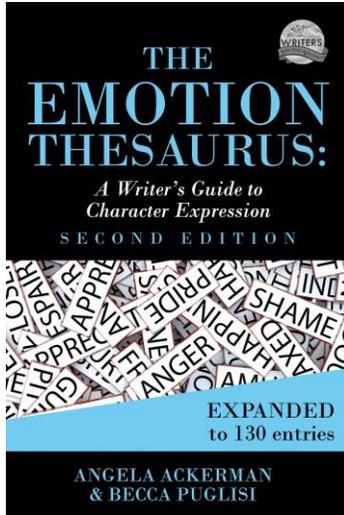


Dearest *Emotion Thesaurus* Fan,



Before a thesaurus book comes to be, a lot of back and forth happens behind the scenes between Becca and myself. Among other things, like deciding the scope of the book and creating the structure for the thesaurus portion, we need to decide which entries we will cover in the volume. This is a hotly debated topic as Becca and I both come to the planning table with our list of favorites, but page count forces us to make some hard decisions.

In the case of the *Emotion Thesaurus* (Second Edition), we needed to decide which feelings to include and which not to, a much harder task than you might imagine and one that often led to discussions over “*what is an emotion, and what is not?*”

If we were not sure if an entry would work, we wrote it anyway and then once the book was drafted, compared the emotion to similar ones. A few were more like a character trait or state of being than a true emotion, or they were too close to an existing entry. In these cases, we removed them or folded some of their contents into their siblings.

All in all, four completed entries fell to the cutting room floor.

Rather than leave them there, we thought we’d put them together into a PDF so they can be used by other writers. The description is sound, so why not?

We hope you enjoy these bonus entries that never quite made it into [*The Emotion Thesaurus \(Second Edition\)*](#).

Yours,



Angela Ackerman & Becca Puglisi
Authors of *The Emotion Thesaurus* and its many sequels

Writers Helping Writers ®

CHEERLESSNESS

DEFINITION: A feeling of gloomy pessimism

PHYSICAL SIGNALS AND BEHAVIORS:

An empty stare, eyes half-lidded
 Slackness in the face, the mouth dragging down
 Heavy movements (e.g., pointing with the chin because lifting one's arm is too much effort)
 The neck slanting forward
 Looking down or off into space rather than making eye contact
 A heavy sigh
 Sagging in one's chair
 Crossing the arms loosely
 A curved back; poor posture
 A plodding stride
 Arms that rest heavy on a tabletop
 Eyebrows that come together (frown)
 Remaining seated when others enter the room rather than rising to greet them
 Elbows resting on the knees with the arms dangling listlessly
 Being non-responsive in conversation (e.g., grunting an acknowledgement rather than speaking)
 Staring at the floor while another is speaking
 The face remaining unanimated when another speaks
 Being a nay-sayer: *Why bother?* or *What's the point?*
 Shaking the head
 Engaging in a habit one knows is bad (drinking, smoking, etc.)
 A weak handshake (or putting hands in the pocket to avoid a handshake)
 A flat or monotone voice; sounding tired when speaking
 Resisting positivity (showing aggravation, grumpiness, or lashing out at others)
 Slowed breathing
 A lack of hand gestures when speaking
 Complaining or making bleak observations

INTERNAL SENSATIONS:

A feeling of heaviness throughout the body
 A slower heartbeat

MENTAL RESPONSES:

Obsessing on whatever event led to this feeling (a disappointment, an upset, a loss, etc.)
 Making assumptions toward the negative (that people won't step up to help, that there's no way to salvage the situation, etc.)
 Being prone to judgmental thoughts
 Taking longer to acknowledge positive signs (if something is changing for the better)
 Viewing people who are upbeat about the situation as naïve or foolish
 Being quicker than usual to write off an opportunity or person
 Turning blame inward; obsessing over thoughts of one's own inadequacy

ACUTE OR LONG-TERM RESPONSES FOR THIS EMOTION:

Deploying sarcasm or impatience
 Wanting to be alone, avoiding others, or leaving when people enter one's space
 Growing angry or feeling vindictive (if someone else is the cause for one's unhappiness)

Becoming depressed
 Adopting a negative outlook in life
 Underachieving (expecting failure or a negative outcome)
 Becoming risk-averse; playing it safe, especially where emotions are concerned

SIGNS THAT THIS EMOTION IS BEING SUPPRESSED:

A smile that quickly fades away
 Making eye contact, then looking away
 Forced enthusiasm in one's voice that sounds strained or unnatural
 Saying something encouraging to others while one's body language doesn't match
 Focusing on a distraction (watching TV, playing a video game, etc.)

