

About Emotions

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Abstract: The existence of emotional control centers in our heads arouses visions of a race of robots created by “nature” to feel and behave in a certain way. Our conscious self - interested in career, personal happiness or something else - must negotiate a compromise within the nervous circuits between what we “know” and the ancient knowledge, ready “configured” in the limbic system. Would this explain the ambivalences and paradoxes that have intertwined a “model” or a theory of the human mind? In a way, conflicts are inherent in the system; what we want for ourselves may not depend on the development of the species. (Dr. Richard RESTAK, *The Brian, the last frontier*) Mindfulness, in its most general sense, refers to waking up from a life lived on autopilot and being interested in what our daily experiences bring to our attention. (...) When we are mindful (conscious) we live HERE and NOW, we are aware of our own thoughts and feelings, being also receptive to those of the people around us (Gaspar & Urban, p. 23).

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A certain state shows our way of being at a given time. It is the result of our physiology, thinking and emotions, but it is much more than the sum of the parts that produce it. We experience the states inside our being, but all of these have external parameters that can be measured, such as a certain frequency of the waves generated by the nervous system, a certain plus, etc. But none of these parameters can explain what it means to be angry or in love. (O’Connor, 2019, p. 130). The term emotion is on everyone’s lips and is a considerable success, especially for the media and advertising, the development of the coaching field. After centuries of industrial development and capitalization, we find, today, a process begun several decades ago, of directing man to personal and spiritual development. We have at hand countless

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materials about mindfulness, NLP, emotional confidence, how to think your way to the life you want, 100 ways to know yourself, etc. But what does personal development mean?

How do you reach a state of well-being and correct communication with yourself and those around you? How do you develop emotionally? Can I become who I want to be, penetrating the depths of my being, without compromise, but with great goodwill? Can I increase my presence in every pleasant or painful situation, so what is emotional intelligence?

If our minds had only psychic processes of knowledge, life would be bland, we would be like robots that relate coldly to the surrounding reality. But, fortunately, through our emotions and feelings, we live in an emotional universe that gives meaning to existence, a life within normal limits being practically inconceivable without affectivity. Through affectivity we differ from the world of technical systems equipped with artificial intelligence. Within the human psychic system, affectivity is, along with motivation and will, one of the decisive factors for the optimal development of the activity, through the important role it has in the activity of energy resources and mental relaxation.

An emotional component is attached to each memory, almost all thoughts are emotionally grounded, evoking the emotions stored with them when we update memories of people, things, moments, objects, events, so we trigger independent nerve networks connected by each of them. Young, P.T. stated in *Understanding your Feelings and emotions* (1975, p. 749) that: “almost everyone, except psychologists, knows what an emotion is. The problem of psychologists is that the processes and emotional states are complex and can be analyzed from so many points of view that a complete picture becomes impossible. It is necessary, therefore, to examine emotional events piece by piece and in various systematic contexts.

Emotional intelligence is the ability of a person to understand and manage their emotions effectively, to understand and deal with the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence means the intelligent use of emotions in professional and personal life, thus reaching a personal development much remembered today. Emotional intelligence allows the connection with the “I”, every time the person identifies an emotion, a feeling, an emotional state that provides information about oneself at a given time, emotions that manifest through a complex internal system, as real as the environment in which one lives.

R. Schaffer shows in his studies: “Emotional competence is a phrase used to refer to the ability of individuals to adapt to both their own emotions and the emotions of others. It is the emotional equivalent of the term “intelligence” which refers to cognitive functions. (Schaffer, 2007, p. 125)

We can say that people aware of the emotions experienced in a day have a better level of resilience (psychological overcoming of difficult moments) and a lower risk of suffering from depression, considered the disease of our century. We are all born with the ability to experience basic emotions such as joy, anger, fear, sadness, shame, amazement.

In order to reach the state of well-being, to manage emotions, so to personal development, it is important to define and understand what emotions are. R. Schaffer states “we know emotions so intimately that this question seems almost ridiculous. Emotions are a constant presence in our daily lives, but nevertheless science has taken a long time to put them under the microscope. (...) it was believed that emotions are disruptive and disorganizing mental events, which interfere with efficient cognitive operations, which were considered the cornerstone of human beings. While cognitive functions are based on the central nervous system, emotions primarily involve the autonomic nervous system (...). emotions have a well-defined role in promoting development and adaptation” (Schaffer, 2007, p. 125).

Generally, emotion is defined as “a subjective reaction to a relevant event, characterized by physiological, experiential, and behavioral changes.” (Sroufe, 1996). A sequence of responses triggered by the brain automatically to prepare the body and mind for proper action when our senses perceive that something relevant to our well-being is happening (Lindenfield).

