

## PART I

# Become Aware of Your Emotional Fingerprint

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# 1

## Discover Your Emotional Fingerprint

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.

—Oscar Wilde

**D**on't touch that!" the security guard yelled. I slowly removed my finger from *Sunflowers*, a painting by Vincent van Gogh. Earlier that day I had been looking at a pair of Oakley sunglasses, and it seemed as though I had to give the sales clerk a photo ID, my Social Security number, and the deed to my house just to get him to take the glasses out of the store's display case. Now, here at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, I was staring at a seemingly unprotected priceless and world-famous piece of art. I knew I wasn't supposed to touch it, but the impulse to make contact with even a sliver of something so precious was too much for me to withstand.

If my wife had been with me, I guarantee you that she would not have touched that painting in a million years, even if she knew the security guard was nowhere to be found. She would have marveled at the art just as much as I did, she would have loved the experience

of viewing it, and she would have emerged from the museum with a deeper, richer appreciation of the extraordinary painting and the artist who created it. She would never have broken the museum's rules, however, whereas I, even with the security guard standing right there, couldn't keep myself from breaking them.

Why are we different this way? What makes one person accepting and respectful of rules and restrictions while another person has to push the limits and oppose authority? What makes one person able to deeply appreciate a piece of art, whereas another person shrugs and moves on? What makes my logic and my view of right and wrong so compelling to me even though your approach to the world—perhaps very different from mine—seems equally correct and compelling to you?

The answer, I believe, can be found in our emotional fingerprints.

## What Is an Emotional Fingerprint?

Your emotional fingerprint is a blueprint of your deepest desires and strongest feelings. It explains why you respond the way you do, both positively and negatively, to the people and events in your life. Becoming aware of your emotional fingerprint enables you to make conscious, effective decisions so that you can get what you want, overcome challenges, and find the happiness you seek. Becoming aware of other people's emotional fingerprints allows you to deal with them more effectively, in your personal life, your relationships, and your work life.

Your emotional fingerprint is based on your feelings of importance. By *importance*, I don't mean ego, selfishness, acclaim, or recognition; I mean your own sense of "Yes! I'm doing the right thing at the right time. I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be. I feel enthusiastic and at peace."

To understand what I mean by important, think of an instance in which you felt on top of the world. I'm not talking about an ordinary good day or even an unusually good day; I'm talking about a peak experience, when you felt absolutely incredible.

You might be imagining a moment of great success or professional recognition, such as winning an award or receiving great applause when speaking. It might be a moment of huge personal triumph: becoming engaged, signing the mortgage on your dream house, or watching your child graduate from college.

You might instead be imagining a far more humble, private moment. Perhaps you're thinking of a country walk you took one night, when you looked up at the stars and felt suddenly awed by their beauty. Maybe you're thinking of the day you gave a stranger a helping hand and felt a rush of joy from being of service. You might be remembering a winter vacation when you skied down a snowy mountain, exulting in every thrilling second, or a morning when you finished your daily jog in a blissful glow of good health. Perhaps you're recalling being flooded with love at the sight of your toddler coloring or the sound of your infant cooing.

These peak experiences were so precious and satisfying because you felt important. As you can see from the examples, importance, in this sense, is not necessarily about being successful or being better than someone else. It might involve achievement, recognition, praise, or triumph, but it doesn't have to. It might involve the presence of another person or of several people, but that isn't necessary, either.

When you feel important, you feel connected to who you really are. Feeling important brings with it a sense of completion and wholeness, as though you have so much that you couldn't possibly want any more. "This is absolutely perfect," you think. Just looking at the stars, skiing down the mountain, or watching your child feels satisfying enough. Feeling important means that you feel on top of the world. It means feeling connected, loved, appreciated, or significant in your life. It means feeling elated, enthusiastic, fulfilled, and full of joy from being in your purpose. It is a deep-down knowledge that all is well and that you are in the right place at the right time. We all have peak emotional highs when we feel absolutely incredible. That is a feeling of importance.

There are thirty-five universal feelings of importance, but each of us has seven primary areas in which we feel important. These

seven areas, or characteristics of importance, make up a person's emotional fingerprint.

Everyone's emotional fingerprint is unique, partly because we don't all share the same areas of importance. Your peak experiences made *you* feel important. Another person might have had the same experiences and been only mildly happy or even had a negative response. My emotional fingerprint includes being free and independent, so I was moved to touch the painting in the museum. For me, it wasn't enough to follow the rules and stand there obediently—I had to enjoy the painting in my own way. My wife, in contrast, feels important when she is living in the moment—that's part of her emotional fingerprint—so she doesn't have the same need to oppose authority and make her own rules. For her, just looking at the picture would have been enough, whereas trying to bend the rules would have spoiled the moment for her. Each of us has his or her own aspects of importance and his or her own emotional fingerprint.

