

Supernoetics® Ex-Press

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Advice, technical methods, advanced psychology, rubrics, tips and teachings.

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The Ladder Of Emotions

In this Ex-Press I'm going to look at emotions in a different way; a kind of spatial way. At least a schematic.

This is not about how to deal with emotions. That's another piece entirely. It's not about why people react as they do. This is about what we observe in people (some of it, I'm sure, you may not have observed before).

But I'm also going to explain, in unusual depth, about the very powerful and positive emotions we may experience, such as happiness and bliss, not just the hurtful ones. In short, this is sensational and different!

By the way, just so you know, researchers don't use the term happiness any more; the scientific term is "overall and long-term subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction"!

I'll stick with happiness, for now, even if it regarded as redundant!

Of course when people talk of "emotions", they almost invariably mean the negative responses to life: grief, anger, fear and so on. There is nothing pathological about feeling grief if a beloved parent or spouse dies or fear if some gun-crazed kid comes to your door, brandishing a .38 revolver. This kind of reaction could be considered "normal". There is nothing much wrong with appropriate emotions.

Emotions become destructive only if they go on too long or if they are inappropriate. So if the grief of bereavement continues darkening one's life for decades (Queen Victoria comes to mind), so that living becomes an intolerable misery, or there is ridiculous anger over the naughty behavior of a small child or abnormal fear of confined spaces—these are unsuitable feelings, out of context and out of control.

This is the unwanted and hurtful aspect of emotion and is the principal cause of human suffering. Such inappropriate responses are highly irrational and

therefore, of course, very destructive to our well-being, achievement and relationships.

Suppressed Emotion

Perhaps because of this, and for other reasons, we are taught all our lives to suppress our emotions. This is the worst possible thing we can do because it doesn't eliminate them, it simply forces them from view.

But like water being held back, what doesn't appear in one place will make its presence known by leaking out in another. Suppressed emotions express themselves as diseases and, far worse, irrational and destructive behavior. It is the results of suppressed emotions that are even more damaging.

We can draw comparisons with the First Law of Thermodynamics, which says that energy can neither be created or destroyed. If it's around it must go somewhere. Emotion is a kind of energy and it too cannot be just ignored: it will merely convert itself into some other form unless it is allowed to express itself.

The trouble is, we are taught to suppress even our positive emotions. This is particularly unfortunate for young children, where the natural release of feelings is an important part of learning. But a child inclined to whoop with delight is just as likely to be censured in the classroom as one who wails. Indeed, there may even be sympathy and support for the latter child, which could reinforce such outbursts, but certainly no encouragement for the happy, noisy child to further explore its discoveries and delights.

Unfortunately, the rule that suppressed emotional energy will eventually come out as disease is equally true for positive emotions. If we are not allowed to be happy we get potentially just as ill as when not being allowed to be sad!

We pay the price throughout our lives of this misguided "education" of our offspring.

Definition Time

Emotion is particularly difficult to define, though fortunately most people know what we mean when we speak of them. Dictionaries usually take the soft option and substitute the word "feelings" and then feelings are defined as emotions! Even the great Webster's falls into this silly loop.

There are three main components of emotion; I'm sure you can figure this out:

- the experiential component (subjective feeling)
- the physiological element (bodily changes which occur)
- the behavioral patterns (action and outcome).

Basically, there are two drivers of emotion. The first, obviously, is that emotions arise as a result of scanning our surroundings and estimating values or threats

in the future (the so-called appraisal theory). The other driver is habit: that specific emotions come about as a conditioned (learned) response. Both have a place, you will find.

For example, on a first date, one might anticipate the possibility of affection and feel an appropriate delight. On the other hand if the appraisal suggests there will be difficulties, mistakes and embarrassment, then we might feel anxiety or fear. But it should be obvious that the second response is likely to be based on habitual learning, such as “Things always go wrong for me.”

Moreover, the anticipation of a poor outcome is likely to further condition the belief that muddles and rejection will probably take place and fear is a practiced response to that belief (repeatedly rehearsed by life events). In other words, fear will create fear, because it’s a habit; anger tends to build anger, because it’s just a habit, and so on.

History

“Emotions,” wrote Aristotle (384–322), “are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure. Such are anger, pity, fear and the like, with their opposites.”

In 1872, Darwin published *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, in which he argued that all humans, and even other animals, show emotion through remarkably similar behaviors. For Darwin, emotion had an evolutionary history that could be traced across cultures and species—an unpopular view at the time. Today, many psychologists agree that certain emotions are universal to all humans. These are: anger, fear, surprise, disgust, happiness and sadness.

The importance of these emotions is that they are said to be the ones which are visible on the outside and universal to all humans, regardless of race or culture. To me, psychologists are missing an important point, which is that not all emotions need to be visible in the face; some is seen through movement and posture, including—but not limited to—boredom, resentment, bliss, apathy (despair) and exhilaration. Love too could be considered a kind of emotion, though in Supernoetics® we think of it as a state of being.

A little-known contemporary of Darwin, Guillaume-Benjamin-Amand Duchenne (Duchenne of Boulogne, 1805 - 1875) was far more insightful. He identified over sixty emotions variants, including thirteen main ones. He researched using electrical stimulation to the muscles of the face. Today the expression “Duchenne smile” refers to a genuine expression of positive emotion, in which the cheek muscles pull up the corners of the mouth and at the same time the muscles round the orbit contract and create crow’s feet round the eyes.

Without the eye response, a smile looks very insincere (try it in a mirror).

Duchenne was an avid researcher and left a huge catalogue of photographs of different facial expressions and implied feelings. His work is the genuine antecedent of my “Ladder of Emotions”, which follows...

The Ladder Of Emotions

Around 1990 I brought out my so-called “Ladder Of Emotions”. It’s an attempt to lay out emotions in a hierarchical table, starting with what may be the lowest, or most destructive emotions, at the bottom and finishing at the top with what may be the most sublime feelings we can know.

Is this helpful? Well, anything which helps us understand emotions better must be a good thing. Since we are so inept with emotions, it must help to shed even a little light in the darkness.

