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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: NATIVE PERSPECTIVES
Dr V Kulandaiswamy, Secretary, VIMS, Coimbatore

**REVISITING NATIVE
WISDOM**

EMOTIONS:

Human beings are the combination of two elements: one the physical being which is visible and the other is emotional entity which is invisible and intangible .But the impact of emotions become visible in the physical form in many ways. Therefore, the human body and human emotions are intertwined and are inseparable. The internal feelings of an individual make an impact on the outward behavior and actions.

Psychologist *Robert Plutchick* (1927-2006), a U.S Professor of Psychology made extensive Research on human emotions and developed a theory of emotions. According to him these are eight primary emotions: *anger, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise, anticipation, trust and joy*. Each of these emotions trigger behavioral response which may be a combination or derivative of these eight basic emotions.

Table 1 Robert Plutchick’s Eight Primary Emotions

Optimism	Love	Submission	Awe	Disapproval	Remorse	Contempt	Aggressiveness
Serenity	Acceptance	Apprehension	Distraction	Pensiveness	Boredom	Annoyance	Interest
Joy	Trust	Fear	Surprise	Sadness	Disgust	Anger	Anticipation
Ecstasy	Admiration	Terror	Amazement	Grief	Loathing	Rage	Vigilance

Based on this premise he has developed a Wheel of Emotions to illustrate the eight basic emotions and twenty four other consequential and derivative emotions in the form of a Circumplex Model.

PLUTCHICK’S WHEEL OF EMOTIONS

The emotional circle and color wheel given below represents the interconnection between different emotional variables and also expresses the different intensities (depicted in different shades) with which they mix with one another.

