

A TEEN GUIDE TO DISCOVERING WHAT YOU FEEL

In My Feelings

SO YOU CAN DECIDE WHAT TO DO

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Vidal Annan Jr.

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Introduction

If you are a teen who has picked up this book by your own choice, thank you. I appreciate you taking the time to learn an important skill on your journey to adulthood: understanding your emotions. I have worked with teens for most of my career as a clinical psychologist, and despite what some adults may say about you and your peers, I know that you are in fact interested in learning and growing. Your choice to read this book shows that you are.

If you didn't choose this book yourself, but someone is encouraging you to read it, I thank you too! The person who gave you this book—hopefully a caring adult—probably sees promise in you and knows that with the right information, you can take your life to the next level. This book is for you as well.

Regardless of why you are reading this book, it will help you better understand the feelings that you are having and use them to set and reach your goals. As a teenager, you are likely experiencing new feelings or old feelings in new ways. And you are probably trying to figure out what the heck is going on inside you!

Whether your feelings are pleasant (such as love, joy, or excitement) or unpleasant (such as loneliness, anxiety, or envy), you're trying to decipher them and determine what to do with them. This is a normal part of being a teen. I hope as you read on, you will see that emotions are more than just weird feelings you have in reaction to situations. They are important bits of information about yourself, others, and the world that you can understand and use to your benefit.

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At its core, this book is about emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to how smart you are about emotions. It describes how well you interpret, manage, and make use of feelings in your life.

People with high emotional intelligence are often good at understanding their own and others' feelings and making helpful or useful decisions based on this emotional information. Some people think emotional intelligence may be more important for a successful life than cognitive intelligence, the ability to learn, remember, reason, and solve problems. Emotional intelligence isn't something you either are or aren't born with; you can learn and develop it.

That's where this book comes in. I wrote it to help you improve your emotional intelligence—especially one of its key elements, emotional self-awareness. Emotional self-awareness is your ability to recognize a feeling you're experiencing, label it correctly, and then figure out what it means to you and your current situation. Let's say you have to make a decision, and your stomach is tight, your heart is racing, and your hands are sweaty. What would you call the emotion you're feeling? It does not feel great, and maybe you'd like it to go away, but could you study this feeling to better understand it and use it to help you decide what to do?

The answer is yes. But sometimes emotions are hard to figure out. In fact, many adults still struggle with this process! But with a little help, you can learn to be more emotionally aware.

This book is designed to be read by teenagers like you. Caring adults may get their hands on this book and use it to understand and help you, but I'm not talking to them; I'm talking to you. This book is meant to interest *you* and give *you* information you can use right away. It's organized so you can find what you need easily. The first four chapters explore what it means to be a teenager, what emotions are, and why you have them. The following eight chapters delve into specific, individual emotions that you may be experiencing daily. You don't need to read this book from front to back unless you want to. Please feel free to jump right into the chapter of your choice! You can read some or all of this book and read it in whatever way helps you get the information you need to understand your feelings and use them to improve your life.

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