When I am coaching a new client, sometimes we run into a little trouble with the notion of importance. Because of the many associations that people have with that word, they may think that it involves being egotistical, proud, boastful, or self-centered; it doesn't. They may think that it's about being better than somebody else; it isn't. A feeling of importance has nothing to do with thinking that you are the best, that you're entitled to something, or that you have anything that others do not. A feeling of importance is simply a deep sense of connection to who you really are, a feeling of confidence that everything is just as it should be.

Another type of confusion arises when clients think that I'm talking about what is important *to* them rather than when they *feel* important. To clear up the confusion, I might say, "Your job may be important *to* you, but does it make you *feel* important?" Often the answer is no. Or perhaps "Your family may be important *to* you, but does it make you *feel* important?" Again the answer is sometimes no. Whatever makes you *feel* important is an element of your emotional fingerprint.

## Identifying Your Emotional Fingerprint

Seven primary aspects of importance make up your emotional fingerprint. Knowing your emotional fingerprint gives you a way to quickly visualize the core pillars of your personality and, ultimately, to become aware of what you really want from your life. When you know your emotional fingerprint, you've taken the first step to owning your life.

To identify your emotional fingerprint, take the following simple quiz. It's based on five years of research that I conducted with the help of several colleagues, interviewing more than twenty-five hundred people from all walks of life to see what made them feel important. We interviewed a diverse group of people of both sexes from different backgrounds, races, and educational levels. We also catalogued the responses of thousands more people from our websites, e-mail, and social networking sites. All of this research enabled us to determine the primary situations in which people feel important.

It is interesting to note that among all of the people we interviewed, we never found anyone who said that he or she felt important from having lots of money, drinking, taking drugs, watching pornography, gambling, or engaging in promiscuous sex. As we'll see in part 2, people do sometimes turn to these escapes to manufacture a false sense of importance or to avoid the feeling of being unimportant. Nevertheless, no one—not even the people who *are* involved in these activities—considers them core areas of importance.

For the questionnaires and exercises in this book, either fill them in here or use a separate notebook to record your answers.

To fill in the following questionnaire online or to share it with your friends go to [www.MyEmotionalFingerprint.com](http://www.MyEmotionalFingerprint.com).

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### QUESTIONNAIRE

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## Determining Your Emotional Fingerprint

1. Read through the thirty-five feelings of importance described in the seven groups below. Don't judge them or compare them or even apply them to yourself. Just read through them.

2. After you've read through them once, go through them again group by group. Select only *one* item in each group that enables you to complete the sentence "I feel important when I am \_\_\_\_\_."

You may want to choose two or more items from the same group, but please choose only one. If you're having trouble choosing, ask yourself which would prevail in case of a conflict. For example, in group 1, you will find "[I feel important when I am] in control" and "[I feel important when I am] organized." You may enjoy both being in control and being organized, so to make the choice, picture a conflict such as the following: You've just moved into a new office, and everything is completely disorganized. You have the opportunity to lead a new work team, but it will mean leaving your office in disarray for quite a while. When you picture the two alternatives—leading a team that you're in control of but having a messy office, or organizing your office before you take on any new responsibilities—which makes you happier? Which situation would you choose? That's the situation that makes you feel more important, so mark it down in that group.

Another way to choose when a decision is close is to ask yourself which of the two experiences you could not live without. So, using the same example, even though you might like both being in control and being organized, if you had to choose, would you rather live without control or without being organized?

Finally, if possible, base your choice on your first impression—just pick whichever answer seems to leap out at you. You may be tempted to think about what your choices mean or what they say about you, but I urge you to resist that temptation. You'll have time to think about your answers after I've had the chance to explain a bit more about how they work. As you gain more clarity, you'll certainly be free to come back and change an answer. For now, however, don't think or analyze; simply respond.

