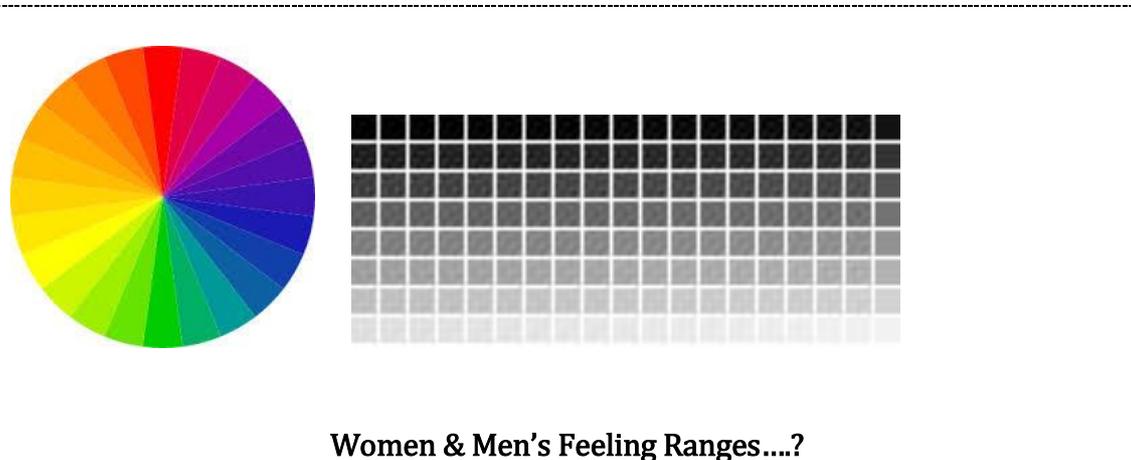


You may have heard the Premier Radio Breakfast show today (20th April 2017) myself, and my friend James, were interviewed by Rosie Wright and John Pantry. The general topic was concern for mental health and in particular men's mental health, because suicide is the biggest killer of men under the age of 45. This is in the news at the moment because of Prince Harry and his brother's encouragement to all of us to talk about our feelings. One problem that especially affects men is the ability to know what it is they are feeling, and finding words to express it.

Whilst preparing for the interview I was chatting to a wise counselling-tutor colleague, Richard Lahey -James of Mind and Soul, who gave me such helpful tips yesterday that I thought they were worth sharing more widely.

Firstly Richard sets our expectations by comparing and contrasting women and men's emotional ranges to the differing palettes on our PC's. He suggests that women's emotional range is like the *colour* palette in our software packages, largely because of our more complex biological makeup & hormonal fluctuations. Men's emotional range in contrast is more akin to the *greyscale* or *monochrome* palette. A friend of Richard's actually experimented on himself to test out this hypothesis by taking female hormones for a two week period. He was amazed by how much richer and expansive his feeling world became.



Richard uses other metaphors to help men begin to recognise feelings and crucially to notice that they can change and be transient.

One of the metaphors he uses is a *cloud*. He invites his clients to describe a feeling by imaging it as a cloud.



Another metaphor that I particularly like is thinking about feelings as different tastes or flavours: bitter, sweet, salty, spicy.....

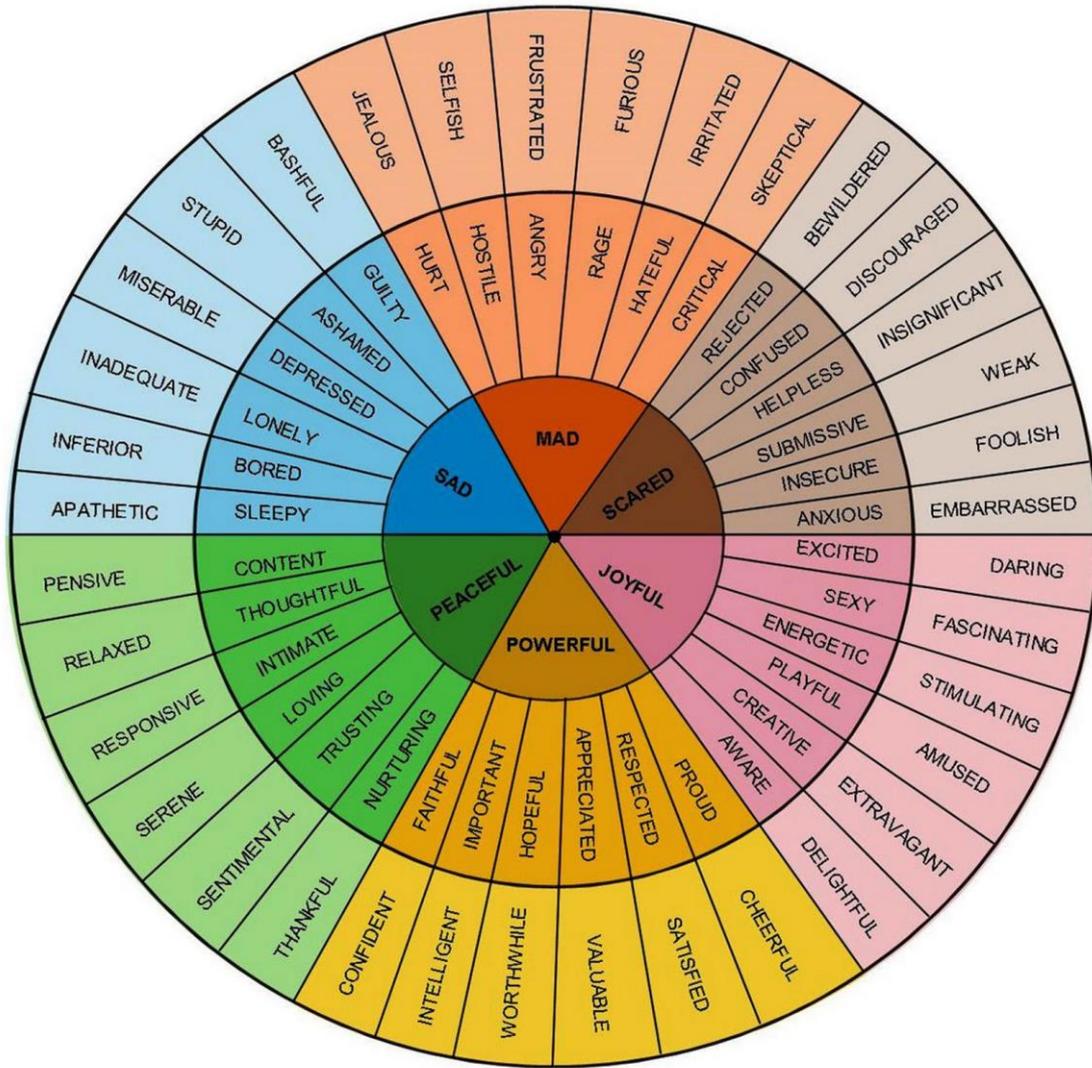


The third and final gift that Richard shared with me yesterday was the *feeling wheel*. It can be downloaded on *google images* and as far as I am aware it is not subject to copyright. It is a very useful tool for men, women and children to begin to widen their vocabulary with regard to identifying & expressing their feelings. It's reproduced below.

If you have any helpful ways of helping men & women get in touch with their feelings do email us at the office and we will compile them and put them on the website.

The very best wishes

Kathy Spooner
ACC Director of Counselling & Psychotherapy



The Feeling Wheel