



# The language of emotions

One of our challenges when we want to speak about our emotions is having the breadth of vocabulary to express ourselves precisely. When noticing or journaling your emotions, use as varied a vocabulary range as possible. Really take the time to tap into what is happening inside and probe a bit more deeply than simply the basic 6 emotions. Notice how the accuracy of the language gives you greater insights and makes you feel differently about a situation.

As a starting point, here is a collection of words to describe emotions and feelings. It is by no means an exhaustive list. There will be many more words so you might like to build your own list and keep it to hand.

I have presented these words in columns representing intensity. This can help you not only be more precise when you describe an emotion, but also open up the possibility that there can be different intensities at which you experience situations. For example, you might feel anger in all these situations, but the intensity of each might be very different:

- angry with the supermarket staff because the self-service till machine got stuck again
- angry with our partner because they forgot to book those tickets we wanted
- angry with our boss because they did not support us in a meeting
- angry with our child because they disobeyed us
- etc...

So try to be as descriptive as possible when tuning into or describing your emotions and feelings.

## Anger

| soft   | medium  | intense   |
|--|---|---|
| annoyed<br>antagonized<br>critical<br>frustrated<br>grumpy<br>impatient<br>irritated | affronted<br>aggravated<br>bristling<br>exasperated<br>indignant<br>offended<br>resentful | contemptuous<br>enraged<br>irate<br>livid<br>seething<br>spiteful<br>vindictive |

## Disgust

| soft  | medium   | intense   |
|---|--|---|
| apathetic<br>averse<br>bored<br>hesitant<br>indifferent<br>uninterested | critical<br>disappointed<br>disapproving<br>judgmental<br>rejected<br>unfriendly | detesting<br>disgusted<br>disliking<br>hating<br>loathing<br>revolted |



## Fear

| soft  | medium   | intense   |
|---|--|---|
| apprehensive<br>cautious<br>disconcerted<br>disquieted<br>doubtful<br>edgy<br>insecure<br>tentative<br>unsure | alarmed<br>distrustful<br>guarded<br>perturbed<br>rattled<br>shaken<br>suspicious<br>unnerved<br>unsettled | appalled<br>desperate<br>frantic<br>horrified<br>panicked<br>paralyzed<br>petrified<br>shocked<br>tormented |

## Joy

| soft  | medium   | intense  |
|---|--|--|
| amused<br>hopeful<br>inspired<br>peaceful<br>serene<br>content<br>flattered<br>fortunate<br>glad<br>hopeful | cheerful<br>contented<br>delighted<br>upbeat<br>optimistic<br>pleased<br>assured<br>confident<br>delighted<br>valued | awe-filled<br>blissful<br>elated<br>exhilarated<br>jubilant<br>overjoyed<br>thrilled<br>fulfilled<br>proud<br>uplifted |

## Sadness

| soft  | medium  | intense   |
|---|---|---|
| brooding<br>distracted<br>listless<br>low<br>pensive<br>regretful<br>wistful<br>sad | dejected<br>dispirited<br>grieving<br>heavy-hearted<br>melancholy<br>mournful<br>sorrowful<br>weepy | anguished<br>bereaved<br>depressed<br>despairing<br>despondent<br>grief-stricken<br>heartbroken<br>inconsolable |

## Surprise

| soft  | medium  | intense   |
|---|---|---|
| alert<br>distracted<br>uncertain<br>uncomfortable<br>undecided<br>unsettled<br>unsure | ambivalent<br>hesitant<br>perplexed<br>puzzled<br>startled<br>stunned<br>torn | amazed<br>baffled<br>bewildered<br>constricted<br>directionless<br>flustered<br>trapped |