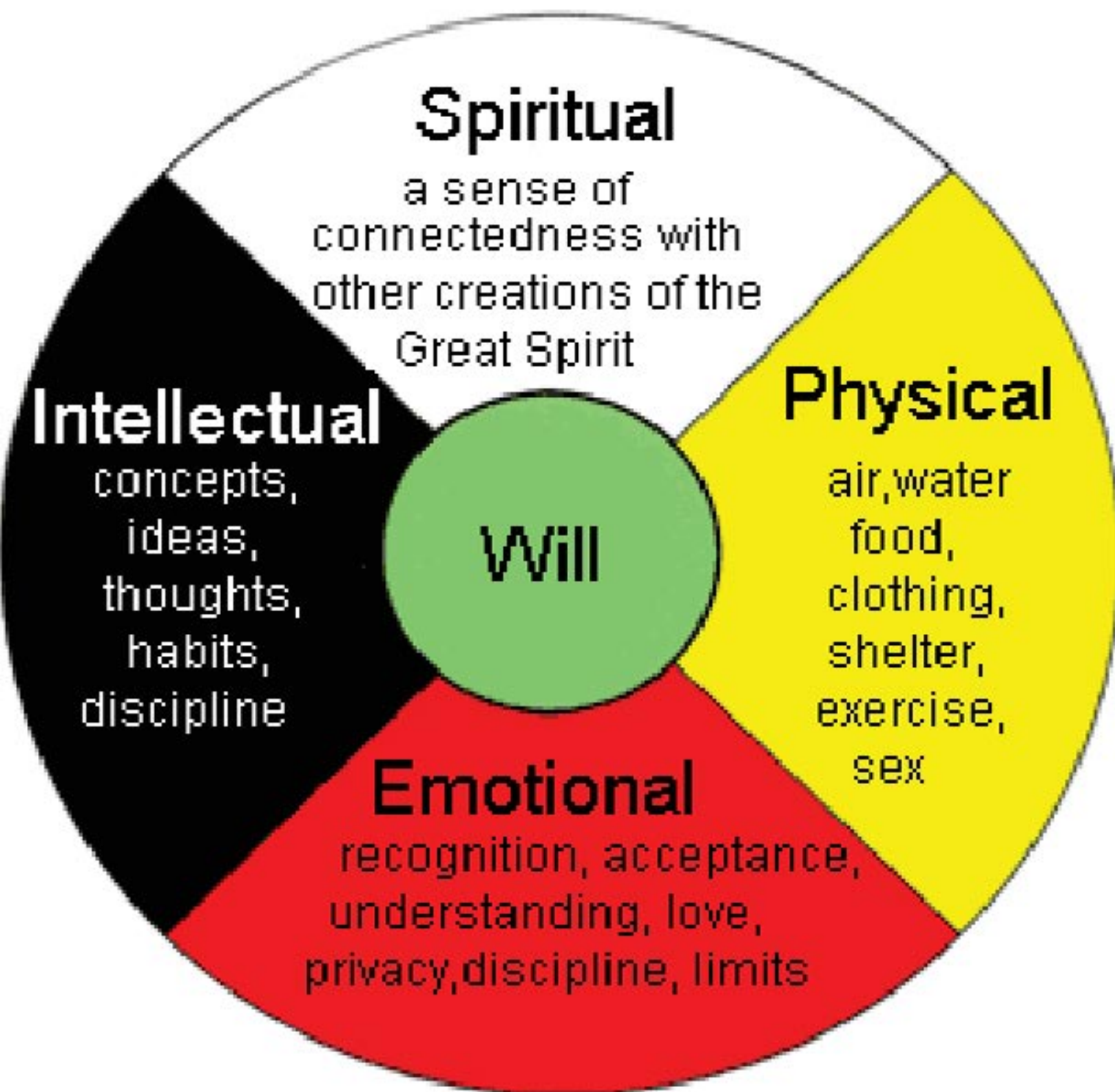
SPIRIT

Handling your emotions.
Learn new tools.
Raise your emotional intelligence.



