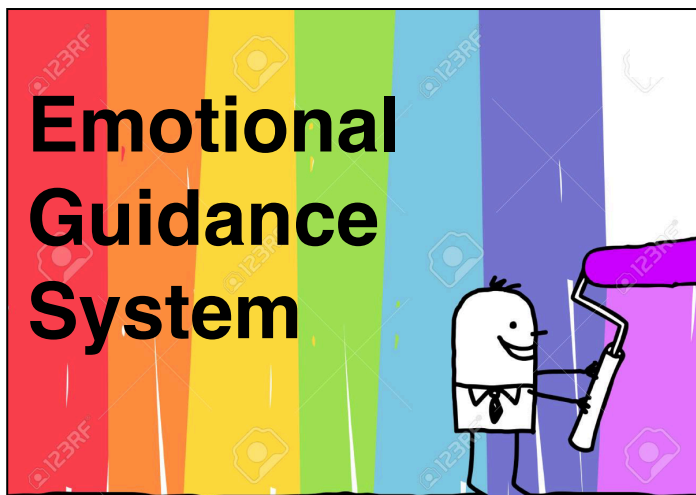




What is the Emotional Guidance System?

Human emotions run the gamut from lowest to highest, from depression to anger to contentment to love and joy. Most people believe they have no control over their emotions, but this is untrue. Our emotions are indicators of where we are emotionally and vibrationally, similar to the GPS (Global Positioning Systems) in our cars.

We can learn to change our emotional state. We do not have to be at the mercy of uncontrollable or chronic emotions. In this article, I will teach you some simple steps to become the master of your feelings, not the victim any longer.

Your Emotional Set Point

The Emotional Guidance scale will help you understand your Emotional Set Point, which is the emotion where you tend to spend most of your time. It's similar to a thermostat. The difference is that you can easily set your home thermostat to keep the temperature steady. Your unconscious habits determine your emotional set point. Take a look at the Emotional Guidance Scale on page 2. At what level do you spend most of your time?

It's not unusual to see people whose emotional set point seems stuck on #10: Frustration/Irritation/Impatience. Some people call that the New York City state of mind. It takes self-awareness to gauge what your set point is. If that is

not who you want to be, it takes some work to change it. Meditation can make a big difference if you intend to push your set point up the scale to contentment, optimism, or higher.

If I had only known about emotional set points before I married some of my four husbands, I might have made different choices. Living with a passionate artist who is always frustrated and pessimistic may be exciting, but over the long term, it grinds you down. You can't expect anybody to change their emotional set Point unless they decide to do it themselves. The most effective way to improve your emotional set point is through a 15-minute daily meditation practice.

When I started meditating while living in Finland for a year after college, I didn't know about the Emotional Guidance Scale or emotional set point. I just wanted to feel better. I left the States as a #10 Frustration and Irritation. After a year of meditation, I came home with a #4 Positive Expectation and Belief. I liked myself a whole lot better, and so did my Mom.

During the long decades I spent suffering from chronic depression, my emotional set point swung from #8 at the best times and down to #22 at the worst times. Now that I have a committed daily meditation practice, I'm a solid #5 Optimism and often go even higher for extended periods.

As human beings, our nature is to go up and down this Emotional Scale as we travel through our life cycles. Outside circumstances constantly change, but we can train our minds and bodies to experience happier higher states far more often than the lower ones.

The Emotional Guidance Scale

To use this scale, start by identifying your current emotion. Once you see where you are on the scale, you can gradually work your way up by shifting your emotional state towards more positive feelings.

Shifting your feelings is akin to crossing the Panama Canal. Because of the 85 ft. difference in

sea level between the Atlantic and Pacific, it's impossible to sail straight across. It requires locks that change the level of the ships gradually, step by step until they reach the other side.

It is impossible to make a giant emotional leap from lower emotions like depression or anger to peace or joy in a moment. It's about making manageable, gradual shifts to an emotion a level or two higher. Moving up the scale by reaching for a higher emotion may mean that you feel thoughts of anger or revenge instead of depression. That will make you feel alive, even though it's still an emotion you'd prefer not to feel.

What a revelation that was to me when I was profoundly depressed and battling breast cancer after my fourth divorce. The *Ask and It Is Given* book said that feeling the hot energy of hatred and rage was an improvement over feeling depressed and powerless. I had to agree. Before long, I was plotting revenge and starting to feel alive.

Next, I let myself feel my anger toward him and my disappointment toward myself for choosing the wrong man again. I went on a haphazard dance up and down that emotional ladder until I made an effort to meditate every single day and found a good therapist. Eventually, I started appreciating periods of boredom as a welcome prelude to contentment and hopefulness.

Strategies for Shifting Emotions

1. **Breathe**—As soon as you realize you feel bad, do not talk about or respond to the situation. Stop and take some deep breaths to regain control. You cannot decide what is best to do next while in the grip of a negative emotion. Using the breath technique when I'm on hold with tech support has helped me become a more amicable, more patient customer on the phone.