MAY ESCALATE TO: Unmotivated, Depressed, Resentment, Disillusionment

MAY DE-ESCALATE TO: Conflicted

ASSOCIATED POWER VERBS: Bend, cave, complain, crush, dampen, deflate, derail, erode, fade, falter, frustrate, glower, heave, lose, lower, scowl, sigh, upset, withdraw

WRITER'S TIP: *When writing emotion, remember how powerful the POV character's thoughts can be. A well-placed internal observation or reflection can supply the "why" behind what the character feels, drawing the reader right into their emotional mindset.*

GLEEFUL

DEFINITION: To be triumphantly pleased or joyful

PHYSICAL SIGNALS AND BEHAVIORS:

Tipping the head back
 An unrestrained smile
 Squinting (from the force of one's grin)
 Curling the hands into fists and holding them close to the chest
 Shouting jubilantly
 Breaking into a cheer
 Running in place with the hands aimed straight up
 Tapping the flat of one's hand against the chest
 Baring the teeth while grinning
 Pumping one's fist at the sky
 Chuckling
 Puffing up the chest
 Rubbing or clapping the hands together
 Drawing out one's words: *Oh, man. This is...the best!*
 Teasing an opponent: *What's the matter--arm too tired to block that shot?*
 Closing the eyes and saying an exaggerated *Yes*, or *Oh, yeah*.
 Dancing on the spot
 Jutting out the chin
 Making a "duck face" at an opponent
 Swaying the shoulders from side to side
 Patting oneself on the shoulder
 Pretending to dust off the shoulders
 Pointing thumbs inward at oneself or pointing at another to celebrate a joint effort
 Hugging and patting the backs of the people one is celebrating with
 High-fiving teammates
 Boasting, bragging, and showing off
 Holding the hands out flat to demonstrate a lack of shaking or nerves
 Walking with a swagger
 Wheezing and soundless laughter
 Hooking the thumbs through one's belt loops and shaking one's hips
 Offering insincere condolences to an opponent
 Acting sassy (with witty quips, sarcasm, etc.)

INTERNAL SENSATIONS:

A flush of warmth through the body
 The eyes tearing up
 Feeling light-headed with adrenaline
 An expansive feeling in the chest
 A weakness in one's knees as the adrenaline wears off
 A feeling of invincibility, as if one is capable of anything

MENTAL RESPONSES:

A desire to rub it in to the naysayers (but restraining as much as one can)
 Wanting to savor the moment
 Heightened awareness of one's surroundings (sounds, smells, colors, etc.)

Perverse joy at the suffering of another (either lighthearted or ugly, depending on the relationship)
 Rewriting the past in one's mind (the current triumph making up for a past failure)
 Mentally replaying the details of one's triumph

ACUTE OR LONG-TERM RESPONSES FOR THIS EMOTION:

Laughter that cannot be reined in
 Running a victory lap with one's hands in the air
 Deep belly laughs
 Being a bad winner—e.g., gloating and repeatedly reminding a rival of their failure
 Collapsing in a heap and sobbing with relief
 Taking big risks out of the belief that one can accomplish anything

SIGNS THAT THIS EMOTION IS BEING SUPPRESSED:

A smile that one tries (and fails) to restrain
 Biting down on a smile and nodding
 Making eye contact with an opponent and shrugging with a smile
 Widening the eyes and looking away (breaking eye contact)
 A bounce in one's step
 Accepting congratulations silently, with a nod, a grunt, or an *mm-hmm*

MAY ESCALATE TO: Elation, Confidence, Pride, Validated

MAY DE-ESCALATE TO: Pleased, Conflicted, Guilt, Regret

ASSOCIATED POWER VERBS: Bask, beam, brag, celebrate, clap, cheer, dance, flaunt, gloat, gesture, gossip, preen, relive, satisfy, saunter, savor, scream, shout, speed, strut, swagger, taunt