#### Group 1

I feel important when I am

In control

Examples: Having control in your life, in your job, in a situation, or in a conversation

Confident in my appearance

Examples: Looking your best, defining your style, or having a unique look

Organized

Examples: Cleaning, organizing, or putting things in order

Connected to God, spirit, or the universe

Examples: Feeling inspired, connected, or faithful

Trusted

Examples: Living so that you are worthy of trust, trusting yourself, having people trust you, or being relied on

My choice from group 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2

I feel important when I am

Providing

Examples: Providing financial, emotional, or spiritual support for your family; securing a financial future; or giving to charities

Overcoming challenges

Examples: Overcoming obstacles and challenges in projects, in relationships, or in daily life

In the moment

Examples: Being emotionally present, feeling a deep acceptance of your life, or being centered and connected

In a loving relationship

Examples: Feeling love for your spouse, partner, loved ones, friends, or yourself

Given respect

Examples: Feeling respected at home, in your work, or from your friends, or feeling a sense of self-respect

My choice from group 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Group 3

I feel important when I am

Working

Examples: Working in a career, at home, or on a serious hobby or avocation

### Free and independent

Examples: Having free time, feeling free of obligations, having the chance to make decisions at work, or feeling independent within a loving relationship or friendship

### Relying on my knowledge

Examples: Using your intelligence to accomplish a task, sharing your knowledge with others, or understanding how things work

### Being a friend

Examples: Spending time calling, texting, or e-mailing friends; maintaining friendships over time; or socializing with friends

### Receiving praise

Examples: Being acknowledged for a job well done by others or yourself, or being appreciated for personal qualities by others or yourself

My choice from group 3: \_\_\_\_\_

## Group 4

### I feel important when I am

#### Secure

Examples: Being able to count on yourself, your relationship, your finances, or your work

#### Being creative

Examples: Expressing your creativity through painting, singing, writing, making a scrapbook, or decorating your home

#### Healthy

Examples: Eating right, exercising, losing weight, or living in a healthy way

#### Connected to family

Examples: Being with children, grandchildren, parents, siblings, or relatives

#### Receiving recognition

Examples: Being recognized for the important role you play at work, at home, or with friends, or recognizing yourself for a job well done or a relationship that you have maintained

My choice from group 4: \_\_\_\_\_

### Group 5

I feel important when I am

Solving problems

Examples: Fixing things, figuring out solutions at work or to other people's personal problems, organizing projects, or coming up with mechanical solutions

Achieving my life's purpose

Examples: Fulfilling the reason you believe you are here on earth, carrying out your life's mission, or serving something greater than yourself

Connected to nature

Examples: Camping, hiking, gardening, walking by the ocean, spending time with animals, protecting the environment, or being "green"

In a position of influence

Examples: Being a leader, a boss, a politician, or an entrepreneur, or being persuasive

Validated

Examples: Your view, opinion, or advice is being sought or validated by others, or you affirm your own clarity or insight

My choice from group 5: \_\_\_\_\_

### Group 6

I feel important when I am

Reaching my goals

Examples: Accomplishing a task, closing a deal, or achieving a desired result

Performing

Examples: Teaching, singing, dancing, entertaining, or speaking in public

Learning

Examples: Reading, studying, or learning something new

Being a good parent

Examples: Taking care of the needs of your child, playing a parental role with young people or students, or being a mentor

Needed

Examples: People want to spend time with you, others rely on you, or you rely on yourself

My choice from group 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Group 7

I feel important when I am

Winning

Examples: Coming out ahead in games, work situations, or personal situations, or believing that you are winning at life

Experiencing life

Examples: Traveling, exploring, trying new things, being adventurous

Honoring my standards

Examples: Being true to your moral code, having integrity and principles, being honest, or holding yourself and/or others to certain ideas about how people should behave

Serving

Examples: Giving and helping or contributing to society, family, or work

Accepted

Examples: Accepting yourself or being accepted by friends, your family, or your coworkers

My choice from group 7: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Now record your answers from each group in the following table:

My emotional fingerprint

I feel important when I am

Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 6 \_\_\_\_\_

Group 7 \_\_\_\_\_

The seven feelings you have selected are your seven aspects of importance. These seven aspects make up your unique emotional fingerprint.

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## Seven Simple Aspects of Importance, One Complex Emotional Fingerprint

At this point you may be wondering how seven simple answers are enough to define your entire personality. After all, you are a complex and multidimensional person. How can you be summed up by only seven responses?

That's what's so exciting about understanding your emotional fingerprint. It gives you a shortcut—a blueprint, so to speak—that allows you to grasp your core concerns very quickly and to rapidly analyze whether a situation validates or offends your aspects of importance.