EMOTIONS

Go into each room every day



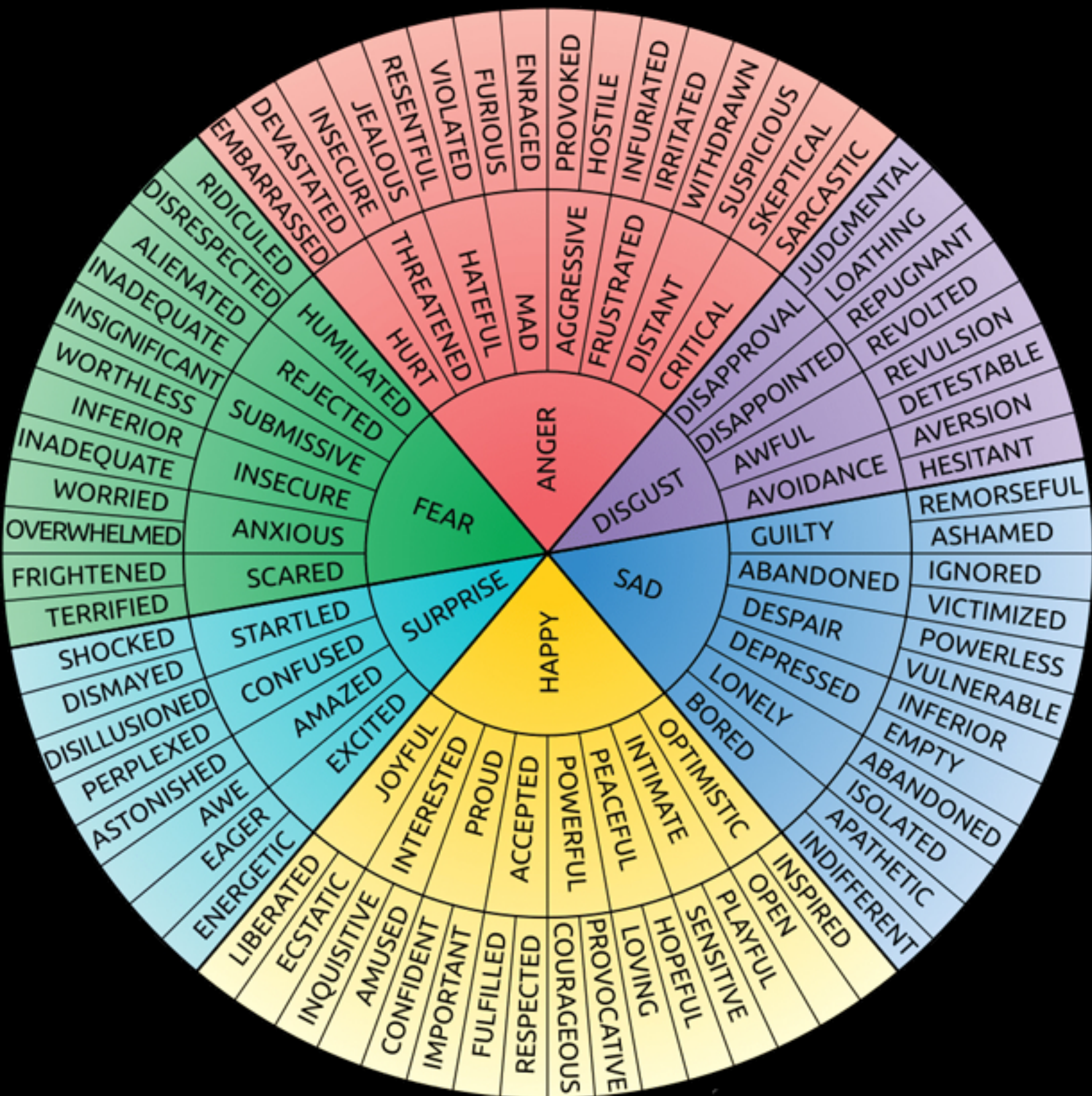
If I can't Control My Emotions...



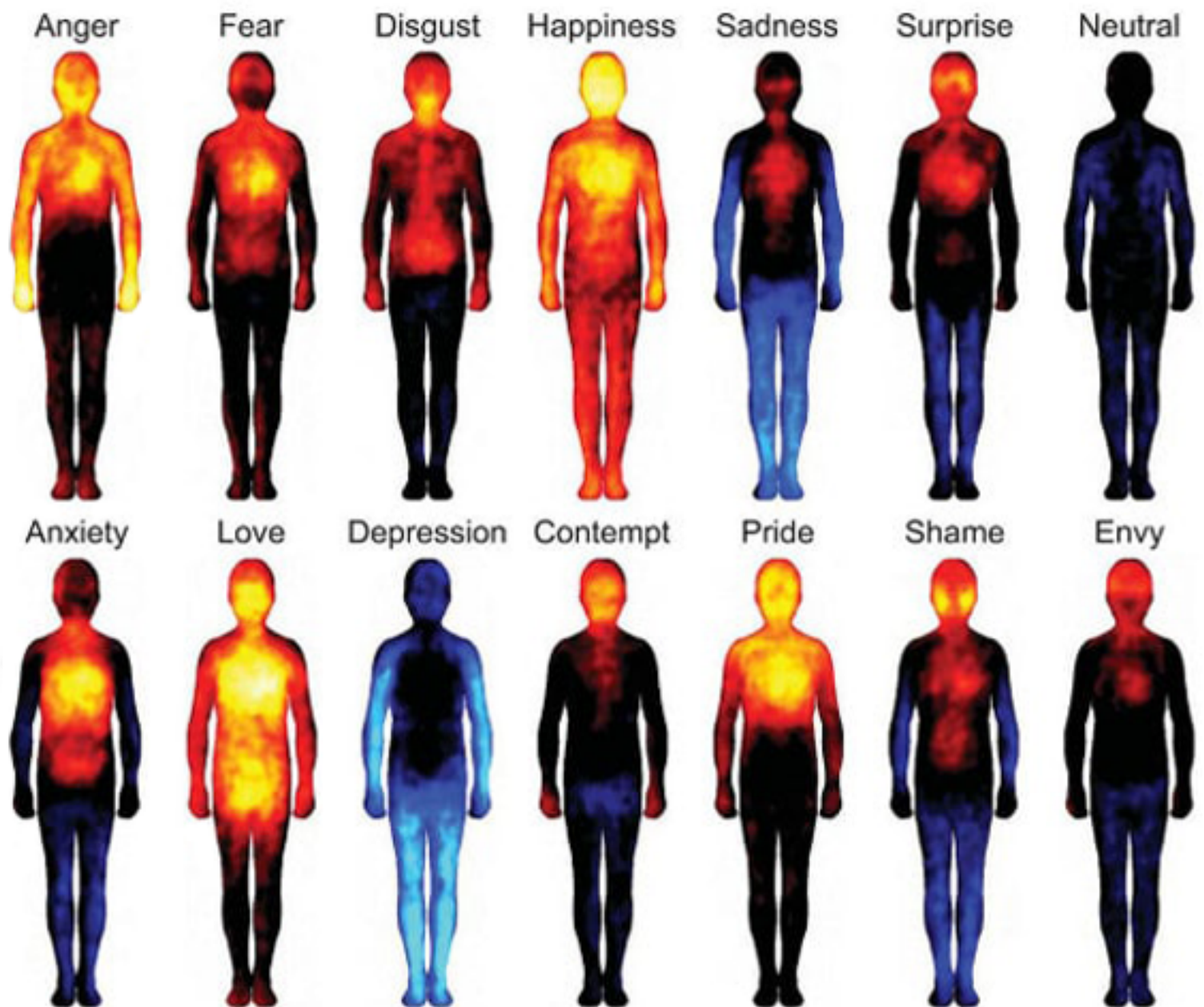
**Then I have
to Control
Your Behaviour...**



