

Your Emotional Vocabulary List

~~~~~ANGER, APATHY, and HATRED~~~~~

Soft Anger and Apathy

Annoyed ~ Apathetic ~ Bored ~ Certain ~ Cold ~ Crabby ~ Cranky ~ Critical ~ Cross ~ Detached ~ Displeased ~ Frustrated ~ Impatient ~ Indifferent ~ Irritated ~ Peeved ~ Rankled

Medium Anger

Affronted ~ Aggravated ~ Angry ~ Antagonized ~ Arrogant ~ Bristling ~ Exasperated ~ Incensed ~ Indignant ~ Inflamed ~ Mad ~ Offended ~ Resentful ~ Riled up ~ Sarcastic

Intense Anger and Hatred

Aggressive ~ Appalled ~ Belligerent ~ Bitter ~ Contemptuous ~ Disgusted ~ Furious ~ Hateful ~ Hostile ~ Irate ~ Livid ~ Menacing ~ Outraged ~ Ranting ~ Raving ~ Seething ~ Spiteful ~ Vengeful ~ Vicious ~ Vindictive ~ Violent

~~~~~SHAME and GUILT~~~~~

Soft Shame and Guilt

Abashed ~ Awkward ~ Discomfited ~ Flushed ~ Flustered ~ Hesitant ~ Humble ~ Reticent ~ Self-conscious ~ Speechless ~ Withdrawn

Medium Shame and Guilt

Ashamed ~ Chagrined ~ Contrite ~ Culpable ~ Embarrassed ~ Guilty ~ Humbled ~ Intimidated ~ Penitent ~ Regretful ~ Remorseful ~ Reproachful ~ Rueful ~ Sheepish

Intense Shame and Guilt

Belittled ~ Degraded ~ Demeaned ~ Disgraced ~ Guilt-ridden ~ Guilt-stricken ~ Humiliated ~ Mortified ~ Ostracized ~ Self-condemning ~ Self-flagellating ~ Shamefaced ~ Stigmatized

~~~~~FEAR, ANXIETY and PANIC~~~~~

Soft Fear and Anxiety

Alert ~ Apprehensive ~ Cautious ~ Concerned ~ Confused ~ Curious ~ Disconcerted ~ Disoriented ~ Disquieted ~ Doubtful ~ Edgy ~ Fidgety ~ Hesitant ~ Indecisive ~ Insecure ~ Instinctive ~ Intuitive ~ Leery ~ Pensive ~ Shy ~ Timid ~ Uneasy ~ Watchful

Medium Fear and Anxiety

Afraid ~ Alarmed ~ Anxious ~ Aversive ~ Distrustful ~ Fearful ~ Jumpy ~ Nervous ~ Perturbed ~ Rattled ~ Shaky ~ Startled ~ Suspicious ~ Unnerved ~ Unsettled ~ Wary ~ Worried

Intense Fear and Panic

Filled with Dread ~ Horrified ~ Panicked ~ Paralyzed ~ Petrified ~ Phobic ~ Shocked ~ Terrorized

~~~~~**JEALOUSY & ENVY**~~~~~

**Soft Jealousy & Envy**

Disbelieving ~ Distrustful ~ Insecure ~ Protective ~ Suspicious ~ Vulnerable

**Medium Jealousy & Envy**

Covetous ~ Demanding ~ Desirous ~ Envious ~ Jealous ~ Threatened

**Intense Jealousy & Envy**

Avaricious ~ Gluttonous ~ Grasping ~ Greedy ~ Green with Envy ~ Persistently Jealous ~ Possessive ~ Resentful

~~~**HAPPINESS, CONTENTMENT, and JOY**~~~

Soft Happiness

Amused ~ Calm ~ Encouraged ~ Friendly ~ Hopeful ~ Inspired ~ Jovial ~ Open ~ Peaceful ~ Smiling ~ Upbeat

Medium Happiness and Contentment

Cheerful ~ Contented ~ Delighted ~ Excited ~ Fulfilled ~ Glad ~ Gleeful ~ Gratified ~ Happy ~ Healthy Self-esteem ~ Joyful ~ Lively ~ Merry ~ Optimistic ~ Playful ~ Pleased ~ Proud ~ Rejuvenated ~ Satisfied

Intense Happiness, Contentment, and Joy

Awe-filled ~ Blissful ~ Ecstatic ~ Egocentric ~ Elated ~ Enthralled ~ Euphoric ~ Exhilarated ~ Giddy ~ Jubilant ~ Manic ~ Overconfident ~ Overjoyed ~ Radiant ~ Rapturous ~ Self-aggrandized ~ Thrilled

~~~~~**SADNESS, GRIEF, and DEPRESSION**~~~~~

**Soft Sadness**

Contemplative ~ Disappointed ~ Disconnected ~ Distracted ~ Grounded ~ Listless ~ Low ~ Steady ~ Regretful ~ Wistful

**Medium Sadness, Grief, and Depression**

Dejected ~ Discouraged ~ Dispirited ~ Down ~ Downtrodden ~ Drained ~ Forlorn ~ Gloomy ~ Grieving ~ Heavy-hearted ~ Melancholy ~ Mournful ~ Sad ~ Sorrowful ~ Weepy ~ World-weary