WRITER'S TIP: *If a character is distressed, they often turn to self-comforting actions. Does your character stroke their own arm, touch a necklace with sentimental value, or do something else personal to them?*

INDIGNATION

DEFINITION: Righteous anger caused by something unjust, unworthy, rude, or mean

PHYSICAL SIGNALS AND BEHAVIORS: AND BEHAVIORS

The head snapping back

Gaping

Expelling an audible yet cut-off breath

Becoming momentarily speechless

Asking the person to repeat what they said

Attempting to shame the other party: *Did you just do what I think you did?*

Shock causing one's eyes to widen or bulge

The face slowly reddening as the unjust words or actions sink in

Taking a half-step back

Flinching

Holding up a hand in a warding-off gesture while one tries to form words

A stiffening posture

Enunciating slowly to convey the depth of one's feeling: *How...dare...you!*

Stuttering or sputtering

Thrusting out one's chest; pushing the shoulders back

Stretching one's neck and dipping the chin to "look down" on someone

Hands that curl up

Visible tension in one's forearms

Visible shaking

Raising one's voice

Verbalizing one's moral beliefs: *This is wrong. You can't do that.*

Demanding an apology or a reversal of a pronouncement

Becoming argumentative

Lips pressing so tight they almost tremble

Pulling in a deep breath and then releasing a flood of targeted criticism

Using an emotion-strangled tone

Shaking one's finger at the other party

Reacting with colorful profanity or personal slurs

Fisted hands pressing tight against one's sides as if to hold in rage

Baring the teeth slightly in disgust while speaking

Moving toward the other party in a threatening manner (fast strides, shoulders back, chest out)

Pointing in sharp stabs to drive one's point home

INTERNAL SENSATIONS:

A tight chest

An elevated heart rate

Blood rushing in one's ears

Tingling in one's face and neck

A heightened sense of hearing

MENTAL RESPONSES:

Momentary shock

Focusing on the body language of the other party to assess whether he or she was serious

ACUTE OR LONG-TERM RESPONSES FOR THIS EMOTION:

Yelling, spraying spittle, shouting obscenities, being restrained, or other signs of having lost control

Physically attacking the messenger

Promising to make the other party pay for this decision

SIGNS THAT THIS EMOTION IS BEING SUPPRESSED:

Eyes that bulge slightly before control of one's facial expressions is regained

Rubbing at one's ear

Taking slow, deep breaths

Clasping the hands tightly behind one's back

Hands that twitch into near-fists before loosening again

MAY ESCALATE TO: Bitterness, Anger, Disappointment, Denial

MAY DE-ESCALATE TO: Hurt, Confusion, Disillusionment

ASSOCIATED POWER VERBS: Argue, attack, blame, blaze, cow, dare, demand, demean, discredit, disgrace, disrespect, face, flinch, inflict, insult, put down, rage, shame, tarnish

WRITER'S TIP: *If you're unsure if your scene is emotionally charged enough, change the character's comfort zone or remove it all together. Disrupt the status quo by introducing someone the character doesn't want to show their feelings to. Or, if they need support, remove it. And if their feelings are volatile, introduce someone who will force them to restrain themselves when, more than anything, they want to explode.*

RESTLESSNESS

DEFINITION: Feeling antsy or fidgety, usually due to waiting or worrying

PHYSICAL SIGNALS AND BEHAVIORS:

Crossing and re-crossing one's legs

A foot jumping up and down at the end of one's leg

Pacing or aimless wandering

Fingers drumming on an armrest or tabletop

Fidgeting with a fork, one's hair, a pen, or other things

Muscles twitching or jumping

Trying to burn off energy (running, going to the batting cages, hitting the gym, etc.)

