



Identifying Feelings and Body Sensations

Feeling words are those we use to describe clusters of experience, and they tend to illustrate states of being. Words like “joyful,” “sad,” “angry,” “disconnected,” “bored,” “refreshed,” “startled,” “afraid” can all be traced to actual sensations in the body. Without even noticing, we can leap frog over most of the actual experience when say we “feel” something. Rather than wondering or investigating *how we know* that’s what we’re feeling, we jump to conclusions. *For example, when you describe yourself as feeling “shy,” how do you know that? What tells you that you feel shy?*

Sensation words are those that describe the physical experiences that make up feelings. For example, if I am feeling irritated, I might experience a tightening of muscles – perhaps in my belly, or chest, or jaw. There might be other sensations as well; heat or cold, for instance. See how much you can notice about your sensory experience. Also see what words you can find for the different sensations.

What are you feeling right now?

Joyful, confident, relieved, glad, happy, pleased, fl at, disconnected, bored, resigned, apathetic, angry, bugged, annoyed, rattled, ruffled, giddy, afraid, shy, startled, uneasy, tense.... Or something else?

Ask yourself how your body/mind lets you know that you are experiencing that? What sensory information has you say, “Oh, I’m feeling..... ?”

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Where is each sensation located inside your body? Watch to see if you are explaining where it is. Try to be simple and concrete (e.g., "It's in my arm, belly, chest, or face.")

Try to distinguish the sensations you're feeling inside. What words do you have that can describe what's going on? Pick some words from the list below AND add your words: *Tingly, hot, cold, warm, tight, dull, shaky, numb, trembling, shivery, thick, tense, damp, congested, vibrating, sharp*

