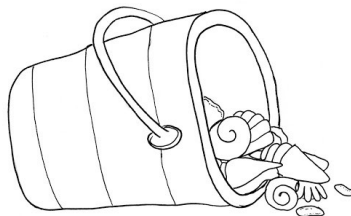


Bead #4

The Ocean of Emotion

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

— Helen Keller (historic figure)



Bead #4

What does it mean to FEEL?

We know that touch is one of our five senses. By definition, “to feel” is to have a sensation of something other than by sight, hearing, taste or smell. But not everything we feel is by touch. “To feel” is also defined as being aware of or emotionally affected by something. Feelings are our emotional reaction to events. **Joy, surprise, anger, sadness, love** and **fear** are what many consider to be the *basic* emotions.



Think of a time recently when you experienced these basic emotions and write it down:

Joy _____

Surprise _____

Anger _____

Sadness _____

Love _____

Fear _____



The entire range of feelings is more complex. When feelings overpower us, we feel out of control. Other times they may be so sneaky that we can't quite describe them. Welcome to the world of feelings! **Perhaps nothing is more important for a satisfying life than to learn how to recognize, manage and learn from our feelings.** Read that sentence again! But, if that's true, why do so many of us ignore, deny or hide our feelings? That's what this section is about.

Recognizing, managing and learning from our feelings is a **skill** and like any skill, it takes time, patience and practice. It may not be easy, but it's worth it. It is the foundation for building healthy relationships with yourself and others.

What are feelings? There are lots and lots of feelings. Look for 24 feelings words in this Word Find Puzzle:



A 15x15 grid of letters for a word find puzzle. The grid contains the following letters:

S	N	K	L	Q	W	Q	B	I	D	S	T	F	H	A
U	G	U	I	L	T	Y	M	E	E	U	R	I	P	S
O	H	B	Q	C	M	P	T	N	Y	P	U	H	L	H
I	A	K	Q	E	O	A	E	B	A	P	H	U	U	A
X	P	Z	U	R	R	R	D	Y	R	O	F	Y	Y	M
N	P	D	T	T	V	U	L	S	T	R	O	N	J	E
A	Y	A	S	O	T	E	C	G	E	T	I	H	F	D
O	N	U	U	S	N	E	N	E	B	E	K	B	W	W
T	R	S	O	O	V	Q	H	E	S	D	S	B	L	I
F	H	L	L	I	U	C	D	K	R	N	I	R	T	A
D	E	T	E	R	M	I	N	E	D	G	I	M	N	M
E	N	O	L	A	N	N	O	Y	E	D	E	G	I	F
D	E	I	R	R	O	W	S	A	D	A	R	T	T	T
S	S	E	L	P	L	E	H	Q	M	Y	I	X	I	E
A	J	Y	U	M	Q	N	D	E	J	Y	J	L	B	C

Decorative stars are placed around the grid: three on the right side and five on the left side.

- | | | | | | |
|---------|------------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| ALONE | ASHAMED | ENERGETIC | HELPLESS | LONELY | SAD |
| ANGRY | BETRAYED | FRUSTRATED | HURT | LOST | SUPPORTED |
| ANNOYED | CHEERFUL | GUILTY | IMPORTANT | MAD | TIMID |
| ANXIOUS | DETERMINED | HAPPY | INSECURE | NERVOUS | WORRIED |

Some feelings are more pleasant to feel than others. Obviously if you are happy, cheerful, energetic and supported, you'd want to feel that way often. But, if you're feeling ashamed, insecure, frustrated or betrayed, you'd probably want to ignore that feeling, try to make it go away or argue with it. But the funny thing about feelings is the more you try to bury or hide them, the bigger and louder they seem to get.

Our feelings can change quickly throughout the day.