Emotions refer to a series of complex, interconnected phenomena, difficult to define or describe, most often occurring in different areas of the body and mind. Paul and Anne Kleinginna (1981) argued that a definition of emotion should refer to all fundamental traits and differentiate from other psychic processes: “emotion is a complex set of interactions between subjective and objective factors, mediated by neural / hormonal systems, which can: a) give rise to emotional experiences, as feelings of excitement, pleasure / displeasure; b) to generate cognitive processes, as emotionally relevant perceptual effects, appreciations, labeling processes; c) to activate extensive physiological adjustments of the initial activity; d) to lead to a behavior that is often, but not always expressive, directed towards a goal and adaptive” (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981, p. 355).

Swiss psychologist Klaus Scherer defines emotion as an episode of interdependent and synchronized changes in the states of the five organic subsystems, in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus depending on its relevance to the body's major concerns" (Scherer, 2005, p. 698), thus referring to the components of emotions (cognitive) (evaluation), neurophysiology (bodily symptoms), action, expressive, subjective component (emotional experience). Supporting Scherer's opinion, Andrei Cosmovici stressed the importance of the cognitive aspect, the relationship with motivation and the significance of the stimulus for the body: "evoking an unhappy episode of my life, a landscape saddens me; while I am eating the ice cream that the doctor forbade me, a concern is expressed about the consequences" (Cosmovici, 1996, p. 224).

Therefore, we can say that emotion is the combination of several changes that occur at the subjective level (experiencing emotion), cognitive (thinking), biological / physiological, behavioral. For example, when someone approaches a barking dog, he experiences a feeling of fear: he feels an emotion called fear (subjective dimension); certain thoughts occur in his mind such as "the dog is dangerous and can bite me" (cognitive dimension); then there are certain changes in the body, such as increased heart rate, breathing accelerates (biological level); behaves in a way, moving away from the dog, for example, displaying a facial expression that denotes fear (behavioral dimension).

If one or more senses detect that something is happening, internally or externally, that could have an impact on our well-being, our emotional responses arise. This perception activates parts of the brain that then trigger a complex sequence of physiological changes that aim to cause us to react and act appropriately. Assassin: the eyes, ears or nose receive a sensation a signal is sent to the center of the thalamus in the brain, which translates it into a language that can be understood by other brain centers the message is transmitted to the neocortex in the brain, where it is analyzed and selected a proper response sends a signal to the amygdala nucleus in the brain, which is responsible for activating emotional responses in all parts of the body. (Goleman, 2007, pp. 51-59; Atkinson, 2002, pp. 49-61).

Our level of mental and physical health is influenced by the diversity of emotions we allow ourselves to experience, counting their diversity and frequency, less the positive / negative valence. Thus, the best strategy for emotional-cognitive development is to accept all emotions, feelings and thoughts. We cannot select our emotional feelings, but what we believe about emotions can influence a calming or

an amplification of them. The human mind can maintain and intensify the manifestation of an emotion. Both R. Schaffer (2007, p. 128) and R. R. Atkinson (2002, pp. 503-506) presents very well the basic emotions and their expressions:

Emotion	Facial expression	Physiological reaction	Adaptive function
Anger	Eyebrows lowered and close; mouth open or lips pressed together.	Heart rate and increased skin temperature, blushing of the cheeks.	Overcoming an obstacle; achieving the goal
Fear	Eyebrows raised, eyes wide open and tense, fixed rigidly on the stimulus	High heart rate, low skin temperature, shortness of breath	Learning about a threatening agent, avoiding danger
Disgust	Eyebrows lowered, nose wrinkled, cheeks and upper lip raised	Low heart rate and skin temperature, increased skin resistance	Avoid harmful sources
Sadness	The inner corners of the eyebrows raised, the corners of the mouth down, and the middle of the chin raised	Low heart rate, low skin temperature, low skin conductance	Encouraging others to provide comfort
Joy	The corners of the mouth brought up and towards the ears, cheeks raised, eyes narrowed	Increased heart rate, irregular breathing, increased skin conductance	Signals openness to friendly interaction
Surprise	Eyes wide open, eyebrows raised, mouth open, continuous orientation towards the stimulus	Slowing heart rate, shortness of breath for a short time, general loss of muscle tone	Preparing for the assimilation of a new experience, widening the visual field

The central relational themes of different emotions, according to Richard Lazarus (Rime, p. 55):

Emotion	Relational fear
Anger	The experience of a humiliating offense
Anxiety	Facing an undefined threat
Fear	The experience of an immediate, concrete and insurmountable physical danger
sadness	The experience of an irrevocable loss
Joy	Making progress towards the goal
Love	The experience of a desired and shared emotional relationship
Compassion	Feeling the suffering of another, with the desire to help

The main tendencies of action, their functions and the emotions that correspond to them, according to Nico Frijda (Rime, p. 57):