2. **Distract**—Often, the easiest way to relieve negative emotions is to direct your thoughts to something that gives you pleasure or satisfaction. Reach for the best feeling thought you can find. Taking your thoughts away from the source of

Emotional Guidance Scale

1. Joy/Appreciation/Empowered/Freedom/Love
2. Passion
3. Enthusiasm/Eagerness/Happiness
4. Positive Expectation/Belief
5. Optimism
6. Hopefulness
7. Contentment
8. Boredom
9. Pessimism
10. Frustration/Irritation/Impatience
11. Overwhelm
12. Disappointment
13. Doubt
14. Worry
15. Blame
16. Discouragement
17. Anger
18. Revenge
19. Hatred/Rage
20. Jealousy
21. Insecurity/Guilt/Unworthiness
22. Fear/Grief/Depression/Despair/Powerlessness

The Emotional Guidance Scale was created by Esther & Jerry Hicks in their best-selling book, *Ask and It Is Given* (available on Amazon). This book is an excellent tool for personal growth.

sadness or upset can quickly relieve those feelings. Do I need this problem fixed right now, or can it wait? We expect instant gratification and cause ourselves unnecessary upset when it doesn't happen. So, chill out!

3. Appreciate—Find something to appreciate that has nothing to do with the cause of your bad feelings. Deep, heartfelt appreciation can relieve bad feelings and pull you up to higher emotional vibration levels more quickly than anything else.

4. Change of Scene—When doing any of the above does not bring you relief, you may need a change of scene. Leave the scene of the upset, whether it's the computer or your significant other, and go for a walk.

5. Fresh Start—When you find it challenging to find relief from a lower emotion, the best solution may be to take a nap or go to sleep and start fresh in the morning.

You Can't Change Other People or Conditions

The cause of much of our unhappiness stems from wanting and expecting the outside conditions and people in our lives to change. You have no control over other people or circumstances and never will. The sooner you accept this, the less emotional turmoil and more peace you will have in your life.

Regular meditation helps you feel contentment that is not dependent on outside circumstances. You can learn to cultivate the higher vibrations of Hopefulness, Optimism, and Positive Expectation. You cannot change other people, but you can become totally in charge of how you feel, no matter what happens.

Dealing With Complainers

If you have people around who constantly complain, you may have to make a difficult choice to minimize contact. It's hard to refrain from taking the bait when someone complains to you, but you

can buy time by taking deep breaths and saying nothing.

Do not jump in and tell your story of how you suffered similarly. You can use short phrases to let the complainer know you understand how they feel. They want someone to listen. They are not likely to be interested in how you think.

Try to turn the conversation into something pleasant, but if you can't succeed, it's time to escape as politely as you can manage.

My fourth husband's mother was unpleasant, and I was glad she lived several states away from us. She had mental problems and spent months in a mental hospital several times when he was growing up. After we got married, she was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Naturally, he wanted to see her before she passed.

I was reluctant to go because I had been quite miserable on previous visits. His mother was a big-time complainer who rarely had anything good to say.

I made a deal with him. I would only go if it were for one afternoon and if he agreed to help steer the conversation into happier times from her past. We weren't sure we could make it work, but it was worth trying.

Things started in the usual vein. She complained about doctors, tests, and family members. But we persevered, and he got her talking about how he played with his brothers and sisters when they were little and how they all went on camping trips together. I started to enjoy hearing about fun times in his family.

Sometimes, she'd veer off-topic with complaints, but we found ways to get her back on track. I'm glad I have some memories of how she was a healthy, good mother for the early part of his life.

Dealing with Toxic People

Sometimes, you run into needy people who want your time and attention and give nothing back

to your relationship. Many people find it hard to cut off contact with these “emotional vampires,” but you cannot change them. They will suck the life energy out of you unless you stand firm and refuse to interact with them. They are a danger to your emotional equilibrium and peace.

Often, the best way to deal with genuinely toxic people is not to deal with them at all. We had a woman like this who would visit my community. She decided I must be her friend and would stalk me, showing up in restaurants where she knew I’d be and inviting herself to the table.

I tried to tell her we were not friends in a polite way, but she would not take no for an answer. The next time I saw her, she approached the table practically crying, “But I like you, and I want you to be my friend.”

I had to be blunt; some might say cruel. “Julie, I do not like you and do not want to be your friend. Stop bothering me. We are NEVER going to be friends.”

My friends at the table raised their eyebrows and looked stricken. They had never heard me speak so harshly to another person. They were embarrassed, but I wasn’t. I later found out she had a brain operation and possible dementia, but she was stubborn as a mule and refused to see a doctor or accept help from kind people who offered.

I didn’t just draw a boundary with this woman. I put up a 10-foot-high wall and never spoke another word to her. She continued to be a pest to other women who would put up with her constant whining and begging, but I was in the clear and never looked back. You have a right to protect yourself from toxic people.

Conclusion

I encourage you to print out the page of this PDF with the Emotional Guidance Scale, cut it out, and tape it to a mirror in your bedroom. Study it and memorize it. Become aware of where you are on the scale as you go through your day.

Remember that you are in control of your emotions and that they exist as a guidance system. When you find yourself in the lower part of the scale, you can reach for an emotion a step or two above.

Going up and down the Emotional Guidance Scale is natural and normal. With some practice and regular meditation, you can spend most of your time on the upper end of the scale.

IMPORTANT: If you are spending most of your time in the grip of lower emotions, you will likely benefit from finding a therapist or psychiatrist to help you. Often, people can get relief from temporary depression or anxiety with medication.



About Barbara L. Wright

Author and speaker Barbara L. Wright roller-coastered between the heights of fun-filled success and the depths of divorce, bankruptcy, cancer, and chronic depression, which she beat with PSYCH-K® and meditation. She is a PSYCH-K Facilitator and Transformation Coach who teaches how to live a happier life, no matter what. To learn more, visit www.BarbaraWrightTransformations.com