

Developing a feeling vocabulary

Sharon Lind

Reprinted with permission from the Davidson Institute for Talent Development. <http://www.ditd.org>

One of the most important asset emotionally intense people, and those who live and work with them, need to develop is an extensive feeling vocabulary. Not being able to ACCURATELY articulate (in words or through actions, music, art, movement, journaling, etc) our and others' feelings can lead to frustration and a reluctance to communicate. Learning the nuances of the expression of emotion leads to validation of feelings and it gives partners, parents, friends, and siblings the language to help the intense person to recognize, accept, express and understand their myriad of feelings.

Here are a number of activities that help to increase a feeling vocabulary. Try these and then have your family create its own.

- Place a list of feeling words on the refrigerator to pique curiosity (see the following list)
- Choose a feeling word for the day – jointly look it up in the dictionary and be sure everyone in the family is now familiar with its meaning
- Chose a feeling word and act out how that might look; draw a picture of the feeling; create a dance that expresses the feeling, etc.
- Pick a word and find all the synonyms you can for it. Talk about how the feelings differ. For example:

Possible Synonyms for ANGRY	Possible Synonyms for HAPPY
acrimonious	blissful
angry	chipper
annoyed	contented
choleric	delighted
enraged	ecstatic
furious	elated
incensed	euphoric
inflamed	exhilarated
infuriated	glad
irate	happy
irked	jolly
irritated	jovial
mad	joyful
miffed	merry
provoked	pleased
resentful	rapturous
upset	thrilled

- Pick a feeling, find all the synonyms, and then place them in order of intensity from mild to intense. For example:



- REMEMBER feelings are subjective – it is possible to have three people order feeling words differently.



Feeling Words

abandoned	accepted	adequate	afraid	ambivalent
amused	angry	annoyed	anxious	appreciated
astounded	awed	bad	beautiful	betrayed
bitter	bored	brave	burdened	calm
capable	captivated	certain	challenged	cheerful
cherished	clever	comfortable	compassionate	competitive
concerned	confident	confused	conspicuous	contented
courageous	courteous	cruel	crushed	curious
deceitful	defeated	defiant	delighted	destructive
determined	different	disappointed	discouraged	disgusted
dissatisfied	distracted	disturbed	divided	dominated
doubtful	dubious	eager	ecstatic	elated
embarrassed	empty	encouraged	envious	excited
evil	exasperated	exhausted	fascinated	fearful
flustered	foolish	forced	forgiving	fortunate
frantic	friendly	frightened	frustrated	full
furious	glad	good	grateful	greedy
guilty	gullible	happy	hate	helpful
helpless	hesitant	homesick	hopeful	hopeless
honored	horrible	humiliated	hurt	hysterical
ignored	immortal	important	imposed upon	impressed
indifferent	infatuated	infuriated	insignificant	inspired
insulted	interested	intrigued	irritable	irritated
intimidated	irritated	isolated	jealous	joyous
jumpy	judged	kind	lazy	left out
lonely	longing	lost	lovable	loved
loving	low	mad	manipulated	mean
methodical	miserable	naughty	nervous	nice
obnoxious	odd	offended	outraged	out of place
overwhelmed	pained	panicked	peaceful	persecuted
perturbed	pitied	pleasant	pleased	pressured
pretty	proud	pushy	put down	puzzled
rage	regretful	rejected	relaxed	relieved
resentful	responsible	restless	rewarded	ridiculous
sad	satisfied	scared	self-confident	shocked
sick	silly	skeptical	sneaky	solemn
spiteful	startled	stereotyped	stingy	strange
stunned	stupid	suffering	suspicious	sure
surprised	sympathetic	talkative	tempted	tenacious
tense	tentative	terrible	terrified	thankful
threatened	thwarted	tired	trapped	troubled
trusted	ugly	uncertain	uncomfortable	uneasy
unequaled	unloved	unmatched	unsettled	used
violent	vehement	vulnerable	weary	wicked
wonderful	worried			