

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGING EMOTIONS SEG. 11

INTRODUCTION: As Haim Ginott was fond of saying, “Emotions don’t vanish by being banished.” Instead, they tend to fester and affect us in subtle but profound ways. In fact, the less aware we are of our emotions, the more power they have over us. Becoming emotionally literate is a worthy goal for all of us. This activity will increase your ability to recognize and express your emotions and thus decrease your emotional reactivity.

STEP ONE: Take time to become familiar with the list of emotions at the end of this document. Notice how subtle the difference can sometimes be between two emotions.

STEP TWO: Each day this week, take time to identify 3-5 emotions you experienced that day. While you can do this assignment at the end of each day, it’s better if you can do it in the moment you are actually feeling the emotion. It’s also best if you can record it using the following format:

***“I felt** (list the emotion) **when** (list the event) **because** (list the reason you believe you felt that feeling in response to that event).”*

*For Example: **“I felt** powerless **when** my son kept arguing even after I asked him to stop **because** it seemed like there was nothing I could do or say that made a difference, and I didn’t know what else to do.”*

Sometimes parents are tempted to write the above example as follows:

***“I felt** angry **when** my son kept arguing **because** I’m sick of his disrespect.”*

Notice the difference between the two. In the first example, writing it this way deepens the parent’s understanding of what they are feeling, and also points toward a solution, namely the need to learn other ways to respond to that type of situation. The second example, on the other hand, actually feeds into the problem even more as it tends to justify the anger, which will likely make the parent feel even angrier.

MONDAY:

TUESDAY:

WEDNESDAY:

THURSDAY:

FRIDAY:

SATURDAY:

SUNDAY:

STEP THREE: Moving forward, do your best to identify in your mind the emotions you are experiencing each day, particularly during difficult moments when you might find yourself tempted to react in ways you are trying to avoid. Then, in those moments, don't try to banish the emotion. Instead, simply take time to observe it and accept it. As you do, remember to keep breathing normally and remind yourself that just because you are feeling the emotion, doesn't mean you have to act on it.

STEP FOUR: Share what you learn from your successes and failures on the Not By Chance website.

Anger		Depressed		Sadness	Indifferent
irritated	repulsed	ashamed	moody	lonely	insensitive
enraged	cross	diminished	crabby	grieved	dull
hostile	incensed	miserable	resistant	dismayed	reserved
annoyed	venomous	despicable	punishing	downhearted	weary
upset	irate	self-hating	out of sorts	oversensitive	bored
hateful	short tempered	terrible	no energy	sullen	preoccupied
unpleasant	rebellious	lousy	sorrowful	disappointed	cold
aggressive	exasperated	desperate	anguished	discouraged	lifeless
bitter	impatient	alienated	desolate	unhappy	uncaring
frustrated	manipulated	pessimistic	unworthy	discontented	uninterested
resentful	contrary	dejected	devastated	remorseful	unresponsive
hotheaded	condemning	self-critical	blindsided	sulky	tired
malicious	seething	self-deprecating		low	robotic
infuriated	scornful	disheartened		cranky	slow
critical	sarcastic	despondent		grumpy	sluggish
violent	overbearing	rotten		gloomy	
vindictive	jealous	stuck		dissatisfied	
sadistic	envious	blocked		guilty	
mean		despair		bummed out	
spiteful		hopeless		troubled	
furious		grouchy		fragile	
agitated				disconnected	
antagonistic				touchy	
				burdened	
				negative	
				closed	

Afraid	Helpless	Hurt	Uncertain	Happy	Peaceful
fearful	powerless	crushed	confused	blissful	calm
terrified	incapable	tormented	doubtful	joyous	at ease
suspicious	alone	deprived	indecisive	delighted	comfortable
anxious	tired	pained	shy	overjoyed	content
alarmed	useless	tortured	uneasy	thankful	quiet
disturbed	inferior	rejected	uncomfortable	ecstatic	certain
panicked	vulnerable	injured	confounded	satisfied	relaxed
nervous	empty	offended	perplexed	glad	serene
scared	pathetic	afflicted	off-kilter	cheerful	blessed
worried	dominated	aching	awkward	sunny	assured
frightened	incapable	victimized	lost	elated	clear
timid	paralyzed	heartbroken	hesitant	jubilant	balanced
guarded	incompetent	agonized	distrustful	joyful	grateful
shaky	inept	appalled	skeptical	fun-loving	carefree
intimidated	incapacitated	wronged	disillusioned	lighthearted	adequate
petrified	shut down	humiliated		easygoing	supported
restless	cut off	insulted		mellow	fulfilled
threatened	weak	miffed		happy-go-lucky	genuine
cowardly		invaded		glorious	forgiving
insecure		bulldozed		innocent	sincere
wary		bullied		child-like	uplifted
apprehensive		slighted		gratified	unburdened
defensive		belittled		euphoric	self-sufficient
self-conscious				on top of the world	complete
					rested
					steady
					centered
					grounded

Strong	Alive	Interested	Positive	Loving	Open
confident	playful	concerned	eager	considerate	understanding
reliable	courageous	curious	enthusiastic	affectionate	easy
sure	energetic	intrigued	bold	sensitive	free
secure	liberated	engrossed	brave	tender	sympathetic
stable	optimistic	inspired	daring	devoted	kind
composed	frisky	absorbed	hopeful	attracted	accepting
energized	animated	fascinated	upbeat	passionate	tolerant
solid	spirited	focused	beautiful	admiring	friendly
mature	thrilled	amused	creative	warm	approachable
	wonderful	attentive	accomplished	touched	flexible
	great	curious	productive	close	present
	giving	amazed	helpful	loved	welcoming
	sharing		motivated	sweet	
	intelligent		cooperative	gentle	
	exhilarated		in the zone	compassionate	
	excited		responsive	caring	
	enjoying		conscientious	allowing	
	communicative		honored	nonjudgmental	
	active		privileged	appreciative	
	spunky			respectful	
	youthful			honoring	
	vigorous			grateful	
	ticked				