

What Good Are Emotions?

Emotions Give Us Information.

- Emotions provide us with a signal that something is happening (e.g., “I feel nervous standing alone in this dark alley”).
- Sometimes our emotions communicate by “gut feeling” or intuition. This can be helpful if our emotions get us to check out the facts.
- It’s a problem when we treat emotions as if they are facts about the world. For example: “If I am afraid, there must be a threat,” or “I love him, so he must be good for me.”
- We need to be mindful that emotions are *not* facts. Therefore, it is important to check the facts about the situation.



Emotions Communicate to, and Influence, Others.

- Facial expressions, body posture, and voice tone say a lot about how you’re feeling. They communicate emotions to others (e.g., your sad face may cause someone to ask you if you are OK and to give you support).
- Whether you realize it or not, your emotions—expressed by words, face, or body language—influence how other people respond to you.



Emotions Motivate and Prepare Us for Action.

- The action urge connected to specific emotions is often “hardwired.” For example, when we hear a loud horn beep suddenly, we startle.
- Emotions save time in getting us to act in important situations. Our nervous system activates us (e.g., we instantly jump out of the way of an oncoming car). We don’t have to think everything through.
- Strong emotions can help us overcome obstacles—in our mind and in the environment.



Adapted from *DBT® Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition*. Copyright 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan. Adapted by permission.

From *DBT® Skills Manual for Adolescents*, by Jill H. Rathus and Alec L. Miller. Copyright 2015 by The Guilford Press. Permission to photocopy this handout is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use only (see copyright page for details).