Frequent blinking

Darting glances

Eyes that are wide, taking in everything

Picking things up and putting them back down

Distracting oneself (with a book or movie, for instance)

Changing positions frequently

Moving from sitting to standing to walking in a short period of time

Frantically cleaning or organizing

Startling easily

Not responding when spoken to; being distracted

Constantly checking one's phone or looking out the window

Fingers fiddling with each other

Rolling the neck and shoulders

Shifting one's weight from one foot to the other

Speed talking

Pouring oneself a coffee and then not drinking it

Talking about anything, including topics people may not care about

Asking rhetorical questions

Jumping from one unfinished activity to another

Scrubbing one's hands over the eyes

Rubbing at one's hair

Bouncing on the balls of one's feet

One's breaths coming shorter and quicker

Shaking out one's hands

Repeating a comforting gesture (twirling a lock of hair, rubbing one's knuckles, etc.)

Engaging in noisy activities without noticing the sound, such as clicking a pen or blowing and popping bubbles with one's gum

Sleeping fitfully

INTERNAL SENSATIONS:

Feeling jittery, as if one must move to keep from going crazy

Muscles that are tense and rigid

A tingling in one's fingers and feet

Elevated heart rate and pulse

MENTAL RESPONSES:

Thoughts flitting from one thing to another

Difficulty focusing on any one project or activity

Wanting to move but not wanting to do any one particular thing
 Impatience
 Self-talk to relax or try and forget the circumstances
 Difficulty engaging in serious or involved conversations
 One's mind obsessing about an event or people involved the event

ACUTE OR LONG-TERM RESPONSES FOR THIS EMOTION:

Physical exhaustion
 Sleeping for long periods of time
 Irritability
 Snapping at people
 Temporarily driving people away because the constant movement is annoying
 Relying on sleeping aids to help one rest
 Decreased productivity at school or work
 Weight loss

SIGNS THAT THIS EMOTION IS BEING SUPPRESSED:

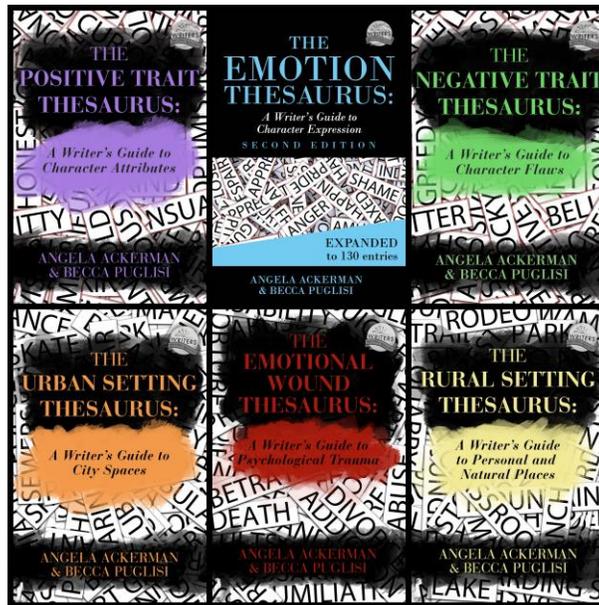
The body being unnaturally still
 An intense stare meant to help one focus
 Hands clasped firmly together, the fingertips turning pink from the pressure
 Mashing the lips together or biting the cheek to keep one's mouth still
 Muscle tics
 A glance that darts toward a phone (waiting for a call), a door (wanting someone to enter it), or a clock (hoping enough time has passed)
 Not talking unless one is spoken to
 Pretending to be engrossed in an activity (reading a book, watching TV) but being unable to focus

MAY ESCALATE TO: Relief, Excitement, Impatience

MAY DE-ESCALATE TO: Anticipation, Apprehension, Worry

ASSOCIATED POWER VERBS: Bother, bounce, chafe, complain, fidget, finger, fuss, grumble, interrupt, jitter, jump, pace, pick at, prattle, shift, squirm, startle, stir, tinker, twitch, wander, worry

WRITER'S TIP: *When you're writing a character's extreme reaction to an emotion, consider the typical response for them based on their personality and emotional range—then push them past it. If you show the catalyst for the extreme emotion along with the character's lack of control, their response will seem authentic.*



PRAISE FOR...

[THE EMOTION THESAURUS](#)

(Expanded into a robust 2nd edition of 130 entries)

“One of the challenges a fiction writer faces, especially when prolific, is coming up with fresh ways to describe emotions. This handy compendium fills that need. It is both a reference and a brainstorming tool, and one of the resources I’ll be turning to most often as I write my own books.”

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