

FEELINGS AS INFORMATION

positive vs negative



Emotions are a meaningful part of the human experience. Happiness, anger, excitement, frustration, and surprise... each emotion comes with physical reactions and feelings and all are perfectly normal and, in most cases, completely healthy.

When we talk about emotions, we tend to label them as either good or bad. We welcome positive emotions like pride and satisfaction, but try to avoid negative emotions like guilt and embarrassment. It's important to remember that emotions themselves aren't necessarily good or bad. They are simply states and signals that allow us to pay more attention to the events and experiences that create them.

Our emotions are complex and interactive. Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions illustrates this by pairing eight basic emotions with their opposites. It's a great tool to help us develop our understanding of how our emotions present themselves, how they fluctuate, and how they can interact with each other.

Negative emotions may not always be a pleasant experience, but they exist for a reason and can be quite useful. We can benefit from better understanding what causes them and how we can use them to create a greater sense of well-being.



POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS... why we need both

We don't have to try too hard to make an argument for the benefits of positive emotions. Countless studies have shown a link between optimism, happiness, and gratitude, and good health and personal success.

POSITIVE EMOTIONS CAN HAVE A DOWNSIDE TOO.

In some cases, certain kinds of happiness (pride, for example) can hinder our ability to empathize and connect with those around us. Unchecked optimism can lead to unrealistic expectations and even dangerous risks that can lead to loss and all of the negative feelings that can come with it.



While we may prefer to stop negative emotions entirely, they are a necessary balance to their positive counterparts.

NEGATIVE EMOTIONS PROVIDE VALUABLE INFORMATION.

They are designed to alert us that something needs to change.

- Anger or anxiety can signal that our well-being is threatened in some way.
- Fear or sadness can be clues to a health issue or relationship need.
- Frustration or resentment may encourage us to change course or take steps to improve circumstances.

Negative emotions can spur action and motivate us to make a change to improve our situation and well-being.

Sources: <https://www.verywellmind.com/embrace-negative-emotions-4158317> | <https://positivepsychology.com/negative-emotions/> | Images by Unsplash