

# Water and Emotions

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*A brief journey into the mystery of emotions*

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Have you ever questioned what it is that you are sensing when experiencing happiness or sadness, pride or shame? Or what really happens when you feel “moved”? Our internal experience of emotions is strikingly similar to the way we experience water. This fascinating similarity is not a coincidence considering that 70 to 80 percent of our body is made of water. Many behaviors that water displays are comparable to the way we experience our feelings demonstrating the fact that emotions are more structured than believed, and they are, like water, essential to our existence. The following examples illustrate parallel qualities of the behavior of water and sensations associated with emotions.

### ■ POWER

The energy of water goes unnoticed while dormant, yet demonstrates tremendous power when in motion. Our emotional energy is also unnoticeable until someone



pushes our buttons. Passion and anger are the flip sides of our hidden power. When water moves in an orderly manner and its energy is harnessed, it can power an entire city; but, when its motion is untamed, water can destroy everything in its path.

Passion, like a steady stream of water, can fuel dreams and inspire great accomplishments. Conversely, a thunderclap of anger can destroy the best of relationships. Faith can generate one’s healing power and cause miraculous recovery from illness. Conversely, despair can erode one’s heart and lead a person to death.

Water has the capacity to accept disturbances, yet maintain its calm state. A pebble thrown in an ocean can cause a ripple, yet the water can remain essentially undisturbed. You also have the capacity to absorb your emotional disturbance and remain internally unruffled. In the same way that you can receive an emotional insult and “keep your cool,” you can also stay calm when someone upsets you emotionally. Sensing irritation or anger building, you can remain composed by keeping yourself emotionally disengaged. You can recognize when someone is provoking you, trying to disturb your mood or affect your attitude, and view the situation as someone merely throwing pebbles into your water. You have the

capacity to let the disturbance of your energy dissipate by being an observer. At any



moment, you can keep your calm. In the human experience, we call this state patience. A Zen proverb says that if in anger you are patient for just one moment you will avoid a hundred days of sorrow.

## ■ TRANSFORMATION

Water can transform its state; likewise, humans can transform their attitudes. For example, a touching story can melt our indifference and transform it into compassion or a simple heartfelt compliment can, when “frozen” by fear, get us back “in the flow.” Like no other liquid element in nature, water freezes from the top so that life below may survive. (All other elements that can appear in both liquid and solid states have a solid state that is heavier than the liquid state, solidifying from the bottom up. If applied to ice and water, much of the life on earth would extinguish). Similarly, your feelings can be numb on the surface, leaving you



emotionally disengaged from your environment and just going through the motions of life, yet you are still alive underneath. We can observe this phenomenon in the example of parents who stay married for the sake of the children, or a person who views work as a chore rather

than an opportunity for expression and enjoyment.

Water takes the shape of its receptacle; likewise, our experience of personal energy is determined by the shape and pattern of our personalities. In other words, our mood and attitude create a personal field of energy that is felt within and around a person. For example, assertiveness gives us the experience that our personal energy is like a strong and big field, while insecurity makes it small and weak; confidence makes the field visible, while embarrassment makes it unnoticeable; faith makes it expand, while fear makes it shrivel, and so on. With your mindset, decisions and attitudes, you can manipulate the shape of your



personality and affect *how* others perceive you. However, it is important to mention, that when you pretend to be someone else, your inner stability weakens. It takes less energy to be your true self than to pretend. For that reason we feel strong and grounded when we are telling the truth and unstable when lying. Hiding your true self and constantly maintaining a fake image is hard work. It

resembles to keeping water inside a container built of mismatched pieces, threatening to leak at any moment. Can you remember a time when you tried to be someone else and you were discovered? Do you remember what it felt like? You probably felt embarrassed. Perhaps the sensation of embarrassment resembled the sensation of water draining suddenly. You felt empty!

#### ■ COMMUNICATION

Water exhibits waves, and so does our sentiment. Like waves, your feelings propagate and affect others, and vice versa. You can display and spread a surge of anger or happiness. A tide of other people's anxiety or fear can affect your mood.

Your enthusiasm can, like a wave, bring others up and inspire them to great accomplishments. It is also important to know that waves can synchronize or clash. When moving in the same direction, two waves can become one stronger or steadier wave, just as two people on the "same



wavelength" can enhance each other's lives. Working on a project with a like-minded person helps you accomplish your task more quickly or to a higher quality. In contrast, if two or more waves are clashing, the direction of the resulting wave is determined by the highest wave. Our emotional struggles are nothing more than clashing emotional waves. Imagine a friend who, feeling sad and lonely, invites you over for dinner. You just got home from work and you are physically, mentally, and emotionally tired. You have two emotional waves clashing: one is the desire to help

and please your friend, the other is to attend to your own need for rest and quiet. Depending on your evaluation of whose needs have higher importance - your friend's needs or yours - the resulting wave will determine your decision and the direction of your action.

Water abides by the principle of osmosis—the tendency of fluids to pass through a membrane in order to balance the concentration on both sides. It is interesting that we use the word osmosis metaphorically to explain the human tendency to learn in a gradual manner. Similar to the process of osmosis, we can unconsciously absorb and assimilate new knowledge or skills. The process of osmosis also explains what happens to “good” people when in “bad” company: erroneous beliefs and inappropriate behaviors outnumber their initial good qualities and skills. Furthermore, we can use the process of osmosis to explain how a make-believe attitude can help us grow energetically. If you want to accomplish something but you are afraid, you can adopt a courageous attitude and allow confidence to permeate and give you the energy to tackle your challenge. This phenomenon also explains why your beliefs and feelings determine how far you will go in life.

#### **NOTE TO THE READER**

If you are already using emotions as your copilots to help you navigate through life, you know what to do; and if you are not, then I hope the information included in this publication will inspire your curiosity to start experimenting. Perhaps, you can start consciously appreciating your feelings and use them to understand better the essence of yourself. Perhaps, you can allow your feelings to help you understand other people and the way you relate to them. Maybe, you could discover that actually paying attention to your emotions can bring you more peace than imagined.

With deep care,

*Emina Karamanovski*



## About Emina Karamanovski, Emotional Literacy Coach

A physician, life coach, author, trainer and speaker have emerged as an international leader in the expanding field of emotional intelligence. A native of former Yugoslavia, (now Serbia) Emina Karamanovski completed medical school at the University of Belgrade. In 1991, she moved to Canada and then later to the United States.



Pursuing her interests, in 2000 she earned a Coaching Certification from HeartMath. She obtained a Diplomate in Logotherapy credential from the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy in 2001, and also holds a license by Excellence Quest as a Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming. Completing the Certified Coach Intensive Program by CoachVille in 2003, Karamanovski is currently in the process of obtaining her Professional Coach Certified license (PCC) from the International Coach Federation.

She believes that in emotional matters, people are not ill but uneducated and thus do not need healing but guidance toward better decision-making. Dedicated to promoting Emotional Literacy, Karamanovski works with both children and adults in one-on-one and group settings teaching about the beneficial role and power of emotions. She currently splits her time between Toronto, Ontario and Dallas, Texas.

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