Action trend	Function	Emotion
Approximation	Willingness to consume	Desire
Avoidance	Protection	Fear
“To be with”	Access to consumption	Pleasure, trust
Careful	Stimulus orientation	Interest
Rejection	Protection	Disgust
Inattentio	Selection	Indifference
Attack-threat	Regaining control	Anger
Pause	reorientation	Shock surprise
Domination	Generalized control	Arrogance
Submission	Secondary control	Humility, resignation

A. Cosmovici noted that “there are many more emotions than these: shame, dissatisfaction, regret, indignation, sympathy, antipathy, hope, pity, satisfaction, indecision, defiance, etc. There are also emotions in relation to intellectual work: wonder, insecurity, certainty, doubt ...” (Cosmovici, 1996, p. 224).

According to M. Golu (2004, p. 471), emotional behavior evolves in three successive phases:

- a) the immediate, short-term response, corresponding, introspectively, to the emotion itself. They are the result of a relatively adequate reflection of the relationship between the characteristics of the stimulus situation and the internal states of motivation of the subject. Their sign is in full accordance with the meaning of the object and there are no phenomena of inversion or unjustified oscillation.

- b) the secondary response, of variable duration, except for pathological cases, of lower intensity than emotion, but evaluated introspectively differently from immediate emotion.
- c) the persistent effects of emotions, consequences of the secondary response, correspond to feelings.
- d) During the conscious evolution of man, in his usual hypostasis, there are two important criteria for classifying emotions (Lindenfield, p. 42, Greenberg, p. 191; Gyorgy, p. 80, Atkinson, pp. 503-505):
- a) the positive polarity, when there is the motivational factor, the concrete events are in accordance with the goals of the person, and negative, when the concrete situation is in contradiction with the goals of the individual.
 - b) functional emotions, those subjective feelings that facilitate the individual's adaptation to the concrete situation in which he finds himself (they can be positive- satisfaction or negative- dissatisfaction), or dysfunctional, those subjective feelings that prevent the individual's adaptation to the concrete situation he finds himself in (positive - extreme happiness after a success that can hinder the individual's progress towards a goal; negative - strong fear that paralyzes the individual, greatly reducing his ability to concentrate).

Functional and Dysfunctional Emotions

	Functional	Dysfunctional
Positives	Thanks, joy	Extreme happiness that can lead to loss of sight of the ultimate goal
Negatives	Worry, sadness, dissatisfaction, disappointment, regret, regret	Anxiety, depression, anger, guilt, feelings of shame

Dysfunction is considered to be the lack of the ability to adapt creatively to situations and produce new reactions, new experiences and occurs when they are inappropriate for the situation, emotions can not be managed or communicated properly.

L. Greenberg (2020, p. 192) highlights four major sources of dysfunctional processing:

- a) lack of awareness of emotion - the impossibility to symbolize in consciousness an experience, felt at the bodily level, which results from the avoidance or denial of the primary experience;
- b) maladaptive emotional reactions - reactions generated by emotional patterns formed by unprocessed emotion, such as fear of abandonment, shame from humiliation.
- c) emotion disorder- involves insufficient or exaggerated regulation of emotion, such as overwhelming traumatic fear.
- d) problems of narrative construction and in the creation of meaning - individuals cannot understand their lived experience and cannot develop narrative discourses about themselves, others and the world.

Negative emotions, such as anger or fear, trigger automatic nervous reactions by increasing adrenaline production, and positive emotions, such as happiness and contentment, create well-being, canceling the physiological changes induced by negative emotions, restoring the body's homeostasis. Both positive and negative feelings are somatized, so that emotions can weaken the function of the immune system and make the body vulnerable to disease. (Nelson, p. 44). Emotions are strongly influenced and shaped by the current needs, interests, goals and values of the individual. It is important, therefore, for the individual to look at himself in order to be able to:

- *recognizes the emotion, identifying as many emotions as possible from those experienced every day;*
- *aware the emotion, accepting both positive and negative emotions as part of its evolution;*
- *investigate through an open attitude where the emotions in the body are located, how the emotion is felt in the body;*
- *integrate and manage the emotions experienced.*

In Summary, the Emotions are:

- a) a part of the affective manifestations, which generate the subjective experience of pleasure and suffering, facilitating or not the adaptation;

b) can be perceived both outside and inside the individual and is presented in the form of responses that involve the motivational-behavioral, facial-expressive, subjective-phenomenal, action-cognitive, physiological-vegetative levels of the individual's functioning;

c) varies in intensity and valence;

d) the rapidity of the installation and the short duration, distinguish the emotion from other affective manifestations.

You will have a clear vision only when you look into the depths of your soul. Whoever looks outside, dreams. Whoever looks inside becomes conscious. (Carl Yung).

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