

THE WISDOM BEHIND EMOTION AND FEELING

Your Daily Life as a Mirror



WENDY VAN MIEGHEM

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Colophon

This book is not intended as a substitute for personalized advice from a healthcare professional. The reader should consult a healthcare provider regarding their health, especially for any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.

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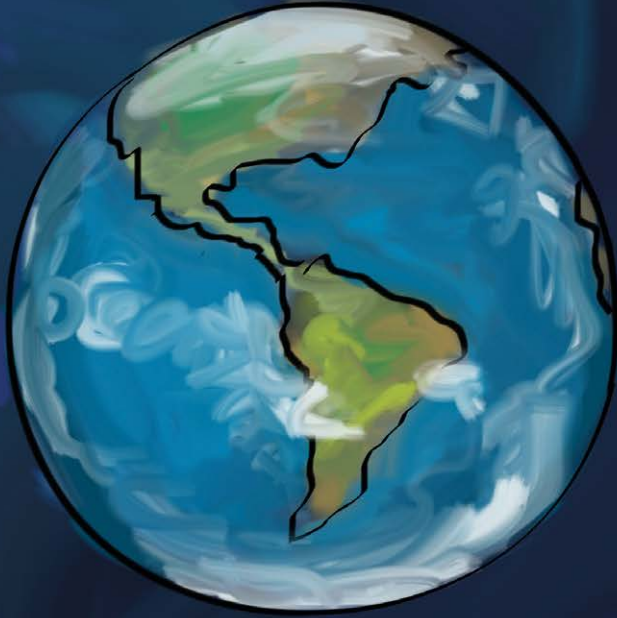
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To Amélie and Robin



*"May you feel carried by the earth
and nurtured by the stars."*

Books by Wendy van Mieghem

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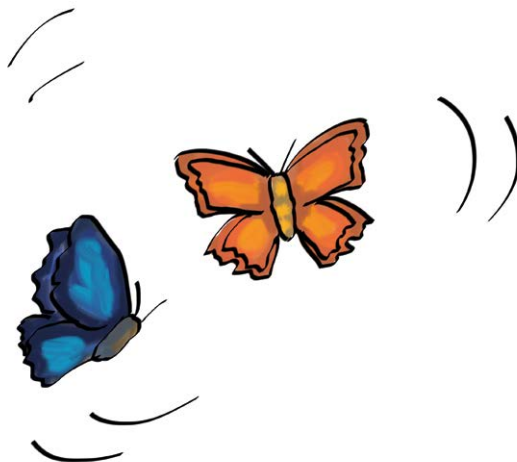
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Introduction

During the training programs and individual sessions I provide, I am consistently amazed by the commonalities in human feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. While participants' personal backgrounds and the causes of their problems may vary, the fundamental human dynamics stay the same. They bring tremendous depth and abundant content that nourishes everyone involved.

What you bring and contribute to this world is unique, and there is no one else like you. Sometimes, you wrestle with pain, sadness, or the shock of a drastic event, which may cause you to withdraw temporarily. It can also feel as if you're the only one struggling with this.

When you find yourself entangled or trapped, it is helpful to realize that emotions, feelings, and pain are not just burdens. They also give you strength, insight, and wisdom when you let them breathe.

This book offers insight into human nature. It explores instincts, emotions, feelings, thoughts, and inspiration in layers. The clear explanations, tips, reflection questions, and examples help you understand the wisdom behind emotions and feelings. The cheerful illustrations help your inner child feel at ease and balance the emotional weight of the text when necessary.

Happy reading!

Wendy van Mieghem

Chapter 1

Your Daily Life as a Mirror

1.1 What Is Inner Growth?

You long to be nurtured, loved, praised, and appreciated for who you are and what you do. You carry a treasure within you, filled with an abundance of qualities. Using these qualities to express who you are and what you need leads to the deepest fulfillment and joy you can find in life. It allows you to completely be yourself. It's your responsibility to become aware of your deepest longings and learn to understand them so you can express them and truly begin to shine. No one else can do this for you; it's a personal journey that only you can navigate. It's not necessarily that you're hesitant to do so, but along the way, as you get to know yourself and life, you might become tangled or distracted.

