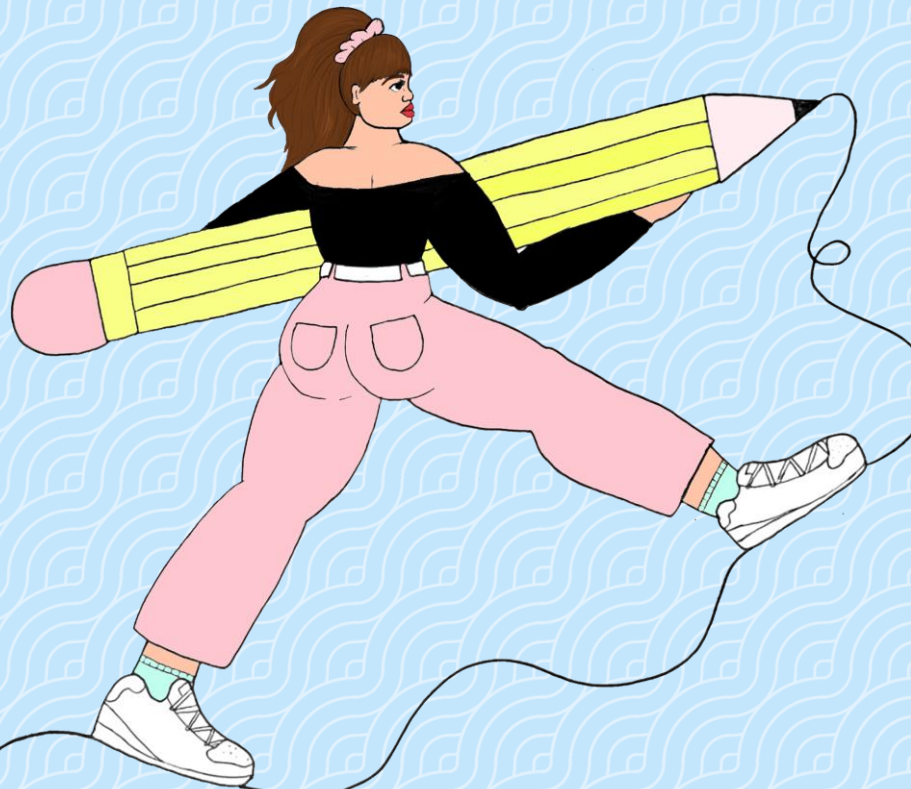




Using Emotions as a Guide

The value of emotion in creative writing



What are emotions and how are they valuable?

Emotions provide incredibly rich and powerful information to us. It is our body's way of communicating with us.

Quite often we find it hard to decipher what our emotions are telling us. We can disguise our emotions or lean into habits that prevent us from knowing what our body is trying to communicate. Writing can be a hugely effective tool when trying to understand.

Ways of understanding what we're feeling.

- Sit in your feelings
- Be silent
- What physical feelings come up
- Let them move through you

What our Emotions are Telling us

Think of your emotions as messages from your internal body to your external body. Sometimes emotions can be processed quickly and other times it takes some time to figure them out. Sometimes there can be a wave of numerous emotions. Below is a guide of what your emotions can mean.

- Sadness – Shows you that something needs to be released.
- Anger – Setting your personal boundaries, letting your body know that something isn't right. This is your body's way of protecting you.
- Fear – Makes your body alert to a possible threat or danger. Sometimes this emotion activates when it doesn't need to be and prevents us from going for the things we want in life.
- Disappointment – This is the gap between expectations and our reality.
- Guilt – Shows you you are outside of your values.
- Jealousy – Shows us what we desire.
- Frustration – Shows us what is blocking us in what we want to achieve.

- Disgust – Shows us what we need to remove from our emotional system.
- Joy – Let's find more of that!!

How can writing help you understand your emotions?

Use the following techniques to help bring any important information forward that your body is trying to communicate with you.

- Sadness – Writing is an incredible method of releasing what you're feeling. Write down all the reasons why you are sad and by doing so release it from your body. Consider burning or burying it once you have written it out.
- Anger – What boundaries within you have been crossed, this is a really helpful way of establishing what *you* accept as ok. Write down what you find acceptable and what you don't, what boundary has been crossed to make you feel anger at this moment? By recognising your boundaries you can communicate them effectively.
- Fear – Fear can make you pay attention and figure out a potential threat, which is very useful in keeping us alive! Sometimes the prefrontal cortex can influence our brain which makes us think there is a threat when there isn't. To establish whether there is a real threat, write down your thoughts, the source of the fear should come to the surface. Ask yourself is this actually true or not? Sometimes your fear can be activated because of situations in the past.
- Disappointment – These quite often arise when our expectations do not align with reality. This is your opportunity to come into alignment with reality. When you live your life in alignment there is more harmony and productivity and ease. Write out what your silent expectations were and then you can understand why you were disappointed. Can you create new expectations based on your reality? How do these feel?
- Guilt – This teaches you that you do not want to repeat certain behaviours as it is outside of your values, for example you may feel guilty for being late when you meet friends, you now know that this is outside of your values. Write out the sentence 'I feel bad about...' this can identify where you feel guilty. Once you can understand that, you can make steps to apologise or correct behaviour.

- Jealousy – This is a very useful emotion as it can directly show us what we want. Desire is a crucial emotional experience. Write down what is making you jealous, can you pinpoint your desires within this. For example you may be jealous of a friend going on holiday, does this mean you desire more time off, some sunshine or seeing something culturally different to you. Once you've understood your desires you can act on them.
- Frustration – You want to get somewhere and something is blocking your way to where you want to be and that is frustrating. Quite simply it is a method of telling you that you need to change direction or figure a way around the obstacle. Frustration usually happens when you are trying to achieve a goal. When you feel frustrated, sit down and write out different ways of getting to that goal.
- Disgust – This serves as a message to remove yourself from a person, place or situation that isn't healthy for you. When you start to feel disgusted write down what the cause of this may be – is it your body trying to guide you in a healthier direction?
- Joy – Joy has many different names – happiness, contentment, excitement, it is generating a 'feel good' feeling. It is a compass directing us to what is right for us. We are allowed to have this feeling. When you have a joyful feeling write it down in your notebook, over time you will have a list of the things that make you feel good, you can then use this list to guide you in the future.