If you're surprised that only seven feelings of importance can combine to produce something so complex, I invite you to look at some other examples of a few simple systems with remarkable powers of expression. There are only 26 letters in the English alphabet, for example, yet those letters are able to form the estimated 754,000 words that make up our language. Likewise, although we have only ten digits, zero through nine, those few numerals can create infinite numbers. Even our DNA, the genetic code for life itself, is made up of only six nucleic acid bases, yet each of us has a different inheritance. Finally, we each have two eyes, two ears, a nose, and a mouth, but every face is unique.

Thus, even though we all have seven aspects in our emotional fingerprints, our individual interpretation of each aspect is unique. Even if you share the same seven aspects with someone else, you will express them through different feelings, thoughts, and actions. For me, touching the van Gogh painting was an expression of feeling free and independent. Another person might express the same aspect of her emotional fingerprint by leaving the world-famous

van Gogh painting to seek out the work of an obscure painter whom no one else recognized. A third person with the same aspect of importance might decide that even being in the museum is too restrictive and instead create his own viewing experience at a number of smaller art galleries. All of us would be expressing the same free and independent aspect of our emotional fingerprints, but each of us would be expressing it in his or her own way.

## Your Emotional Fingerprint and Love

Let's see how your emotional fingerprint influences your experience of romantic love and partnership. For simplicity's sake, let's look at only the five aspects of importance in group 1. Notice how each aspect leads to a different interpretation of what love means and when we feel loved.

If you chose being in control, you may need to feel in control to feel loved. This can consist of telling your romantic partner what you want and expecting to get it, feeling in control of your romantic life, or remaining in control of yourself even when the relationship is at its most challenging. If you feel this sense of control, then your aspect of control is being validated, and you feel loved.

If you chose feeling confident in your appearance, you may need to feel confident in your appearance to feel loved. Perhaps you feel loved when your romantic partner acknowledges how beautiful or handsome you are or finds other ways to appreciate your appearance. Perhaps your partner supports your desire to work out, eat in a healthy way, shop for nice clothes, get manicures, or otherwise work on your appearance.

If you chose being organized, then the person who loves you should understand that you need to feel organized to feel important. He or she should make space for this need by accommodating your wishes to organize the space you share, giving you gifts that help you to organize your work space or your time, and respecting the organization you have set up.

If you chose being connected to God, spirit, or the universe, you might share a religious faith with your loved one, or perhaps you share activities that help you to feel a spiritual connection, such as listening to music, hiking in the woods, doing yoga, or meditating. Your partner might help you to feel loved by discussing your own sense of connection with you, encouraging you to take time for whatever feeds your spirituality, or sharing his or her own thoughts on spirituality and religion.

If you chose being trusted, your partner should affirm his or her trust in you, remind you of others who trust you, encourage you to see yourself as trustworthy, or support you in your efforts to build trust with someone else.

If you are not feeling loved, take a look at the seven aspects of your emotional fingerprint and ask yourself how they are being ignored or devalued in your love relationship, or at least how they might be more fully validated there. This will give you a targeted, focused way to identify what is really bothering you and point you toward what you can do to make things better.

Although you might enjoy one of the other aspects of importance in each group, none will make you feel as important as the specific aspect of your emotional fingerprint. If you feel important when you feel trusted, and your husband compliments you on your appearance, that might make you feel good, but it won't make you feel nearly as loved as when he reminds you how deeply he trusts you, either by expressing his trust in words or by taking actions that show how much he trusts you.

Similarly, if your girlfriend lets you take charge of the activities for your next date, you might enjoy the feeling of being in control. However, if being in control isn't part of your emotional fingerprint and being organized is, she would do better to put your DVDs back in alphabetical order, the way you like them, or buy you a new file box for your home office so you can organize it, as you've been meaning to do.

Now let's make it personal. Let's see how your emotional fingerprint determines *your* experience of love.

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**EXERCISE**

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## How Do I Feel Love?

1. Write down the seven aspects of your emotional fingerprint.
2. Look at each aspect of importance. Ask yourself what it tells you about how you experience love. Use my example:

### My Emotional Fingerprint

1. Feeling connected to God, spirit, or the universe
2. Providing
3. Being free and independent
4. Being creative
5. Achieving my life's purpose
6. Being a good parent
7. Experiencing life

### I feel love in my relationships when I am

1. Feeling connected to God, spirit, or the universe. My wife and I attend church with our kids, and we have scripture study before school.
2. Providing. My kids and my wife talk about our business with me, and we are all working together for the greater good.
3. Free and independent. My wife gives me free time to do whatever I want. She honors me for being unique and independent.
4. Being creative. The kids and I do creative things together on Saturday morning, such as oil paintings, chalk drawings on the driveway, or craft projects.
5. Achieving my life's purpose. My family supports everything I am trying to achieve in my career and my personal life.
6. Being a good parent. We have pizza delivered and watch a movie on Friday night, and we read stories at bedtime.
7. Experiencing life. We travel, go to the beach or to theme parks, and just experience everything around us.