**Intense Sadness, Grief, and Depression**

Anguished ~ Bereaved ~ Bleak ~ Depressed ~ Despairing ~ Despondent ~ Grief-stricken ~ Heartbroken ~ Hopeless ~ Inconsolable ~ Morose

~~~~~**DEPRESSION and SUICIDAL URGES**~~~~~

Soft Depression and Suicidal Urges

Apathetic ~ Constantly Irritated, Angry, or Enraged (*see the **Anger** list above*) ~ Depressed ~ Discouraged ~ Disinterested ~ Dispirited ~ Feeling Worthless ~ Flat ~ Helpless ~ Humorless ~ Impulsive ~ Indifferent ~ Isolated ~ Lethargic ~ Listless ~ Melancholy ~ Pessimistic ~ Purposeless ~ Withdrawn ~ World-weary

Medium Depression and Suicidal Urges

Bereft ~ Crushed ~ Desolate ~ Despairing ~ Desperate ~ Drained ~ Empty ~ Fatalistic ~ Hopeless ~ Joyless ~ Miserable ~ Morbid ~ Overwhelmed ~ Passionless ~ Pleasureless ~ Sullen

Intense Suicidal Urges

Agonized ~ Anguished ~ Bleak ~ Death-seeking ~ Devastated ~ Doomed ~ Gutted ~ Nihilistic ~ Numbed ~ Reckless ~ Self-destructive ~ Suicidal ~ Tormented ~ Tortured

Note: If you're having any thoughts of suicide, don't feel as if you have to wait until you're in the throes of torment to reach out for help. If you can learn to catch your suicidal urges when they're in the soft stage, you can often stop yourself from falling into the pit of anguish. In the territory of the suicidal urge, your capacity for emotional awareness and sensitivity can literally save your life!

If you or anyone you know is feeling suicidal, free and confidential help is available. In the U.S., you can call the [**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**](#) at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. For other countries, the [**International Association for Suicide Prevention**](#) has a list of crisis and suicide prevention centers throughout the world. In Canada, see the [**Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention**](#).

How to Be Helpful to Someone Who Is Threatening Suicide ([from the NSPL website](#))

- ◆ Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- ◆ Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- ◆ Be non-judgmental.
- ◆ Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad.
- ◆ Don't lecture on the value of life.
- ◆ Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- ◆ Don't dare him or her to do it.
- ◆ Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- ◆ Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- ◆ Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- ◆ Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- ◆ Get help from people or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

Thank you for your concern and your willingness to reach out.

Weasel Words!

If people don't seem able to identify or own up to their emotions (or if they're disturbed and offended by the true names for emotions), you can use soft emotional vocabulary words from your Emotional Vocabulary List, or you can use *Weasel Words* to gently bring awareness (even weaselly awareness) to the true emotion that's present.

If you can frame your observation as a question (or use the phrase "*It seems that you are feeling...*"), you'll help people begin to develop their own emotional vocabulary.

In this list, we start with soft emotion words that are less weaselly, into the Weasels, and finally to what we call the Wonder Weasels (***Bad, Stressed, Unhappy***) and Lesser Weasels (***Hurt, Upset***) if they're appropriate to each emotion. Also note the teen weasel word: *Whatever!*

Anger: Affronted, Agitated, Annoyed, Disappointed, Displeased, Frustrated, Peeved, Tense, Vexed, Whatever, ***Bad, Hurt, Stressed, Unhappy, Upset.***

Apathy & Boredom: Detached, Disinterested, Indifferent, Whatever, ***Unhappy.***

Shame & Guilt: Awkward, Flustered, Exposed, Demeaned, Humiliated, ***Bad, Hurt, Stressed, Unhappy, Upset.***

Sadness: Blue, Bummed, Disappointed, Discouraged, Down, Low, Whatever, ***Bad, Hurt, Stressed, Unhappy, Upset.***

Grief: Blue, Down in the Dumps, Lost, Low, Whatever, ***Bad, Hurt, Stressed, Unhappy, Upset.***

Depression: Blue, Detached, Disinterested, Low, Whatever, ***Bad, Hurt, Stressed, Unhappy, Upset.***

Fear: Cautious, Curious, Jumpy, Off, Uneasy, Unsettled, What Do You Sense?, ***Stressed, Upset.***

Anxiety: Agitated, Bothered, Concerned, Jumpy, Off, Tense, Unsettled, ***Bad, Stressed, Unhappy, Upset.***

Jealousy: Insecure, Sensing Disloyalty, ***Bad, Hurt, Stressed, Unhappy, Upset.***

Envy: Insecure, Sensing Unfairness, ***Bad, Hurt, Stressed, Unhappy, Upset.***

Panic: Bothered, Cautious, Nervous, Uneasy, ***Stressed, Upset.***

Contentment: Fine, Good, Happy, Pleased, Proud, Satisfied.

Notice that we don't include **Happiness** or **Joy** in our Weasel Words list, because most people are fine saying those words outright. As you go through this list, however, notice how our five weaselly words (*Bad, Hurt, Stressed, Unhappy, & Upset*) can describe pretty much every emotion except happiness, contentment, and joy. That's stunning, but it explains why so many of us struggle to develop emotional awareness, emotional skills, and Empathic Accuracy — because all of these are linked to a strong emotional vocabulary!

From *The Art of Empathy: A Complete Guide to Life's Most Essential Skill* by Karla McLaren, M.Ed. (2013, Sounds True).