It’s hard to put numbers to happiness, grief, anger and the like. But charting something—laying it out to look at—is a well-known scientific approach that does help bring clarity. A diagram, if you like, rather than just a table.

I call it a ladder because it is supposed to be something we climb up, not something we slide down, like the snakes in the well-known board game with dice. Yet how often are our emotions the snakes!

In actual fact, laying out emotions in this hierarchical way leads to some surprising insights and actually suggests some very simple procedures that can alter emotions for the better. You can test these out for yourself and be satisfied

The thing is: what would you put on this ladder structure and how would you arrange these emotions, in ascending or descending order?

Let me shortcut your musings a little bit, by saying it’s been done before and has stood up well to examination and testing over the years. When you’ve grasped the ladder, look for it showing up in everyday life, among friends, family and colleagues. You’ll be pleasantly surprised, I think.

A ladder is a useful metaphor, since we can climb up and down it, as circumstances work their changes in our lives. We can stop at whatever rung (level) we feel suits us best; or we can strive to go all the way to the top, to that sublime oceanic feeling we know as bliss.

Another way of looking at the Supernoetics® Emotional Ladder is to think of it as a scale of being. A person in the depths of despair has little life force or energy. He or she barely responds to the environment. Such a person is not very alive in the normal sense of the word. Being is a purely relative term here!

Whereas a person who is in delight (exhilaration) is so bubbling over with life force and energy that he or she can barely contain it. The characteristic of such states, nearby and above on the ladder, is that there is a powerful spiritual

element. Being in a body at this level is rather like trying to get bubbly wine back into the bottle; the container can barely hold the degree of life force present.

A Scale Revealed

To get a glimpse of this ladder in action, let's do what's called a thought experiment. We don't have to go out and find a case to study; let's just see, in the mind's eye, what would happen.

Let's suppose an individual is doing just fine, no problems. He or she may be winning in life, free of inhibitions, enjoying optimum health and succeeding in his or her ambitions. That's a bit hypothetical for a start!

For a person in this state, you might find their emotional state could be described as true happiness, joy or delight (elation, or rapture, if you want to be poetic). There are many words for it, as you can see, but few of us ever reach these heights, or if we do we cannot linger. It does seem a number of people live most of their lives at this level of pleasure; we can only envy them.

A bit lower than this is a level that is a bit more familiar to us; call it high spirits, cheerfulness or pleasure as an emotion. You've been there. Some people never seem to get to here or they can do it only by the abuse of chemicals, such as drugs or drink. That's not as good as a natural "high", I'm sure you know that. But, while it lasts....

With enough of us able to remain stably at this emotional level, I think the world would truly be a very different place. Society would be exciting, enervating, constructive and positive in all its outlooks.

Now suppose our happy individual slips a bit. Bad news perhaps. The boss changes to somebody not so easy to get on with; marital strife breaks out; or there has been a cut in income. How does this person respond?

Maybe he or she would still feel OK inside and would outwardly be seen by others as being cheerful. But if it slips some more, we might start to see a little uncertainty creep in, hesitation. We could call it caution or concern. It means pulling in those reins of happiness just a little.

Here we have conditional happiness. He or she feels it provided they are reassured there is no immediate threat. So somebody who has learned to be wary of the company of others—they don't feel comfortable in crowds—might be unhappy at a gathering but as soon as they are home in their own house, with no visitors to disturb them, he or she relaxes, is happy and warmly loving to familiar friends and family!

This is the beginning of disengagement.

Below that, when the person is definitely not engaged, he or she is indifferent or (worse) bored. Here we are balanced between feeling good and feeling bad. Just

above are mildly good feelings; just below, mildly bad ones, starting with boredom perhaps. Boredom is the first negative emotion on this ladder. Not good but not so bad. It's a slightly negative, frustrating feeling, as you will know from experience. But boredom doesn't contain any threat (except, perhaps, continuing boredom!)

This is such an important cross-over point that I searched the thesaurus for words that cover it. Indifference, disinterest, impassivity, idleness, mental inertia, complacency and nonchalance are some of them. As you see, none of these words are negative, or positive either. In other words these are to describe a person who isn't being pushed towards good feelings and isn't being thrust towards bad feelings. It's the neutral, balance, point.

As the person drops on down, the first notably negative emotion is a resistance to what is happening we call irritation or annoyance. A person is starting to experience something they do not like and annoyance is the rejection of it. "I don't like this!" feeling...

When it gets worse, it becomes overt hostility and antagonism.

Worse still, next level down, we get full-blown anger. Then we are in trouble! Things are really going wrong for this person. We don't get angry unless there is a considerable perceived threat. The threat need not be real; it can be imagined, as I said. But there has to be a perceived threat for such a blow up.

Anger is a very violent emotion, full of obnoxious energies, as we all know. Anger is saying "Stop!" or "Go away (pain)!"

If the unpleasantness goes on for a time, he or she may drop into a real anguish. That's a kind of mental pain, as opposed to physical pain.

Fear is when a person stops fighting back. Anger is fighting—rejection. Fear is when a person gives up: "I cannot control this... It could hurt/kill me."

Actually, there is maybe a little half step here, where the person is still fighting something but, because of their fear, they hide it. This level is resentment. It may be expressed but is often suppressed or concealed resentment. We call this sneaky or underhanded. The person has enough fight to hit back but such fear they don't like to be seen doing it. They are deceitful, they skulk and hide. Sly, cunning and perfidious are words that come to mind. These people are hypocritical, always. They hide their true feelings. Insincerity is their name. People at this level make good spies, I'm told!

But right underneath there is real, raw fear. The person quakes in their boots. They want to run. Cortisol levels run dangerously high because, of course, there is a well-conditioned biological response to fear we call "fight or flight".

The person perceives what they consider to be a real danger, a threat (works the same, even if there is no real danger). So either you stand your ground and fight,

or quit and run like hell! Either way, the person feels fear, at least until the threat passes.

