



Turning Emotion into Action (TEA)

Although it may not feel like it at times, your emotions are a gift – they are like directional guideposts along your life path. As you have probably already experienced, these “guideposts” are easy to misinterpret, and we have all attributed emotions to the wrong people or situations. In addition, until you can fully process emotions, especially negative emotions, it’s hard to let them go and move forward.

The Turning Emotion into Action (TEA) exercise is designed to help you use your emotions to pinpoint opportunities for positive change. The TEA exercise utilizes the concept of emotional competence: using emotional intelligence and leadership skills to create positive change in yourself and in your environment.

1. **Think about a recent experience you have had that elicited strong, feelings for you.** Consider the events and causes leading up to the conflict, the conflict itself, the outcome(s), and feelings you had throughout.
2. **Access the [Human Systems Virtual Emotion Wheel](#) and use this tool to choose the emotion and definition that best describes your feeling and the experience.** In the table below, write the emotion word and the definition in the first two columns. The first row is a sample.
3. **Think about what the need is behind your emotion.** For example, if I chose “betrayed”, I might decide one of the needs associated with that emotion is “protection”. Enter your need into the “Need” column.
4. **Think about what principle or behavior change you could implement that might get your needs met.** For example, if I feel betrayed because somebody did not follow through on an important item and I need protection, I might decide that I need to implement some boundaries or self-care.
5. **Finally, determine what action you would need to achieve the solution.** If I feel betrayed, I need protection, and I’m setting boundaries, I might decide that next time I need this person to follow up on something, I will send them a reminder email with details about what needs to be done, as well as an invitation to correct this information if it’s incorrect.

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Emotion	Definition	Need	Principle/Behavior Change	Action
Betrayed	Feeling exposed (to danger) because a person I trusted said they would follow through on something and they did not.	Protection	Self-care/boundaries	Next time I need this person to follow up on something, I will send them a reminder email with details about what needs to be done, as well as an invitation to correct this information if it's incorrect.

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