

Primary Emotions, Secondary Emotions

Joy, coming filled with laughter, bubbling up, perhaps as we are surrounded by loved ones...and fear, these are real. These are examples of *primary* emotions. The latter might even be called more of a valuable, physiological response to survival dangers than an actual emotion. Sadness too, is primary. These are natural, normal, healthy. There is not a problem with these or with the short-term experience of them.

Human problems begin to form only when, for external reasons, these natural, healthy responses to life are deemed less than acceptable and, as a result, become repressed instead of experienced. Fear, for instance, might be deemed, from an early age and by influential others such as parents and later, peers, as a “less-than-manly” experience. In being incorrectly labeled as such, the healthy and quite appropriate response, fear, begins to get repressed, subverted. In its stead we find something quite manufactured, quite unhealthy, and deeply inappropriate; a *secondary* or derived emotion. Not real. Created. All so that the correct response to a frightening situation doesn't make us feel that our solid and unwavering femininity or masculinity might waver.

This secondary or derived emotion that surfaces to replace fear is anger.

Yes, that's right. Anger is derived. It is an inappropriate response that comes from the repression of fear, an appropriate response. It can also be a secondary emotion for sadness, like the sadness from injustice.

As was discussed in an earlier paper though, culture is that which helps us to adapt *more* successfully to the environment in which we find ourselves. This then, is an example of an illogical application of what is sacredly referred to as, culture. Culture can and should be changed, its purpose is to aid not stifle human adaptation. More importantly, we should recognize, through this definition, that not all things currently protected under the sacred umbrella of culture need be protected – for they are not culture.

The purpose of discussing culture's true aim and of discussing the primary emotions and the secondary emotions is that by so labeling and discussing them, we hope to bring them out of hiding and into the light of day. It is hoped then that regular people going about their regular lives can more easily begin to recognize when their own responses to situations before them have deviated from the path of healthy response into the terrain of secondary, unproductive, inorganic response. Greater recognition is of course, an end goal in itself but, in creating greater, faster recognition in the every day, it is more likely that the damaging, derived “emotion” can be stopped – and in being stopped, prevent you from creating in your own life, a vast empire of damage and fallout.

Ms. Carole Ramsay, MA, MS, MS

Principal

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