

## Think, Feel, Know



Emotions are felt in the body, not in the mind. So it makes sense to focus our attention on the body if we want to know how we are feeling! When we listen to our body with Presence, we notice a continual stream of sensations and emotions that normally go unnoticed.

We begin to realise that our emotions are not us, and that we have a choice as to whether we follow them or choose another response. They are just energy moving through us. We can learn to observe them, without judgement, avoidance or suppression.

In an interesting study by UCLA's Matthew Lieberman, decreased activation of the amygdala (the fight or flight centre in our brain) occurs when feelings are labelled with words. This occurs by a series of brain messages via the prefrontal cortex. (Matthew Lieberman et al., "Putting Feelings into Words: Affect Labelling Disrupts Amygdala Activity in Response to Affective Stimuli", 2007),

It can be a challenge to name our feelings. By focusing attention on where in the body the feeling sits, and then guessing at words to describe the feelings, we can get clarity and a sense of relief when we find the word that corresponds to the feeling.

Improving our emotional vocabulary and awareness involves identifying our feelings and needs, and asking for those needs to be met without expectation or blame.

Marshall B. Rosenberg, from the Centre for Non-Violent Communication ([www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org)) developed a method of heart-imbued communication that encompasses an extremely useful list of universal feelings and needs.

Our version of this list shows three columns; Think, Feel and Know, and illustrates the feelings we may have when our needs are not met, and what those needs could be. We can use these lists to help us identify our feelings – notice the sense of relief in your body when you find the word to really describe your feelings. This is not a comprehensive list, and it's possible to feel more than one thing at any one time!

The Thinking words are ones we often mistake for feelings, but are really covering up our feelings with our Story.

We usually precede the use of these "Thinkings" by:

1. I feel... that, like, as if (I feel that you are ignoring me)
2. I feel.... I, you, he, she, they, it (I feel I am always being nagged)
3. I feel.... names or nouns referring to people (I feel my boss is manipulative)
4. I feel.... descriptions of what we think (I feel inadequate as a guitar player)
5. I feel... what we think others are doing to us (I feel ignored)

As you read the Thinking words, notice how there is implicit blame or victimhood in them.

●●● Think, Feel, Know Table

Story - Think	Underlying Feelings - Feel	Underlying Needs - Know
Abandoned	Frightened, Hurt, Sad, Lonely	Nurturing, Connection, Belonging, Support
Abused	Angry, Frustrated, Frightened	Caring, Support, Wellbeing
Attacked	Scared, Angry	Safety
Betrayed	Angry, Hurt, Disappointed, Enraged	Trust, Dependability, Honesty
Blamed	Angry, Scared, Antagonistic, Hostile	Accountability, Fairness, Justice
Bullied	Angry, Scared, Pressured	Autonomy, Choice, Safety, Consideration
Cheated	Resentful, Hurt, Angry	Honesty, Justice, Trust, Reliability
Criticised	Scared, Anxious, Humiliated	Understanding, Acknowledgement, Recognition
Dumped On	Angry, Overwhelmed	Respect, Consideration
Harrassed	Angry, Frustrated, Frightened	Respect, Consideration, Space
Ignored	Lonely, Scared, Hurt, Sad	Connection, Belonging, Inclusion
Invalidated	Angry, Hurt, Resentful	Appreciation, Respect, Acknowledgement, Recognition
Isolated	Lonely, Afraid, Scared	Community, Inclusion, Belonging, Contribution
Let Down	Sad, Disappointed, Frightened	Consistency, Trust, Dependability
Misunderstood	Upset, Angry, Frustrated	To be heard, Understanding, Clarity
Overworked	Angry, Tired, Frustrated	Respect, Consideration, Rest
Patronised	Angry, Frustrated, Resentful	Recognition, Equality, Respect
Provoked	Angry, Frustrated, Hostile, Resentful	Respect, Consideration
Rejected	Hurt, Scared, Angry, Defiant	Belonging, Inclusion, Closeness, To be seen
Smothered	Frustrated, Scared, Desperate	Space, Freedom, Autonomy, Authenticity
Unappreciated	Sad, Angry, Hurt, Frustrated	Appreciation, Respect, Acknowledgement
Unloved	Sad, Bewilderd, Frustrated	Love, Appreciation, Empathy, Connection



Thinking



Feeling



Knowing