

Precisely Write Emotion

*1200 Words for
Describing Emotions*

A Heart and Craft Edition



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This list of adjectives for describing emotions has evolved through several revisions over a period of seven years, and includes input from over 100 people. Although most entries are single words, it does contain a few commonly used phrases. Several concepts, for example were expressed in multiple forms to describe perception of others and the corresponding perception of self, sometime in additional forms, each with slightly different connotations. Many could be stretched further. The list is definitely not comprehensive. Anyone could sit down with a thesaurus and add another hundred or more words, and similes would infinitely expand it.

You may wonder why we need so many words when emotion can be boiled down to a precious few, for example, mad, sad, glad, scared and confused. Comparing this to crayons, very young children begin with a basic box of eight colors: black and brown, red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple. As they develop in discernment and skill, they move up to more sophisticated options, perhaps even to the deluxe 96 shade box, but not even that array will come remotely close to expressing the nuances of color in nature. An experienced artist with a good eye for color and skillful mixing will create a closer approximation. This list is a 1200 box of word crayons that gives you tools to express most nuances of human emotion. Simile and metaphor take you even further.

Unfortunately, merely having the list isn't enough to magically transform your writing. For that, you need to know which word pre-

cisely fits the situation and story, and that requires awareness of what an emotion feels like, what it looks like, and how it works. Observing, analyzing and labeling feelings and emotions isn't something ordinary people spend a lot of time doing. Reading this list can be a starting point. It may heighten awareness of your emotions and provide a vocabulary for describing fine distinctions as you consider the meaning of each word. Take time to explore the list and consider what each word means to you, what that emotion *feels* like. Look up definitions of any you don't recognize.

Using this list together with [*The Emotion Thesaurus*](#), by Becca Puglisi and Angela Ackerman will further speed your journey toward understanding the nuances of emotion. Based on a vocabulary of 75 emotion-defining nouns, they provide lists of physical signals that show what observers are likely to see when somebody is experiencing that emotion. They tell what internal sensations accompany it, the likely mental responses, cues of acute or long-term experience of the specific emotion, what it may escalate to, cues that it's being suppressed and writer's tips for incorporating that emotion into stories. Perhaps one day someone will cluster the words on this list to align with the basic 75 terms in *The Emotion Thesaurus*.

Increasing your emotion related vocabulary will add zest and precision to your writing, factors that strengthen connections with readers. Expanding awareness of your personal emotional state at any given time and learning to precisely label those feelings will not only enhance your writing, hundreds of research studies show that it will enhance your physical and emotional well-being, adding zest to life.

Word List

Abandoned	Alert	Apprehensive	Battered	Blocked
Abashed	Alienated	Approachable	Beaming	Blotchy
Absorbed	Aligned	Appropriate	Bearing	Blue
Abundant	Alive	Ardent	Beat up	Blue in the face
Abused	Alluring	Argumentative	Beaten	Blurry-eyed
Abusive	Alone	Arrogant	Beaten down	Boastful
Accepting	Aloof	Arthritic	Bedraggled	Bold
Accommodating	Amazed	Ashamed	Befriended	Bolting
Acidic	Amazing	Astonished	Befuddled	Bored
Adamant	Ambitious	At end my rope	Beguiled	Boring
Addled	Ambivalent	At peace	Beholden	Bothered
Adequate	Amused	Attuned	Believing	Bouncy
Admirable	Analytical	Atwitter	Belligerent	Bounteous
Admired	Angelic	Authentic	Bemused	Boxed in
Admiring	Angry	Avaricious	Bent out of shape	Brain dead
Adorable	Anguished	Awake		Bratty
Adoring	Angst	Aware	Bereft	Brave
Adrift	Anguished	Awash	Betrayed	Bright
Adult	Animated	Awe	Bewildered	Brilliant
Adventurous	Annihilated	Awed	Bewitched	Brimming
Affirmed	Annoyed	Awesome	Big-headed	Bruised
Afraid	Anticipation	Awful	Bipolar	Broken
Aggressive	Antisocial	Awkward	Bitchy	Broken-hearted
Aggrieved	Antsy	Bad	Bitter	Bubbly
Aghast	Anxiety	Badgered	Bitter	Bugged
Agitated	Anxious	Balanced	Blah	Bullied
Aglow	Apathy	Balky	Blasé	Bullish
Agonized	Apologetic	Ballistic	Blessed	Bummed
Agreeable	Appalled	Bankrupt	Blinded	Buoyant
Airy	Appreciated	Barred	Blindsided	Burdened
Alarmed	Appreciative	Bashful	Blissful	Buried

