

Workout 1 ▪ Observing Emotion

Prompt, Exercise & Practice for Homer's *Iliad*

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"My father had me learn every word of Homer . . . to see me develop into a good man." —Niceratus of Athens

"Homer enthusiasts say that Homer has been the educator of Greece, and for the education and government of humans, we should build up our entire lives with the assistance of this poet." —Socrates of Athens

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WORKOUT 1 IS all about observation—about being aware of our feelings or emotions. What exactly are our emotions? And what, if anything, is behind them?

The word "emotion" itself comes from a Latin word that means "to move out or from." In other words, emotions are movers. Motivators. They're like cowboys driving cattle. They move us on from one thing or place to another.

But again: what, if anything, is behind them? What moves our emotions? Or, to continue with the analogy, what motivates the cowboy to drive the cattle?

Of course, we could look at what's going on in terms of our brain, nervous system, and the rest of our body. But that's not our interest. For us, the question is more psychological. What we want to know, really, is what movers move the movers we experience. What emotions are behind our emotions?

Usually, if we look close enough, we'll find a desire* for something behind our emotions, whether the emotion is positive (such as joy or pleasure) or negative (such as fear or pain or anger). So if we can figure out what this desire is, and what it is for, and if, moreover, we can learn to regularly recognize the desire behind our emotions, we'll be in a much better position to manage our emotions. Let's get to it, then!

*By the way, desire itself is an emotion.

Greek & English ▪ The Greek word for "feeling, emotion, passion" is *pathos*.

PROMPT ▪ EMOTION OBSERVATION ▪ Let's begin with Homer's *Iliad* before taking a look at another person we know and ourselves. **Identify** and **describe** the emotion or desire that is behind **Achilles' anger**. Do the same for **Agamemnon's** and **Apollo's anger**. And for **Hephaestus' fear** that Hera and Zeus will quarrel toward the end of Book 1 (though the word "fear" is not literally present, it is implied—or something like fear). And for **Hector's longing** "to do something great" during his battle with Achilles (Book 22). Do the same for an **emotion of someone you know** (a family member, friend, or someone else). Finally, consider **an emotion you experience**. Identify and describe the emotion or desire that is (or was) behind your own feeling or emotion (whatever it is or was).

Achilles' anger _____

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Agamemnon's anger _____

Apollo's anger _____

Hephaestus' fear _____

Hector's longing _____

An emotion of someone I know _____

An emotion I experience _____

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EXERCISE • EMOTION & DESIRE CHART • Consider **four emotions*** you have experienced in the past—**two positive** emotions (they feel good) and **two negative** emotions (they don't feel good—or not exactly). They may or may not be regularly occurring emotions. In the following **chart**, 1) **name** the emotion, 2) **identify** and **describe** the desire behind the emotion (what the desire is for) and, 3) **to what degree** you are usually **able to satisfy** the desire behind the emotion (1 being you are not at all able to satisfy the desire, and 10 being you are always able to satisfy it).

*Centuries after Homer, the Greek Stoic philosophers identified many human feelings, emotions, passions (*s. pathos*), including joy, caution, willing(ness), gladness, merriment, cheerfulness, modesty, respect, purity, goodwill, kindness, being welcoming, brotherly love, grief, pain, pity, envy, jealousy, rivalry, heaviness, annoyance, distress, anguish, confusion, fear, terror, shame, hesitation, consternation, panic, mental agony, desire, lacking, hatred, love of strife, anger, erotic desire, spiritedness, wrath, pleasure, enchantment, joy in the misfortune of others, delight, relaxation. For more, see the Cave's *The Best of the Early Stoics*. With the help of others, we might add disgust, surprise, love, tranquility or calmness, gratitude, amusement, awe, happiness, sadness, anxiety, worry, boredom, disappointment, empathy, apathy, nostalgia, interest, curiosity, laziness, procrastination, patience, impatience, humility, pride, contentment, discontentment.

NAME THE EMOTION	IDENTIFY & DESCRIBE THE DESIRE BEHIND THE EMOTION	DEGREE OF SATISFACTION

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PRACTICE • EMOTIONS-FEELINGS LOG • The **goal*** for this practice exercise is to get used to looking at the feelings and emotions you experience and what emotions or desires are behind them. In the following Emotions-Feelings Log, **note three** things you feel or three emotions you have during three days out of the following week. Next, try to **identify** and **describe what is behind** the feeling or emotion, whether it be another emotion (say, fear behind anger) or desire itself (say, desire behind fear). If possible, **continue** the exercise into the following weeks. The more we look at our feelings and emotions and what is behind them, the better we will get at emotions management. (By the way, Workout 2 is “Managing Anger.”)

*The goal is not to get rid of our feelings or emotions. We’re not interested in being robots. The goal is to learn how to manage our emotions in such a way that is healthy and beneficial to us and to those around us. So feel! Be moved! But try to do so in a way that is healthy and beneficial rather than harmful and unhealthy.

DAY 1	
Name the emotion	Identify and describe the emotion or desire behind the emotion
1.	
2.	
3.	
DAY 2	
Name the emotion	Identify and describe the emotion or desire behind the emotion
1.	
2.	
3.	
DAY 3	
Name the emotion	Identify and describe the emotion or desire behind the emotion
1.	
2.	
3.	