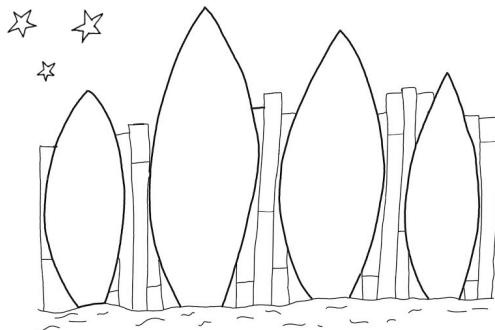
Read this story and circle every feeling word:

Morgan woke up tired and sad. She didn't sleep well because she said something mean to her best friend, Tessa, and felt guilty.

Annoyed, she dragged herself to the breakfast table and was happy to see that her dad hadn't left for work yet. She was surprised when he said he was taking the day off so they could spend a day together at the beach.

She used to love the beach but was fearful about swimming in the ocean after getting recently caught in a fast current. Morgan was excited when her dad suggested she bring a friend, but anxious about whether Tessa would want to go. Nervously, she called Tessa and was relieved when she said "I know you didn't mean what you said last night.

Let's forget about it." Cheerfully, they packed the car anticipating a restful day ahead. At the beach, Morgan was determined to overcome her fear of swimming and bravely walked into the water. She felt supported when Tessa pointed out the lifeguards and promised to stay with her every moment. The water was calm and after a few minutes, her confidence returned as she swam freely. She was proud of herself! Morgan and Tessa were happy and content enjoying the ocean for over an hour. Soon, it was time for a break, lunch and a nap under the hot sun.



How many feeling words did you find?

_____ ☆ ☆
☆

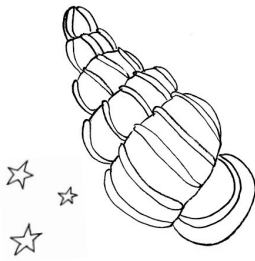
Have you ever had a day where your feelings changed quickly?
Write a story about that time, describing the feelings you experienced:

Just the other day ... _____



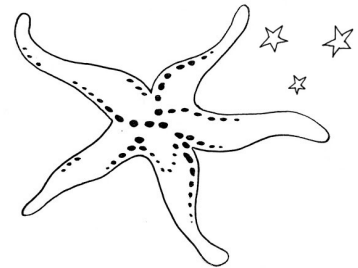






Think about why it is important to name and recognize your feelings. Consider what happens when you resist, deny or ignore your true inner feelings. This is like trying to keep a beach ball under water. Eventually feelings surface and when they do, they may explode if they've been forced into hiding! Fear of something is often the cause of trying to ignore, deny or hide your feelings.

Imagine what would happen if instead of being afraid of your feelings, you learned to experience them. Try thinking of your feelings as a close friend who is sharing precious secrets with you. Hmmm ... If a close friend was telling you about something important that just happened, and how it made her feel, you wouldn't ignore her would you? Treat yourself with the same respect and kindness!

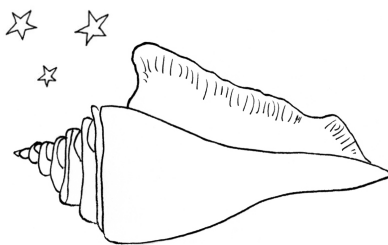


Learning how to get in touch with and really feel or experience your true inner feelings takes practice. Here are some helpful tips:

- **It's essential to get out of your head** (thoughts) and go into your heart/body to really get in touch with your true feelings.
- **Don't try to judge or change your feelings.** There are a number of ways we do this:
 - "I shouldn't be feeling this way."
 - "It's stupid to feel this way."
 - "There's no reason to feel _____."
 - "What's wrong with me that I always feel this way?"
- **One of the most helpful things we can do** is to name our feelings.

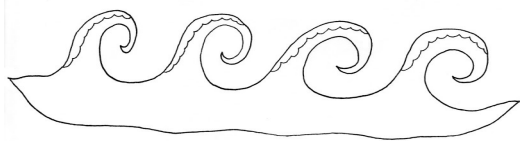
For example:

- I feel **excited** to get a part in the school play.
- I feel **jealous** that Madeline got the latest cell phone.
- I feel **disappointed** and **angry** that I can't go on the class trip.