This response is mediated by adrenalin. The thing is, if you get the adrenalin, you feel fear. The symptoms of fear are really the symptoms of adrenalin: racing heart, goose bumps, feeling a chill, cold sweat. You'd get these symptoms if you injected adrenalin, even in a calm, relaxed and non-threatening environment.

Next I put a state of "shock", meaning the emotional stunned response, not loss of blood volume. It does exist and people are sometime plunged into it. It's close to fear.

What's next? I'm sure you can guess: it's sadness. Overwhelming sadness we call grief. It takes over a person, shakes them and consumes them. A person sobbing heavily seems to be floppy like a rag doll. He or she cannot resist the flood of emotions; it takes them over.

The individual has given up and become resigned to Fate, which is the enemy. In full force, grief is not to be missed. But milder forms you might miss are sighs (which means tears are just beyond view), slumped posture with slowed verbal responses and deep resignation to events.

It is paradoxical, is it not, that tears can also connote wild happiness?

The Bottom Rungs

Yet this is not quite the lowest emotion. Below overt grief and sadness, we run into deep depression. It's far from rare. The individual slumps into an apathetic, grey world, seemingly without any hope of escaping it. The person effectively gives up. This is despair.

One of the best clues is the slow monotone voice. Also the person is not congruent and says "Wow! That's great!" when you hear no "Wow" or enthusiasm in the voice.

Also you may begin to suspect the laughter that is cold and tinny, the anger with none of the typical bravura of this emotion or the soupy happiness that again is not quite congruent. The dictionary has a word glee, which may express this kind of false, joyless laughter: Webster's defines it as mirth, gaiety or merriment. But it just doesn't fit; it's slightly over the top and feels wrong to the non-apaty person.

Anything below that? I would say numbness. No feelings. Nothing gets through to the person at this level. Often they are almost motionless. But not quite.

Numbness may be a late reaction of childhood abuse. It may follow as PTSD, after severe and shocking events with threat to life. The shock has to be considerable and have a stunning effect, which then does not go away without therapy of some kind.

This is a kind of emotional detachment, in which the person feels completely disconnected and helpless. This should not be confused with the assertive kind of detachment that allows people to maintain their boundaries and psychic integrity when faced with the emotional demands of another person or group of persons.

The person, while physically present, moves elsewhere in the mind, and in a sense is "not entirely present", making them sometimes be seen as preoccupied or distracted. Their actions appear mechanical and robotic.

Finally, death itself, and there is an emotion which corresponds to death. It isn't often seen but someone in a profound state of shock, who responds to no stimuli, would be in this state. It is pretty drastic. Yet some institutionalized cases spend years in this condition, unheeding, unmoving; biologically alive but to all intents and purposes mentally dead. The *elan vital* (life force) has drained away altogether. It is a medical state called catatonia, a sad and wretched condition, as close to dead as any living, free, human being can get.

Nevertheless, it is just another emotion.

An Emerging Hierarchy

Finally, then, we can arrange all these moods or emotional feelings into a table or hierarchical ladder in which each one relates progressively to those above and below. What we have so far is this:

Joy/Delight
Pleasure
Interest/Indifference or Boredom
Disgust or Irritation
Antagonism/Hostility
Anger
Pain, anguish
Open Resentment
Concealed Resentment
Fear
"Sock"
Grief or Sadness
Despair/Deep Depression
Numbness
Dead emotionally

Other Intermediate States

Of course there are many other possible additions and subdivisions. The above list simply picks out key points which lie on what is really a continuous spectrum of feelings, each one shading subtly and indefinitely into the next. Some of the gradations we have no word for, yet they clearly exist.

For example, there is a cold hard reserved feeling just between anger and antagonism. Modern macho films with tough "heroes" make much use of it, since it suits an indifference to human suffering and death while being undemonstrative. It is not as well hidden as the sneaky hostility emotion below anger, nor yet as evident as open anger, which is a highly *outflowing* emotion.

Anger is really not a hero's emotion (anger turns you into a jerk most often); neither is the one below, which has the connotation of sneakiness (hiding one's feelings while trying to hurt another is basically the act of a coward who doesn't want to be recognized as what he is, for fear of being punished or destroyed).

There are many thinner slices that you can identify, like this. For example anxiety above fear or sadness just below grief

Some omissions may puzzle you. What about courage, for example? Or honesty? Well, these are really attitudes and not emotions or feelings as such.

And what about love? Love is often believed to be an emotion. But the best kind of love soars way above all other emotions. Unfortunately, love is notorious for creating the most appalling emotional anguish and misery but of course that's not true: it's *loss or threat of loss* that causes the pain of love.

One thing I will say though, pure love breeds the highest levels of emotional experience: excitement, delight, thrill, ecstasy and ultimate bliss. Isn't that the truth though?

It's all about Being. Love and purity and bliss and serene beauty all bring out the highest levels of experience and the subtlest wavelengths of spiritual perception. It's up here, at the top of the ladder, that we transcend being human, altogether. Love is part of that.

Emotions vs. The Past

Notice how all the negative emotions are past based. The nice ones are "now". If you think about it, grief, fear and anger are all based on past experiences. Grief comes from something that happened to you, or another. Fear generally stems from conditioning that says, internally, this is scary, this is dangerous!

Those whose emotions are shattered and sitting in despair or deep depression are, without exception, reacting to something which happened in the past, abuse, trauma, loss and so on. They just can't escape and move on. They are stuck in the past; stuck in what happened that precipitated the emotional disaster.

Interestingly, anger is a bit more in the Now. It's still pre-conditioned, but I observe that angry people are more reacting to something that is right there, in front of them. So that's a bit more in the present.

Of course there is still past conditioning with anger too; a person who is angry is internally comparing what he or she sees with a past scenario. They expect poor outcomes, based on history, and so get mad with what they are being asked to experience.

Now, looking at the really amazing top emotions: pleasure, delight, joy, bliss, it stands to reason that this is coming from something in the present, the Now!

You can't enjoy the excitement of the past if the Now is full of pain and hostility. So excitement and joy says you are well and truly in the Now!

The Many Faces Of Happiness And Delight.