Burned out	Clear	Contrite	Deep	Disappointed
Bursting	Clownish	Contrived	Defeated	Disbelieving
Bushed	Clueless	Controlling	Defensive	Discombobulated
Busybody	Clumsy	Convinced	Deferential	
Butted	Coddled	Cool	Defiant	Disconcerted
Buzzed	Coherent	Coordinated	Defiled	Disconsolate
Callous	Cold	Cornered	Dejected	Discouraged
Calm	Cold-hearted	Courageous	Delighted	Disdainful
Capable	Colorful	Courteous	Delusional	Disgruntled
Capricious	Combative	Covetous	Demeaned	Disgusted
Captivated	Comfortable	Cowardly	Demoralized	Disheartened
Caring	Comforted	Coy	Demure	Disillusioned
Cautious	Committed	Crabby	Denigrated	Disjointed
Celebratory	Compassionate	Cracked	Dependable	Dismal
Centered	Compelled	Cranky	Depleted	Dismayed
Certain	Compelling	Cranky	Depressed	Dismissed
Chagrined	Competent	Crazy	Deprived	Disoriented
Challenged	Competitive	Creative	Desirous	Dispassionate
Changeable	Complacent	Crippled	Desolate	Dispirited
Chaotic	Complete	Critical	Desperate	Displeased
Charged up	Compulsive	Cruel	Despondent	Disrespected
Charitable	Conceited	Crushed	Destroyed	Distant
Charmed	Confident	Curious	Destructive	Distracted
Charming	Confining	Curmudgeonly	Detached	Distraught
Cheerful	Conflicted	Curt	Determined	Distressed
Cheerless	Confounded	Cynical	Devastated	Disturbed
Cherished	Confrontational	Damaged	Devilish	Ditzy
Chicken	Confused	Daring	Devious	Docile
Childish	Congratulatory	Dark	Devoted	Dogged
Chilly	Connected	Darling	Devout	Domineering
Chipper	Conservative	Daunted	Diabolical	Dopey
Choosy	Consumed	Dauntless	Different	Doting
Chubby	Contaminated	Dazzled	Diminished	Dotty
Chummy	Contemptuous	Dazzling	Dingy	Doubtful
Circumspect	Content	Deceitful	Direct	Down
Clean	Contentious	Dedicated	Dirty	Down and out

Downed	Energetic	Fat	Formidable	Gentle
Downtrodden	Energized	Fathered	Foxy	Genuine
Drab	Engrossed	Fatherly	Fractious	Giddy
Dreadful	Enlivened	Fatigued	Fragile	Gifted
Dreamy	Enraged	Fearful	Fragmented	Glad
Drowned	Enraptured	Fearless	Frail	Gleaming
Drowsy	Enriched	Fed up	Frantic	Gleeful
Drunk	Entertained	Feisty	Fraudulent	Gloomy
Dry	Enthused	Fenced-in	Frazzled	Glum
Dulled	Enthusiastic	Fertile	Freaked Out	Gluttonous
Dumb	Envious	Fervent	Freaky	God-awful
Dumbfounded	Erudite	Fervent	Free	Golden
Dumpy	Euphoric	Fidgety	Frenetic	Gone
Duplicitous	Evaluative	Fiery	Frenzied	Good
Durable	Even-keeled	Finicky	Fretful	Good-Natured
Dysfunctional	Evil	Finished	Friendly	Goofy
Eager	Evolved	Fired Up	Frightened	Goony
Easy-going	Exacting	Fitful	Frigid	Gracious
Ebullient	Exalted	Flabbergasted	Frilly	Grand
Eccentric	Exasperated	Flattered	Frosty	Grateful
Ecstatic	Excellent	Flexible	Frozen	Gratified
Edgy	Excessive	Flighty	Fruitful	Grating
Effervescent	Excited	Flimsy	Fruity	Grave
Egotistical	Exhausted	Flirtatious	Frumpy	Gravelly
Elated	Exhilarated	Flirty	Frustrated	Greedy
Elevated	Exonerated	Floundering	Fulfilled	Grief-Stricken
Eloquent	Expansive	Flowing	Full	Grievous
Embarrassed	Expectant	Flummoxed	Full of myself	Grim
Emboldened	Explosive	Flushed	Functioning	Groovy
Empathetic	Exuberant	Flustered	Funny	Gross
Empathic	Exultant	Focused	Furious	Grouchy
Empowered	Fabulous	Foggy	Fuzzy	Grounded
Empty	Fair	Foolish	Gabby	Growly
Enchanted	Faithful	Forgiving	Gauche	Grudging
Encircled	Fakey	Forgotten	Gawky	Grumpy
Encouraged	False	Forlorn	Generous	Guarded

