



# ELA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES & VALUES



## FIRST UNDERSTAND

Emotion Literacy Advocates' primary motivation is to understand emotion—an often misunderstood aspect of the human condition. The ability to translate emotion affords us the opportunity to know feelings and their constellation of soft (non-physical) needs, memories and associations.

## FULL-SPECTRUM FEELINGS

All feelings are “friends,” helping us bloom in the growing knowledge of ourselves and each other. Feelings are like letters in the alphabet; each one is required to speak the language. We benefit by appreciating the capacity to feel, the awareness of feelings and the story they tell.

## COMMUNICATION

Words, thoughts, beliefs and expressions can lock or open a door; words do not tell the whole story; meaning lives between the lines. Given our need to connect and comprehend, it is essential to aim for congruency between feelings, needs, behavior and words.

## MUTUAL INCLUSIVITY

Feelings and needs coexist within individuals and groups albeit often worlds apart. Core feelings and needs are a truth worth discovering, no matter how diametrically opposed or seemingly nonsensical their expression. The ability to perceive and to hold contradictory elements allows understanding to deepen.

## FREEDOM

Emotion literacy advocates practice translating their own emotions and behavior, thereby earning the freedom to know feelings and recognize needs in progressively clearer ways.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Given the primary neural imperative—to survive—and given memories of past difficulties, patterns and fears, we are susceptible to constrained thinking and disavowed feelings which, when not recognized, can result in scapegoating, bullying, self-injury and other reflexive behaviors. If we are unable to immediately respond in accordance with our ideals, we can create a closer alignment, when resilient and privileged with a second chance.

## VULNERABILITY

We must accept vulnerability in order to learn. We must be strong to accept our vulnerability. Strong humans are aware of and embrace their vulnerability. To be vulnerable can mean receptivity to learning and the willingness to risk—fertile soil for universal connection, in the face of differences.

## AUTHENTICITY

Emotion literacy advocacy aspires to transparency in the interest of self-knowledge, genuine community and insightful stewardship of the natural world. When being ourselves in a social setting poses a threat, it is difficult to uphold the value of authenticity and imperative one upholds it, if only to and for oneself. Loving groups and wise, loving actions begin with self-loving individuals.