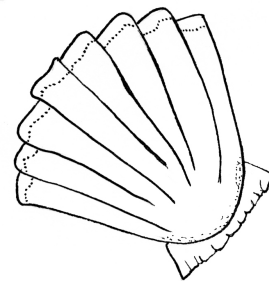
- **Let your feelings speak to you.** Consider them an amazing, wise voice that you own. Write, journal, draw, or move your body (dance, run, swim, etc.) to do whatever is helpful to YOU to encourage the feeling to come out.

- **When you are feeling something intense**, take time to sit quietly, breathe deeply and listen to what that feeling has to say.
- **Ask your body what it's trying to tell you.** What is the feeling in response to? It's very likely that a strong feeling of fear is your "reptilian brain" doing its job of worrying.
- **It might be helpful to journal** after listening to your feelings. Or, talk with a close friend, relative or trusted adult. We can learn a lot from our feelings, but sometimes need help to understand or "process" them.
- **If you are feeling a strong emotion** and can't look "inward," it may also be helpful to shift your outer focus. Use your five senses to notice what is happening around you. Listen to background noises, smell the air or stare at the beautiful tree outside the window that you've never really noticed before. The goal is NOT to mask or avoid your feelings but just to give your brain a break and shift its attention to something else.
- **Notice patterns in your feelings.** Perhaps you feel anxious or jealous around certain people. Or are tired and lonely at the same time each day. Have you been getting adequate sleep and eating healthy foods?
- **Most of all, be compassionate,** loving and kind towards yourself. Your brain and body are going through some magnificent changes. Learn to relax, smile, breathe and thank your body for all it does for you!



"Let's not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives and we obey them without realizing it."

— Vincent van Gogh
(artist)



When you are feeling a strong emotion, try this:

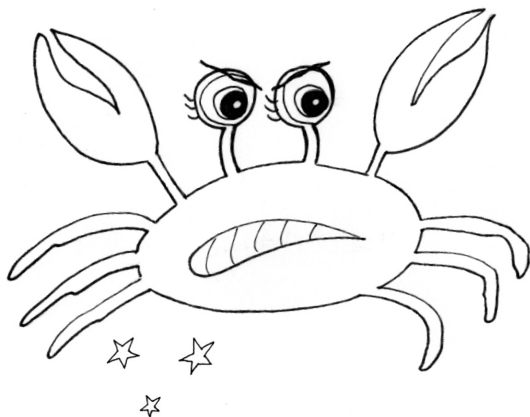
- **Sit quietly** and take a few deep breaths to get “centered.”
- **It might be helpful** to picture yourself in a peaceful, happy place – floating on a raft, lying in the sun, curled up with your pet, sitting in front of a fireplace, or whatever brings you intense joy.
- **When a strong feeling comes up**, welcome it, say hello and name it. If you can’t name it, simply be aware of it.
- **Use your imagination** to describe how it feels. For example, it may feel like a wet blanket, a hot ball of fire, a spinning top or a sad, rag doll.
- **Give it space to just be there.** Breathe! Notice if it feels less intense after doing this.
- **Be curious.** What is the feeling there to teach you or tell you?
- **Know that your feelings** are a PART of you. They are not ALL of you. For example, today you might feel furious with your best friend. That’s OK. Feel furious. Ask yourself “Why?” and learn from it.

“Feelings are much like waves.
We can’t stop them from
coming but we can choose
which ones to surf.”

— Jonatan Martensson
(philosopher)



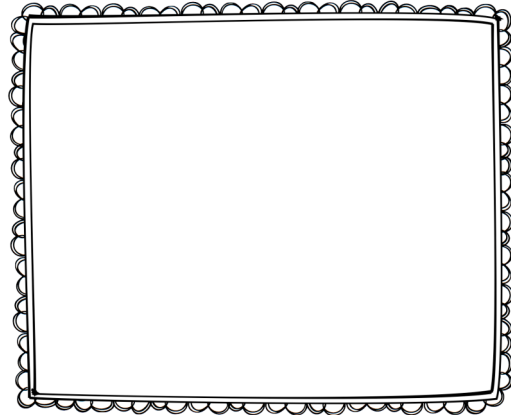
You may not find good examples or role models of how to get in touch with your feelings and emotions in our culture. In fact, it can be so hard or painful that many people cover up, deny or mask their negative feelings such as failure, inadequacy or stress, etc., by destructive behaviors such as impulsive shopping, overeating, and overworking.



