

Understanding Emotions & Their Primary Messages

Boredom

Disgust

Confusion

Compassion

Sadness

Curiosity

Envy

Fear

Anger

Understanding Emotions & Their Primary Messages

The Guest House

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame,
the malice. Meet them at the door
laughing and invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*

— Jellaludin Rumi,
translation by Coleman Barks

As a *Wholeness Advocate*, my work is to ensure that no aspects of human life is left in the shadows of our unconsciousness. The more we are aware of about ourselves, the less we are driven by habit, and the more we can live **an awake and aware life**. This leads to greater health in our minds, bodies, and souls. These aspects include the scary or unattractive parts of ourselves that we hide, deny, or deflect away from. They also include gifts, talents and strength that we step back from. It includes our humanness and our divineness. **And it includes our emotions.** Every single one of them.

In our society, we are taught early that **emotions are something we must get under control**. We are taught that emotions are distracting and immature. We are taught that being too “emotional” is disqualifying for certain responsibilities or jobs. We are taught that explanations, testimony, actions, or arguments made from or motivated by with emotion lack credibility. That they lack reason. That they are illogical. Even, that they are dangerous.

As children, we are taught that emotional “outbursts” are a sign of weak character, that there is a “time and place” for emotions to be expressed (and this is rarely in public.) But, as if society understands that we are emotional creatures and must express some expression of emotion, we are allowed “go-to” emotions—often dependent on our sex.

Boys are often allowed the emotion of anger and its close relatives of frustration, annoyance, irritation, etc. With this come a greater allowance for expressing a short temper, “lashing out”, playground fights, and other such acts. **Girls are allowed the emotion of sadness** and its relatives — disappointment, victimhood, sorrow along—with the expressions of crying, self-sympathy, and expressions of dependency.

We learn what our emotional allowances are both through the “carrot” and the “stick,” which are exerted by parents, teachers, and other authority figures. The carrot for boys expressing anger is greater respect among their peers, even if it means they get deemed a bully. The carrot for girls is attention and sympathy. As far as the stick is concerned, when girls express an emotion other than sadness (particularly anger) they are reprimanded sharply. When boys express an emotion other than anger (particularly sadness) they are mocked ruthlessly.

Understanding Emotions & Their Primary Messages

Of course, family culture plays a large part in this as well as society. Whatever the go-to emotions are for our family are the ones that we, most likely, find most comfort in as well. Put simply, most of us grow up to believe that there are “safe” emotions for us to express, and “unsafe” emotions. Over time, our safe emotions become our go-to, knee jerk emotions. No matter what life experience we have—an injury, a loss, a fright—we relate to it and respond to it from our go-to emotion.

For example, if anger is our go-to emotion, than we rage when we get hurt. We shout when we get fired. We shake our fist at the Universe at the loss of a loved one. We respond through violent words and/or actions whenever boundaries are crossed. We never cry. We never feel sorrow or grieve. We never allow room for any other response. And so, over time, we become one-dimensional, flat creatures. **We miss out on the entire color wheel of emotions, and get stuck on one response, all the time.** Unsafe emotions, having become unacceptable to us, may eventually become inaccessible. We all know people who “can’t cry,” or “never get angry.” These are not emotionally healthy or whole human beings, yet they can become so.

We were given a large array of human emotion for a reason, and that is to experience them and learn from them. Emotions are not an enemy we should never invite in, nor a friend we ought to become overly dependent on.

Emotions should be treated as messengers, or guests, as in Rumi’s poem. Upon its arrival, each one ought to be treated with respect and reverence, but without fear or favor. They have come with a message, and **that message has the power to take us deeper into our selves, if only we dare to take the time.**

We can recognize that there is no such thing as “safe” and “unsafe” emotions. There are only human emotions. And if we learn how to live in relationship with them, they can color our lives with greater depth, feeling, and wisdom.

But because our relationship with emotions is so fraught with judgement, because we are so conditioned into and out of certain emotions, it takes time, discernment, patience, and a **reintroduction to our emotions.**

Below, I will reintroduce some common emotions **through the lens of Ayurvedic cosmology**, which, simply said, means that I will introduce them through an understanding that everything in the Universe is comprised of the Five Great Elements- see the chart on the next page for a visual explanation.

In Ayurveda, everything that we can see, and not see, in the Universe is comprised of some combination of the elements. This includes the stars, the trees, the oceans. It also includes our bodies, our lives, and our emotions.

