



EMOTION ATLAS

The Connection Set

Five core emotions that bring us closer — mapped.

LOVE · KINDNESS · TRUST
GRATITUDE · CARE

For each: what it is, where you feel it in your body, what triggers it, and its shadow side — plus a card and a question to sit with.

EVERY FEELING HAS A PLACE

MAPPING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Five Ways We Reach Each Other

Love. Kindness. Trust. Gratitude. Care. These five emotions do the quiet work of holding us together. We feel them constantly, yet rarely stop to understand them — what they are, where they live in the body, what calls them up, and where they turn on us.

This is a small field guide to all five. Read one a day, or all at once. Notice which ones you give easily and which ones you struggle to receive.

HOW EACH EMOTION IS MAPPED

- Definition** — what the emotion actually is, beneath the word
- In the body** — where and how you physically feel it
- Typical triggers** — what tends to call it up
- Shadow side** — what it becomes when it loses its balance

A reflection card and a question close each one.

LOVE

Core · Attachment

DEFINITION

Love is the emotional experience of deeply valuing someone's existence, wellbeing, and place in your life. It is less about intensity and more about attention — the people we love become part of how our mind understands the world.

IN THE BODY

A warmth and fullness in the chest. A softening around the heart. Their happiness affects yours; their pain reaches you. You carry them in your thoughts even when they are not present.

TYPICAL TRIGGERS

Shared vulnerability. Time and presence. Being truly seen. Caring for someone through difficulty — the small, repeated acts of attention that quietly say: you matter to me.

SHADOW SIDE

Love is not possession, and it is not dependency. Its shadow appears when it turns into control, or a need you cannot survive without — when you lose yourself inside another instead of standing beside them.

Love is not simply an emotion. It is a way of assigning importance — a quiet declaration that someone matters.



E M O T I O N A T L A S

LOVE

FAMILY

Core · Attachment

VALENCE · ENERGY

Positive · Warm, deep

CORE NEED

To value and be valued

HIDDEN FEAR

Loss of the one who matters

BODY EXPERIENCE

Warmth and fullness in the chest, softening around the heart, a pull toward their wellbeing

SHADOW SIDE

Possession — love that becomes control or dependency

NEIGHBOURS

Trust · Gratitude · Compassion · Tenderness

OPPOSITE

Indifference

SIT WITH THIS

Who has become part of how you understand the world — and when did you last let them know?

EVERY FEELING HAS A PLACE

EMOTION ATLAS

KINDNESS

Social · Prosocial

DEFINITION

Kindness is care in action — the small, often ordinary choices that tell another person they are safe with you. It is rarely a grand act; more often it lives in daily moments most people forget they made.

IN THE BODY

The shoulders soften. The face relaxes. The body feels a little more at ease — both for the one giving it and the one receiving it.

TYPICAL TRIGGERS

Witnessing someone struggle. A moment of shared humanity. Remembering a time you needed help. Listening without interrupting, offering help, speaking gently when frustration would be easier.

SHADOW SIDE

Being kind doesn't mean saying yes to everything. Without boundaries, kindness can quietly become self-neglect — giving to everyone while abandoning yourself.

Kindness leaves no footprints. Yet somehow, it changes the path for others.



E M O T I O N A T L A S

KINDNESS

FAMILY

Social · Prosocial

VALENCE · ENERGY

Positive · Gentle, steady

CORE NEED

To make others feel safe

HIDDEN FEAR

Being cold, or causing harm

BODY EXPERIENCE

Softened shoulders, a relaxed face, an ease that spreads through the body

SHADOW SIDE

Self-neglect — kindness without boundaries

NEIGHBOURS

Compassion · Warmth · Generosity · Care

OPPOSITE

Cruelty

SIT WITH THIS

What is one small act of kindness you can offer today — to yourself, or to someone else?

EVERY FEELING HAS A PLACE

TRUST

Core · Social Bonding

DEFINITION

Trust is the willingness to accept risk because reliability has been shown, again and again. It is not the absence of risk, nor blind belief — it is confidence built, quietly, from experience.

IN THE BODY

Loosened shoulders. A slower breath. An open posture. A settled stomach. The quiet physical sense that you no longer have to brace.

TYPICAL TRIGGERS

Small handovers honoured over time. Someone keeping their word. Being met with care in a vulnerable moment. Consistency, repeated until it becomes safety.