My Emotional Fingerprint

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel love in my relationships when I am

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Are you starting to get a picture of how your emotional fingerprint reveals your unique experience and points you toward the things you really want? Remember, even if the seven aspects of your emotional fingerprint are the same as those of another person, each of you will have his or her own ways of interpreting those aspects.

Here is an example of someone who has the same emotional fingerprint that I do, yet his life is very different from mine. I'm an

entrepreneur and a life coach who has three children with my wife of fifteen years. Jeremy is a freelance writer who's been married twice, with two kids from one of those marriages. He's currently dating a woman with whom things are just starting to get serious. Here's how he responded to the exercise you just completed:

### My Emotional Fingerprint

1. Feeling connected to God, spirit, or the universe
2. Providing
3. Being free and independent
4. Being creative
5. Achieving my life's purpose
6. Being a good parent
7. Experiencing life

### I feel love in my relationships when I am

1. Connected to God, spirit, or the universe. My girlfriend and I attend yoga classes together. We discuss our ideas about spirit, soul, and life after death.
2. Providing. I provide my girlfriend with the emotional support she needs after a long, hard day, and I often give her a neck rub or a foot rub.
3. Free and independent. When my girlfriend and I travel together, we often take a day to each go off separately and explore. Then we have dinner at night and talk about our adventures.
4. Being creative. I talk about the articles I'm working on with my girlfriend. I also am creative in planning special times for us.
5. Achieving my life's purpose. When I slip from the path to my life's purpose, my girlfriend calls me on it and asks me how I plan to get back on track.
6. Being a good parent. My girlfriend and I talk about my kids. Sometimes she helps me to see some ways to have a better relationship with them.
7. Experiencing life. Every Sunday we try to do something we've never done before, like going to a new part of the

city, finding a new activity, or even just trying out a new restaurant.

As you can see, everyone's interpretation of his or her emotional fingerprint is unique. Knowing the seven aspects that make you feel important—and your own unique interpretation of them—is the key to being aware of your emotional fingerprint.

## Your Emotional Fingerprint and Work

We've seen how your emotional fingerprint is expressed in your relationships. What about your work life and your career? Whether you are the CEO of a Fortune 500 company or running your household as a stay-at-home parent, your emotional fingerprint affects how you experience—or fail to experience—fulfillment in your chosen work. Looking at only the five aspects of importance in group 2, you can see many ways in which your emotional fingerprint might affect your work life.

### Providing

You might interpret providing as

- Providing financially for yourself and your family
- Securing a financial future
- Giving to charity
- Providing yourself, your family, your community, or the world with some nonfinancial benefit: emotional assistance, intellectual insight, spiritual connection, physical improvement, or support for health

### Overcoming challenges

You might interpret challenges as

- Making more money for yourself, your department, or your company
- Creating or promoting a product or a service that is widely respected and appreciated
- Helping everyone in your department or your company to get along

- Encouraging everyone in your department or your company to be more productive
- Being a troubleshooter
- Dealing with schedules, deadlines, or a long to-do list
- Overcoming a personal challenge, such as shyness in making cold calls
- Being reluctant to take on authority or holding your temper with the office grouch
- Helping your kids get what they need
- Coping with a spouse or a romantic partner who is out of work or struggling with another serious problem

### **Living in the moment**

Your work-related version of living in the moment might involve

- Being present and emotionally available to clients, colleagues, or members of your household
- Accepting what is: a difficult boss, a frustrating policy change, or an economic problem
- Confronting setbacks at home
- Being centered and connected in everything you do

### **Being in a loving relationship**

While engaged in your work or career, you might turn to thoughts of your loving relationship to help you

- Regain your emotional equilibrium when things go badly
- Muster the courage to take new risks
- Give of yourself to do your best work

### **Being given respect**

At work, you might interpret respect as being

- Paid what you believe you deserve
- Given the responsibilities you believe you deserve

- Asked for your opinion
- Given respect for being a stay-at-home parent
- Spoken to respectfully rather than ordered around

To make this personal, complete the following exercise. How does your emotional fingerprint affect your feelings about work and career?

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## EXERCISE

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### How Do I Feel Fulfilled in My Work?