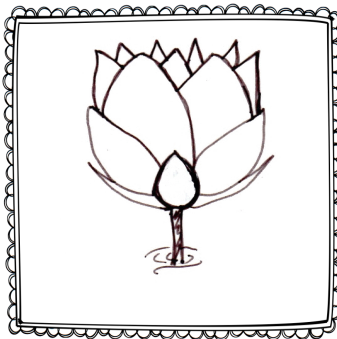
If you ever find yourself thinking about engaging in a destructive behavior, it may be because you don’t want to deal with your feelings. An adult can help you avoid the pain of doing that. *Please* ask your parents, school counselor or any other trusted adult to help you! Destructive behaviors can have really negative consequences for a long time to come. So please pay attention to those negative thoughts and behaviors, and seek help when needed because that is part of being kind and respectful to yourself.

Journal Activity

Go back to the beginning of this section where you wrote about times you experienced the six basic emotions. Pick one emotion that you can recall in great detail. Remember what it felt like and use the box on the right to record what you experienced in words or by drawing a picture.



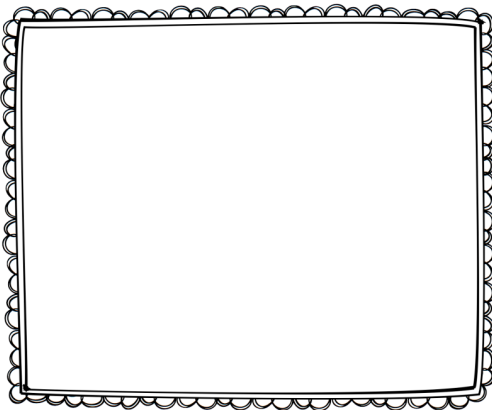
Now, let's try to go a little deeper. The beautiful lotus flower (see the box at the left) grows in the muddy, murky waters of a pond. The flower grows despite the yucky conditions, until it pushes through the surface and blooms! In many cultures and religions, a lotus is a symbol of purity, awakening, potential and rebirth.



Sit quietly and breathe deeply for a few moments. Picture a closed lotus bud and stem underwater as you recall the same experience you wrote about above. Now, picture the flower as it starts to emerge and observe each petal gradually unfolding to reveal a lotus in full bloom. (See the box on the right.) As each petal unfolds, feel your experience in detail using all five senses to notice what was

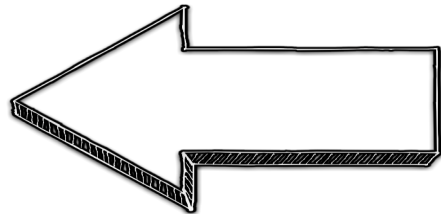


happening around you. (Did you hear the gentle water splashing? Did you feel a soft breeze blow past you?)



In this relaxed state, notice the difference between a thought in your head and a feeling in your body. See if your feelings have anything new to share with you. Record them in the box to the left using words or pictures.

