

# Sometimes feelings are monsters

Lilli Höch-Corona

Self management with feeling



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This book has been written by the creator of the *Gefühlsmonster*® cards and illustrated by the *Gefühlsmonsters*' artist, Christian Corona. As means of illustration we will be using the *Gefühlsmonster*® cards in the exercises. You can also use the free *online-Gefühlsmonster-tool-box*<sup>1</sup> for these exercises.

A comment on gendering: In some cases, gendering causes quite complicated sentence structures. To avoid confusion I will be using the pronouns they and them for all genders.

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1 [scan.gefuehlsmonster.de/en/](https://scan.gefuehlsmonster.de/en/)

























## Legend

- 1  Emotions
- 2  To think about how our brain works
- 3  Limitations
- 4  Body exercises
- 5  Personal Wellbeing
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- 7  New Ways
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The names of the chapters are categories like *feelings*, *body exercises*, *to think about* etc. The exercises in the individual chapters sometimes also contain elements from other categories. In this case you will find several icons so that you can easily find your way around.



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*For my family*

## *Preface for the English translation*

Why am I publishing this book in English?

I have always loved being able to communicate in more than one language. It began with a student exchange stay in England 1966, three beautiful holidays in France (1967–1972) as an Au Pair, and summer jobs in London and Paris. One of my life's highlights was an Interrail trip in 1970 from Germany all around Europe. I managed to see Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Lapland, France, Spain and Portugal all in four weeks! One of the things that stood out for me was my realization that there are kind and helpful people everywhere.

So when I met my Italian future husband during a vacation on Sardinia in 1975 I happily used my French and Latin skills to communicate with him and learned Italian relatively quickly. Our children learned both of our languages from day one, because I wanted them to be able to communicate with their Italian relatives while being raised in Germany. Later on, to my great delight, they learned several other languages with ease.

For the last 45 years it has been normal for me to live in two cultures. I have experienced raising children in Sardinia and in Germany and I learned to find solutions where we were different. I learned to value the delicious and long Sardinian meals and, interestingly enough unlike many other children, ours never complained about these big family

dinners. The fact that I have come to know and love mediation, negotiating between different opinions and points of view, certainly has to do with this very lifestyle.

My studies in Process-oriented Psychology got me in touch with people from all over the world, something I still experience as a great enrichment.

Now, what does all this have to do with feelings?

The two cultures I experienced couldn't be more different in how and with what intensity they express emotions. Through my husband's Sardinian family I got to know a more expressive way of dealing with feelings and embracing each other emotionally.

16 years experience with the *Gefühlsmonsters* have taught me how beneficial it is when conversations about feelings become more lighthearted, when even difficult topics sometimes can take on a humorous side with the monster cards.

My vision is that the *Gefühlsmonsters* become a language, a language that supports mutual understanding everywhere. In this book I explain, that before you can build up mutual understanding you first need to know your own feelings. More about that later.

Because English is a world language, and after publishing the book "Feelings with Empathy" in English, it is now my very special pleasure to present my heart's project, "Sometimes Feelings are Monsters", to all of

my family, all of our friends and all of the *Gefühlsmonster* friends we have made by now – and their friends, ...

Hopefully, with all of this work on our emotions, we will get to know ourselves better, and on this basis treat each other better in as many places on earth as possible.

# *Preface*

Originally I didn't want to mention the current situation because this book was written long before the COVID 19 pandemic and will be useful beyond the pandemic. Yet, this challenging time dominates all of our thoughts and feelings so I decided to comment after all:

I think it could help us a lot right now if we used all our ingenuity, all our skills and experiences, to imagine and work towards a better future. To find people with whom we work together on developing ideas and solutions that make a difference. If you look closely you will see that this is already taking place in many areas. People are getting together in huge *hackathons*, because they want to contribute and others are going above and beyond their usual work expectations despite difficult conditions. They are helping neighbors, working on solutions to current problems ... The most important message in my book is that we can influence what we feel, and that it is important to understand how our feelings work. Through this knowledge and its implementation we have influence over further evolution in our world. Basically my theory is that if each of us is in touch with their own feelings and focuses on what brings them joy, we will automatically become who we are meant to be. Because from a place of joy we are able to be productive and capable, we feel connected to people, nature, and the world, and treat each other mindfully and compassionately.



Berlin, January 6th 2021

# Foreword

I am a collector of things and information that I find useful or that someone else might need. You can imagine that storing red glass heart buttons from children's clothes, old Nivea tins, and historical recipe books – and getting excited the moment someone is looking for just that – has its limits. But I actually kept it up for quite a long time. One of my favorite childhood memories is that while walking in the woods with my father I was able to conjure up a little shovel from my backpack at just the right moment, when he sadly stood in front of a beech sapling he would have liked to plant in his little woodland. (Yes, I know that nowadays we definitely do not take saplings from the forest.)

Keeping information is a little easier. No matter what I was reading, I used to cut out everything and file it away. Today I'm always quick with my cell phone camera to photograph interesting paragraphs or book titles. My kids can tell you a thing or two about getting such *important information* from me. In fact, they don't find this information half as important as I do ... Maybe you know what I mean.

In the work preferences model "Team Management System" that I have enjoyed working with for a good 20 years,<sup>2</sup> my role is that of a Reporter Advisor. In my teachings I like to talk about the piles of books on bedside tables, something that can be found in many people's homes who work

in this style. The piles of books that are now sitting next to me for the citations are a demonstration of that.

Unfortunately one characteristic of Reporter Advisors is that they never finish collecting knowledge. That's why it took me a long time to decide to write a book without being able to include every bit of information I would like to. This book is my own personal collection of information and exercises. If you see that two topics seem alike it was designed this way to reinforce what you have learned or that you can choose the appropriate exercises.

I can honestly say that my regular exposure to these topics and the practice it provides me with have made me a happier and more balanced person.

Please decide for yourself how you want to work with this book. It covers the essence of what I have learned on the subject of *feelings* in my professional work since 1979 and what I have shared in my *feelings letters* from 2008 until now. So take your time. You may also be inspired to read some of the books I cited. In the footnotes you will find references to the authors I have found helpful. You will find the correct page numbers from the corresponding books in the footnotes. In the bibliography you can see which of these books are also available in English. I highly recommend all the books mentioned.

*Lilli Höch-Corona*

# *The Beginning*

Let's start with the story of how I became more involved with feelings and how I discovered the *Gefühlsmonsters*:

Even, or especially, as a mathematics teacher (during the years 1980–1994) I made an effort to create a pleasant climate in my classes. Special exercises helped to create a friendly learning atmosphere in which the students, as well as I as a person, found space.

One of my most moving lessons came from telling my class at the beginning of the lesson that I wasn't feeling well because of an argument – and then bursting into tears in front of the class. Afterwards, we had a wonderful conversation about how difficult it often is to get along. Incredible, a conversation with the whole class (basic math class, 25 students between 17 and 22 years old) for 90 minutes! This was my first experience of how addressing feelings can develop into something very positive, touching – a genuine exchange.

Another time I heard from colleagues that one of my students had been beaten up and therefore missed a day. The next day I spoke to him about his black eye and to my surprise this student said after a while he felt that this kind of thing happened to him more often, that he always got into fights easily because he couldn't control himself. It was obvious that he