

# FEELING TYPE

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## Introduction to Emotional Categorization and the Feeling Type

The study of human emotions represents one of the most intricate domains within the field of psychology, as it attempts to quantify and categorize the subjective experiences that define the human condition. **Feelings** are complex psychological processes that frequently defy simple linguistic expression, necessitating a structured approach to understand their origins, manifestations, and impacts. In contemporary psychological discourse, feelings are broadly bifurcated into two primary classifications: **primary emotions** and **secondary emotions**. This distinction is critical for understanding the foundational layers of human affect and how these layers contribute to the overarching concept of the **feeling type**.

**Primary emotions** are characterized by their immediacy and are generally considered to be universal across different cultures and demographics. These emotions, which include **joy**, **sadness**, **anger**, **fear**, and **surprise**, are often viewed as biological imperatives that have evolved to assist in survival and social cohesion. Because primary emotions are felt almost instantaneously in response to external stimuli, they serve as the raw data for our psychological state. They are the initial reactions that signal to the individual and the environment how a particular situation is being perceived at a visceral level.

In contrast, **secondary emotions** are significantly more complex and are heavily reliant on cognitive processing and social conditioning. These emotions, such as **guilt**, **shame**, **jealousy**, and **envy**, often emerge as a reaction to our primary emotions or as a result of reflecting on our social standing and interpersonal interactions. Secondary emotions require a higher level of self-awareness and are often influenced by the cultural norms and personal values of the individual. The concept of the **feeling type** serves as a comprehensive framework to categorize these various emotional experiences, providing a systematic method for psychologists to analyze the spectrum of human feeling.

Understanding the **feeling type** requires an appreciation for how these emotional categories overlap and interact. While the distinction between primary and secondary emotions provides a starting point, the feeling type model delves deeper into the specific characteristics that define how an individual experiences and processes these states. By examining the nuances of emotional categories, researchers can better understand the psychological underpinnings of personality and behavior, leading to more effective therapeutic interventions and a more profound understanding of the human psyche.

## Theoretical Frameworks: Plutchik and Ekman

The conceptualization of **feeling type** is deeply rooted in the pioneering work of two influential psychologists: **Robert Plutchik** and **Paul Ekman**. Their individual contributions have provided the

visual and theoretical tools necessary to map the vast landscape of human emotion. Plutchik is perhaps best known for his development of the **Wheel of Emotions**, a sophisticated circular diagram that illustrates the relationships between different emotional states. This model posits that there are eight primary emotions, which can vary in intensity and combine to form more complex emotional experiences, much like colors on a palette.

Plutchik's **Wheel of Emotions** is instrumental in explaining how emotions can be both polar opposites and complementary states. For example, joy is positioned opposite sadness, and anger is opposite fear. This spatial representation allows for a nuanced understanding of how emotions transition from one state to another. Furthermore, the wheel demonstrates how primary emotions can blend into secondary emotions; for instance, the combination of joy and trust results in love. This framework is essential for the **feeling type** concept as it highlights the dynamic nature of emotional life and the importance of emotional intensity in determining an individual's state.

Complementing Plutchik's work is **Paul Ekman**, who proposed the **Atlas of Emotions**. While Plutchik focused on the evolutionary and structural relationships between emotions, Ekman's work emphasizes the universal nature of emotional expression and the specific states that can be categorized within a grid-like structure. The Atlas of Emotions serves as a comprehensive guide to the various emotional states one can experience, providing a detailed map of the emotional terrain. Ekman's research into micro-expressions and the cross-cultural recognition of facial expressions has solidified the idea that certain emotional types are hardwired into the human experience.

When used in conjunction, the **Wheel of Emotions** and the **Atlas of Emotions** provide a holistic overview of the **feeling type**. They allow psychologists to not only identify what an individual is feeling but also to understand the intensity and the cognitive components of that feeling. These theoretical frameworks are the cornerstone of modern emotional research, offering a standardized vocabulary and visual representation that bridge the gap between subjective experience and objective analysis. By integrating these models, we gain a clearer picture of how diverse emotional states contribute to the overall **feeling type** of an individual.

