

Emotions: what are they for?

Here's the second concept that Héloïse Junier passed on to us during my two-day training session! Happy reading!

What are emotions? What are they used for?

In 1984, psychologists James A. Russell and Beverley Fehr said, "Everyone knows what an emotion is, until they are asked to define it. At that point it seems no one knows anymore!"

Patrick Vuilleumier, professor in the Department of Fundamental Neuroscience at Geneva's Faculty of Medicine, defines emotion as "a cerebral upheaval whose function is to adapt the brain (and the rest of the organism) to the situation that has generated this emotion, whether it be joy, anger, disgust etc."

Héloïse Junier compares the brain to "an orchestra conductor, at the root of emotions, sensations and feelings". She goes on to say that "Emotions are useful to our survival, and have the function of :

Understand that one of our needs is not being met

React quickly

Restore balance to our organism

Optimize our chances of well-being and survival".

How does fear manifest itself and what purpose does it serve?

How does sadness manifest itself and what purpose does it serve?

How does happiness manifest itself and what purpose does it serve?

How does anger manifest itself and what purpose does it serve?

Anger shows that our personal limits have been crossed.

In our gender stereotypes, anger in girls is generally taken as hysteria, while anger in boys is seen as having character.

Héloïse Junier invites us to compare emotions to an iceberg:

The visible part of the iceberg is the physical manifestation of the pleasant (joy) or unpleasant (anger) emotion: (crying, laughing, smiling, crying, looking, kicking, etc.).

The submerged part of the iceberg represents the child's (and/or the adult's) unsatisfied needs.

The adult can then ask: What does the child need?
Emotion must be distinguished from need.

Most people tend to blame others for their emotions, whereas if we take responsibility for our own emotions, we can avoid triggering inappropriate behavior.

The child is at the center of his or her emotion: the adult is not responsible for the child's emotion but can be a trigger. On the other hand, a child who "explodes" with his or her parent (and not with his or her teacher at school) is a child who demonstrates a strong, healthy and secure attachment bond: in a way, it's a sign of trust that the child is placing his or her emotions in the hands of an attachment referent, an attachment figure: "with you I CAN get angry, because I KNOW that no matter what happens, you'll love me".

The aim is to fill the child's "affection bucket" or "emotional cup" (cf. OWOT #2) (quality time), so that the child becomes more tolerant of frustration. Quality time is a form of fuel for the child," adds Héloïse Junier.

Do you have your affection bucket full today? What quality time will you spend today with your child, your spouse, your colleague?