SHADOW SIDE

Trust turned careless becomes naivety — or a dependence that stops you standing on your own. Healthy trust still keeps its eyes open.

Trust is one of the invisible structures of human life. We rarely notice it — we simply stand upon it.



E M O T I O N A T L A S

TRUST

FAMILY

Core · Social Bonding

VALENCE · ENERGY

Positive · Calm, grounded

CORE NEED

Safety inside connection

HIDDEN FEAR

Betrayal

BODY EXPERIENCE

Loosened shoulders, slow breath, open posture, settled stomach

SHADOW SIDE

Naivety — or dependence that stops you standing alone

NEIGHBOURS

Vulnerability · Belonging · Hope · Loyalty

OPPOSITE

Suspicion

SIT WITH THIS

When did you last consciously choose to trust someone? What made you decide?

EVERY FEELING HAS A PLACE

GRATITUDE

Existential · Appreciation

DEFINITION

Gratitude is the shift of attention from what is missing to what is already here. It does not deny pain — it simply reminds us that pain is not the whole story.

IN THE BODY

Softness. A deeper breath. A lighter chest. A quiet sense of enough.

TYPICAL TRIGGERS

A message from an old friend. The first sip of coffee. Sunlight through a window. Someone remembering your name. The ordinary things that ask for nothing in return.

SHADOW SIDE

Forced gratitude can become avoidance. Sometimes the healthiest response is to acknowledge the hurt before reaching for the gift.

Gratitude is the art of finding treasure where you already stand.



EMOTION ATLAS

GRATITUDE

FAMILY

Existential · Appreciation

VALENCE · ENERGY

Positive · Soft, settling

CORE NEED

To recognise what is already here

HIDDEN FEAR

Taking life for granted

BODY EXPERIENCE

A deeper breath, a lighter chest, a quiet sense of enough

SHADOW SIDE

Forced gratitude that becomes avoidance

NEIGHBOURS

Contentment · Awe · Warmth · Humility

OPPOSITE

Entitlement

SIT WITH THIS

What in your life has become so familiar that you no longer notice how much it gives you?

EVERY FEELING HAS A PLACE

CARE

Social · Connection

DEFINITION

Caring is the emotion that connects us. It grows from empathy, attachment, and the desire to protect what matters. True caring is not fixing — it is being present enough to say: you don't have to carry this alone.

IN THE BODY

Warm and soft. A gentle pull toward someone else's wellbeing. A readiness to help before being asked.

TYPICAL TRIGGERS

Checking on a friend after a difficult day. Staying beside a loved one in silence. Noticing the details others forget. Helping without expecting recognition.

SHADOW SIDE

When caring loses boundaries, it becomes exhaustion. You can pour so much into others that nothing remains for yourself.

Caring is love in its quietest form — not loud enough to seek attention, but powerful enough to change a life.



E M O T I O N A T L A S

CARE

FAMILY

Social · Connection

VALENCE · ENERGY

Positive · Warm, tender

CORE NEED

To protect what matters

HIDDEN FEAR

Helplessness — unable to help

BODY EXPERIENCE

Warmth and softening, a gentle pull toward another's wellbeing, readiness to help

SHADOW SIDE

Exhaustion — caring until nothing remains for you

NEIGHBOURS

Empathy · Tenderness · Protectiveness · Love

OPPOSITE

Indifference

SIT WITH THIS

Do you care for yourself with the same kindness and patience you offer everyone else?

EVERY FEELING HAS A PLACE

Five Questions

One question per emotion. Don't rush to answer — let each one sit for a moment first.

LOVE

Who has become part of how you understand the world — and when did you last let them know?

KINDNESS

What is one small act of kindness you can offer today — to yourself, or to someone else?

TRUST

When did you last consciously choose to trust someone? What made you decide?

GRATITUDE

What in your life has become so familiar that you no longer notice how much it gives you?

CARE

Do you care for yourself with the same kindness and patience you offer everyone else?

Keep this. Answers change as you do.



EMOTION ATLAS

A new emotion is mapped every week.

This is five of them. The full atlas of the human emotional landscape is being drawn one feeling at a time — its psychology, its body, its gift, its shadow.

FOLLOW THE JOURNEY

@emotionatlas

GET THE WEEKLY EMOTION MAP

*One emotion, one insight, one question — in your inbox every Monday.
Sign up at the link in our bio.*

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