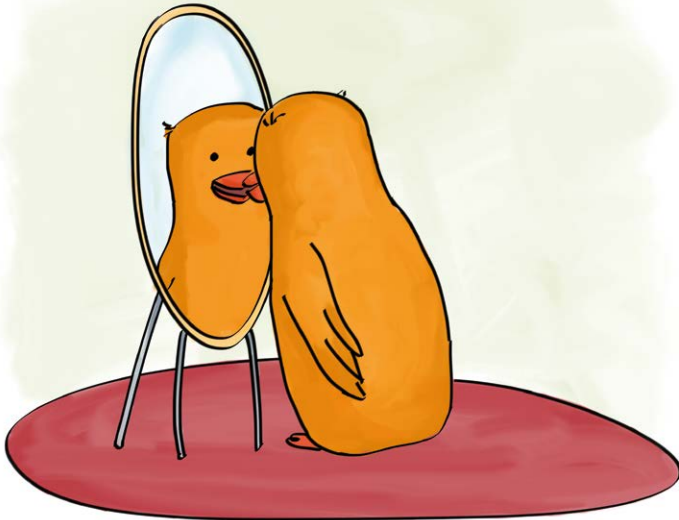
To me, anyone who makes the effort to tune into their inner self and listens to what they need is a brave person. The place where you discover your deepest qualities and desires is also where you face your greatest fears: fear of rejection, fear of loneliness, fear of death or loss, fear of illness or madness, and fear of intense emotions. Navigating this is what I call **inner growth**: gradually understanding and experiencing your own emotions on a deeper and deeper level, so that you can understand yourself and life more fully. Becoming aware of and learning to accept or endure your instincts, emotions, and feelings leads to the deepest fulfillment in life. Yet, no matter where you are in the world, this is the hardest thing for people to achieve. Many tend to run away from feelings and suppress or deny their instincts and emotions.

Perhaps you're afraid of change and the emotional intensity it brings. You might worry that you can't fully express what's inside or find the best way to do so. You could be scared of emotional pain and anxious about feeling despair and losing control over yourself and your life when facing your emotions. Maybe you're also worried that the purity of your feelings could lead to destruction, so you push away the most uncomfortable emotions and experiences. Good riddance, but for how long?



1.2 Your Daily Life as a Mirror

There are many ways to become more aware of who you are. Whatever road you choose, the core principle is to get to know and trust your own humanity. If you want to become more aware of what you need to find inner peace and contentment, you don't have to look any further. Your daily life is full of information and reflections about yourself. Whether you're working, cleaning the house, caring for (grand)children, exercising, or relaxing in your chair, you encounter yourself everywhere. Your everyday life serves as your most important school. You can use all the instincts, emotions, and feelings you experience throughout the day as stepping stones to better understand yourself. But is that really what you want?



Your inner and outer worlds mirror each other. When you suppress your emotions and feelings, choosing not to acknowledge them, you also avoid addressing the emotions and feelings of others, as well as the world around you. Everything you suppress constantly demands your attention. It takes time and energy to hide whatever you wish to avoid confronting on a daily basis. This struggle creates an internal battle – an exhausting fight that others don't see.

Sometimes, you need to stray far from who you are and what makes you happy to realize that what you want has been within your reach all along. You just hadn't recognized it yet, or it was still too difficult for you to find an attitude that would let you welcome your deepest desires into your daily life and find ways to express them. Your humanity includes instincts, emotions, feelings, thoughts, convictions, and inspiration; all of these help you understand your needs and desires, and your humanity guides you along the way.

Emotions and feelings are not the final destination over which you have no *control* or only minimal control. Instead, they are a station on the path toward greater insight and wisdom; they provide information on how you can embrace yourself in a way that makes you feel nourished and supported. However, to gain such insight and wisdom, it is essential that you stay connected with yourself. This can be quite difficult because, instinctively, your first response to pain is to withdraw. Learning to remain connected to your current feelings and emotions, step by step, helps you build trust in your ability to handle whatever happens inside and outside of you. **You** are the one who chooses how to care for your life. Of course, drastic events beyond your control will continue to occur; however, the choice of how to respond to them is always yours, time and again.

1.3 Constructive and Destructive

One of the choices you often make every day is whether to respond in a constructive or destructive manner. Both methods can bring you joy, like when you first build a tower with blocks and then watch it fall. But they can also be equally painful. Allowing or denying what is present can cause hurt. The key difference is whether you delay experiencing the pain or not.

Example: constructive expression

Charles is a vital 19-year-old who has felt unheard and unseen by his parents for a long time. Most of the time, they are preoccupied with themselves and their own problems and struggles. Since the death of Charles's brother, Thomas, nine years ago, this situation has only gotten worse. For years, no one has mentioned Thomas at all. It seems that the entire family, including Charles, is stuck in their own grief.

Charles notices he's becoming angrier inside. He feels frustrated because things in life aren't going as he would like. At the same time, he feels unable to change. He decides to find an outlet for his anger and joins a boxing school. Occasionally, he shares his feelings with his sparring partner, Mo, and as a result, Charles feels free to vent his frustrations through punching and kicking. Mo is okay with catching his punches. The gloves, pads, and techniques they learn provide adequate protection, and soon it will be Mo's turn.



Example: destructive expression

Charles is a vital 19-year-old who has felt unheard and unseen by his parents for a long time. Most of the time, they are preoccupied with themselves and their own problems and struggles. Since the death of Charles's brother, Thomas, nine years ago, this situation has only worsened. For years, no one has mentioned Thomas at all. It seems that the entire family, including Charles, is stuck in its own grief.

Charles notices he's becoming angrier inside. He feels frustrated. He contacts a group of people who gather in the nearby square almost every day, from the afternoon until late at night. They incite each other to destroy things. Recently, they collectively took down a lamppost and completely wrecked it. Charles vented his anger on a trash can. It was as if something snapped inside him. There isn't much left of the trash can now; Charles set it on fire after it was already damaged. Then he took off.