Guided	Hooked	In sync	Invulnerable	Likeable
Guilt-ridden	Hopeful	Inadequate	Irascible	Lively
Guilty	Hopeless	Incisive	Irate	Lonely
Gullible	Horny	Included	Irked	Longing
Gun shy	Horrorified	Incomplete	Irrational	Loony
Gushy	Hostile	Inconsolable	Irrelevant	Loopy
Gutsy	Hot-tempered	Incredulous	Irritable	Loquacious
Haggard	Hot under the	Indifferent	Irritated	Lost
Half	collar	Indignant	Isolated	Lousy
Halted	Huggable	Indulgent	Jaded	Lovable
Hamstrung	Hugged	Inebriated	Jazzed	Loved
Happy	Humble	Inept	Jealous	Loving
Hardy	Humiliated	Inert	Jittery	Low
Harmonious	Humored	Infantile	Jolly	Loyal
Hated	Humorless	Infatuated	Jolted	Luminous
Hateful	Humorous	Inferior	Joyful	Luscious
Haunted	Hungry	Inflexible	Joyless	Lustful
Healthy	Hurried	Inquisitive	Jubilant	Lusty
Heart-achy	Hurt	Insatiable	Judgmental	Lyrical
Heart-broken	Hushed	Insecure	Juiced	Mad
Heartened	Hysterical	Insightful	Juicy	Mad at the
Heart-warmed	Ignored	Insignificant	Just	world
Heavy	Ill-tempered	Inspired	Justified	Magic
Helped	Illuminated	Intelligent	Kind	Magnanimous
Helpful	Ill-wishing	Intense	Kindly	Malleable
Helpless	Immature	Interested	Klutzy	Malicious
Heroic	Immobilized	Intimidated	Languid	Maligned
Hesitant	Impartial	Intoxicated	Larcenous	Manic
High	Impatient	Intrepid	Lazy	Manipulated
High as a kite	Impish	Intrigued	Lecherous	Marginalized
Hilarious	Important	Introspective	Leery	Marred
Hip	Imposed on	Intuitive	Left Out	Martyred
Homesick	Imposing	Inventive	Leprous	Maternal
Homicidal	Impressed	Invigorated	Lethargic	Mature
Honest	Impressive	Invisible	Liberating	Maudlin
Honored	Impudent	Involved	Light	Mauled