Now let's extend this ladder upwards, into the realm of delightful and positive emotions. We visit these emotions far less frequently than the lower ones. Nevertheless, they do exist—like a mountain range; even if nobody climbs them the peaks are still there.

This is a whole new kind of psychology, called “positive psychology”. Martin Seligman has pioneered it (well, I was first). But there is very little written about amazing and positive emotions. Can we lay them out on our ladder?

Joy and delight are found as exhilaration and this is not so rare I find. It comes with all sorts of complex indulgences and achievements, such as sports, listening to or performing music and other arts, in fact anything which enriches our psychological make-up can catch us in these moments which feel so delicious.

It may be slightly cynical to state that this tended to be more frequent when we were young. But it is true that the accumulation of hurts makes it harder to reach these divine and transformative emotions.

Above there we find “the flow” and power states. These are when mind and spirit are in harmony to such a degree that everything works for us. *The Flow*, made famous by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, is that state of effortless ease, where everything barrels along in an exciting river of creativity and production.

We don't need to be a celebrity artist or composer to reach this state. Everyone can be there. All states above delight and joy are 'in the flow'. These peak or optimal experiences define what life is like at its best for us.

Using the techniques from Supernoetics®, you can learn how to seize control of your life and get increasingly into The Flow. It is about knowing what you want, knowing how to get it, having the necessary skills and involving yourself deeply in the process of realizing your dreams and aspirations. Flow is effortless delight in the pursuit of the self and its fullest realization.

The Flow is really a state of power: the power to get things done. It's here that manifesting gets into gear, big time. If you hit The Flow, all kinds of great things start to happen for you. You'll become unstoppable.

For those of you who like this sort of talk, this is the level where your card-carrying spiritual masters appear.

The Fury Of Living

The Flow overlaps with the next level, power. I mean real power; spiritual puissance, to use a lovely old French word. This is where the physical universe starts to crumble before our wishes and intention. We are moving into the zones I describe as the "white fire of being", because that's how it feels to me, when I get there. I consider myself to be in a 'fury of living'. If you've been to these heights, you won't need a translation of this metaphor!

That wild, exalted state, where the body is a confinement and restriction; where feelings are so intense they want burst out from your head and chest. Words can't really describe it but I liken it to "white fire". I feel flooded with positive feeling, love and energy.

Have you had that feeling take over your mind? If so, you were very close to exaltation and being free of your physical confines at that time. It's on the brink of out-of-body. Perhaps you didn't realize what was happening.

In writing about this level, I am reminded of the glorious words of Thomas Carlyle, who gave us the memorable phrase "a life of hallowed fire". It's an expression of the abundant formative energies of a new movement (he was thinking of early Christianity) at its rise and spread.

I too share Carlyle's vision that nothing is as vibrant, exciting, filled with potential and fiery energy as that which is inspired and new. That's how movements and religions are born! The new flame bursts on the world and consumes in its burning passion all that is staid, mediocre and unchanging. That is my hope, my dream, for Supernoetics®. We need something like that just now. Hallowed Fire is the cleansing fire that keeps our world young and alive! Let's have more of it.

Ecstasy

Ecstasy goes even beyond this and in turn is a more advanced emotional response. I'm thinking of the spiritual ecstasy, not just the good feeling of, say, a sexual orgasm. Figures like St. Teresa de Havila reveled in it; but Buddha warned against it, as he did against all extremes! In this higher sense, ecstasy is quite rare.

We encounter it with increasing frequency, as we travel along the Golden Path of Supernoetics® to our spiritual heart. You will learn later on in Supernoetics® that a person in ecstasy has already transcended the body and is exterior to it.

Significantly, the word ecstasy come from the Greek: *ekstasis*, which means “to stand outside of or transcend [oneself]”.

Higher still, at the pinnacle, come feelings and experiences which are hard to label and describe, though many mystics have tried. I’m calling them bliss and serenity, which are, to our humble perspective, much more than human emotions and are quite transcendent quasi-religious experiences.

The Pythia (priestess) of the Greek oracle at Delphi often went into an ecstatic state during which she uttered sounds revealed to her by the python (the snake, the symbol of resurrection), after drinking water from a certain spring. Her “words” were then interpreted by a priest to help a supplicant find a way to avoid calamities, especially death. In primitive religions, ecstasy was a technique highly developed by shamans, religious personages with healing and psychic-transformation powers, in their “soul,” or “spirit,” flights.

These are highly precious states that some individuals make the subject of a whole life's quest. In our most sublime moments, we may but glimpse it, though in the hurly burly of life few can even get a hint of what it is like. The tendency is to consider it reserved for some other life than this troubled one on earth.

Fortunately, we have some good spiritual techniques to get you there—and it won't take 30 years of meditation!

Bliss

At the very top of my ladder lies that deeply spiritual serene oceanic bliss. Psychologist Abram Maslow wrote a great deal about this transcendent degree of emotional experience in his book *Towards a Psychology of Being*. What was clear (at least among the people Maslow interviewed) was the fact that it came as an involuntary thing.

The person had no control over these experiences. What is more, they did not seem to repeat much. Having one such experience did not make it any easier to have another.

Peak experiences are sudden feelings of intense happiness and well-being, and possibly the awareness of "ultimate truth" and the unity of all things. Nothing troubles the man or woman who sees beyond the horizon of mere human life in this way.

Maslow cited intense aesthetic perceptions, creative moments, intellectual insights and special orgasms as possible experiences of this type ("*Towards A Psychology Of Being*", Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1968).

Accompanying these experiences is a heightened sense of control over the body and emotions, and a wider sense of awareness, as though one was standing upon a mountaintop. The experience fills the individual with wonder and awe. He

feels at one with the world and is pleased with it; he or she has seen the ultimate truth or the essence of all things.

So unfamiliar are these states, so far removed from everyday feelings that Maslow found in his research people would use phrases to describe them like "Too much", "It is too wonderful" and "More than I can bear".