## The Tripartite Model of Feeling Type: Intensity, Duration, and Valence

The classification of **feeling type** is fundamentally based on three measurable components: **intensity**, **duration**, and **valence**. These three dimensions allow psychologists to quantify emotional experiences that might otherwise seem subjective and ephemeral. **Intensity** refers to the magnitude or strength of the emotion being experienced. A feeling can range from a subtle, low-level sensation to an overwhelming, high-intensity state that dominates the individual's consciousness. The intensity of a feeling often determines its impact on behavior and decision-making processes.

**Duration** is the second critical component, referring to the temporal span of the emotional

experience. Some feelings are fleeting, lasting only a few seconds or minutes, while others can persist for hours, days, or even longer. The duration of a feeling is often a key indicator of its psychological significance; for example, a brief flash of anger is common, but a long-duration state of anger may indicate a deeper underlying issue or a specific **feeling type**. Understanding the temporal nature of emotions helps in distinguishing between temporary moods and more enduring emotional traits.

The third component, **valence**, describes the hedonic quality of the emotion--whether it is perceived as positive or negative. Positive valence is associated with pleasant sensations and states of well-being, whereas negative valence is linked to unpleasantness and distress. It is important to note that valence is not necessarily a moral judgment but rather a description of how the emotion feels to the individual. By combining these three factors, Plutchik and Ekman proposed that all feelings could be categorized into four basic types: **positive**, **negative**, **mixed**, and **neutral**.

This tripartite model provides a rigorous framework for assessing **feeling type**. By analyzing where an emotional experience falls on the scales of intensity, duration, and valence, psychologists can more accurately diagnose emotional patterns and their effects on an individual's life. This structured approach moves the study of emotions away from purely anecdotal evidence toward a more scientific, data-driven understanding of how we feel. The interplay between these three components is what ultimately defines the specific **feeling type** at any given moment.

## Characteristics and Manifestations of Positive Feeling Types

**Positive feeling types** are characterized by a high degree of intensity, a relatively long duration, and a positive valence. These feelings are typically associated with pleasant physical sensations and a general sense of psychological flourishing. From a biological perspective, positive feeling types are often linked to the release of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin, which reinforce behaviors that are beneficial for the individual and the species. Examples of positive feeling types include **joy**, **love**, and **excitement**.

The experience of **joy** is a quintessential positive feeling type, often manifesting as a high-intensity state of delight or happiness. Joy is frequently triggered by significant achievements, social connections, or moments of profound beauty. Because of its high intensity and positive valence, joy can have a transformative effect on an individual's outlook, fostering resilience and creativity. Similarly, **love** is a complex positive feeling type that often has a long duration, providing a stable emotional foundation for long-term relationships and social bonds. It encompasses a range of states, from the intense passion of romantic love to the enduring affection of familial bonds.

**Excitement** represents another facet of the positive feeling type, often involving a sense of anticipation and high physiological arousal. Unlike the more serene states of contentment,

excitement is characterized by an energetic drive toward a goal or an upcoming event. This feeling type is crucial for motivation and engagement with the world. Positive feeling types serve as a psychological "buffer" against stress, helping individuals to maintain mental health and navigate the challenges of life with a more optimistic perspective.

In the context of the **feeling type** framework, positive feelings are not merely the absence of negative ones; they are distinct states that require active cultivation and recognition. By understanding the components that contribute to positive feeling types, individuals can better identify opportunities for emotional growth and well-being. Furthermore, the study of these types highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in recognizing and sustaining positive states, which contributes to overall life satisfaction and healthy social functioning.

## Analyzing the Dynamics of Negative Feeling Types

**Negative feeling types** are defined by their negative valence and are often characterized by lower intensity and shorter duration compared to their positive counterparts, though this is not a universal rule. These feelings are generally associated with unpleasant sensations and psychological distress. Despite their negative label, these feeling types serve essential evolutionary functions, acting as warning signals that alert the individual to potential threats or social transgressions. Common examples of negative feeling types include **fear**, **anger**, and **sadness**.

