



# GUIDE TO MANAGING EMOTIONS

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# The Science of Emotions



Emotions are energy in motion, moving through the body, that need to be felt and released as needed.

Feelings are what's happening whilst the energy of an emotion is flowing i.e. the physiological sensation of an emotion. For example, you may feel constriction or heaviness in the chest when sad, tightness in the jaw or hands when angry and light and floaty when happy or joyful.

While emotions may feel draining at times, they are necessary. One of the most basic examples is that we need to feel fear to stop us doing dangerous things. We need to feel happiness to be able to enjoy life. The more you resist and judge an emotion, the more intense and unpleasant it can become, causing and creating emotional phobia. That's why it is better to accept, release or integrate emotions, which can help transform them into personal growth and resilience.

More often than not, it's the story that we tell ourselves that is worse than the actual emotion we originally felt. This causes us to ruminate about it even more. We need to be willing to stop the blame, self-pity and resentment and feel the anger, fear, sadness, denial, loss, sorrow, or grief.

Both positive and negative emotions can coexist. It's not a matter of one or the other and they do not need to make sense or follow a logical pattern – no matter how much we wish them to.



Our emotional brain responds faster to events than our analytical brain. It is also connected to every area of the brain, whereas our analytical brain is not. That is why feelings of stress, worry, fear, or anger take priority over feelings of happiness and peace.

The emotional brain influences all decision making, thought processes, memories, and present experiences. This means that understanding, dealing with, and effectively using your emotional energy is vital to your happiness levels.

Practising mindfulness and meditation can help process and release emotions stuck in the body. It also helps us become aware of where we feel emotions in our body to start to recognise them as soon as they are triggered, rather than become overwhelmed by them.

The sensations you feel in your body hold the key to bringing awareness to behaviour patterns - transforming stress and generating lasting happiness.



We tend to feel emotions in the body as follows:

- FEAR can be felt in the whole upper body.
- ANXIETY may be felt in the chest and stomach.
- ANGER is quite often displayed in the face, chest and arms.
- LOVE is felt in the upper body.
- HAPPINESS is felt in the whole body.

Fear, resentment, and tension result in the contraction of muscles and energy.

Happiness, joy, and calm result in the expansion of muscles and energy.

These emotions we feel can make us feel physically uncomfortable, for example, a pounding heart, tightness in our chest, feeling sick in the tummy. These emotions can lead to an array of physical sensation or feeling. Emotional exhaustion can make your body feel sore, weak and tired. However, resisting these emotions isn't the solution as that can cause excessive thinking, shallow breathing and muscle tension, which can all contribute to disease and illness.



One meditation myth is that meditation is used to block or repress emotions or thoughts.

Sitting still for long periods, can bring up strong thoughts, feelings and emotions, as you are not distracted by “doing” and being busy.

By sitting in relaxation with an open heart we can bring awareness to our feelings, allowing them to unfold as needed.

Here are some ways in which you can work with emotions in meditation:

- Focus on something like your breathing (i.e. mindfulness meditation) to lessen the intensity of the emotion.
- Sit and be aware of what physical sensations arise, accepting them with self-compassion and just allowing them to be rather than trying to fix them.
- Avoid judging your emotions or getting connected to your thoughts about them, for example, the story that came with them.
- Naming your emotions in the third person can help lessen the emphasis, e.g. there is anger in the belly, there is sadness in the chest rather than using “I am angry” or “I am sad” which can emphasise the feeling more.
- After you have recognised and named the emotion just sit with it and allow it without trying to fix or analyse it (see R.A.I.N. exercise on page 9).
- Cry if you need to, or go for a walk to allow the energy to shift and release – it is much easier to still your mind once any feelings have been given the attention they need.
- Use a mantra (see page 6)
- Try moving up a few spots on the scale of emotions rather than trying to get from feeling something like grief to something like joy in one sitting. Refer to the [Scale of Emotions](#) on page 10 to see the different levels, e.g. try going from worry to boredom.



Scientific studies have shown that repetition of a single word can lower blood pressure, slow the heart rate and calm brainwave activity. Repeating words and thought patterns tricks the brain into thinking in these new ways. Affirmations are a statement of intent, chosen and spoken consciously, to establish a subconscious belief or desire. Using mantras and affirmations can:

- Promote relaxation and healing
- Develop confidence and self- esteem
- Override negative thoughts
- Be used as a tool to create your desired reality

Some of my favourites when I start getting hijacked by my thoughts and the emotions they bring are:

- "I choose peace over this" (Gabby Bernstein)
- "May I be happy, may I be healthy, may I be safe, may I live with ease (Sharon Salzberg)
- "I'm sorry, please forgive me, thank you, I love you." (Ho‘oponopono)

Something as simple as "I am okay" is also a good one.