I propose we can divide these into two degrees. For some people, there remained a separation of self and others; an awareness of subject and object, and which are extensions of the individual's own experiences. They are not true mystical experiences, but rather inspirations, ecstasies, and raptures. It is thought that probably the majority of peak experiences fall into this category.

But even beyond that are absolute transcendent experiences, where time and space seem to vanish. Everything melts together, separateness fades away and the Self becomes as One with all things. These experiences—and I have had several—are characterized by an intense beauty that is so vivid, it hurts. There is a kind of piercing pain of sadness to go with it: a beautiful sadness.

Part of that, I believe, is wanting that state to last forever and knowing we are bound, by our human-ness, to be soon separated from it.

Maslow was very clear: that all individuals are capable of peak experiences. Those who do not have them somehow suppress or deny them.

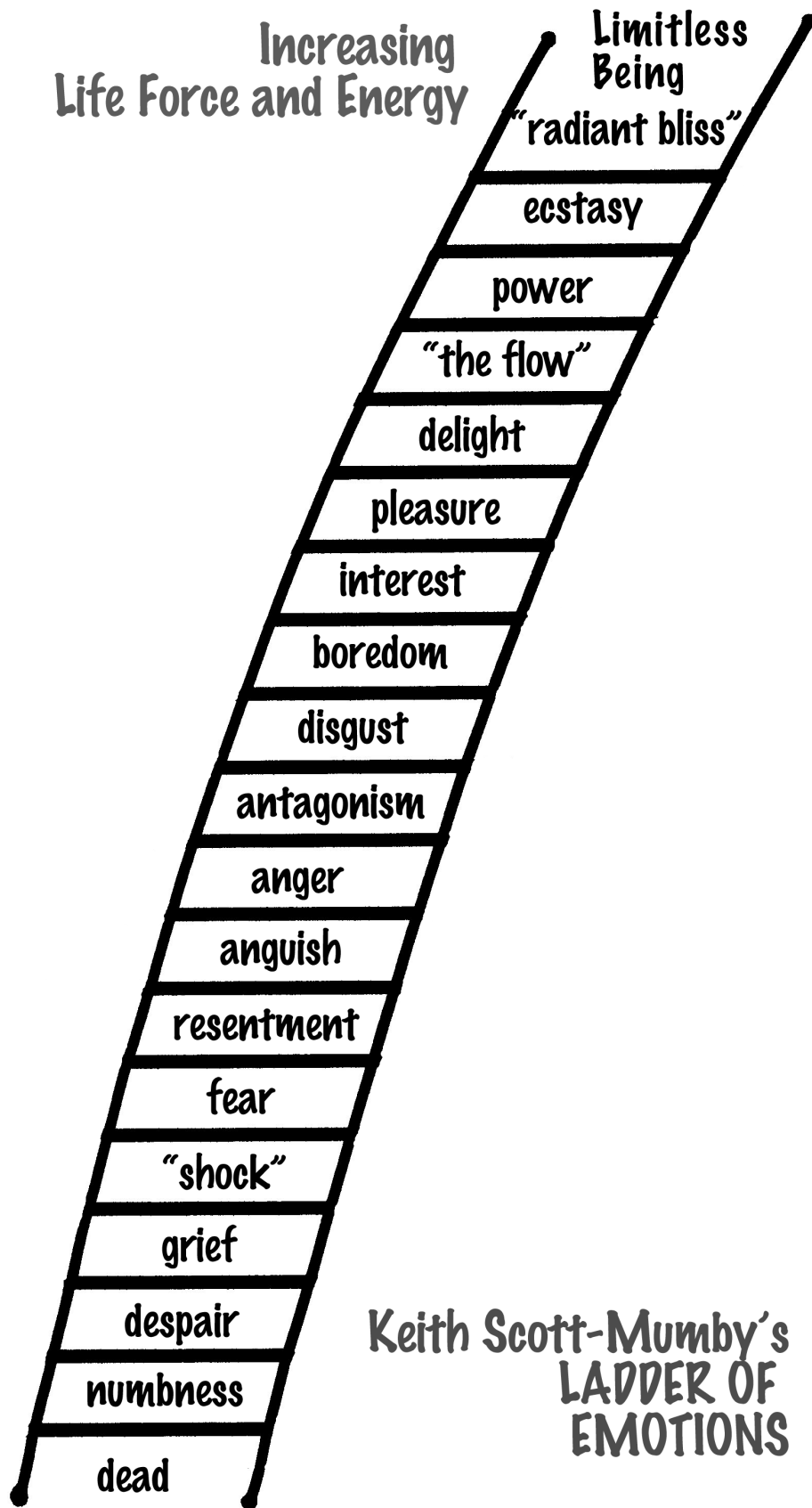
Complete Ladder

I wish I could give the steps on this ladder a numerical rating. I can't. But I have noticed the shifts tend to be exponential or logarithmic, meaning as you step towards the extremes of the ladder, it gets harder and harder to move to the next degree.

Meaning the gap between pleasure and oceanic bliss is vaster by far than the journey from anger to delight!

You can see that of course. It takes no big effort to pull yourself together, stop being annoyed, and start to smile. We experience it a lot. Whereas very few people ever move into radiant bliss. It's rare because it's a huge stride from here to get there!

So how does our ladder look when we add our extreme upper levels?



Transcendental Power

I mention this question of power, or energies, again and again. It seems to me that people in these vivid and advanced states actually radiate a serene presence, outwards from their heart centers. It is a sublime metaphysical state we call Radiant Bliss.

Above that I put Limitless Being. This is a largely theoretical state and clearly bordering on, if not actually, a divine state. But I believe it can be attained. It is the ultimate quest of Supernoetics®.

In my paradigm-busting book *Medicine Beyond* I postulated the question whether or not there is a sharp border between the immanent (present in the world) and the Divine, or is it hazy or blurred. More importantly: can it be moved towards us? I think so.

Thus, aside from the question of emotions, this ladder is also a scale of ascending spiritual powers. The further we travel from our base emotions, the more light and airy we become as spirit; the less solid and material.

