

CHAPTER 8

Emotions

What Are Emotions?

- Are emotions simply things we feel?
- Physiological changes occur when we have strong emotions.
- Nonverbal behaviors can show emotions and cause emotions.
 - Research:
 - When volunteers smiled, they felt better, and when they looked unhappy, they felt worse.




What Are Emotions?

- Cognitive interpretations: The mind plays an important role in determining how we feel.
- Research:
 - Survey of 5,000 people, 80% described as "shy at some time in their lives"; 40% "presently shy." Both behaved the same way. Label is the key!




What Are Emotions?

- Verbal expression
- In our low-context culture, we can't rely on perceptiveness to ensure understanding.
- We use specific emotion words to represent intensity.
- Communicating about feelings = emotional intelligence.



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Personality



- Powerful force, but doesn't have to govern communication satisfaction.
- Low-threat ways of expression through e-mail, IM, chat rooms.

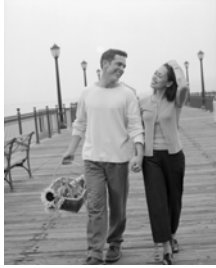
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Culture

- Same events generate different feelings in different culture.
- People in warmer climates are more emotionally expressive.
- People from Southern part of countries are more emotionally expressive than northerners.
- Ethnicity impacts how others' emotional states and appropriate rules for expressing emotions.
- Individualistic-collective dynamics impact behavior within in-groups and out-groups.

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Gender



- **Research:**
 - Biological sex is the best predictor of the ability to detect and interpret emotional expression.
 - Some truth to the cultural stereotype: "inexpressive male" and "demonstrative female."
 - Men less emotionally expressive with feelings; less bashful about revealing strengths and positive emotions.
 - Some men become more emotionally expressive later in life.

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Social Conventions and Roles



- U.S.: Unwritten rules of communication discourage direct expressions of most emotions.
- Social rules even discourage too much expression of positive feelings.
- Reluctance that threaten the "face" of others.
- Limited to the requirements of social roles i.e., line of work.
- Capacity to recognize and act on certain emotions decreases without practice.

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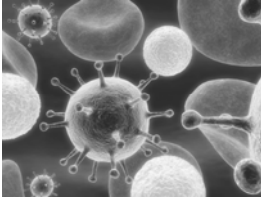
Fear of Self-Disclosure



- Emotional self-disclosure feels risky.
- Others might misunderstand.
- Emotional honesty might make others uncomfortable.
- Emotional honesty can be used against us.

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Emotional Contagion



- The process by which emotions are transferred from one person to another: a “social virus.”
- Process can occur quickly with little or no verbal communication.

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Guidelines for Expressing Emotions

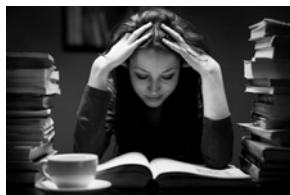
- People who know how to share feelings are healthier; people who over-express can also suffer.
- Key is to learn to express emotions constructively.
- Sharing emotions improves relationships.



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Recognize Your Feelings

- Be aware of your feelings and able to identify emotions.
- Monitor physiological change and nonverbal behaviors.
- Recognize thoughts and verbal messages sent to others.



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Choose the Best Language

- Many people suffer from impoverished emotional vocabularies.
- Improve yours:
 - through single words: "I'm angry!"
 - by describing what is happening to you metaphorically: "My stomach is tied in knots."
 - by describing what you'd like to do: "I feel like giving up."
- Make it clear that your feeling is centered on specific circumstances, not the whole relationship.



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More tips for expressing emotions...

- Share multiple feelings.
- Recognize the difference between feeling and acting.
 - Liberate yourself from the fear that getting in touch with emotions will cause a disastrous course of action.
- Accept responsibility for your feelings.
 - Use "I" language.
- Choose the best time and place to express your emotions.

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Managing Difficult Emotions

Facilitative

- Contributes to effective functioning.
- Certain amount of anger/irritation can be constructive when improving unsatisfying conditions.
- A little bit of nervousness can boost performance.

Debilitative

- Hinder or prevent effective performance.
- Communication apprehension can lead to a variety of problems.
- More intensity.
- Extended duration.

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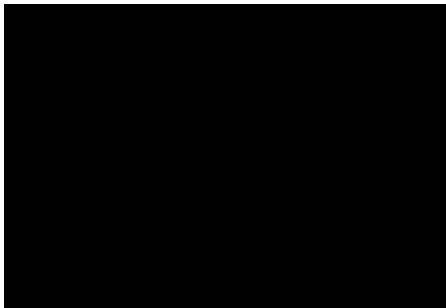
Thoughts Cause Feelings

- Rational-emotive approach: Change feelings by changing unproductive thinking.
- Consider activating event and the consequent emotion.
- Work on self-talk, listen to “thinking voice.”

<u>Activating Event</u>	<u>Thought or Belief</u>	<u>Consequences</u>
Being called names	“I’ve done something wrong.”	hurt, upset

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Thoughts Cause Feelings



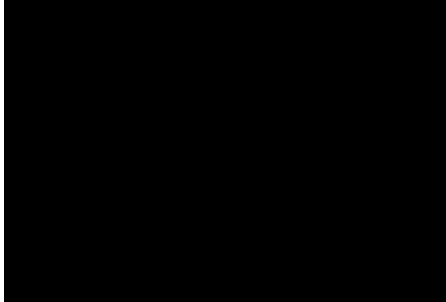
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Irrational Thinking and Debilitative Emotions

- Debilitative feelings come from “fallacies” that lead to illogical conclusions and debilitating feelings:
 - Fallacy of perfection
 - Fallacy of approval
 - Fallacy of should
 - Fallacy of overgeneralization
 - Fallacy of causation
 - Fallacy of helplessness
 - Fallacy of catastrophic expectations (rumination)

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Thoughts Cause Feelings



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Minimizing Debilitative Emotions

- Monitor your emotional reactions.
- Note the activating event. Consider:
 - Specific people
 - Types of individuals
 - Settings
 - Topics of conversation
- Record your self-talk.
- Dispute your irrational beliefs.



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Consider Common Objections to the Method from Readers...

- "The rational-emotive approach sounds like nothing more than trying to talk yourself out of feeling bad."
- "The kind of disputing ... sounds phony and unnatural. I don't talk to myself in sentences and paragraphs."
- "This approach is too cold and impersonal. It seems to aim at turning people into cold-blooded, calculating, emotionless machines."
- "This technique promises too much. There's no chance I could rid myself of all unpleasant feelings, however nice that may be."

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