Emotions Wheel



Learn to Name What I Want to Manage



**Research Mapping Human Emotions
Shows Strong Mind Body Connection**

6 STEPS TO MINDFULLY DEAL WITH DIFFICULT EMOTIONS



1

Turn toward your emotions with **acceptance**

Become aware of the emotion and identify where you sense it in your body.

Identify and label the emotion

To stay mindful, say to yourself, "This is anger" or "This is anxiety."

2



3

Accept your emotions

Don't deny the emotion. Acknowledge and accept that it is there.

Realize the **impermanence** of your emotions

Even if the emotion feels overwhelming, remember that it will pass.

4



5

Inquire and investigate

Ask yourself, "What triggered me? Why do I feel this way?"

Let go of the need to control your emotions

Be open to the outcome of your emotions and what unfolds.

6



The Gottman Institute



**If you never
heal from
what hurt
you, then
you'll bleed
on people
who
did not
cut you.**

Letting Go of Emotional Suffering: Mindfulness of Your Current Emotion

OBSERVE YOUR EMOTION

- NOTE its presence.
- Step BACK.
- Get UNSTUCK from the emotion.

EXPERIENCE YOUR EMOTION FULLY

- As a WAVE, coming and going.
- Try not to BLOCK emotion.
- Try not to PUSH the emotion AWAY.
- Don't try to KEEP the emotion around.
- Don't try to INCREASE the emotion.
- Just be a witness to your emotion.

REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT YOUR EMOTION

- Do not ACT on the sensation of urgency.
- Remember when you have felt DIFFERENT.
- Describe your emotion by saying "I have the feeling of _____", rather than, "I am _____."
- Notice OTHER feelings that you have at the same time you feel the strong emotion.

PRACTICE RESPECTING, LOVING YOUR EMOTION

- Don't JUDGE your emotion.
- Practice WILLINGNESS with your emotion.
- Radically ACCEPT your emotion.

THE 10 ESSENTIAL TRAITS OF EMOTIONAL HEALTH



STAY HONEST

Stay honest with yourself and others. Personal strength and emotional stability is built on integrity and transparency.



STAY DETERMINED

Find your primary reason for doing the work of emotional recovery and keep it first and foremost.



STAY PEACEFUL

Make every effort to be a peacemaker, overlook offenses, and stay serene and calm.



STAY INTENTIONAL

Get rid of haphazard and random living. Stay deliberate, determined, and purposeful.



STAY GRATEFUL

Remain humble and accepting. Be grateful for another chance to get your life back.



STAY BALANCED

Keep work, love, projects, and people integrated in a finely tuned harmony.



STAY POSITIVE

Keep a positive, upbeat, and optimistic attitude. Smile, laugh, and enjoy your life.



STAY STRONG

Be known for the best attitude, best effort, and best character. Finish strong.



STAY CONNECTED

Stay close to those who support your recovery and distance yourself from those who do not.



STAY HOPEFUL

Remain confident that your future is filled with the promise of good things to come.

Emotionally mature people...

Move on.

Stay in control.

Embrace change.

Know how to keep happy.

Act with kindness.

Take (calculated) risks.

Live for the now.

Accept responsibility.

Celebrate others' success.

Accept failure.

Enjoy their own company.

Know when and how to work hard.

Have resilience.

Re-evaluate their core beliefs.

Tolerate discomfort.

Reflect.