1. Look again at the seven aspects of importance of your emotional fingerprint that you wrote down for the first exercise.
2. Ask yourself what each aspect tells you about what you're looking for in your work life. Use the example of Maria Vasquez, a marketing consultant, as a guide:

I feel fulfilled at work when I am

1. Trusted. I love it when my clients and my colleagues trust me. I'd go to any lengths to do a good job for a client who has given me his or her trust.
2. In the moment. When I get all wrapped up in a meeting to figure out a client's needs, I forget about everything else.
3. Free and independent. My job lets me make a lot of decisions myself. I come up with the marketing plan, and I have a lot of control over when and where I meet with clients and how I schedule my own work.
4. Secure. I feel secure when I know I've gotten all the information I need and there won't be any surprises.
5. Solving problems. I like solving problems for my clients.
6. Reaching my goals. I work hard to reach my goals, but that's something I enjoy.
7. Serving. I love feeling of service to my clients and to the woman in charge of our department, who has been very good to me.

I feel fulfilled at work when I am

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 6. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you see how much your emotional fingerprint reveals about you in your work? Knowing your emotional fingerprint allows you to be conscious of what you need so that you can take effective steps to get more of what you want.

### When Something Isn't Going Right

Your emotional fingerprint doesn't identify only the sources of fulfillment in your life. It also helps you to understand why something is *not* working, so that you can target your actions to make it right. To learn more about how your emotional fingerprint can help you to analyze problems in your life, complete the next exercise.

EXERCISE

### What's Not Working Well Right Now?

- 1. Choose an area where you are feeling frustrated, whether in your relationships, at work, or in your personal life. Write down what

is bothering you as specifically as you can, such as “Mike never remembers to take out the garbage” or “My boss isn’t paying me enough.”

2. Look at the list of your emotional fingerprint aspects of importance that you wrote previously. Ask yourself how each aspect is or is not being met in the situation you’re considering. Write down your responses. Use the example of Dava Miller, age thirty-five, who has been in a steady relationship for two years, as a guide:

#### My Emotional Fingerprint

1. Being trusted
2. Being given respect
3. Relying on my knowledge
4. Feeling secure
5. Connected to nature
6. Being a good parent
7. Honoring my standards

My frustration: My boyfriend never plans dates with me ahead of time; he just comes over and hangs out. I don’t mind doing that some of the time, but sometimes I want him to plan a nice evening for us.

#### How my emotional fingerprint is or is not being met

1. Being trusted: I don’t feel trusted; I feel taken for granted. Maybe he doesn’t trust me enough to plan something special because he’s afraid I won’t like it or will make fun of him.
2. Being given respect: I think it shows a lack of respect for me to just treat me like a buddy he can hang out with. If he had more respect for me, he would plan something special once in a while.
3. Relying on my knowledge: Doesn’t apply.
4. Feeling secure: I feel insecure when he puts so little effort into our relationship. Doesn’t he love me? Doesn’t he care about making me happy?
5. Feeling connected to nature: Doesn’t apply.
6. Being a good parent: If we get more serious and start a family, is he going to be this way with our kids’ birthdays and special days? That’s not the kind of father I want my kids to have.

7. Honoring my standards: If I let him treat me this way, I am not meeting my own standards for how I deserve to be treated.

Now it's your turn.

My frustration: \_\_\_\_\_

How my emotional fingerprint is or is not being met

1. \_\_\_\_\_

How this aspect is or is not being met

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

How this aspect is or is not being met

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

How this aspect is or is not being met

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

How this aspect is or is not being met

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\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

How this aspect is or is not being met

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\_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

How this aspect is or is not being met

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\_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

How this aspect is or is not being met

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We'll look more at how to respond to situations like these in subsequent chapters. Meanwhile, has this exercise given you any new ideas for how to improve your situation, either by communicating with someone else or by taking new action yourself? If you like, explore these ideas further by writing about them for a few minutes.

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## Which Type Are You?

At this point you might be wondering if there is a shortcut—a way to identify a particular “type” based on the seven aspects you have identified. Does your emotional fingerprint have a name? Can it fit into a category?

The answer is both yes and no. When I first discovered the concept of the emotional fingerprint, I was very resistant to creating labels. I wanted my clients to look at every aspect of the emotional fingerprints separately, because, as you will see throughout this book, working with the individual aspects of your emotional fingerprint enables you to target problem areas and create change as well as to build on your strong points and preserve strength.

As I interviewed more and more people, however, I began to realize that the aspects of importance in each group do fall into five distinct patterns. The name of each is given here, followed by a description and the list of its aspects of importance.