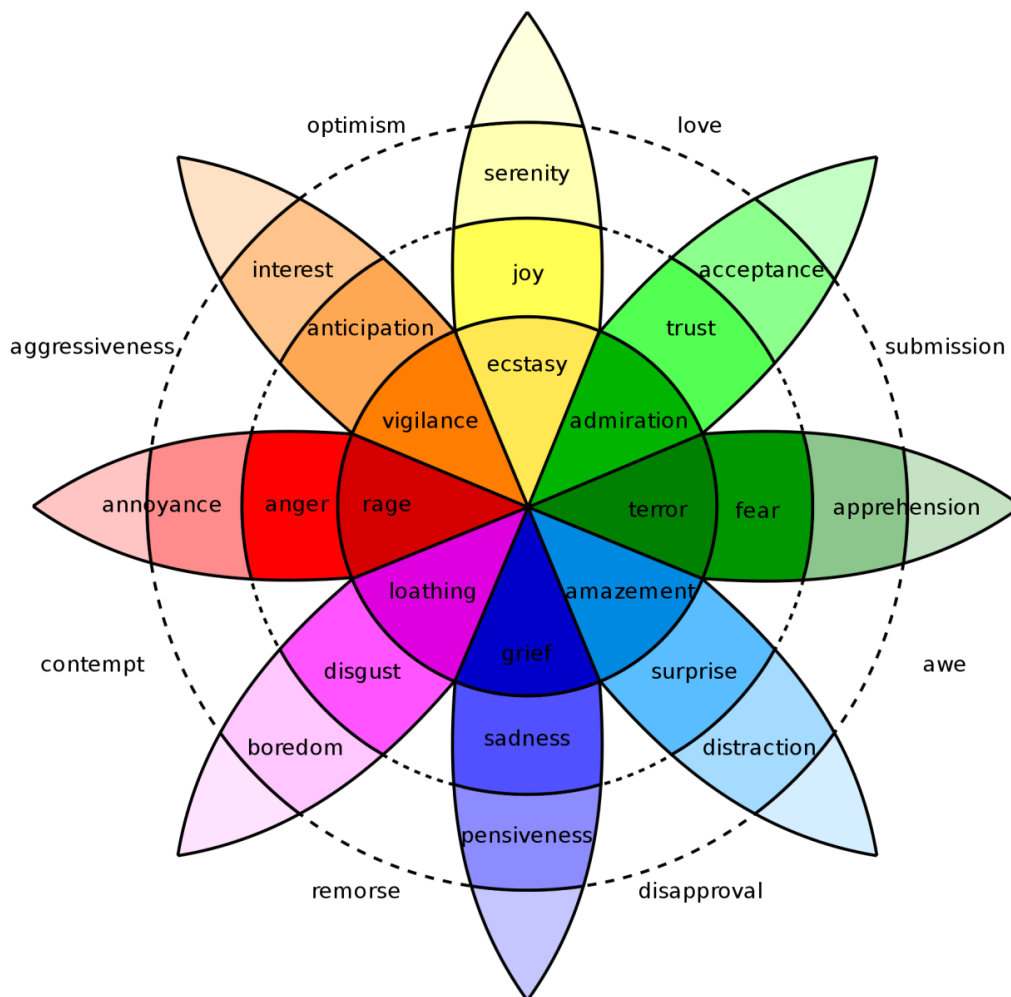


Figure 1 Plutchick’s Wheel of Emotions (Source: Plutchik, R. E., & Conte, H. R. (1997))

Tamil classic *Tholkappiam* deals with basic human emotions and the different ways they are expressed and the root cause for such emotion in a structured manner, which is a thorough and holistic analogy from common man's point of view. There is a striking similarity between *Plutchick's* theory and *Tholkappiar's* (circa 2nd century B.C) portrayal of human emotions. Quite interestingly *Tholkappiar* also classified the basic human emotions into eight types and have identified four sources/causes lay behind each of the basic emotions, aggregated into 32 causative factors which influence human emotions and behavior.

While *Plutchick's* analogy exhibits the interconnections among the emotional categories and their derivatives in the psychological perspectives, *Tholkappiar* lists the causative factors for each of the basic emotions he propounded.

Table 2 *Tholkappiar's* Analogy

Laughter	Wail	Remorse	Surprise	Fear	Pride	Anger	Happiness
Ridicule	Insult	Aging	Novelty	Demon	Education	Mutilation	Wealth
Childishness	Deprivation	Disease	Magnification	Animal	Valor	Exploitation	Sensual pleasure
Ignorance	Loss of status	Sorrow	Minimization	Dacoits	Glory	Torture	Sex
Foolishness	Poverty	Weakness	Achievement	Ruler	Benevolence	Murder	Entertainment

Tholkappiar's analogy can be fitted into a diagram identical to the Wheel of Emotions, but with a different logic.

