

The Benefits of Naming Emotions Accurately

Naming our emotions is a key element in emotional awareness, which is foundational to emotional intelligence and optimal human functioning.

We often go for the simple labels, like “angry,” “happy,” and “sad.” However, this simplification costs us greatly:

- ➖ We disconnect from our authentic experience.
- ➖ We miss crucial data about what we need and matters most to us.
- ➖ We fail to process our emotions productively.
- ➖ We miss key insight and learnings for deeper self-awareness.
- ➖ We lose opportunities for making sense of our experiences.
- ➖ We mistake emotional complexity for confusion.
- ➖ We judge ourselves for feeling "contradictory" emotions.
- ➖ We fail to respond and self-regulate appropriately.

Coaching clients sometimes resort to simple labels when experiencing negative emotions.

When this happens, I support them with this Emotion Wheel, providing an opportunity to go deeper and get more specific.

Author

This reflection tool was developed by Dr. Michelle Watson-Grant. The wheel is from the Positive Psychology Toolkit.

Goal

This tool aims to support individuals in naming negative emotions and moving them closer to the emotions they want to experience.