Just like the Universe, the goal of Ayurveda for personal health and well-being is to bring about balance. Balance is achieved when the elements are working in harmony with each other — i.e., not too much or too little of any one element.

As you read through the list of emotions, try to identify your core emotions, or what we might consider your “go-to” emotions. From there, consider the core elements you’re working with primarily. This will be key as you begin to work on balancing out all the emotions, integration of new ones, and remedying the relationship with emotions that are out of balance.

Perhaps today, we can all take a little time to get to know our emotions better. To create more space, and a willingness to experience more emotions without shame, prejudice, or fear.

Five Great Elements

Pancha Mahabhutas

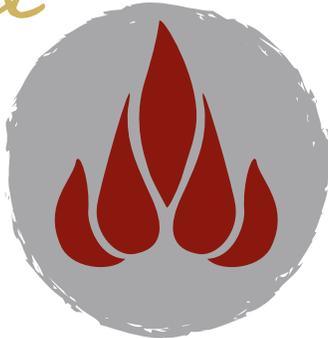
Ether



Water



Fire



Air



Earth



Earth

Manifests idea of solidity and stability. Resistance.

Water

Manifests idea of liquidity and flowing action.

Fire

Manifests idea of light, perception, clarity, vision.

Air

The subtle movement of ideas, velocity and change.

Ether

The idea of connection and interchange between all material mediums, communication & self-expression.



Elemental Emotion Chart



ANGER

FIRE

Anger is an emotion almost purely derived from fire. Like a fire in the real world, anger can bring connection and healing (campfire), or it can cause us to scatter apart (wildfire).



As a fire emotion, Anger is hot and mobile, and can be quite unpredictable. Yet, it is powerful in that it can break up stagnancy and light the way forward.

FORMS

When Anger arises, it may be pointing to a sense of injustice or unfairness.

Discernment is needed to determine what action, if any, is needed. Set to task properly, anger can right wrongs in our personal & collective lives.

PURPOSE

Anger always has a purpose, and as mentioned, discernment is necessary to flesh it out. Caution is needed, as oftentimes Anger is a cover for a deeper emotion, such as sadness, fear, or envy. A wise person learns to understand the messages of Anger.

ENVY



WATER EARTH

Envy primarily has a watery/earth muddy component that keeps us believing we are stuck where we are. So, rather than being inspired by what we witness, which is the possibility, we are kept at a distance by no one except ourselves.



FIRE

Envy also has a tinge of fire in its makeup which can make us laser-focused on another individual or another circumstance—while losing perspective on our own. Suggestion is to "find a way to fire up" some projects of your own, rather than "burn" with envy, which eventually turns to bitterness.

FORMS

When Envy or its friends jealousy, bitterness, or judgment, come knocking, start asking yourself questions about why you think you are not deserving enough, or capable enough, to attain what you want.

PURPOSE

It's time to re-evaluate our life, know what we want and move toward it daily. This way, we can truly feel happy for others and their successes rather than envious. It's time to create your own life and path rather than attempting to follow another's.

COMPASSION

The underlying sensation of Compassion is a feeling of oneness and solidarity.

It must be understood apart from pity, which remains aloof and cool.

Pity is thoughts and prayers; Compassion is feeling and response.



WATER FIRE



Compassion is largely a water emotion of great depth and capacity. Its qualities are soft and receptive, yet, it contains enough fire (heat) for it to see clearly all surrounding circumstances. A powerful emotion!

ETHER



There is also a component of ether in Compassion, especially when it extends from those directly around us to those with any amount of "earth" (distance, time, space) separating us. The heart has no bounds.

PURPOSE

Giving and receiving Compassion is nourishing and revitalizing to our soul. It keeps us humble, youthful in spirit, and awake to all kinds of human struggles.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERISTICS

CONFUSION

ETHER

Confusion connects mostly to the element of ether – a feeling of being “lost in the clouds”, or ungrounded.



A state of Confusion produces thoughts that are disconnected from each other. This is one way Confusion differs from Fear, which has a hardness associated with it (i.e., thoughts are concrete, feel real, often repeated),

FORMS

Confusion can look like inability to focus, feeling untethered, having fragmented thoughts, indecision. While uncomfortable, this is also ground zero for imagination and creativity!

PURPOSE

Ether is an element all about possibility. Try to see Confusion as a messenger about sensing possibilities & opportunities and, when it's time, eventually concretizing them into ideas. Be patient; confusion takes its time.