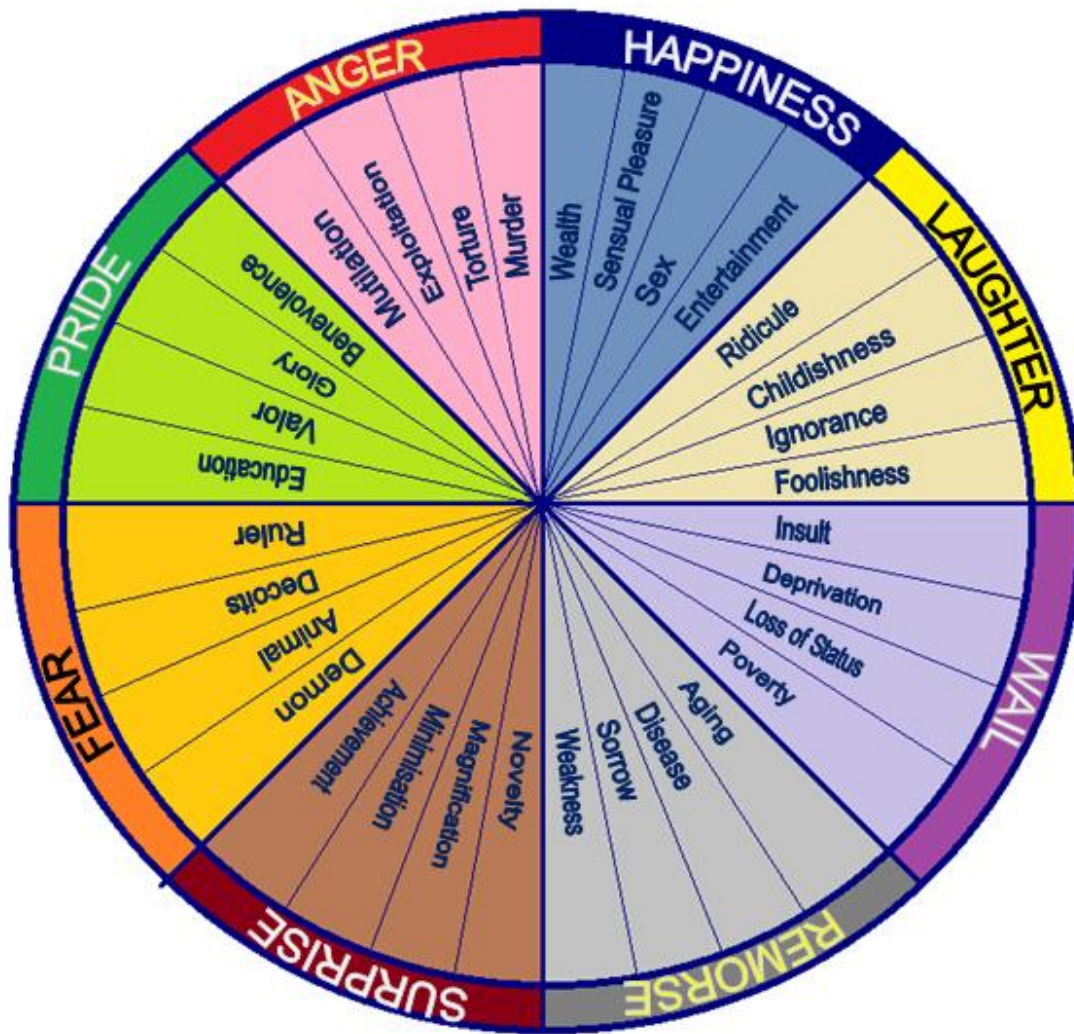


Figure 2 *Tholkappiar's* Analogy-Diagrammatic Structure by the Author

Tholkappiar's analogy is perhaps the earliest attempt to systematically analyze and schematically present human emotions.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE:

Emotional intelligence is distinct from intellect. Human intellect and human emotions are two different competencies. There is no known connection between intellectual capacity and the ability to balance human emotions. Performance or success of an individual is more influenced by the way human emotions are managed. Emotional intelligence incorporates two competencies:

1. Personal competency which is connected to self awareness and self management. In other words, it is the ability to recognize, understand and manage one's own emotions.

2. Social competence, which means the ability to interact with others, build social relationship and recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others.

In short emotional intelligence is the ability to manage emotions in such a way that one should not succumb to emotions but successfully convert human emotion into positive results.

Emotions have positive as well as negative orientation. Managing the emotion imply that positive oriented emotions need to be encouraged and negative oriented emotion need to be moderated so as to achieve positive results. Proper understanding and management of emotions is a prerequisite for any human endeavour. Managing emotion have the following prerequisites:

- Have proper understanding of the emotions which impact human or social relation.
- Refrain from making instant decisions based on temporary emotions.
- Control your reaction to emotions by focusing your thoughts on such emotions with a rational approach.
- Strive to control emotions so that you don't become a slave to your emotions and also harmonise emotions with your goals.
- Cultivate positive emotions like goal orientation, empathy, praise, forgiveness etc.

R. Michael Fisher in his research work has categorically stated that "mind is superior to emotions" and "mind can heal the heart." Therefore control of emotions is possible through proper application of a rational mind.

BALANCING EMOTIONS: THE INDIAN WAY

EMOTIONAL CONTROL:

Emotions are by and large the product of five senses. The sense organs generate passion and prejudice and instigate human emotions like anger, fear, hate and desire. According to Bhagawad Geeta: "As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, an embryo by the womb, so wisdom is enveloped by emotions. Emotion deludes the intellect and shadows the wisdom which leads to sin and sorrow".

