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Empathy VI – Security

Empathy building is self-building. It starts at the bottom.

> "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults."
> — **Fredrick Douglas**

We seem to have basic emotions. I say "seem" because emotions are poorly defined. There's no way to be certain that we experience the same emotions. It is strange that we simply assume we share similar emotions when we clearly do not. We say we do, and at a superficial level, we act like we do, but that's mostly because we've been trained to react similarly, and we copy each other relentlessly.

Much of society is based on the fiction of like-mindedness. Much of the unbridgeable gulf that separates people is predicated on the illusion that we manage the same feelings. In managing feelings and social presentations, the easiest thing to do is follow the simplest, most salient feelings. In our society, that feeling is selfishness built on fear, need, and isolation. Built, in fact, on our deep feeling that we don't share similar, deep feelings with anyone.

If we actually knew our feelings, could communicate our feelings, and could share our feelings, then not only would we feel less isolated, but we would have a basis of understanding. We could start to

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trust each other beyond the simple world of "this is mine and that is yours." If we understood our emotions, then we could control, apply, compare, rely and draw on a common understanding, and we could become allies. Right now, our allegiances are thin to very thin.

We communicate our emotions using stories, and we understand each other based on the stories we agree on. The stories are built of words, pictures, and associations. They're built on other stories that elicit the emotional pictures we're communicating. We use words to label the result and the underlying emotions. We give names to the stories and we put those stories in the dictionary.

How To Learn Emotion

If you want to change, whether because something is pushing you or pulling you, you'll need something in you to change. You'll need to change your story. You'll have to let something go. Feeling secure is the place to start. It's a place from which you can judge what you can let go.

We approach our stories intellectually, investing in what makes sense. In truth, not much does make sense when you know the full details, so we simplify. Reinforcing our emotions is how we simplify because it allows us to go right to how we feel. Once you've decided how you're going to feel, then you can interpret most any story in a way that takes you to the destination of how you feel.

Emotions are memories of how you felt. You can use words to recall or create a situation that triggers a feeling, but words alone are not emotions and can't substitute for them. It is not the story that's emotional, it's the emotions triggered by the story.

In order to learn emotions you must experience them, or you must recall that you once experienced them. It's possible, but I think it unlikely, that you can willfully create experiences that you never had, but it's worth considering.

It is possible that we do this naturally in a less obvious form. It is possible that we amplify and recombine feelings to arrive at new feelings. I'm not certain if this really results in a new emotion, or just a more complex combination. It's like our perception of flavors: how many do we perceive, and can we create new ones?

There is this thing called "Theory of Mind," which refers to your ability to understand how you see yourself and others. There is no one Theory of Mind among us, and our abilities differ. Not all of us will be equally adept at learning emotions, nor will there be any common baseline for what we understand to be the emotions of others.

One thing seems clear, to arrive at a new emotion or to amplify an existing emotion, you must dig into memory and re-experience feelings and associations. To do this and remain intact, you must have some stability. When you stop thinking—if you do or can stop thinking—you need to be in a stable and familiar state of mind to which you can return.

Trance

Trance is an alternate state of reality. In a trance state you can be out of touch with the normal and in touch with the abnormal. Normal is not the same as real, and what's abnormal is not false, it's only different from what we expect. A trance state is a state of personal reality that can be, and often is, more real than what others experience, or what you normally experience yourself.

Trance is the ideal state in which to explore emotions. That's probably why we do most of our emotional explorations while dreaming. Dreams are where we put together what we feel about what we've experienced in a holistic and atemporal way. We conglomerate feelings from distantly related times, and we disassemble present and past memories into new categories. We may even create new categories and arrive at new understanding in the process.

We don't remember much about our dreams, but we can learn to remember more. If you do, then you will find dreams affect your emotions. You become moody at some times and emotionally robust at others. Working with dreams is emotional work that most people find difficult.

We do the work in our sleep where emotions are recast and manipulated, but it's done subconsciously. Like patrons at a library, we only know what's in the collection when we check something out.

Here, we'll use self-hypnosis in a program to become more empathetic. The exercise is to become more adept at managing, exploring, and exposing emotions. I've created the audio piece called "Security" as an exploration of stability. To clean off the emotional stage. To put down the tape like actors use in order to know where to stand. To give ourselves a place to work from.

Listen to the self-hypnosis audio *Security.*

https://mindstrengthbalance.substack.com/p/security-induction

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