Mean	Nervous	Ornery	Perturbed	Prodding
Mean-Spirited	Nice	Outgoing	Pesky	Professional
Meddlesome	Noisy	Out of control	Pessimistic	Proficient
Melancholy	Nonchalant	Out of it	Petty	Prolific
Mental	Nonfunctional	Out of the loop	Phobic	Prosperous
Mentally	Non-plussed	Out of touch	Picky	Protected
Mercurial	Nostalgic	Out to get you	Pious	Proud
Meteoric	Nosy	Outgoing	Pissed	Psychotic
Meticulous	Numb	Out-of-control	Pissed off	Pugnacious
Miffed	Nursed	Outraged	Pitiful	Puissant
Mindful	Nurturing	Outspoken	Placid	Pulled
Mischievous	Nuts	Over The Top	Playful	Pumped
Mistrustful	Objective	Overbearing	Pleased	Punchy
Misunderstood	Observant	Overflowing	Pleasure	Punitive
Misused	Obsessed	Overjoyed	Plodding	Pure
Molested	Obstinate	Overloaded	Plucky	Purposeful
Moneyed	Obtuse	Overlooked	Poised	Pushed
Moody	Off	Overwhelmed	Policed	Pushy
Morose	Off-color	Pained	Polite	Put Upon
Mortified	Offended	Pampered	Poor	Puzzled
Mothered	Okay	Panicked	Positive	Radiant
Motherly	Old-fashioned	Paralyzed	Postal	Rambunctious
Mournful	On cloud nine	Paranoid	Potent	Rampant
Mousy	On edge	Partnered	Pouty	Rankled
Mulish	On pins and needles	Passionate	Power	Rapacious
Mushy	On the edge	Passive	Powerful	Rapturous
Muted	On top of the world	Pathetic	Powerless	Rattled
Mystified	On track	Patronized	Precise	Raw
Nagged	Open	Peaceful	Precious	Reactive
Nasty	Open-minded	Peeved	Precocious	Ready
Naughty	Oppressed	Peevish	Pregnant	Rebellious
Needed	Optimistic	Pensive	Preoccupied	Rebuffed
Needling	Organized	Peppy	Prepared	Receding
Needy	Orgasmic	Perky	Pressured	Receptive
Negative		Perplexed	Primal	Reconciled
Neglected		Persecuted	Primitive	Red-faced

Reflective	Salacious	Sheltered	Solid	Stubborn
Refreshed	Sanctimonious	Shocked	Somber	Stuck
Regretful	Sanguine	Shy	Sorrowful	Studdly
Reinvigorated	Sarcastic	Sick	Sorry	Stuffy
Rejected	Sassy	Sickened	So-So	Stumped
Rejuvenated	Sated	Significant	Soulful	Stunned
Relaxed	Satisfied	Silly	Sour	Stupefied
Released	Scared	Single-minded	Spaced out	Sturdy
Relieved	Scared to death	Sinking	Spacey	Stymied
Reluctant	Scattered	Sisterly	Special	Subdued
Remorseful	Schizoid	Skeptical	Speedy	Subjective
Renewed	Schizophrenic	Skipped	Spent	Sublime
Repulsed	Scintillating	Skittish	Spiritual	Successful
Repulsive	Scornful	Sleepy	Spiteful	Sufficient
Resigned	Screened	Slender	Split	Suggestive
Resistant	Searching	Slick	Spunky	Suicidal
Resonant	Secure	Slim	Squashed	Sulky
Resourceful	Seductive	Slimy	Squeamish	Superficial
Respected	Seething	Sloppy	Squelched	Superior
Respectful	Self-centered	Slow	Starred	Supple
Restless	Self-confident	Sluggish	Steady	Supported
Restored	Self-important	Sluggish	Steamed	Surly
Reticent	Selfish	Small-minded	Steaming	Surprised
Reverent	Self-sufficient	Smart	Steamy	Surviving
Reviled	Sensitive	Smashed	Still	Suspicious
Revolted	Sensual	Smiley	Stimulated	Sweating
Revolting	Serene	Smoking	Stoic	Sweet
Rhythmic	Serious	Smoky	Stoked	Sympathetic
Rigid	Settled	Smug	Stomped	Synchronous
Romantic	Set-up	Snaky	Straight	Tainted
Rotten	Sexy	Snarky	Straight-Spined	Taken for granted
Rowdy	Shady	Sneaky	Stressed	Targeted
Rushing	Shaken	Snotty	Stricken	Tearful
Sad	Shaky	Soaring	Strong	Temperamental
Safe	Sharp	Sobbing	Strong-Willed	Tender
Sagacious	Shattered	Soft-hearted	Strung	