FEAR

AIR

Fear is an emotion driven primarily by unstable air. As such, it is not “grounded”. It is “caught up” in the winds and movements of the mind. Like a kite set free, it is at the mercy of its environment.

Whereas Sadness is a cool emotion, Fear is actually cold. Whereas sadness has a heaviness to it, fear is light. Hence, the “shivers up the spine” sensations. But air represents ideas and imagination, Thus, Fear can simply guided in a different direction.

FORMS

Synonyms of fear include anxiety, nervousness, worry, paranoia, panic, etc. They are likely all derived from a mind hungry to envision, create, and/or manifest new ideas—a hunger which needs some healthier “food for thought.”

PURPOSE

Fear comes to tell us about impending change, much of which is good for us! Ground Fear with the elements of earth, water, and fire through food, activity, and lifestyle. Then you'll better interpret Fear's message.

SADNESS

WATER

Sadness is primarily water emotion, with some needed earth, for if water overpowers the earth, we can capsize, and even drown.

In its healthy and balanced form, Sadness allows for flow and movement from one state to another. It carries us. It holds us. It nurtures us.

EARTH

Swimming in a lake of sadness, we've got to see “dry land” lest we risk becoming lost at sea. Conversely, too much earth can find us stuck, as in quicksand.

Balance and perspective are key.

FORMS

Whether our “guest” names itself sadness, grief, disappointment, loneliness, depression, or some other synonym or relative of sadness, we are working with maintaining the appropriate mix of the water/earth elements.

PURPOSE

Sadness and grieving are essential ways through which nature and human beings cleanse. Water is also how we are “baptized” in some religious traditions. This is a sacred emotion, and must be treated with reverence.

ELEMENTS



CHARACTERISTICS

DISGUST

EARTH



A very uncomfortable emotion comprised largely of wet earth with a spark of fire. This earth is not in any way connected to the flow of the rivers, or supporting the growth of the trees., but like a barren island, set apart.

FIRE



The key to Disgust is to better use its fire. Rather than directing it "out there," we can use it to enlighten ourselves about what we think holds as apart (different/better than) others.

FORMS

Disgust and related emotions such as judgment, aversion, loathing, are generally pointing us to our recognize our own shadows. What disgusts us "out there" is something we're avoiding seeing about ourselves.

PURPOSE

If honored as a messenger, Disgust can point us to our blind spots, prejudices, and all the ways we hold ourselves apart from others. Any parts of ourselves that were "barren islands" can now be integrated into the whole.

BOREDOM

ETHER

Disconnected & uninterested, boredom is an emotion of ether, lacking the fire to energize it, earth to ground it, water or air to move it. The best remedy for boredom is adding fire (energy) and air (movement).

Boredom doesn't exist in Nature (plants, animals), therefore is it a real human emotion? Often, boredom is a signal that we are uncomfortable sitting with oneself, It might can be a cover for a truer emotion. Time to look closer.

FORMS

When we say we are bored, or feel apathetic or withdrawn, we are probably uncomfortable with what's coming up, and wish to have a distraction. Focus on the boredom with intensity until it evolves into its truer form.

PURPOSE

Boredom, apathy, withdrawal, etc., are all tools the ego uses to pull away from doing the hard work of growing closer to our own selves. If you notice an emotion like this, try to go deeper into the discomfort and see what message might be waiting.

CURIOSITY

Curiosity is an emotion with a youthful, childlike quality.

The opposite of Boredom, Curiosity has a touch of all the elements, which is balancing for nearly any other emotion.



Curiosity is a state of mind most closely connected to the soul itself. Therefore, when you are curious about something, without attachment or aversion, you have access to the wisdom of your soul.

PURPOSE

Curiosity is an effective antidote for nearly any of the previous emotions in their out of balance state. It partners well with creativity and courage. Apply liberally!

FURTHER RESOURCES

For Exploration & Personal Growth

Embodying Soul E-book release!

Mother's Day 2020
embodyingsoulbook.com becomes
an e-book you can buy at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com)

Ayurveda

For more information on Ayurveda, please visit:
www.kerimangis.com/ayurveda-the-basics or
www.kerimangis.com/ayurveda-beyond-basics

Podcast

awakenyourpowerpodcast.com

Blog

kerimangis.com/blog

Facebook Group

For thoughtful discussions, come visit
the Embodying Soul Facebook Group

Embodied Soul Lessons Coming in June!

A once-a-week video teaching series based on Keri's book
Embodying Soul : A Return to Wholeness.