A person in anger or grief has very little powers to transform his or her condition. “Manifesting” does not appear at this level, or rather manifesting what is desired because, of course, manifesting occurs at all levels, all the time. So a person in a low state of mind will get an existence which reflects this.

But to manifest in the ordinary sense of the term is an ability (not a law), which increases as we rise up this scale. Only when we have left behind the negative states, from interest on upwards, does it become a useful power with which to transform our lives.

Psychic abilities, such as telepathy and remote viewing, appear increasingly from the Flow upwards. Note that our model postulates that anyone and everyone is ultimately capable of exhibiting these abilities.

Loss Of Materiality

Another effect is that of increasing lightness of heart and spirit. Someone near the lower end of the ladder feels heavy, both to themselves and others.

Depression is a very descriptive word: something pushing down. A person who is sad or apathetic looks weighed down with troubles; drooping shoulders visibly attest to the burden of woes being borne.

Conversely, near the top end of the ladder, a lightness and airiness of being emerges more and more.

Lightness prompts me to mention another point, almost invariably badly taught by gurus: a decision, once made, if from the transcendental power levels, does not need reinforcing! That’s silly. The idea of manifesting something with a grunt of effort (as some people seem to believe) is nonsense. An effective

change is brought about by the merest, lightest of decisions... poof!... and it's done. Once the decision is made, it's made! You can't keep making it with daily affirmations!

What I have noticed with the top levels—and I have been there many times, albeit it temporary—is that what we call the physical becomes less and less real.

When engaged in some of the advanced practices of Supernoetics®, you will find that as spirit ascends and starts to fly, the material world seems less and less substantial. I have been able to see through the person in front of me and see through the walls of the building. It is as if the manifest world starts to dissolve and then we enter the real world of spirit and creativity.

While so-called scientists argue that spirit is just a fantasy, it becomes clear to the mind-worker reaching these levels that it is actually the physical universe which is an illusion. We just put it there mentally!

Matter, energy, space and time are just metaphors and mean next to nothing. The only thing I would say which cannot ever go away, is consciousness!

Emotional Tones Are Fluid

It is important to remember that an individual will usually moves in steps from one level to another, and sometimes it can be so fast you hardly notice the intervening stages. Nevertheless, they are there.

A man who arrived home to find a note saying his wife had left him for example might first burst into violent rage "How could she do this to me?" (anger), become afraid that it's really true, then finally weep loudly (grief) before sinking into depression or numbness. It could all happen in minutes. This is just an illustration, perhaps you can think of many others from your own experience.

I learned all this, by the way, from watching how people changed and responded in piloting, especially when dealing with unpleasant past experiences.

When brought back to the memory in a fully immersed manner (a technical expression meaning "right in it" and experiencing it as "now"), he or she would sigh and then burst into tears. Full floods of grief would come tumbling out and then often he or she would talk about the fear or dread of the moment ("fear he had left me forever", "afraid he was dead" etc.).

If the event was very oppressive, say years of child abuse, often depression and numbness would be the starting place. But sooner or later the client would rise to grief and start crying.

Then upwards through fear to anger. If you have ever watched a person recovering (truly recovering) from abuse, you'll always spend time at the anger level; usually a lot of time. There is a LOT of anger, inevitably.

Remember, anger in such a situation is quite healthy. It's far ahead of depression and fear. The person is kicking back, fighting it! But eventually even that begins to dissipate and, as the hostility towards the abuser begins to evaporate, boredom starts to set in.

At some point there is a switch and she starts to look outwards and see herself in the present, instead of associated into the past unpleasant experiences. That's the cue for more positive emotions. Don't stop! Keep going and this will appear as interest in the way things have affected her and finally cheerfulness about the future and the release from the emotional prison.

Concealed Resentment

There are some other lower tones that should be commented on. Open resentment is a weak position. It is really a kind of jealousy: one resents what one cannot duplicate or have.

One has to be especially careful of those who are feeling concealed resentment or suppressed hostility. They are doubly dangerous because they keep their feelings and intentions hidden. In other words they act sneakily.

Fear is the motivation to remain hidden. These people never act out in the open. Anger is the drive for destructive intent, so a person in this band (between fear and anger) is likely to be a very dangerous companion or acquaintance. He or she keeps it hidden but is likely to want your destruction.

These are the people who spread covert rumors and lies. They are not to be trusted. But they hide it so well, they are truly a menace to others.

Great, if over-the-top, fictional examples of this type of character are Grima Wormtongue, advisor to King Theoden in J R R Tolkein's *Lord Of The Rings* and Iago, the malicious character in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Both have mischievous twisted tongues, weaving schemes and seductively planting poison and lies into the minds of their masters. Yet both are very loyal in outward appearance, proudly affirming they have the king's *best interests* at heart.

The classic case you are likely to meet is the sweet little old lady, who is *ever-so-kind**, yet all those around her seem to be falling apart. She appears to be sympathetic to them but all the while she is the cause of their suffering! She is the person who could turn a family member over to the police, because it is "the right thing to do", all the while feeling smug and sanctimonious.

*Ever-so-kind in my writings means deep down vicious, while making all the right verbal posturings about caring and doing things for the right reasons: a cyanide-wouldn't-melt-in-my-mouth sort of person.

Some Unusual Placings

Based on the researches of others I have had to find places for certain not-obvious emotional tones. For example, gratitude, hope, awe and pain.

Gratitude can be just an attitude, of course, a state of mind. But there is an emotion here too that you may be very familiar with. True gratitude is a warm, positive feeling, saying that life is great “I am content”. It’s a very positive flooding feeling.

A person who experiences gratitude would probably not want to change the way things are or have been. So that implies a positive and acceptable past. Most negative emotions come from a past that we wish we could change!

Awe is interesting. The word awful (meaning bad) comes from this. But real awe is a very high level of positive involvement indeed. Those great things which create awe within us are far, far-reaching, mighty and important. We are inspired and lifted to a higher level; a transcendent level perhaps.

To feel the rush and increased heartbeat of awe is to experience something very wonderful indeed. It belongs up above gratitude and close to the top, a little below power or “The Flow”.