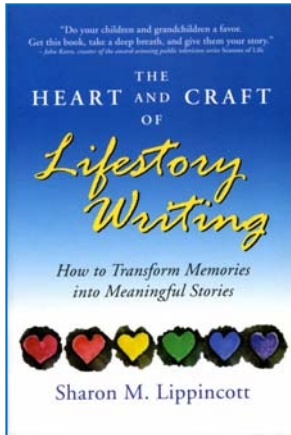
Tense	Troubled	Unnerved	Vicious	Wretched
Tepid	True	Unpleasant	Vulnerable	Wrung Out
Terrified	Trusting	Unreliable	Wandering	Wry
Territorial	Trustworthy	Unsettled	Wanted	Yearning
Testy	Turned	Unshakable	Wanting	Yellow-Bellied
Thick-Skinned	Two-Faced	Unstable	Warm	Young
Thin-Skinned	Ugly	Unstoppable	Warm-Hearted	Zany
Thoughtful	Unafraid	Unsupported	Wary	Zestful
Threatened	Unappreciated	Unwanted	Weak	
Thrilled	Unbalanced	Unwavering	Weary	
Thriving	Unbeatable	Unwelcome	Weepy	
Thumped	Uncertain	Unworthy	Welcome	
Thwarted	Uncontrollable	Up	Whiny	
Tickled	Undaunted	Uplifted	Whole	
Tight	Understanding	Uprooted	Wicked	
Timid	Understated	Upset	Wild	
Tingly	Understood	Used	Wild-Eyed	
Tired	Underwater	Useful	Willful	
Titillated	Underwhelmed	Vacuous	Wily	
Together	Undone	Validated	Wiped-Out	
Tolerant	Undulating	Vampish	Wired	
Tongue-tied	Uneasy	Vanquished	Wise	
Tormented	Unemotional	Vapid	With it	
Torn	Unfeeling	Vaporous	Witty	
Toxic	Unflinching	Vehement	Woebegone	
Tranquil	Unfocused	Vengeful	Woeful	
Transcendent	Unforgiving	Verbose	Wonderful	
Transfixed	Unfriendly	Vexed	Woozy	
Transformed	Unfulfilled	Vibrant	Worked Up	
Translucent	Unglued	Victimized	Worn	
Transparent	Unhappy	Victorious	Worried	
Trapped	Unhinged	Vigorous	Worshiped	
Traumatized	Uninterested	Vile	Worthless	
Tripped	Unique	Vindicated	Worthy	
Trite	Unlovable	Violent	Wounded	
Triumphant	Unloved	Visionary	Wowed	

About Sharon Lippincott

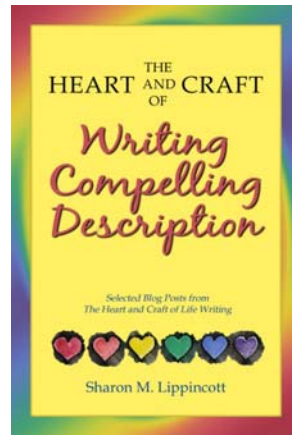
Sharon Lippincott is hooked on all forms of life writing, especially memoir and journaling. She's a dedicated lifelong learner and loves sharing discoveries with others. She teaches local and online classes and workshops on basic memoir and lifestory writing as well as specific skills like writing compelling description. Her book, *[The Heart and Craft of Lifestory Writing](#)* has helped thousands create written legacies of their lives. She serves on the advisory board of the National Association of Memoir Writers and is proud to be an adviser to the Allegheny County Library Association's initiative to sponsor lifestory writing groups in county libraries.

For more information on classes, coaching services, recommended reading and free downloads, visit her [website](#).

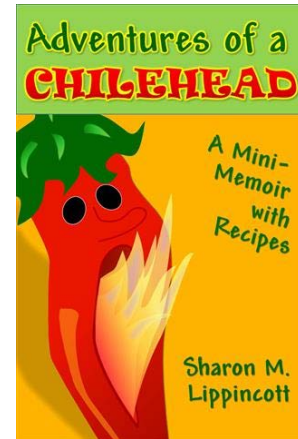
Also By Sharon Lippincott



This comprehensive guide-book covers everything you need to know to take a lifestory writing project from inspiration to professionally printed volumes. Click [here](#) to order your copy from Amazon.



To learn more about description in general and describing emotions in particular, order your copy of *The Heart and Craft of Writing Compelling Description*. Click [here](#) to order your print or Kindle copy from Amazon.



This irreverent volume focuses on Sharon's lifelong love affair with chile. Recipes give complete instructions for managing chile heat to make it enjoyable for all. Click [here](#) to order your print or Kindle copy from Amazon.