

Primary Emotions and Adaptive Response

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Emotion</u>	<u>Adaptive Actions</u>
Violation, attack on self, family or possessions	Anger	Assert, protect, defend self
Loss, separation, psychological injury	Sadness, hurt, emotional pain	Seek support (e.g., crying); withdrawal into self
Danger	Fear	Freeze, monitor, flee
Exposure as having acted inappropriately	Shame	Correct or hide impropriety to protect social standing, connection with others
Offensive, dirty, indigestible object or person	Disgust, contempt	Expel or avoid object or person
Change, novel stimuli	Surprise, interest, curiosity, excitement	Attend, approach, explore, engage
Achievement of goal, task, need or connection	Happiness, joy	Friendly interaction, future seeking of similar situations
Highly valued other	Love, affection, caring	Contact, express positive regard; strengthen attachment bonds

Compiled from Greenberg & Paivio (1997).

When feeling diffuse/unclear emotion(s) or a sense of dissonance inside, ask yourself...

- 1) What emotion or emotions (above) am I experiencing [looking at the above list and seeing what/which emotions seem to fit this/these feelings?]
- 2) Where does this [sad, anger, etc.] emotion seem to be resulting from? What are the “pieces” of the sadness [anger, etc.]?
- 3) Where do I feel this emotion in my body? How do I experience it physiologically? If I imagine it as an image or metaphor, what might it look like? If I simply react to the emotion, what does my default reaction look like. Does it make me want to withdraw, feel shame, want to retaliate, etc.?
- 4) What does this [sad, scared, angry, etc.] part of me *need*? How might I get this need met? Who comes to mind? Who might I want/need to tell this to and/or what might I say to articulate this? If this feeling is assertion/adaptive anger, what boundary or limits might I need to express and to whom?