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FORM 4.4

What Is the Function of Emotion?

COMMUNICATE/INFLUENCE OTHERS: The expression of emotion influences others whether we intend it or not. The expression of fear may communicate to others the presence of danger. The expression of sadness may evoke concern and empathy in others, and influence them to be caring. The expression of love may cause others to move closer to us. The expression of anger or disapproval may cause others to change their behavior.

MOTIVATE/PREPARE US TO TAKE ACTION: Emotions can motivate us and prepare us to take action. Intense fear can motivate us to flee danger or study for an upcoming exam, and love can motivate us to move closer to others. Emotions help us make decisions by letting us know.

COMMUNICATE TO THE SELF/SELF-VALIDATE: Emotions can provide us with valuable information about situations and people we anger. For example, our fear may indicate that the situation is dangerous, or our distrust may indicate that a person is untrustworthy. Although emotions provide us with valuable information, they should not be treated as facts. Emotions can be self-validating: we feel angry because we have good reason to, or we feel sad because something of value to us has been lost.

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