



Some good books which explain the emotion system clearly are:

- * *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman
- * *Emotional Rollercoaster* by Claudia Hammond
- * *A User's Guide to the Brain* by John Ratey
- * The relationship between emotions and virtue is explained clearly by Julia Annas in *Intelligent Virtue*.

SESSION 1: Understanding the emotions (Performance virtue).

1. How do you feel? How do you know?

- * Ask students to write down how they feel (in a word) and how they know they feel that way. Ask them how one other person in the room feels and how they know. They should concentrate on verbal and non-verbal signals, as well as physiological signs like pulse, temperature (sweating etc.).
- * Feedback ideas.

2. Recognising emotions.

- * Give students the opportunity to see if they are able to recognise more complex emotions, using more limited information. There are some good, free, online tests of emotional recognition, e.g. http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/ei_quiz/ and <http://kgajos.eecs.harvard.edu/mite/> [both available 02/15]. It is worth noting that the teenage brain is at a stage of development where emotional recognition is harder.
- * Discuss why it is important that we are able to accurately read the emotional state of others: what benefits might this ability bring us? How can an ability to read emotions enable us to develop virtues and character?

3. The causes of emotions: why we feel the way we feel.

- * Emotions are present for a reason. Give students the slide with a number of different emotions on it

and ask them to identify the causes of those emotions: they can be specific (e.g. Liverpool winning the Premiership causing joy) or generic (believing they have been harmed causing anger).

- * Feedback and discuss. Try to identify the root causes of particular emotions, rather than individual, specific causes. Perhaps discuss how it is possible for 2 people to be in the same situation and yet each feel different emotions.

4. How does the system work?

- * The basic idea is that emotions are responses to real or perceived stimuli in our environment (e.g. a real threat might be a lion, a perceived threat might be a group of teenagers: both may result in our feeling fear). The response is physiological and psychological. Emotions fit into two main groups: approach emotions and avoid emotions. Approach emotions are experienced when we perceive we are safe and there is something good in our environment; avoid emotions are experienced when we perceive we are under threat and there is something harmful in our environment.
- * Ask students to work in small groups to devise a way of bringing the emotion system to life. This could be using a diagram of a machine that works the same way the emotion system works, or even using people in the room to act as components in the system.

¹ See further 'Blame My Brain' by Nicola Morgan (esp. pp 29 and 40ff)





SESSION 2: Managing the system (Performance virtue).

1. Managing our emotions.

- * Give the statement ‘you can choose how you feel’ to the students. Ask them whether they agree or disagree with it, and why? There is the famous quote from Aristotle on anger on the following slide.
- * There are some good examples of the idea of managing emotions on the internet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qnsCssTU1s>
[available 02/15] (James Kingston, urban free climber);

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFkRbUKy19g>
[available 02/15] (angry birds and controlling anger);

- * Get students to discuss the strategies they have seen in the stimulus for managing emotions. Ask them to talk about any strategies they use to manage the way they feel.
- * Feedback.

2. Emotions Zones.

- * Show students the emotions zones circular diagram and explain how it works.

The green line is the positive – negative energy line; the purple line is the high – low energy line. The green line corresponds to the release of serotonin: high serotonin means positive emotion. The purple line corresponds to adrenaline: high adrenaline means high energy.

The two lines create four emotions zones:

Survival (high + negative, e.g. anger),
Burnout (low + negative e.g. sadness),
Performance (high + positive e.g. excitement) and **Recovery** (low + positive e.g. contentment) and they get stronger as they move outward from the centre point: therefore top left is the highest and most negative energy. We will find ourselves in particular zones depending on what is happening around us and in our minds. We can move ourselves between zones by engaging in particular thinking or activities.

- * Give students the list of 20 emotions and ask them to place these emotions in the right zone.
- * Feedback where they placed different emotions and notice any disagreement/incorrect placement. The zone will be correct/incorrect; e.g. anxiety is a survival emotion, not a burnout emotion, but the position in the zone will vary because the intensity with which people feel anxiety is subjective.

3. Positive action to manage emotion.

- * Give students the list of 10 ideas for managing our emotions and moving between zones². Ask them to identify which of these techniques they already use, or would use to manage their emotions.
- * Ask students to plan to test out at least one new strategy for managing emotions in between lessons.

² These suggestions come from Barbara Fredrickson’s book Positivity. Fredrickson is a leading researcher on the role of the positive emotions.





SESSION 3: Using the emotions to help us decide: Moral virtues.

1. How are emotions involved when we choose between right and wrong?

- * Ask students to think about the last time either they did something they now regret and know was wrong, or that they believe was the right thing to do. Looking back, was emotion involved in their decision at all? When they decide between right and wrong normally, is there any emotion present?

Emotions move us towards things we think are beneficial, and away from things we think are harmful. Emotions therefore generate desires, which may be said to be in tension with what is in our interests, or what is good. This is sometimes referred to as the choice of Hercules: the choice between the pleasant life and the virtuous life.