PICK ONE OF
THESE FEELINGS

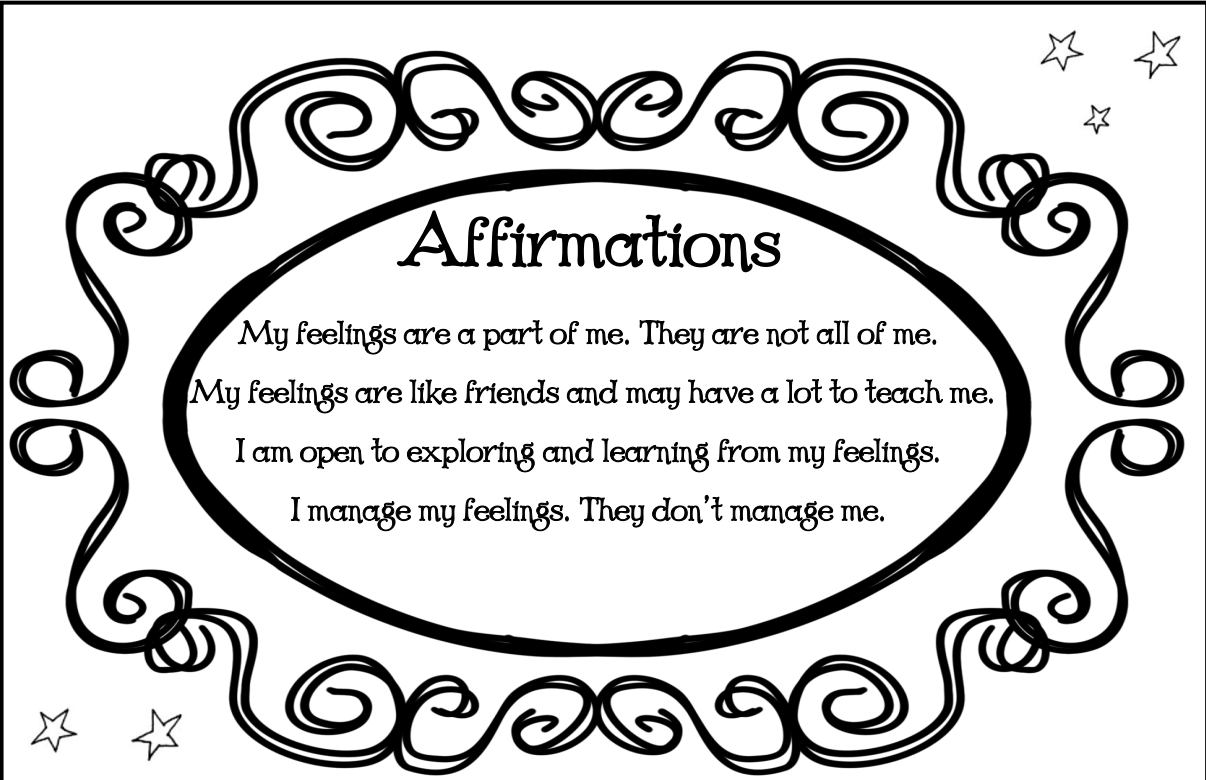


PROUD
CAPABLE
THANKFUL
PLAYFUL

Recall a time when you felt that emotion – not because of something you did or something that happened, but just because you're you.

