Types of Negative Emotions

The following are the five main categories/types of negative emotions:

• **Sadness** (depression, despair, hopelessness, etc.)

• **Anxiety** (fear, worry, concern, nervous, panic, etc.)

• **Anger** (irritation, frustration, annoyance, rage, etc.)

• **Guilt**

• **Shame/Embarrassment**

**Note:**

→ Generally, any time a person is feeling negative emotions, it could be classified into one of the five “flavours” (and more than one of these types could be experienced at the same time).

→ The words “emotion”, “mood”, or “feeling” are often used to express these states.

→ The word “upset” is not very specific- it conveys that there is a negative emotion, but if you find yourself thinking your emotion is “upset”, it would be better to pin down the specific negative emotion from the above list.

→ Once you decide which of the five types you are feeling, pick a word that best describes it (it is not so important to find the right word as it is to decide which type), and then rate the intensity (from 1% to 100%).

→ Some words, such as “lonely”, “overwhelmed”, “hopeless”, and “stressed”, probably indicate both an emotion (from the above list) and a thought. For example, loneliness may be a combination of sadness with the thought “I am alone and unwanted” and hopelessness may be a combination of unhappiness with the belief “things will never change”.


Types of Negative Thoughts Associated with Each Type of Negative Emotion

If you are aware of what negative emotion you are feeling, but you are not sure what automatic thoughts are causing it, you may be able to figure out the thoughts by assuming that it is going to be a certain type.

**Sadness**
- Self-critical thoughts
- Pessimistic thoughts
- Thoughts of loss or failure

**Anxiety**
- Thoughts of something bad that could happen in the future
- Thoughts of threat, risk or danger
- What-if thoughts

**Anger**
- “should” thoughts
- Thoughts of having been harmed, having been treated unfairly
- Thoughts of rules being broken

**Guilt**
- Thoughts of having harmed someone
- Thoughts of having done something that goes against your own morals
- Sense of responsibility for a negative outcome

**Shame/Embarrassment**
- Thoughts that other will judge flaws or mistakes in a negative way

**For Example:**
If you are anxious, but unsure what the anxiety-causing thoughts are, you can ask yourself, “What risk or danger might I be assuming exists?” or “What bad thing might I be assuming could happen?”