



**New Trends  
in Psychology**

## **Affective Maturity**

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**Abstract:** The evolution of human affectivity is strongly influenced by social interactions, by imitating the emotions of those around us and by life experiences. During development, emotions become organized and become more and more complex, guiding interpersonal relationships and everyday decisions. Psychologist Paul Ekman described six basic emotions, but subsequent studies have shown that they can combine, generating a wide range of feelings. Emotions are an essential component of the experience.

**Keywords:** emotions; emotional state; behaviors; affective feelings; personality

### **1. What Does Affective Maturity Mean?**

Affective maturity is not only about the ability to control emotions, but also about the ability to recognize, accept, and express them appropriately. Emotionally mature people manage to manage stress, adapt to difficult situations and build harmonious relationships with others. Psychologist Vasile Pavelcu emphasizes the importance of empathy, stating that “the key to understanding others lies in our own affective

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vibrations". Thus, quality interpersonal relationships require an emotional balance and a deep awareness of one's own feelings.

## 2. Affective Development in Stages

The evolution of emotions follows a natural path, from simple reactions to complex feelings, marking the development of the individual:

- 0-1 year: Emotions are rudimentary, manifesting themselves through pleasure and discomfort. At 2 months the smile appears as a reaction to pleasant stimuli, at 4-5 months fear develops, and at 8 months authentic joy appears.
- 1-3 years old: The child begins to recognize the emotional expressions of those around him, showing jealousy, attachment, but also the first forms of opposition.
- 3-6 years: Social emotions such as guilt and pride develop, and play becomes an essential means of affective exploration.
- 6-10 years: Deeper feelings appear, such as intellectual curiosity and a sense.
- 10-14 years old: Emotional experiences become more intense, and the need for belonging and social acceptance is essential.
- 14-18 years old: The control of emotions is accentuated, but the affective life is complicated by the identity crisis and first loves.
- Over 18 years of age: Affective maturity is progressively achieved, characterized by emotional stability and mature interpersonal relationships. duty.

## 3. Basic Emotions and Their Impact

Robert Plutchik created a circular pattern of emotions, comparable to the color wheel, highlighting the combinations of primary emotions. Thus, joy and trust generate love, and fear and surprise lead to the feeling of amazement.

Fundamental emotions include:

1. Happiness – characterized by a smile, relaxation and mental well-being. Happiness is often defined as a pleasant emotional state that is characterized by feelings of fulfillment, joy, contentment, satisfaction, and well-being.

2. Sadness – expressed through apathy, crying and social withdrawal. Like other emotions, sadness is something that all people encounter from time to time.
3. Fear – survival mechanism that activates the “fight or flight” reaction. Fear is a powerful emotion that can also play an important role in survival.
4. Disgust – protective reaction to unpleasant stimuli. This feeling of repulsion can come from a number of things, including an unpleasant taste, sight, or smell.
5. Anger – it can be constructive if managed correctly, but destructive if it gets out of control. It is a particularly strong emotion, characterized by feelings of hostility, agitation, frustration and antagonism towards others.
6. Surprise – is another emotion from those initially described by Eckman. The surprise is usually quite brief and is characterized by a physiological response of fright, after something unexpected.
7. Other types of emotions- The six basic emotions described by psychologist Paul Eckman are just a part of the many types of emotions that people are capable of facing.

Emotions are part of our daily lives and influence both our decisions and the way we relate to ourselves and others. However, not all emotions help us develop or effectively manage the situations we go through. This is where the distinction between functional and dysfunctional emotions comes in.

#### **4. Functional Emotions – Our Allies**

Functional emotions are those that help us adapt to reality and act in our own interest. They are natural, they have a clear role and they mobilize us in a balanced way. For example:

- Fear helps us to be cautious and avoid real dangers.
- Sadness allows us to process losses and reconfigure our emotional resources.
- Anger can be a constructive energy when it motivates us to fight for our rights.
- Enthusiasm pushes us towards action and exploration.

These emotions, even if they are sometimes uncomfortable, have a logic and a purpose. They appear and disappear in a natural way, without consuming our energy excessively or blocking our lives.

## 5. Dysfunctional Emotions – When Emotions Hinder Us

On the other hand, dysfunctional emotions are those that overwhelm us, block our actions, or cause us to make inappropriate choices. They are often exaggerated, persistent, and can affect our relationships and performance. For example:

- *Paralyzing anxiety* that no longer lets us act for fear of an imaginary failure.
- *Excessive guilt* that keeps us prisoners in the past and prevents us from learning from mistakes.
- *Uncontrollable anger* that makes us react impulsively and ruin important relationships.
- *Chronic sadness* that turns into a state of helplessness and prevents us from seeing solutions.

These emotions are often fueled by irrational thoughts or past experiences that have not been processed correctly. Unlike functional emotions, which are transient and have an adaptive role, dysfunctional emotions tend to become a way of life, affecting mental health.

## 6. How Do We Manage Them?

The key is to learn to recognize the difference between them and train our emotional skills. Sometimes, a simple change of perspective can turn a dysfunctional emotion into a functional one. For example, instead of saying, “I’m good for nothing, I’ve made a mistake again,” we can rephrase, “I made a mistake, but I can learn from it.”

Emotions are not our enemy, but the way we manage them makes the difference between a healthy balance and an emotional block. Listen to your emotions, but don’t let them drive the whole car!

## 7. Conclusion

Affective maturity is a long-term process, which involves developing awareness of emotions, self-regulation and building harmonious relationships.

Emotions are not good or bad in themselves, but become functional or dysfunctional depending on their intensity and the way they are managed. Through self-knowledge and practicing emotional balance, we can reach a state of well-being.

Emotions are part of human nature and profoundly influence our decisions, relationships, and overall well-being. The key difference between functional and dysfunctional emotions lies in the impact they have on us – functional emotions help us adapt and evolve, while dysfunctional emotions block us and consume our energy.

It is not realistic to want a life without negative emotions, but it is important to learn to manage them in a healthy way. Awareness, reinterpretation of thoughts, and development of emotional intelligence can help us turn dysfunctional emotions into opportunities for growth.

In the end, emotions should not be our masters, but our allies. It is up to us to understand them and use them to our advantage.

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