

## **Emotions: That's the Way the Ball Bounces**

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Emotion can be like a bouncing ball—at times difficult to control and at times right on the spot. Like an excellent pitcher in the game of baseball, learning how to control the power and force of our emotions can make a difference in how we throw a pitch. In the game of handball, the way we bounce the ball off the wall determines how the ball will come back. Awareness, understanding and behavior are key components of well-pitched and well-bounced emotions. Learning about our emotions is one of the most important of lessons that life has to offer.

My guess is that the following situation is not new to you. Say for example, a student knows that he has study and get his homework done. On the other hand he doesn't want to lift his hand from his pillow to begin working on whatever he needs to do. A fierce battle of sleep or study irritatingly becomes louder and louder and he ends up his stuck doing neither. Is his feeling of lethargy excuse/ reason to avoid facing the demands of educational achievement? While this may be the way some people relate to his situation, this may not be true for others. What exactly is emotion? Why do people have emotion? Can emotions really have a powerful influence on us? Let us explore emotions further in order to connect with how they can help or hinder.

### **What is emotion?**

What is emotion? Chuang(1999) points out that emotion is a mentally-provoked and physically-provoked state that individuals are affected by given certain of stimuli. Duan-Wei Yao;Ying-He Chen;Yan-Qin Zhao(2004) suggests that emotion is a regulation mechanism that helps individuals establish, maintain and change their relationships with the world around them. In other words, emotion is a subjective experience being provoked by external stimuli. Experience of emotion changes depending on a wide range of elements including time factors, situation factors and individual factors.

Generally speaking, emotion is classified into two categories — positive emotions and negative emotions. The examples of positive emotions may include being happy, warm, compassionate, proud, hopeful, content, etc. Negative emotions are further grouped into two sub-types: the constructive

and the unconstructive sub-type, or say, the healthy negative emotions and the unhealthy negative ones. The healthy negative emotions may be, but are not limited to, worry, sadness, regret, disappointment, concern for relationships with others and healthy envy. Some examples of the unhealthy negative emotions are anxiety, depression, shame, bitterness, hurtfulness, pessimism, jealousy and unhealthy envy. (Dryden Windy, 1997) Surprisingly, not all of the emotions are bad. In some situations, negative emotions even have positive functions. For example, reasonable worry pushes individuals to take some actions to avoid certain dangers; healthy envy can motivate individuals to better themselves.

In short, it is reasonable to say that emotions are present all the time as long as we breathe. Since emotions are something that we can't get rid of, how to manage them well becomes an important lesson to learn.

### The functions of emotion

As mentioned above, emotion is not something troublesome that always drags us down. On the contrary, emotional energy can be transformed into a positive life force. Through awareness and acceptance of our emotions, we can learn to control and take responsible and appropriate action. Using the baseball metaphor, a pitcher throwing out of control may hit a batter and send him to first base with a bruised body part. The runner is both hurt and may be a risk for scoring a run. A pitcher who is controlled can strike a batter out even better throw a no-hitter. Like a pitcher who has to read a lot of information about a batter, base runners and signals from the catcher, emotions provide us tons of information and serve a lot of functions, such as informing an individual of potential dangers, of the personal boundary being offended, or of being left along without any assistance from the outside. Second, emotion pushes us to take appropriate actions in response to changes in our environment. For instance, we step back when scared; we fight back when mad; we withdraw when upset. When we better become aware and understand our own emotions, we can work toward better relationships between self and our environment. Last emotion assists us to be aware of the relationships among individuals. Observing others' facial and vocal expressions increases our ability to understand their emotion, which in turn helps us manage our relationships with others.

## Managing emotions

It is reasonable to say that emotion is powerful based on what is mentioned above. In some situations, a person may feel that their emotions are easily swayed by others' emotions; and in other situations that same person may be affected by their own emotion. Like a pitcher who is throwing out of control or a handball player who has missed several shots, a person whose emotions tip toward a boiling point can follow four steps to manage emotions and regain power and control:

### Step 1: Take a deep breath

When upset, breath in more oxygen through deep, slow breaths. Increased oxygen levels decrease uncomfortable feelings.

### Step 2: Leave the scene

When persons involved in a difficult situation are upset, leaving the scene for a while to cool down is better than rushing to deal with matters while still angry.

### Step 3: Shift emotions

After leaving the emotion-provoking situation, do something else, such as exercise or other something enjoyable and comfortable. Also a simple shift in attention or concentration can increase the likeliness that something different will happen.

### Step 4: Return to communicate at the appropriate time and in the appropriate place

After sorting out our emotions and regaining calm, we can choose to discuss what happen with the other at the right time and in the right place.

Emotion, like a bouncy ball is energy in the hand of a thrower. An experienced star pitcher can control high speeds and tricky pitches having learned how and where to throw the ball for desired results and winning games. Strong and successful pitchers relate and rely on their catcher as well as read the batter. Pitchers carefully take in a ton of information before throwing a pitch. Managing our emotions help us to read and to relate not only to our own emotions but help us get along with others.

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