Hope may be an emotion, as well as a sense of want and need. Where would you put hope? It’s a positive attitude. As a feeling, where does it fit on the ladder?

I think hope is stronger than anger, fear and boredom. I think it is just above but not so positive as definite pleasure. It’s looking towards pleasure.

Finally, I have looked at pain. Not physical pain, which you could get at any level if you break your arm or burn your hand. I’m talking about emotional pain, which is best called anguish. It is found below anger and above fear.

Emotional pain is intense at this level. It is hard to bear and impossible to resist. Once fear and grief set in, it is watered down and loses some of its strength. But real anguish can be intolerable. People have been known to hurt and mutilate themselves to cope with it: better a self-inflicted physical pain than the unbearable anguish of emotional pain.

Have you experienced anguish? Probably you did when your teenage puppy love and longings were frustrated and blocked.

The Emotional Setpoint

You will learn from these examples that people continuously move up and down the Ladder. No-one is stuck in one spot. Notwithstanding, each individual seems to have a conditioned social emotional response. We call this his or her *emotional setpoint*.

It’s emotion by habituation; the accepted technical term for this is “hedonic adaptation”. Of course such stuck responses are understandable if a person has been battered repeatedly towards a certain emotional tone: repeated fear and anxiety situations, for example, will leave a person with a lifelong insecurity and anxiety complex.

Thus a woman may be sad and sighing often, weeping at the least thing and filled with sadness (grief). This is her conditioned tone, yet she will blossom into smiles if you buy her a bunch of flowers (though don't be surprised if she then bursts into tears and insists "You shouldn't have"!)

Similarly a man may be permanently in anger, fighting everyone and everything (remember the expression "angry young men" of the 1950s?) Yet he will fall to sadness if someone points out that his woman cannot continue to love him because of his aggressiveness. Perhaps if he couldn't find anything to be angry about he would soon become bored—that is, he would move up one level because nothing appeared threatening at that moment in time.

On the positive side, someone who has always enjoyed life and had few shocks or setbacks, is likely to continue through life in a cheerful, happy manner. That's a high emotional setpoint.

The unique insight I offer here is that there are probably a number of fixed conditioned emotional tones, associated with different aspects of our persona. Multiple personality disorder is a medical condition in which the patient has many different 'people' living inside one head. Each has its own separate attitudes and emotions. The sufferer has no control over the switch from one personality to another.

It is an important insight into your own life to realize that we are all, to a degree, a complex of multiple selves. It only becomes recognized as pathology when the different characters are outrageous.

It's important to realize our different selves have differing emotional reactions to different situations. Right away, that explains the mystery of why we sometimes react a certain way and at other times we do not.

Anger Can Be A Good Thing!

Knowing this "emotion-spotting" scale will help you to avoid a serious mistake. You must not stop what you are doing because the person you are helping is growing angry. Providing this is encountered on the way up, there are better emotions to come!

Similarly, it would be wrong to give up while addressing a disturbingly traumatic incident, just because the person is getting bored with what you are addressing. In both instances, just keep going until the client is cheerful again. It's remarkable to me that counselors and psychologists can function without an intimate knowledge of this ladder. There will be mistakes, as unwanted emotions cause distractions, instead of being seen as mileposts on the way to sure recovery.

You see people getting this very wrong in life, too. If a child cries and gets upset there will be a period of anger to follow as they recover themselves. It is wrong to slap the child down again for being rude or naughty. That simply sends him or

her back down to grief. The correct thing to do is to ignore the temper tantrum; act as if you are bored (the next level up). Pretty soon the youngster will get bored with getting no response from others, and move on up in mood, find something interesting and recover their normal interest and cheerfulness.

I'll tell you more about how to bait emotions in this way shortly.

Social Judgments And Emotion

Sadly, our society is very judgmental about emotions. Anger is seen as bad because the person is "trouble", when in fact anger is way superior to fear and apathy.

But fear and apathy are preferred because the person is (by definition) controllable and therefore "no trouble".

There is a cooky psychology that believes it is good to suffer, that artists especially are supposed to haunt these lower rungs. It is even suggested that happy people are not 'experiencing' life properly. This stupidity is based on the misunderstanding that positive feelings are somehow not real emotions. We have become so steeped in negativity that these levels are somehow perceived as the 'real' emotions and everything else is suspect.

A society of angry young men (or women) may be uncomfortable to live with but they are incomparably more valuable than those apathetic wretches who would let things drift on in the same deplorable state, without trying to improve our lot, such as we have in the USA today.

Unfortunately anger is by definition irrational. So you may want someone who protests to organize a march but for heaven's sake don't let them run things afterwards! That was what went wrong with communist revolutions. The angry people who fought hard against the existing system were simply hopeless at putting something workable in its stead. They were irrational and destructive, you see!

Finally, anger, in the right circumstances, can be seen as a healing thing at the personal level. Certain therapies, for instance, find that raging against something is a way to loosen its grip. It is common knowledge that Japanese workers are encouraged to go into a private room and bash at effigies of the management. It helps release tension. This also recognizes that anger on the way up the Ladder is a useful stage post.

Mirroring Emotions

One of the important uses of this Emotional Ladder is mirroring emotions. It's a concept from NLP; they teach it in sales and motivational seminars. If you want to strike up immediate empathy and liking with an individual, try to copy their emotions.

Move as they do; talk the way they talk; use their words.

It stands to reason that if you are with a person whose life is miserable and overwhelming and you are bubbling over with joy and enthusiasm, you will not exactly hit it off. Far from being "cheered up", the other will feel isolated and distanced by your mood and its unfamiliarity. He or she will relate to you more easily if you tone it down a bit.

You've probably heard the saying, "Misery likes company." It doesn't mean likes cheerful company; it means miserable people like people at their own level.

You don't have to be miserable to talk to these people. But talk somberly and empathize with their misery. If someone is angry, yell with them. Angry people often appreciate a good ding-dong shouting match, because they feel the other person is more real and understands what it feels like. Have you ever had the experience of someone saying (genuinely) 'I enjoyed that!' after a good argument?