The first step in the emotional control is to filter the inward flow of diverse outside interests.

Mind has a tendency to go in different directions. We must focus it towards fixed goal. Human

soul is capable of elevating oneself to a higher plane through the control of senses internally. Saint *Thirumoolar* emphasizes the internal locus of control that exists in the human mind.

“One is one’s own friend and foe
One can control this birth and the one that follows
One will experience the consequences of his actions
One is one’s own master.” - (*Thirumanthiram-verse 2228*)

According to Swami *Paramananda*, “the less a man is nourished inwardly more does he wants outer contact, companionship and diversion.”

One has to realize that human mind is capable of exercising control over senses and emotions caused by the senses.

NURTURE VALUES:

Values are the intangible means by which one can gain dispassionate outlook, objective world view and a rational approach in overcoming emotional issues. With the help of higher human values, one can overcome passion and emotions. Such a dispassionate outlook of life is eminently expressed by a great Sangam period Tamil poet *Kanian Poongunran* who has portrayed the secular values and pragmatic world view:

“All habitats on earth are my own,
All people are my kith and kin,
Good and evil come on their own,
Likewise pain and relief happen,
Death is not new to humans,
I never take life as unmixed pleasure,
Nor do I hate it as suffering entire,
Wisdom has taught me the vagaries of life;
As the canoe that jolts violently on the turbulent water,
That flows in the mighty meandering river,
Intensified by heavy downpour,
Destiny drives the human life and its course,

Therefore,

Neither do I admire the mighty, more so
Nor do I degrade the meek” - (Translation by the Author)

FREE FROM ATTACHMENT:

All sufferings emanate from attachment towards objects and persons. *Thiruvalluvar* states that:

“Whatever things a man has renounced, by that thing, he cannot suffer from”

(யாதனின் யாதனின் நீங்கியான் நோதல்

அதனின் அதனின் அலன்) - (*Thirukkural-341*)

Bhagawad Geeta gives a pragmatic philosophy of renouncing the fruits of action than the action itself. “It is not possible for a human being to abandon action entirely but he who relinquishes the fruits of action is verily called relinquisher.” Therefore one has to practice working without expecting rewards.

KEEP EVENNESS OF MIND:

Mid positioning of mind or keeping the mind equipoised is a healthy and a desirable mindset advocate by saints and sages. *Thiruvalluvar* conveys this wisdom as follows:

“Loss and gain come not without cause; it is ornament of the wise to preserve evenness of mind.”

(கேடும் பெருக்கமும் இல்லல்ல நெஞ்சத்துக்

கோடாமை சான்றோர்க் கணி) - (*Thirukkural-115*)

Human emotions are induced by two extremities of life, the opposite pairs or the dualities. The Vaishnavite saint *Nammalvar* has listed 23 dualities of life and has advised the devotees to accept these attributes dispassionately as the bestowal of lord Almighty. The dualities listed by *Nammalvar* are as follows:

Poverty and Wealth	Forgetfulness and Remembrance
Hell and Heaven	Dishonesty and Honesty
Enmity and Friendship	Black and White
Poison and Elixir	Untruth and Truth
Pain and Pleasure	Aged and Young
Confusion and Clarity	Old and New
Heat and Clod	Ignoble and Glory
Rural and Urban	Invisible and Visible
Ignorance and Wisdom	Shadow and Sunshine
Sin and Blessings	Meanness and Greatness
Separation and Union	Short and Long
Non-existence and Existence	

The mid positioning of mind between these two extremities is the sure way of controlling the emotions. This is the way to apply spirituality in daily life. *Thiruvalluvar* has precisely conveyed this idea in the following couplet:

“He who does not seek pleasure in pleasure will never suffer in the sufferings”

(இன்பத்துள் இன்பம் விழையாதான் துன்பத்துள்
துன்ப முறுதல் இலன்)

(*Thirukkural-629*)

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