*Director:* A director enjoys a good challenge, loves to feel free and independent, is a performer, has a purpose for what he or she does, and enjoys experiencing life. Directors are orchestrators and collaborators. They can take a diverse amount of information and process it into understandable knowledge for a large audience. They are great in social settings, bringing a variety of people together and making something happen. They find joy in overcoming obstacles and making a difference in the world. These aspects of importance fit into this category:

Confident in my appearance

Overcoming challenges

Free and independent  
 Being creative  
 Achieving my life's purpose  
 Performing  
 Experiencing life

*Relator:* A relator values building strong, long-term, healthy relationships. Relationships make these people feel important, because relators derive energy and security from their relationships. In the workplace, the strength of relators is in networking and inspiring other people to reach a higher level of productivity and accountability. Relators have a hard time being productive in any area if their personal relationships are in trouble. They are very loyal, and they will sacrifice a great deal to make sure that their relationships continue to grow. These aspects of importance fit into this category:

Connected to God, spirit, or the universe  
 In a loving relationship  
 Being a friend  
 Connected to family  
 In a position of influence  
 Being a good parent  
 Serving

*Intellectual:* An intellectual is stimulated through books, speeches, research, and other types of reading. Intellectuals often feel close to nature, and they tend to be highly organized. They feel successful when accomplishing a task. They are motivated to learn and grow. They would rather be learning something new than just sitting around. They want to better themselves and become more useful. They are driven to understand and to become more knowledgeable. These aspects of importance fit into this category:

Organized  
 In the moment

Relying on my knowledge

Healthy

Connected to nature

Learning

Honoring my standards

*Validator:* A validator feels loved when he or she is trusted, respected, praised, accepted, or needed. Validators enjoy being social and in relationships in which they are being validated. They are often very good at giving validation to others. They do not like to be ignored. They are offended when people they care about disrespect them. Their confidence stems from the strength of their relationships. If they believe that they are in healthy, caring, and trusting relationships, they feel strong, secure, and loved. These aspects of importance fit into this category:

Trusted

Given respect

Receiving praise

Receiving recognition

Validated

Needed

Accepted

*Executive:* An executive hates having nothing to do. Executives are productive and thrive on getting the job done. They are task-oriented and focused on getting results. They hate small talk and prefer tackling a project to sitting around wasting time. They are good at managing things. They feel productive when they are in control, solving problems, working, providing, and winning. They are happiest when they are pursuing or achieving a desired goal. These aspects of importance fit into this category:

In control

Providing

Working

Secure

Solving problems  
Reaching my goals  
Winning

In the table on page 37, identify your emotional fingerprint by selecting only one word from each group that makes you feel important. Total them at the bottom of the grid. The more words you have circled in a particular category of the D.R.I.V.E. System the more dominant that category is to your personality. Then read the corresponding definitions to see if it gives clarity to why you do what you do.

I encourage you to identify how many aspects of your emotional fingerprint fall into each type. If you have three or more aspects in one category, that's your dominant type. It's the part of your emotional fingerprint that shows up most often, or predominantly.

If two aspects of your emotional fingerprint fit into one category, that's a strong secondary category. It might influence your dominant category or take turns with it. For example, you might consistently be an executive with a strong director influence, or you might be an executive at work but a director in your personal life.

Even if you have only one aspect of importance in a particular category, it is part of your emotional fingerprint, and the type it belongs to is at least one characteristic of your personality.

Finally, as you read the types, think about people you know. Can you see them fitting into one type or another? Does that give you some clues about how to better communicate with them?

These types are a shortcut, an overall snapshot of your emotional fingerprint that can help you to understand quickly how you respond to people and situations. This can also help you to understand another person's responses. What will be more useful to you than the types, however, is the individual aspects of importance that make up your emotional fingerprint. As we'll see throughout this book, the more aware you are of each aspect of your emotional fingerprint, the more effective and the happier you will be.

**D.R.I.V.E. System**

	<b>Director</b>	<b>Relator</b>	<b>Intellectual</b>	<b>Validator</b>	<b>Executive</b>
Group 1	Appearance	God	Organization	Trust	Control
Group 2	Overcoming	Relationships	Moment	Respect	Providing
Group 3	Independence	Friends	Knowledge	Receiving praise	Work
Group 4	Creativity	Family	Health	Recognition	Security
Group 5	Life's purpose	Influence	Nature	Validation	Solving problems
Group 6	Performing	Good parent	Learning	Being needed	Goals
Group 7	Experience life	Service	Standards	Accepted	Winning

**Total**

## How Your Emotional Fingerprint Is Created

My clients often wonder whether their emotional fingerprints are ever likely to change. The answer is a qualified yes. Your emotional fingerprint *can* change, but only in response to a dramatic (extremely positive) or traumatic (extremely negative) event; it won't change on a daily or a weekly basis. You need a pivotal experience to create what I call a *mind shift*.