You are referred to texts on mirroring, which explain about posture, copying breathing rhythms, and so on.

Emotional Baiting

A slightly more positive extension of this matching idea is that you can often raise a person's tone by going in gently just above where they are at, a trick we call "emotion baiting".

So if someone is angry, act bored. Yawn! Pretty soon they'll be bored too. That's an improvement, as you can now see. Then find something more interesting and they'll follow you; look for appreciation and move on forward. Similarly, if someone is fearful, get mad. Try to make them angry at whatever they fear. Challenge them (don't frighten them) and have them yelling back at you.

That's better than feeling helpless! We don't want too much of this yelling stuff, but you get the idea?

Pets: You can do this with animals. If you have a sick or slumped pet, persuade it to reach out a paw. As its limb comes over to you, withdraw your hand as if you are frightened to be touched. It will try again. Keep pretending to be scared and withdraw. Pretty soon the animal will be lashing out at you and having great fun trying to whack you. It's a great little remedy! I have used it and proved it often.

Fixed Emotional Response

Similar to, but not the same as the emotional setpoint, is the concept of the stuck emotional response. It is short-range and relates to a particular topic and the individual comes back to it time and time again when it is triggered by association. A man who has been jilted might feel grief every time love, sex or

women are mentioned but be otherwise cheerful. Someone wronged may fall into anger merely contemplating the individual he considers is to blame.

Providing the person's attention is elsewhere, he or she moves around on the Ladder normally. But mention the fixated topic and once more you will see the stuck emotion switch on.

This isn't quite the same as a person's emotional setpoint, which extends broadly to color everything in that individual's life, not just specific topics.

Specific subjects can have their own emotional response above or below this level. You will notice men often rise in mood when talking about sport. Women do the same when chattering about fashion, cosmetics and babies. Conversely, many people experience a drop in emotional level when discussing sex, religion or politics.

That is because these have been for so long repressed in our society. Dogma, hypocrisy and guilt are associated with subjects which inevitably lead to a drop in emotional vibrancy.

Art and music almost invariably lead to a rise in emotional tone. This is because anyone is free to enjoy their own aesthetic tastes and no-one else can complain about it or argue convincingly that one's taste and opinions are wrong. Common sense will tell you to stay off a topic where your associate has a stuck bad emotion and share only those things where the related emotion is good.

Choosing Your Partner, Friends And Employees

You will readily see that being aware of the emotional setpoint of any potential partner is critical. To be married or committed for life to someone with poor emotional responses is a sure road to your own misery!

A successful couple need to have setpoints close to each other on the ladder and be able to share appropriate emotions. Inappropriate emotions, such as rage when there is no need or endless grief and moping when the environment is basically healthy and supportive is just destructive. As I said, negative emotions tend to come from the past, while positive emotions come from the present.

To enjoy a rich and happy relationship, a couple should be together in the present and able to share delight often, plus occasional visits to the higher realms of exhilaration and awe.

One must also be able to support the other when there is real need (such as appropriate sadness at the death of a loved family member). No need to shed tears too, unless these are sincerely felt. But being able to sympathize with the needs and energy of grief is a great gift and makes for a sensitive lover.

Of course, it's not just love partners and marriage partners, but our "friends" too.

Think about people you know and try to place them on this Ladder. We are looking now at their habitual (setpoint) level, not what they are like during some particular crisis or just after an outstanding success. Consider their general behavior and mode of speech; what are they like really?

You will probably get some shocks from this. Be warned!

A quick tip for happier living is not to associate much with those habitually lower than yourself on this Emotional Ladder and certainly not with people at anger or below. Lower emotions, from hostility and anger on down, are destructive and such associations will inevitably lower your own mood. If you consider the “toxic” people in your life, you will find they all fall in this band below indifference.

It might sound a bit callous and cynical actually choosing your friends, but this is deadly serious. Of course, this isn't to suggest that you suddenly reject former associates as if they were lepers. Friends are still friends.

But I would urge you to apportion the time spent in company with others in accordance with their level on this Emotional Ladder. Reduce your involvement with those who are lower than yourself; treat them as toxic, because they will be. Better still, get to work on them by introducing them to my Supernoetics®, Punk Psychology™ and the *Life and Living TOOLBOOK*. Show them that life can be changed for the better!

The same applies incidentally to people at work. Generally those on the lower rungs make poor employees and will actually harm any business. You only have to study prominent figures in the press to see how true this is but it applies everywhere in business, not just in huge corporations which operate on a national scale.

A person stuck low on the Emotional Ladder is actually succumbing in life; they are not doing well at all. For most of them it is a downward path, getting inexorably worse. Unfortunately, such individuals try to dramatize their own failure on other people, groups and businesses. No-one is going to antagonize customers faster or take more liberties that harm a flourishing concern than someone with a low emotional response.

Books and Movies!

Something you don't hear talked about much in psychological research is the effect of books and movies!

Yet I believe they are very important to us and can be of profound positive health in finding the right emotional stance in life.

Of course I am talking about good books and good movies; those which empower us, not the violence, evil and horror of modern Hollywood “action” movies. Authentic movies can have a great effect on our emotions, enriching and empowering us.

One of the good things about this is we can stand and watch events play out, so we are not directly involved and can enjoy the good and the bad and learn from these vicarious adventures. It's a version of my Glass Elevator ride, which you can read about elsewhere.

So start yourself a library of good books and good DVDs; ones that you can watch over and over, rather than chasing the latest foolish thing. May your life grow deeper and more comfortable with Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, J R R Tolkein and Paulo Coelho.

Keith Scott-Mumby
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Note: Do not confuse this Ladder with Ron Hubbard's "Tone Scale", as used in Scientology. His working is garbled, fragmented and complicated. He includes behaviors as "emotions". He tries to include emotional tones of a person not within a body, which rather violates the concept of an emotion (a physical response or state initiated by a thought, encounter or experience). He rates boredom as neutral (neither positive or negative). Anyone who has been really bored knows it is a very negative emotion!