

# What Emotions Do For You

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Strong emotions are there to help us

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## Motivate (and Organize) Us for Action

EMOTIONS



Emotions motivate our behavior. Emotions prepare us for action. The action urge of specific emotions is often “hard-wired” in biology

Remember our nervous system is doing its job when our body responds to feelings. Emotions create feelings in our body and also motivate us to behave a certain way.

For example

- you are sad
- you frown or cry

Emotions save time in getting us to act in important situations. Emotions can be especially important when we don’t have time to think things through

Our survival brain and nervous system drive the emotional response. When we feel threatened or unsafe emotions can motivate us to move quickly to safety.

**Strong emotions help us overcome obstacles—in our minds and in the environment.**

When our response system kicks in we take action. Life is full of challenges and obstacles. Think of that rush of adrenaline you get before a show or a sporting event. This is our nervous system helping us prepare.

# Help Us Communicate (and Influence) Others

## EMOTIONS



Facial expressions are hard-wired aspects of emotions. Facial expressions communicate faster than words. For example:

- you are sad
- you frown or cry
- People in your life notice and may intervene to support you

**Our body language and voice tone can also be hard-wired. They also communicate our emotions to others.**

- When it is important to communicate to others, or send them a message, it can be very hard to change our emotions.
- Whether we intend it or not, our communication of emotions influences others.

# Emotions Help Us Communicate With Ourselves

## EMOTIONS



Emotional reactions can give us important information about a situation. Emotions can be signals or alarms that something is happening. Gut feelings can be like intuition—a response to something important about the situation. This can be helpful if our emotions get us to check out the facts.

Caution: Sometimes we treat emotions as if they are facts about the world:

“If I feel unsure, I am incompetent,”

“If I’m afraid, there must be danger,”

“I love him, so he must be OK.”)

If we assume that our emotions represent facts about the world, we may use them to justify our thoughts or our actions. Noticing our emotions and using our Wise Mind to engage with them is important.