Mudra means "seal" or "closure" in Sanskrit (the original language of Hinduism and Buddhism). They are hand gestures that channel your body's energy flow and there are more than 100 different mudras with different benefits. Mudras are done in conjunction with mindful breathing to enhance the flow of energy or life force known as Prana. Different areas of the hands are connected with different areas of the body and brain:

- Thumb & index finger – concentration, knowledge, insight
- Thumb & middle finger – intuition, emotions, thoughts
- Thumb & ring finger – metabolism, digestion, immunity
- Thumb & pinkie – clarity, communication

# Mudra Exercise



- Sit crossed legged on the floor or on a pillow or on a chair with your feet flat on the floor.
- Keep your back nice and upright but shoulders relaxed.
- Let the muscles across your forehead, around your eyes and in your jaw relax.
- Place your hands palms facing upwards on your thighs.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Then let your breathing flow naturally in and out through your nose.
- Notice the feel of the air as it enters and leaves your nostrils.
- Notice the feel of your chest as it rises and falls gently with each breath.
- Notice the feel of your belly as it inflates and deflates with each breath.
- Take a breath in and bring your thumbs and your index finger tips together and on the out breath say the words "I am confident and curious."
- Take a breath in and bring your thumbs and your middle fingertips together and on the out breath say the words "I am calm and content."
- Take a breath in and bring your thumbs and your ring finger tips together and on the out breath say the words "I am comfortable and complete."
- Take a breath in and bring your thumbs and your pinkie finger tips together and on the out breath say the words "I am clear and kind."
- Adapt or change the words to what resonates with you.

# Colour Breath Exercise



- Sit crossed legged on the floor or a pillow or on a chair with your feet flat on the floor.
- Keep your back nice and upright but shoulders relaxed.
- Let the muscles across your forehead, around your eyes and in your jaw relax.
- Place your hands palms face down on your thighs.
- Take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth, closing your eyes.
- Then let your breathing flow naturally in and out through your nose.
- Notice the feel of the air as it enters and leaves your nostrils.
- Notice the feel of the air as it flows up and down your throat.
- Begin picturing that with each in breath you breathe in a cool blue colour, the colour filling your throat with each breath.
- On each out breath, picture you are releasing any stuck emotions from your throat.
- Notice the feel of your chest as it rises and falls gently with each breath.
- Begin picturing that with each in breath you breathe in a cool green colour, the colour filling your chest with each breath.
- On each out breath, picture you are releasing any stuck emotions from your chest.
- Notice the feel of your belly as it inflates and deflates with each breath.
- Begin picturing that with each in breath you breathe in a warm red, orange or yellow colour, the colour filling your belly with each breath.
- On each out breath, picture you are releasing any stuck emotions from your belly.
- Was one colour a stronger sensation than the others for you?



## RECOGNISE

- Acknowledge the emotion.
- Label the emotion (e.g. worry, anger, sadness, fear).
- Notice where you are feeling it in your body.

## ALLOW

- Accept the emotion if possible but don't force it (e.g. grief).
- If you can't accept it right now then just allow it and hold space for it, don't try to fix it.
- Avoid resisting the emotion.

## INVESTIGATE

- Be present with the emotion and the story behind it.
- Using your intuition, be curious as to why you are feeling this way.
- Where is it felt in the body – do you recognise this sensation?

## NON IDENTIFY

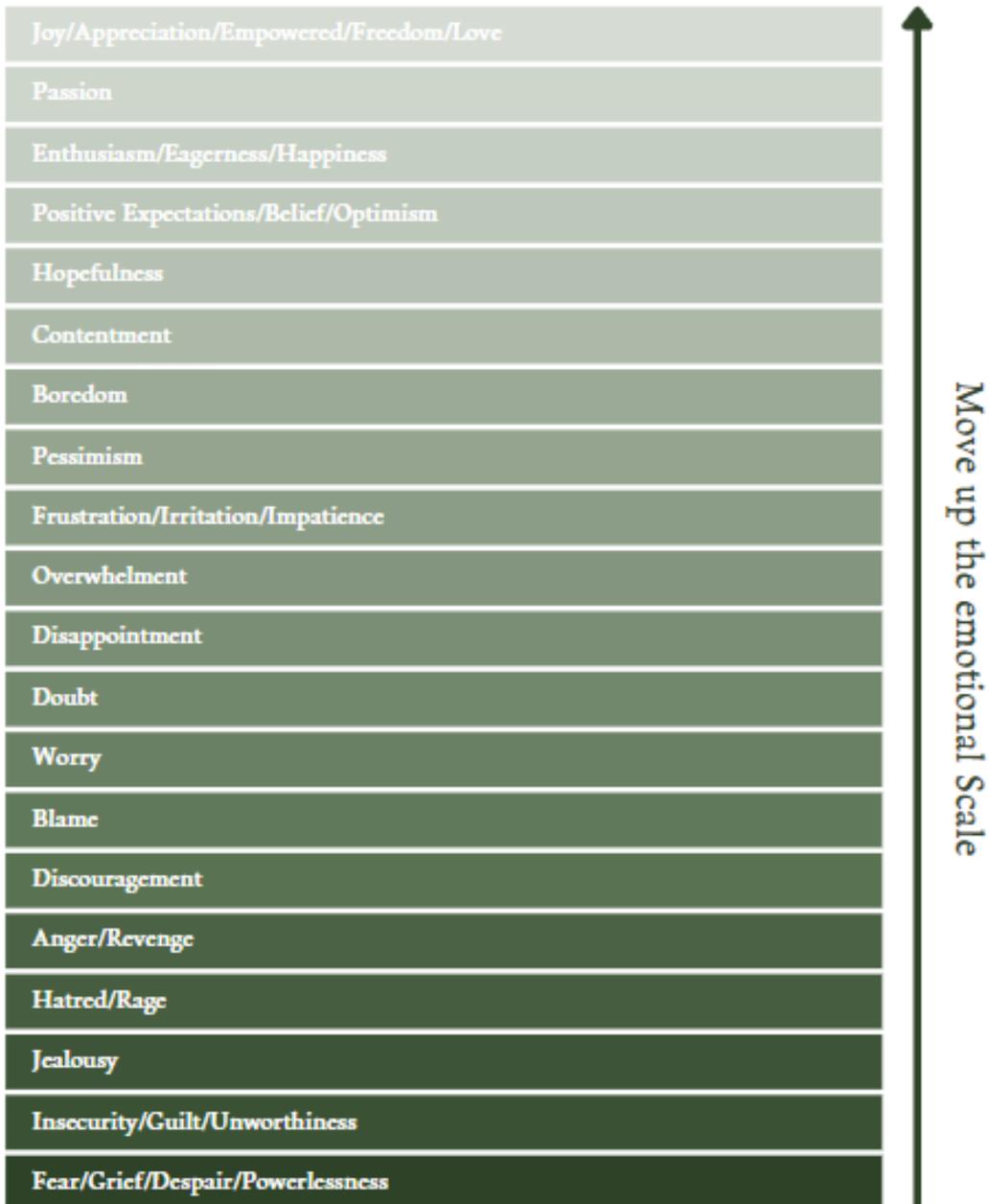
- Know that you are not your emotion (e.g. being angry doesn't make you an angry person).
- Nurture yourself until the emotion passes or changes (moving up the emotional scale with self-compassion).
- It doesn't need to be resisted as it flows through your body – it will pass.

