# What emotions are for

What each emotion tells you and what it gets you ready to do.

Emotions are fast signals that tell you something matters and get your body ready to respond. Having them is not a weakness or a fault.

| Emotion | What it is telling me | What it pushes me to do |
|---|---|---|
| **Fear** | Something may be dangerous | Escape, avoid, freeze, get ready |
| **Anger** | A boundary has been crossed, or something is unfair | Stand up, push back, protect |
| **Sadness** | I have lost something that matters | Slow down, withdraw, seek comfort |
| **Guilt** | I have acted against my own values | Put it right, apologise |
| **Shame** | I fear being rejected or seen as less | Hide, or try to repair my standing |
| **Disgust** | Something could be harmful or contaminating | Move away, reject |
| **Joy** | This is good for me | Do more of it, share it |
| **Love** | This person or thing matters to me | Move closer, care, protect |

## Three things emotions do

1. **They inform.** A feeling points to something that needs attention.
2. **They motivate.** Each emotion comes with an urge to act.
3. **They communicate.** Faces, voices and posture tell other people how we are, faster than words.

## When emotions cause trouble

- The signal is too strong for the situation.
- The feeling fits an old situation better than the present one.
- We act on the urge without checking the facts.
- We push the feeling down, and it comes back stronger or sideways.

## Noticing a feeling without acting on it

You can take in what a feeling is telling you without doing what it urges. Ask: "What is this telling me? Does it fit the facts? What do I want to do about it?"

> **Note**
> No emotion is bad. Some are painful, but each one has a purpose.

**My notes and questions**

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