

THE Emotion Focused Compass

A GENTLE GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING YOUR EMOTIONS, UNMET NEEDS, PROTECTIVE PATTERNS, AND THE PATH TOWARD HEALING.

1 OUR ATTACHMENT NEEDS

We all have core needs that must be met to feel safe, secure, and connected.



LOVE
to be
cared for



TO BE SEEN
noticed for
who we are



TO BE HEARD
to have our
voice matter



BELONGING
to be part of
something



TO BE VALUED
to matter and
be appreciated



SAFETY
to feel safe
and secure



AUTONOMY
to have choice
and control



GROWTH
to learn, grow
and thrive

2 EMOTIONS ARE MESSENGERS

They tell us whether our needs are being met or not.

WHEN OUR NEEDS ARE MET

Our emotions communicate:



Joy



Peace



Connection



Confidence

*"My needs are being met.
I am safe. I can stay open and engaged."*

WHEN OUR NEEDS ARE NOT MET

Emotions step in to get our attention:



ANGER
A boundary
has been
crossed.



FEAR
Something
feels
unsafe.



SADNESS
I've
experienced
loss or
disconnection.



DISGUST
Something
doesn't feel
right for me.



EMBARRASSMENT
I fear
rejection or
exclusion.



LONELINESS
There is an
unmet need,
longing or
threat to
connection.

3 OUR NERVOUS SYSTEM PERCEIVES A THREAT

"This feeling is dangerous."

Our threat response activates:



FIGHT
Defend,
confront,
take control.



FLIGHT
Escape, avoid,
get away.



FREEZE
Shut down,
disconnect.



FAWN
People-please,
appease,
keep peace.

These responses helped us survive,
but can keep us stuck.

4 PROTECTIVE PATTERNS DEVELOP

Over time, we find ways to cope and protect ourselves.



ISOLATION
Withdraw and
shut out.



PERFECTIONISM
Strive to be
perfect to feel
safe or worthy.



OVERTHINKING
Cycle in worry
and what-ifs.



DEPRESSION/
SHUTDOWN
Lose energy,
motivation,
or hope.



BLAMING
OTHERS
It's their
fault, so I don't
have to feel.



SELF-CRITICISM
I'm not good
enough. It's
my fault.



BINGING
Numb or
soothe with
food or habits.



RESTRICTING
Control, deny
or push away
needs.

These strategies protected us in the short term,
but keep us disconnected from our needs and others.

5 WE CAN CHOOSE A DIFFERENT RESPONSE

When we pause and get curious, we create space to respond instead of react.



NOTICE
What am I feeling
right now?



LISTEN
What is this
emotion trying
to tell me?



IDENTIFY
What need
is not being met?



RESPOND
How can I meet
this need with
compassion?

*Curiosity creates
the space that
compassion
can grow.*

6 WE BEGIN TO MEET OUR OWN NEEDS

Little by little, we learn to become our own safe place.



REGULATION
Finding greater calm
and steadiness in
your mind and body.



CONNECTION
Developing a more
compassionate and
authentic relationship
with yourself and others.



HEALING
Creating new patterns
that reflect who you are,
rather than the ways
you've had to cope.

REGULATION • CONNECTION • HEALING

The foundation of secure self-attachment.

Learning to meet your own emotional needs with compassion and care.

Dana Millar
COUNSELLING

Compassionate. Curious. Connected.

The Emotion Focused Compass
Developed by Dana Millar, CCC

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