



If you've read the [Emotions Miniseries](http://InwardGaze.org/EmotionMiniseries) (<http://InwardGaze.org/EmotionMiniseries>) you know the importance of building your Emotional Vocabulary. I've never seen anyone teach or even discuss this before. So what is below is a step-by-step guide to my own personal method that I used, and continue to use, to build my own emotional vocabulary.

Step 1

Create a list of emotions that you want to add to your vocabulary. A good place to start is Abraham Hicks's Emotional Guidance Scale. I've copied it below.

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| 1 . Joy/Appreciation/Empowered/Freedom/Love | 12. Disappointment |
| 2 . Passion | 13. Doubt |
| 3 . Enthusiasm/Eagerness/Happiness | 14. Worry |
| 4 . Positive Expectation/Belief | 15. Blame |
| 5 . Optimism | 16. Discouragement |
| 6 . Hopefulness | 17. Anger |
| 7 . Contentment | 18. Revenge |
| 8 . Boredom | 19. Hatred/Rage |
| 9 . Pessimism | 20. Jealousy |
| 10. Frustration/Irritation/Impatience | 21. Insecurity/Guilt/Unworthiness |
| 11. Overwhelm | 22. Fear/Grief/Depression/Despair/Powerlessness |

Step 2

Pick an emotion from your list. It can be any one of them, but it's probably a good idea to choose the one that you are the least familiar with - one that you haven't felt in a long time or are not sure if you've ever felt before.

Don't judge the emotion; it is neither good, nor bad, positive, nor negative. It is an emotion that you were designed to feel and be able to detect. If we focus only on "good" emotions, we won't know what to do with the "bad" ones. We won't be able to correct our Alignment when we experience the "bad" ones, or know how to handle ourselves when others express the emotion in front of us.

Step 3

Commit to that emotion. Decide right now that you will not move on to another emotion until you have a full grasp of this one, can recognize it when you see it in others, and can definitively recognize it when you feel it yourself.

Step 4

Experiment with the emotion within yourself. Think of things that you can do in order to feel that emotion. If you've never felt it before or are not sure, try to think of things that commonly make people feel that emotion. Then go do it.



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Step 5

Catalog the emotion. While you are experiencing the emotion take note of everything. Here are a some questions to help you:

- What does it feel like?
- Where in my body to I feel it? (head, chest, throat, stomach, etc)
- Is there a motion to the feeling?
- Does it make me feel heavier or lighter or neither?
- Does it feel like it's rising or falling or neither?
- Does it make me feel bigger or smaller or neither?
- Do I feel more or less energized?
- Did my heart rate speed up or slow down?
- Am I breathing deeply or shallowly? Am I holding my breath?
- Does it make me feel like doing something? If so, what? (Shout, kick, scream, cry, laugh, smile, sing, etc)
- Am I doing anything with my body? (clenching jaw, droopy posture, etc)
- Is there any tension in my body? (Head, shoulders, fists, back, etc)
- On the scale of standing perfectly straight and curling up into a ball, where am I?
- Does it feel good or bad?
- Do I like the feeling?
- Is there anything that comes to mind easily that I could do that would it feel better?
- What other kinds of things would make me feel this way?

Step 6

Study the emotion in others. Do searches for images and videos of people expressing that emotion. Good places to start are “[name of emotion] expression,” “emotions expressions,” and “micro expressions.” Paul Ekman is an excellent source for this as well (<http://www.paulekman.com>).

Learn to recognize the emotion as it is expressed in others. Mimic their facial expressions, posture, body language, and motions. How does that make you feel?

Step 7

Once you can definitively identify the emotion you chose in yourself and others, you know exactly how it feels and where you feel it when you experience it, you can move on to the next emotion.

Bonus Exercise

Once you have a reasonably large emotional vocabulary, go people watching. We are all constantly experiencing emotion. Even emotional numbness is an emotion. Go watch people and see if you can identify what emotion they're experiencing in that moment.