

# Confusing feelings

Feelings emerge to help us, but feelings can often times be perceived as confusing and not so helpful at all. Livet&Sånn has created the Wheel of hearts, as a starting point for exploring and understanding more of one's own and others' feelings.

The heart we have called **outside** is about all the things that affect our feelings. What happens that make our different feelings emerge. Children can also use the outside heart to talk about how we can notice different feelings in others, that feelings are displayed in their facial expressions and in body language.

The heart we have called **inside** is about what happens inside us. Feelings come with various signs or signals such as increased pulse/breathing, temperature changes, pressure and pain in the body, or muscles that tighten.

When we recognise these signs, we can use the heart we have called **message** to find out what these signs try to tell us. What message does the feeling want to convey? It could be telling me, for instance, that I should get ready for combat or defence. Or that I am about to lose something that is important to me. That the people close to me dislike something I have done, which could lead to me being disliked as well, or that something is dangerous, and I have to protect myself.

The heart we have called **need** is there to remind us that all feelings represent a need: what do I need when I feel like this? I might, for instance, need understanding and support. Or I might need to be alone for a bit. Maybe I need to set boundaries for myself? Or do I need to repair a relationship because of something I have said or done?

This last heart, the heart we have called **under**, is a little bit different, and does not necessarily always need to be involved in handling our emotions. But sometimes we experience that our emotional response to something not always match what actually happened. We can become super frustrated over something we understand is basically a trifle. Or we can feel sadness, shame, fear, or other feelings without fully understanding why. In these situations it can be useful to explore whether or not there can be something underneath it all that is causing trouble.

Could it be that this feeling is covering over another, original, feeling that is not expressed? Sometimes we carry painful memories or experiences from our past that surface and tint the feelings we feel in the present. Most of you probably also have experienced that the sum of our everyday life affects what happens and how we feel on the inside here and now. Feelings do not always come neatly and simply and easily understood, because to complicate things further, we also have complex feelings, and feelings that occur simultaneously. It is, for example, not unusual to feel angry and sad at the same time. Furthermore we may sometimes use our feelings with purpose to achieve something. So... if you experience that feelings can be confusing, then you're pretty normal.

Feelings are often confusing. But if we notice that a feeling is emerging in us, if we wonder what the feeling wants to tell us, and if we consider whether or not the feeling come with a need we can meet - then we have handled the feeling in such a way that it can be useful to us. And if the feeling doesn't match the situation? Well, then we wonder and explore what might lay underneath it. Because when we understand, it almost always become easier to find helpful solutions to the hard things.