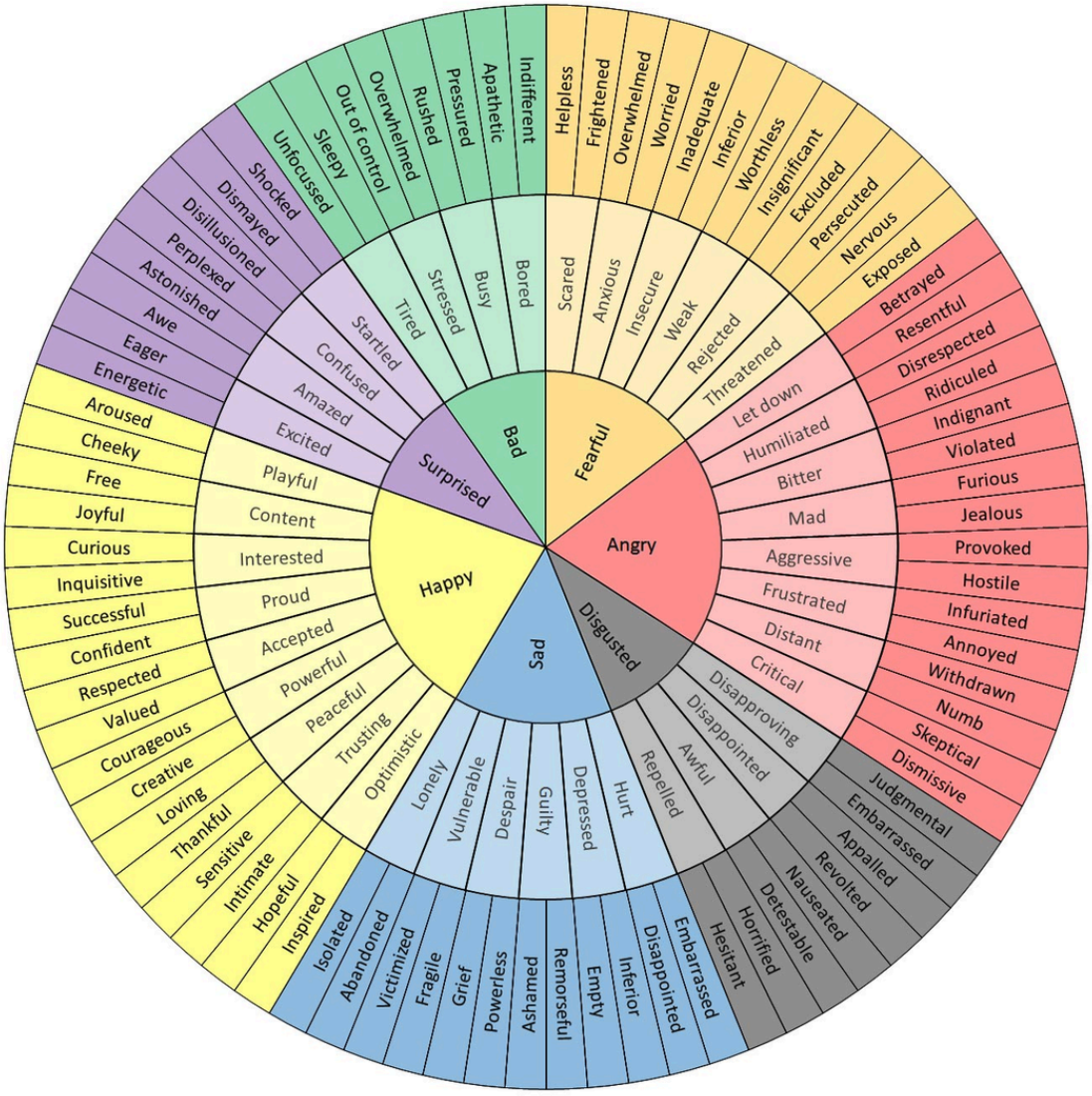
The *Feelings* Wheel



The **Feelings Wheel** is a simple, powerful tool designed to help you:

- **Name what you're feeling**
- **Expand your emotional vocabulary**
- **Dig deeper into why you're feeling it**

This starter tool was created by Dr. Gloria Willcox, this tool is often used in therapy (especially early on!) to get past the vague "I feel bad" or "I'm just not okay" and move towards some clarity.

How to Use the Wheel

1. **Start from the center**
   Look at the 6 core emotions: **Happy, Sad, Angry, Disgusted, Fearful, Bad, Surprised**.

2. **Move outward**
   Look at the second level of the wheel. Which version of that emotion feels **most accurate**?

For example:
→ Angry → Frustrated → Annoyed

3. **Sit with what resonates**
   Let's say you land on:

   "I feel angry."

   Here's how you can think more deeply about it:

- What's overwhelming me right now?
- Is it physical, emotional, social?
- Why does this specific version of anger show up?
- Where do I feel this in my body?

It also helps to know your Primary vs. Secondary emotions

1. **Primary Emotions** are immediate and instinctive (like fear, joy, anger).
   You feel them before you even have time to think.

2. **Secondary Emotions** come *after* you've had time to interpret the situation.
   They're shaped by your past, beliefs, culture, and inner dialogue.

Imagine this scenario
Your manager criticises your presentation in front of the whole team.

Primary Emotion:

Fear or shock; your body tenses, heart races.

Secondary Emotion:

Insecurity or self-doubt; you begin questioning your competence and replaying the situation in your head:

"Am I even good enough for this job?"
"Maybe I should stop speaking up."

When Can You Use the Feelings Wheel?

🧠 **In therapy**
When your therapist asks, “How are you feeling today?” — and your mind goes blank? Use the wheel.

🔳 **While journaling**
Try a daily check-in:
“What did I feel today? What triggered it?”

💬 **After an argument or tough moment**
Ask yourself: “What was I *actually* feeling?”
→ Maybe you thought you were angry, but really, you felt rejected or powerless.

💻 **During stressful work moments**
Instead of pushing through, take 2 minutes to name the feeling. It creates emotional distance and clarity.

💛 **To build emotional language with others**
Especially helpful for kids, partners, or people new to naming feelings.

If you’d like to know more, here are some additional resources:

🌀 The original **Feelings Wheel**: allthefeelz.app
🌈 **Plutchik’s Emotion Wheel:** 6seconds.org
📚 **Book Rec:** *Atlas of the Heart* by Brené Brown – Amazon Link

And if you’re reading this, then we’d like to commend you on taking the time out to learn more about yourself and your emotions.

Find us here:
Instagram Website