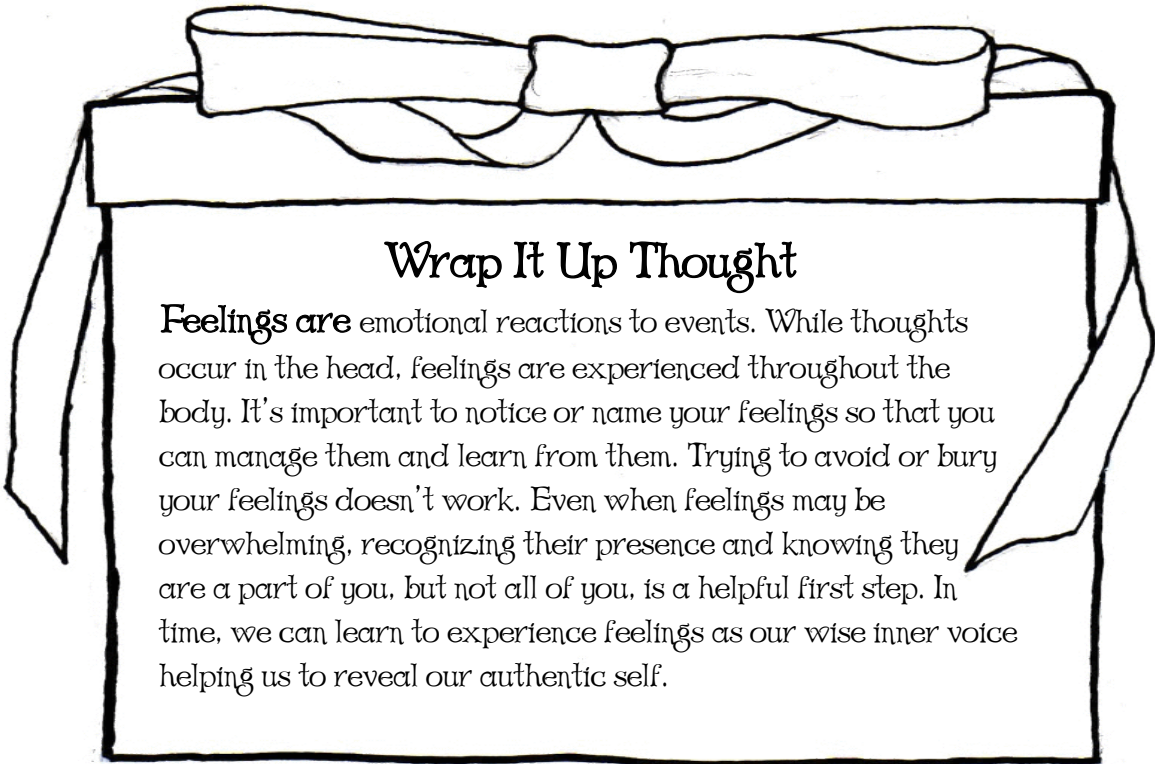
Here's an example: You may feel proud and capable after winning an award but have you ever felt proud and capable just because of who you are? You are whole and perfect and magnificent just as you are.

Know that you don't need external events to experience wonderful feelings!



Affirmations

My feelings are a part of me. They are not all of me.
My feelings are like friends and may have a lot to teach me.
I am open to exploring and learning from my feelings.
I manage my feelings. They don't manage me.



Wrap It Up Thought

Feelings are emotional reactions to events. While thoughts occur in the head, feelings are experienced throughout the body. It's important to notice or name your feelings so that you can manage them and learn from them. Trying to avoid or bury your feelings doesn't work. Even when feelings may be overwhelming, recognizing their presence and knowing they are a part of you, but not all of you, is a helpful first step. In time, we can learn to experience feelings as our wise inner voice helping us to reveal our authentic self.

Bead #4

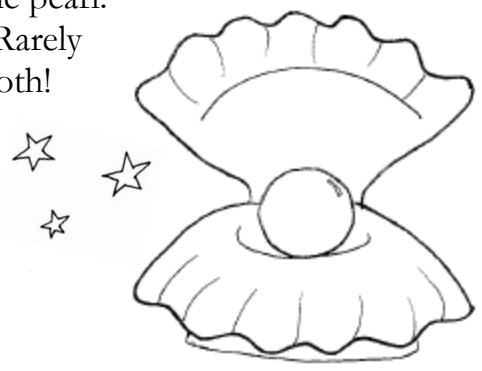
Do you know where pearls come from?

Most jewelry is made out of precious metals and gems such as gold, silver, turquoise, sapphires and diamonds that have been mined from the earth.

Pearls are different They are found in live mollusks, a group of ocean-dwelling animals that includes oysters, clams and mussels. The most common pearl-making mollusk is the oyster, but pearls are very rare. Oysters have a hard shell to protect them, but if a grain of sand or food particle slips into the shell, it irritates the lining. The animal feels the pain of the foreign object and coats it with layers of the same minerals used to build its shell. This happens over and over until it eventually forms a pearl!

In some ways, that's how people are. Things happen in life that cause us pain and we react to it. The oyster's natural reaction is to cover up the irritant to protect itself. What is your defense system? Humans don't produce pearls and for good reason. It's almost never a good idea to cover up a painful feeling.

Here's another lesson from the pearl. Authentic pearls are not perfect. Rarely are they perfectly round and smooth!



explore, embrace, empower

