

## Emotions Rule

In contemporary fiction, readers want to laugh, cry, suffer and cheer for our heroes and heroines. Logic pales. Emotions rule.

Writing from the heart and gut, we recognize that emotions run through deep, convoluted territory. Yet they probably fall somewhere on the spectrum below:

- mad
- sad
- glad
- scared
- love
- surprise
- disgust
- shame

Many of us cling to the myth that we're rational beings . . . that our thinking minds are the hallmark of our humanity. As writers, we know better.

Emotions are triggered instantly, and the trigger can be nothing more than a look to evoke fear, hope, despair, joy, fury, delight, lust, panic or a combination of conflicting emotions depending on the dramatic situation.

By the way, according to Daniel Goleman, " . . . emotion is a term whose precise meaning psychologists and philosophers have quibbled over for more than a century."

Goleman thinks that emotions mutate into moods, temperaments, and disorders. Our job as writers is to be as emotionally specific and dramatic as possible. Readers expect and demand that emotions rule.

## The ABC's of Emotions A-H

Below is a short list of emotions:

- A** - Angry  
Anxious  
Ashamed
- B** - Bored  
Bewildered  
Bothered
- C** - Cautious  
Confident  
Confused
- D** - Disgusted  
Depressed  
Despondent
- E** - Embarrassed  
Enraged  
Ecstatic
- F** - Fearful  
Frustrated  
Frantic
- G** - Guilty  
Giddy  
Grandiose
- H** - Happy  
Hysterical  
Hopeful

Exercise: Add at least two more emotions to each alphabetical set.

## The ABC's of Emotions I-Q

- I** - Insecure  
Irrational  
Immature
- J** - Jealous  
Joyful  
Jaded
- K** - Kinky  
Klutzy
- L** - Lonely  
Loving  
Lovestruck
- M** - Melancholy  
Mischievous  
Maligned
- N** - Nervous  
Nitpicky  
Nasty
- P** - Pathetic  
Pitiable  
Pragmatic
- Q** - Quirky  
Querulous  
Quizzical

Exercise: Divide alphabetical lists into two groups: 'Similar' and 'Dissimilar' emotional categories.

## The ABC's of Emotions R-Z

- R** - Repulsive  
Revolted  
Rebellious
- S** - Silly  
Shocked  
Suspicious
- T** - Titillated  
Teased  
Talented
- U** - Understood  
Unhappy  
Unfulfilled
- V** - Victorious  
Vulnerable  
Validated
- W** - Whimsical  
Wonderous  
Woeful
- X** - Xenophobic
- Y** - Yielding  
Yearnful  
Yokelish
- Z** - Zealous  
Zapped  
Zinged

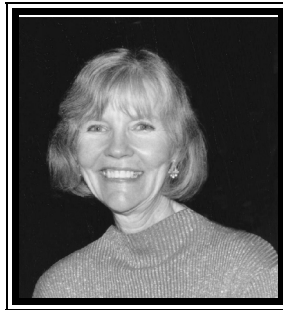
Exercise: Check your thesaurus for synonyms and antonyms for these emotions.

## Other Workshops:

"Discover Your Writer's Voice."  
"He Said... She Elaborated"  
"Mining Sensory Data."

## More Writing Tip Sheets:

"Guaranteed Tips to Create Conflict"  
"Tight Places for Your Characters"  
"Beyond the Realm of Spoken Language"



Barbara lives near the exit off the fast lane in Silicon Valley with her husband and two literary mews, T.C. and Jessica, who never cease to inspire her.

## References:

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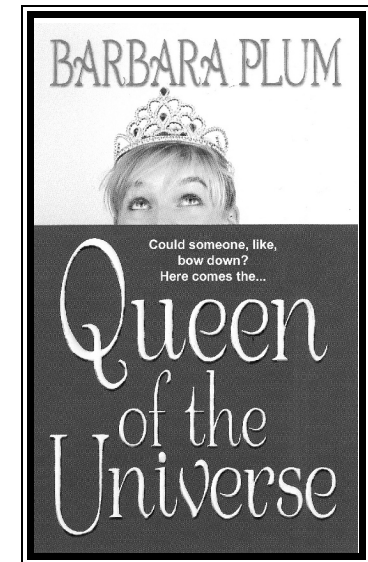
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Revised: July 18, 2005

## Emotions Rule©

Adapted by Barbara Plum  
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