



Emotions and Life: Perspectives from Psychology, Biology, and Evolution

By Robert Plutchik

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Emotions are powerful forces influencing our everyday behaviour. People laugh, cry, fall in love, or blow up buildings under the influence of emotions. Most of the current diagnoses of mental disorders involve one or more emotions that have gone awry. Yet until recently, emotions have not received the attention they deserve in college and university psychology courses. There are many reasons for this neglect; they concern linguistic, experiential, historical and philosophical issues, and all are explored in depth in this work. The book attempts to shed light on the nature and function of emotions, drawing on the latest theories in evolutionary psychology and cognitive neuroscience, as well as the older, established motivational and psychodynamic traditions. Author Robert Plutchik demonstrates the fundamental importance of emotions to all living creatures, and their crucial role in ensuring both bodily and genetic survival. Designed as a textbook for upper level undergraduate and graduate students of psychology, this book contains useful chapter previews and summary material and is richly illustrated. Starting with an overview of some of the challenges involved in studying emotion, Plutchik discusses how thinkers such as Darwin, James, Cannon and Freud have conceptualized emotion and then describes the views of many contemporary researchers and theoreticians concerning emotions. Subsequent chapters examine such topics as the links between emotions and cognitions, the linguistic problems involved in trying to describe emotions, key contemporary theories of emotion, measurement and assessment issues, the functions of facial expression, how emotional expressions and thinking develop and change over the lifespan, insights evolutionary theory offer into the nature and generality of emotions, how humans and other animals communicate emotion, and how brain mechanisms are related to emotions. Concluding chapters of the book provide a detailed examination of the literature on love and sadness, and fear and anger

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Robert Plutchik, PhD, is professor emeritus of psychiatry and psychology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, as well as adjunct professor at the University of South Florida. He has taught at Columbia, Rostra, Yeshiva, and Long Island Universities and lectured widely in the United States and in many countries around the world including New Zealand, Greece, Austria, China, Japan, Colombia, Germany, Israel, Argentina, and Canada. He spent two years at the National Institute of Mental Health participating in brain research. He has been Director of Program Development and Clinical Research at the Bronx Psychiatric Center in New York City, and he later became Associate Director of the Psychiatry Department at Jacoby Hospital, an affiliate of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

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