***This has been adapted from [Tara Brach](#)***



## Moving up the Scale of Emotions

(Abraham Hicks Scale of Emotions)



*This has been adapted from [Abraham Hicks](#)*



Listen to my [Releasing Emotions Meditation](#) on Insight Timer.

Enrol in my mini course [Techniques to Develop Emotional Intelligence](#).

[Subscribe to my newsletter](#) to receive my Quick Guide to Mindfulness Meditation.

Contact me on 0438 915 830 or [michelle@meditationsunshinecoast.com.au](mailto:michelle@meditationsunshinecoast.com.au) if you have any questions or would like to know more about establishing a mindfulness meditation practice. Services I offer include:

- Community classes and programs
- Workplace workshops and programs
- 1:1 Coaching
- Online courses
- Retreats



For more tips, tools, resources, and meditations:

- Website - [www.meditationsunshinecoast.com.au](http://www.meditationsunshinecoast.com.au)
- Facebook - [www.facebook.com/meditationsunshinecoast](http://www.facebook.com/meditationsunshinecoast)
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- Insight timer app - <https://insighttimer.com/m3dlt8>
- Online courses - <https://meditation-courses.teachable.com>

## About ME (Michelle Eckles)



Like most people, I began learning meditation during a challenging period in my life. I was utterly overwhelmed with running a business, being a single parent and selling my home. I was taking pain killers for chronic back pain and drinking myself to sleep most nights. I knew I needed something to not just help reduce the feelings of anxiety and overwhelm (without antidepressants), but to also prevent me from getting to that state in the first place.

When I tried to meditate, I couldn't sit still for more than 5 minutes or count to 10 breaths! I struggled to learn through an app or on my own, so I began researching teachers and studying mindfulness and meditation.

As a result, I have completed training and qualifications in Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training, Guiding & Teaching Meditation, Mindfulness for Wellbeing & Peak Performance, and Corporate Mindfulness. Realising how beneficial these tools would be for kids, I also completed Connected Kids, Meditation Capsules, Inspired Kids Yoga, Calm Kids Coaching, and Youth Psychology and Counselling.

I have been teaching mindfulness and meditation to adults, teens, and kids since 2016. During that time, I moved home again, shut down my party business, opened and closed a meditation studio, managed events for high-profile speakers (including the Obamas), and lost that events job due to Covid.

I may not have done all these things with complete grace, but I credit my ability to transition through all of it without falling apart or contemplating drowning in a bottle, to my meditation practice.

It has not only made me feel calmer, more peaceful, and resilient, but it has also increased my clarity, creativity, productivity, and focus. It's also given me the patience and compassion needed to look after two teens and a grandmother with dementia.

I enjoy bringing the practical applications of mindfulness and meditation to the home and the workplace, by educating others, and demonstrating the profound mental, emotional and physical benefits it can have in your day-to-day life.

As well as offering workshops, programs, and online courses, I facilitate mindfulness meditation programs for Mindfulness Works Australia and run community classes as part of the council's Healthy Sunshine Coast Program.

I am a member of the Australian Meditation Association and mindful.org and a Veriditas trained and certificated labyrinth facilitator.