**Fear** is a primary negative feeling type that is essential for survival. It triggers the "fight or flight" response, preparing the body to respond to perceived danger. While the duration of fear is often short--lasting only as long as the threat is present--its intensity can be very high. **Anger**, another negative feeling type, often arises from a sense of injustice or frustration. It can range from mild irritation to intense rage. When managed effectively, anger can be a catalyst for social change or personal boundary-setting, but when chronic, it can lead to significant psychological and physical health issues.

**Sadness** is a negative feeling type that often follows a loss or disappointment. It is typically characterized by lower intensity than anger or fear but can have a longer duration, leading to a state of reflection and eventual healing. In the **feeling type** model, negative feelings are analyzed not as something to be avoided at all costs, but as necessary components of the emotional spectrum. Understanding the intensity and duration of these feelings is key to distinguishing between healthy emotional responses and clinical conditions such as anxiety or depression.

By categorizing these experiences as **negative feeling types**, psychologists can help individuals understand that these emotions are a natural part of being human. The goal of many therapeutic approaches is not to eliminate negative feelings but to change the individual's relationship with them, reducing their duration and managing their intensity. Recognizing the valence of these feelings allows for a more honest appraisal of one's emotional state, which is the first step toward

effective emotional regulation and psychological resilience.

## The Complexity of Mixed Feeling Types in Human Experience

**Mixed feeling types** represent some of the most cognitively demanding emotional states, as they involve a moderate intensity and duration and are associated with both positive and negative sensations simultaneously. These states, often referred to as emotional ambivalence, highlight the complexity of the human mind and its ability to hold conflicting assessments of a single situation. Mixed feelings are frequently secondary emotions that require significant cognitive appraisal. Examples include **guilt**, **shame**, **envy**, and **bittersweetness**.

**Guilt** is a prominent mixed feeling type that occurs when an individual's actions conflict with their moral standards. It involves the negative valence of self-reproach but can also include the positive valence of empathy and the desire to make amends. This mixture of sensations is what makes guilt such a powerful motivator for social behavior and moral development. **Shame** is similar but often more intense and long-lasting, as it involves a negative evaluation of the self rather than just one's actions. These mixed states are crucial for maintaining the social fabric, as they encourage adherence to group norms.

**Envy** and **jealousy** are also mixed feeling types that involve a complex interplay of desire (positive valence) and resentment (negative valence). Envy occurs when an individual desires something that someone else possesses, while jealousy involves the fear of losing something one already has. These emotions are often moderate in intensity but can persist for long periods, influencing behavior in subtle and sometimes destructive ways. The **feeling type** framework allows for the identification of these mixed states, providing a way to unpack the conflicting signals the individual is receiving.

Understanding **mixed feeling types** is essential for psychological maturity. It allows individuals to navigate complex social situations where there is no clear-cut "right" way to feel. By acknowledging that it is possible to feel two things at once, individuals can reduce the cognitive dissonance that often accompanies ambivalence. In a clinical setting, addressing mixed feeling types involves helping the patient to disentangle the various threads of their emotional experience, leading to a more integrated and coherent sense of self.

## Neutral Feeling Types and Psychological Homeostasis

**Neutral feeling types** are often overlooked in emotional research but play a vital role in psychological homeostasis. These feelings are characterized by low intensity, short duration, and a valence that is neither distinctly positive nor negative. They represent the "baseline" of emotional experience, where the individual is not actively being stimulated by significant internal or external events. Examples of neutral feeling types include **boredom** and **apathy**.

**Boredom** is a neutral feeling type that occurs when an individual is in a state of low arousal and lacks interest in their current environment. While often perceived as negative, boredom can serve as a crucial psychological signal that one's current activities are not providing sufficient meaning or challenge. This can lead to increased creativity and the search for new, more engaging stimuli.

**Apathy** is another neutral state, characterized by a lack of feeling, emotion, interest, or concern. In some contexts, apathy can be a protective mechanism against overwhelming stress, though in other cases, it may indicate clinical issues like depression or burnout.

The **feeling type** of neutrality is essential because the human nervous system cannot remain in a state of high intensity indefinitely. Neutral states allow the mind and body to rest and recover from the physiological demands of intense positive or negative emotions. They provide the necessary contrast that allows us to recognize and appreciate more intense feelings when they do occur. Without these periods of neutrality, the individual would likely experience emotional exhaustion and a diminished capacity to respond to the environment.