Aristotle would say that the virtuous life is the pleasant life because being virtuous is intrinsically rewarding. Immanuel Kant said that moral decisions should be rational, rather than emotional, whereas David Hume said that moral decisions are emotional, not rational. Psychologist Jonathan Haidt, is a leading researcher in the role of the emotions in moral decision making. He has constructed ingenious stories, which from a rational perspective appear morally sound (because no harm is done), but from a moral perspective seem deeply offensive or wrong. There are some examples on the slides (best used with KS4/5 students).

- * Ask students whether they think emotions should influence our moral decision making.
- * Show them the cute slide. Ask them if they could harm any of the individuals in the slide.
- * Show them the less cute slide and ask them again.
- * Can students think of any REASONS why we might need to harm any of the cute individuals (e.g. chemotherapy for a sick child) and protect any of the less cute individuals?

- * Use the Haidt stories to explore the role of emotions in moral decision making (best used with KS4/5).
- * Ask students to discuss whether moral decisions are emotional, rational or a mixture of both. If they are a mixture, what role does each play in formulating a choice?

2. Good Sense: choosing using more than just emotion.

There are plenty of examples from film, literature and popular culture where emotion may have clouded a person's judgment. One such is Zinedine Zidane's head butt on Marco Materazzi in the 2006 football World Cup Final. An interesting case study on this topic is the case of Jon-Jaques Clinton, whose conviction for the murder of his wife Dawn was overturned in 2012, when the judge decided that he had been too emotional to have been in control of his actions. This case set a precedent in British law, which allowed for guilt to be lessened or even eliminated if there is sufficient emotional provocation.

- * Choose a piece of stimulus and ask students whether emotion (in the stimulus) clouded judgment and led to a poor response, or provided motivation to act in the right way.
- * Emotional decisions are often referred to as 'heat of the moment' decisions and could be depicted in red, whereas rational/intellectual decisions are often referred to as 'cool, calm and collected' and could be depicted in blue.
- * Provide students with a range of scenarios where emotion is likely to be present. Ask students in small groups to speculate on what a red, emotional decision would look like, and what a blue, rational decision would look like.



- * Ask the students to come up with practical strategies to enable them to make moral decisions, which are not just emotional, but are guided by reason too.

SESSION 4: Using the emotions to engage the civic virtues.

1. Using emotion to make a difference in the world.

- * The key idea in this lesson is to show how our emotional responses are clues to our moral reaction to situations and that they can move us to enhancing the world.
- * Provide students with some stimulus: a good example is Michael Buerk's original BBC News report on the famine in Ethiopia, which provoked Bob Geldof to set up BandAid and LiveAid: it is on Youtube. There is also an amusing Ricky Gervais video from Comic Relief 2007, which plays with the idea of how emotion is exploited to get us to donate to charity.
- * Ask students the following questions: what do you feel in response to this? What does your emotion tell you about your values, and what does it tell you about your thinking response (e.g. Bob Geldof's anger at the famine in Ethiopia tells us about his values surrounding human life and equality and his thoughts about the injustice of the situation and his perceptions of harm). There are some prompts on the slides and an explanation of the link between certain thoughts and certain feelings/emotions.

2. Emotions, practical intelligence and virtue.

- * Our emotional response to a situation tells us about our values and about what we think of the situation. Emotions powerfully propel us to act. Ask students to speculate on how a strong emotional

- * Ask the students to think about the 7 principal virtues: Courage, Justice, Honesty, Compassion, Self-discipline, Gratitude and Humility. Do any of them seem more red than blue, or vice versa? In order to be courageous, do we need to be more emotional, more rational, or a mixture of both?

response to the stimulus in part 1 of the lesson, could have led to a poor response to the situation.

- * Practical intelligence and the virtues can help us harness the energy of an emotional response and temper it into a constructive and meaningful response to a situation. Give students a situation which should provoke an emotional response, e.g. someone takes something of yours without asking or someone you care about is harmed by someone you dislike. Ask students to work through the practical reasoning questions and then the virtue questions. Do these questions help the students to identify a good course of action?

3. The role of empathy.

- * Another important angle is the role of empathy. There are two good RSA Animate videos: a very short explanation of the difference between empathy and sympathy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewvgu369Jw> and a longer video explaining how empathy is the beginning of positive social change: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG46lwVfSu8> [both available 02/15].
- * Ask students to identify how empathy can help us to respond constructively to the issues in our communities.

4. Planning to make social change.

- * Get students into small groups. Ask them to identify things in their world that annoy them or make them unhappy, which they would like to change. Ask them to discuss their emotional





response and explore it in depth: this will provide their motivation for action.

- * Now ask the students to use practical intelligence and virtues to plan the things they can do to change the situation that makes them irritated/ annoyed/sad/angry. It's important that students select something in their immediate environment,

so that they can see the impact that their actions can have on something tangible.

5. Making social change.

- * Ask students to act on what they have talked about and be prepared to discuss the outcomes in their next lesson.

SESSION 5: Reflection: **Why are emotions important to virtue?**

Ask students to reflect upon and discuss the following questions.

1. What have you learned about your emotions?
2. How have you become more emotionally skilful?
3. What have you learned about choosing between right and wrong?
4. How have you used your emotions to improve your immediate environment?