Dramatic events that create a mind shift include getting married; graduating from school; landing your first job; being accepted by friends, family, or a new love; shooting a winning shot seconds before the buzzer; or holding your child for the first time. In your childhood—when your emotional fingerprint is created—dramatic events can include being picked first for the basketball team, having a cute boy or girl want to sit next to you at lunch, getting a 100 on a test you studied for, being recognized by an adult, or being complimented on your appearance. Each of these positive mind shifts makes you feel unusually important, which makes them more significant than most everyday experiences.

Traumatic events cause you to feel unusually unimportant, which creates a deep inner desire to feel important instead. Such events include getting fired, being rejected by someone you like, or losing something precious. In your childhood, traumatic events can include being picked last for a game at recess, getting a bad grade, having someone make fun of you, having a teacher or another adult figure call you stupid or make you feel inferior, or trying really hard to do something and failing publicly.

My dear friend Tony Magee experienced a traumatic event in his childhood that created an aspect of his emotional fingerprint. Tony grew up in the Watts housing projects of East Los Angeles, where he was surrounded by violence, drugs, and gangs. He witnessed his first homicide at age four, when he saw a young man gunned down right in front of him.

While Tony was in first grade, he had an experience that may seem trivial to some people but that changed his life. One day his class was given an assignment to color pictures of fruits, and Tony was told to color a banana. I'll let him tell the rest of the story:

I was so proud of the way I was coloring my banana. After everyone was finished, it was time for show-and-tell. So I showed my paper to the class, and everyone started to laugh. My teacher, Miss Pierce, was curious and said, "Let me see your paper." And she just fell out laughing, which gave permission to the whole class to laugh at me. And I'm wondering, "What are you guys laughing at? What's so funny?"

She looked at my paper again, and she said, "Tony, you colored your bananas brown. Everyone knows that bananas are yellow."

What Miss Pierce failed to realize was that when bananas are picked wherever they grow them—I've never seen a banana farm, okay? I mean, whether they grow them in Hawaii or Columbia, it sure wasn't Watts, okay?—they pick them, almost like Kelly green, like fresh new money, right? But by the time they make it to my neighborhood,

these bananas are essentially brown with little yellow spots. What was I to do? So when I colored my bananas, I colored them brown because that's all I knew. When my mother went to the store, they might have been a little yellow, but by the time she made it home, they were brown when I saw them.

So when everybody laughed at me, like a little turtle I just went into my shell. I was so sad I didn't talk to anybody for the rest of the day. I don't think I talked to anybody for the rest of the week. I was just so sad.

Tony experienced a traumatic event, and part of his emotional fingerprint was formed. Suddenly, an aspect of importance, relying on his knowledge, was set on fire. Never again would he allow himself to feel stupid. He went on to become the first person in his family to graduate from high school. Then he put himself through college. Eventually he became the first African American to work with NASA in metallurgy, designing rockets for the space shuttle. He had come a long way from the Watts housing project. He transformed the trauma of that experience into a positive way of feeling important. From that day forward, Tony's reliance on his knowledge made Tony feel important. A whole new life was the result.

You learn a lot about Tony when you understand that relying on his knowledge is part of his emotional fingerprint. Imagine if you knew the emotional fingerprints of your spouse or romantic partner, siblings, parents, teenagers, best friend, and favorite coworkers. Think how much better you would understand why they do what they do, how they have gotten to where they are in life, and what really moves them.

I highly recommend that you urge those close to you to fill in the "Determine Your Emotional Fingerprint" questionnaire. Of all the people I have interviewed, I've never found anyone who didn't want to discover his or her emotional fingerprint. After all, our favorite conversations are usually the ones about us. You'll find that people will often open up much more than you anticipate.

Just asking another person about what makes him or her feel important will have a surprisingly powerful effect on just about any conversation.

Now that you've identified the seven aspects of your emotional fingerprint, you're already able to live more consciously and make more effective choices. There are even more benefits awaiting you from becoming aware of your emotional fingerprint. Your next step is to learn how to master your emotional highs and lows.