In the broader context of **feeling type** theory, neutral feelings are seen as an integral part of the emotional cycle. They are the periods of equilibrium that exist between the peaks and valleys of more intense emotional experiences. By recognizing the value of neutral states, individuals can learn to accept periods of low stimulation without feeling the need to constantly seek out high-intensity experiences. This acceptance is a key component of emotional regulation and long-term mental health.

## The Interplay Between Feeling Type and Behavior

The concept of **feeling type** is not merely an academic exercise; it has profound implications for understanding how our internal states drive our external actions. Our **behavior** is often a direct manifestation of our current feeling type, as emotions provide the motivational force behind most human activity. For instance, a positive feeling type such as excitement can lead to proactive, goal-oriented behavior, while a negative feeling type like fear can result in avoidance or defensive actions. Understanding this link is crucial for both personal development and psychological practice.

The **intensity** component of a feeling type often dictates the urgency of the resulting behavior. High-intensity feelings, whether positive or negative, demand immediate attention and action. This can be seen in the impulsive behaviors associated with intense anger or the spontaneous acts of kindness driven by intense joy. Conversely, low-intensity feeling types tend to result in more deliberate, slow-moving behaviors. By identifying the intensity of their feeling type, individuals can gain better control over their impulses and make more rational decisions, even in the heat of the moment.

The **duration** of a feeling type also significantly impacts behavior over the long term. A feeling that

persists for a long time can become a mood or even a part of one's personality, leading to habitual patterns of behavior. For example, a long-duration mixed feeling type like envy can lead to a consistent pattern of competitive or resentful behavior toward others. On the other hand, the long-term cultivation of positive feeling types like love or gratitude can lead to prosocial behaviors and the development of strong, supportive social networks. The **feeling type** framework thus provides a way to trace the origins of complex behavioral patterns back to their emotional roots.

Finally, the **valence** of a feeling type influences the direction of behavior. Positive valence generally encourages approach behaviors, drawing the individual toward certain people, places, or activities. Negative valence encourages withdrawal or corrective behaviors, pushing the individual away from perceived discomfort or harm. By understanding the feeling types that drive their behaviors, individuals can begin to align their actions more closely with their long-term goals and values, leading to a more intentional and fulfilling life.

### Theoretical Implications for Interpersonal Relationships

The framework of **feeling type** is particularly useful for analyzing and improving **interpersonal relationships**. Relationships are essentially a series of emotional exchanges, and the ability to accurately identify one's own feeling type, as well as the feeling types of others, is a core component of emotional intelligence. When individuals understand that their partner might be experiencing a **mixed feeling type** like guilt or a **negative feeling type** like sadness, they can respond with greater empathy and effectiveness, rather than reacting purely to the surface-level behavior.

Communication within relationships is often hindered by a lack of clarity regarding **feeling types**. For example, one person might express anger (a high-intensity negative feeling), while the underlying cause is actually fear or sadness. By using the concepts of intensity, duration, and valence, couples and families can learn to look beneath the immediate emotional display to find the core feeling type. This leads to more honest and productive communication, as it addresses the actual emotional needs of the individuals involved rather than just the symptoms of their distress.

Furthermore, understanding the **feeling type** of others helps in setting healthy boundaries. Recognizing that someone else's persistent negative feeling type is a long-duration state that they must manage themselves can prevent a partner or friend from taking unnecessary responsibility for that person's emotional well-being. It also allows for a more balanced relationship where both parties are aware of the emotional climate and can work together to foster more positive feeling types within the partnership. This shared understanding creates a more resilient and supportive bond.

Ultimately, the study of **feeling type** in a social context emphasizes the interconnectedness of human emotions. Our feeling types do not exist in a vacuum; they are constantly being influenced

by and influencing the feeling types of those around us. By applying the insights of Plutchik, Ekman, and other researchers, we can build more compassionate communities and more fulfilling personal relationships. The ability to navigate the complex world of feeling types is a vital skill for anyone seeking to improve their social and emotional life.

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