Welcome to another AG LEGACY recording.

AG LEGACY is a series of presentations and other online materials intended to assist rural families in creating their own legacy by beginning the thought process and opening the lines of communication.

Today's recording will address the question "Feeling Left Out in Your Ag Legacy?"

Ag Legacy

Helping agriculture nurture its legacy. . .

Agriculture & Horticulture
University of Wyoming Extension

Today's speaker

**Caleb Carter**

Consultant to the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics in the University of Wyoming College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Ag Legacy

USDA Sustainable Ag & Horticulture
Agriculture & Horticulture

University of Wyoming Extension
RightRisk

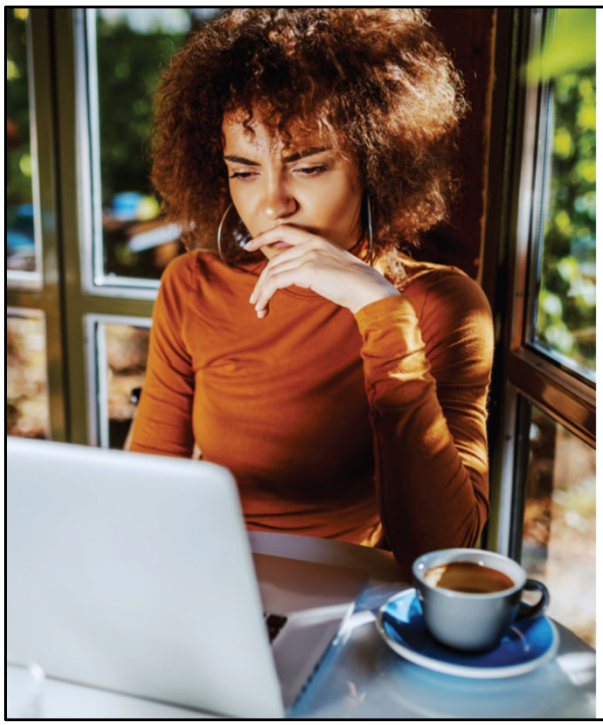
I'm Caleb Carter, consultant to the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics in the University of Wyoming College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

I will be your speaker for today's AG LEGACY presentation

# Feeling Left Out in Your Ag Legacy?

Caleb Carter, consultant to the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics
John P. Hewlett – Farm/Ranch Management Specialist

While it is common for people to have difficulty in understanding and expressing their emotions, it doesn't change the fact that emotions are real and they can have an affect on our relationships. While in turn our relationships can also affect our emotions. Emotions can become even more real when a family is discussing the creation of their Ag Legacy. Feeling left out can also be common through this process. This in turn can lead to stronger emotions and can become a roadblock in building stronger family relationships.



Sandra sat at her usual chair at the table. Drank the same dark coffee from the same coffee cup. And could almost quote her Dad as he talked about how things were going on the farm. He talked about the past year and the increased crop prices and the new tractor they just bought. He praised her brother as he always did, for his efforts in the feedlot and changing their crop rotation to increase forage production. He even mentioned the vacation that they were all able to take over the winter. The first time in a long time that they had been able to get away.

What he didn't discuss was her efforts to balance the books and to keep them in the black. It hadn't been easy. She was no accountant, but she worked hard and learned on her feet to keep everything straight and to make sense of the many operations they had going on. Between the feedlot, the dairy, and the crops in the field it was a lot to keep track of. She had been able to find several ways to help cut costs that really helped their cash flow. Her efforts were also a big reason they were able to take that vacation.

She knew he didn't do it intentionally. Managing the books was never something he did. Her Mom had always done that. Since she passed away five years ago he had ignored it even more. Sandra had invested an immense amount of time over the last three years trying to straighten it all out again. And while her Mom had done a good job, she also didn't have any training and didn't always keep things straight.

Would it kill her Dad to also take the time to notice and acknowledge her effort as part of the family farm operation?

## Feeling left out?

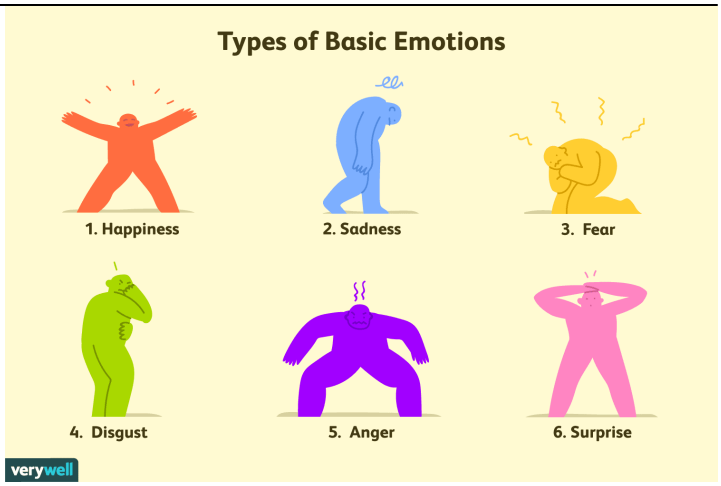
It can be common to have feelings of being left out. Whether you are feeling left out of a conversation, an important decision, not getting to play as many minutes on the basketball team, or eating alone.

## Feeling left out?

There can also be times that you or someone else can feel left out of decisions and activities on the family operation, and consequently the development of the family's Ag Legacy.

Maybe it’s the son who moved away to college but now feels that he is not involved in decisions about the future of the family ranch. Or a daughter who feels like she is never consulted about decisions on the farm, while her Dad and brother talk all the time. Or the son-in-law who feels like he isn’t welcome as part of the ranch, even though they sacrificed to move back to be able to help more.

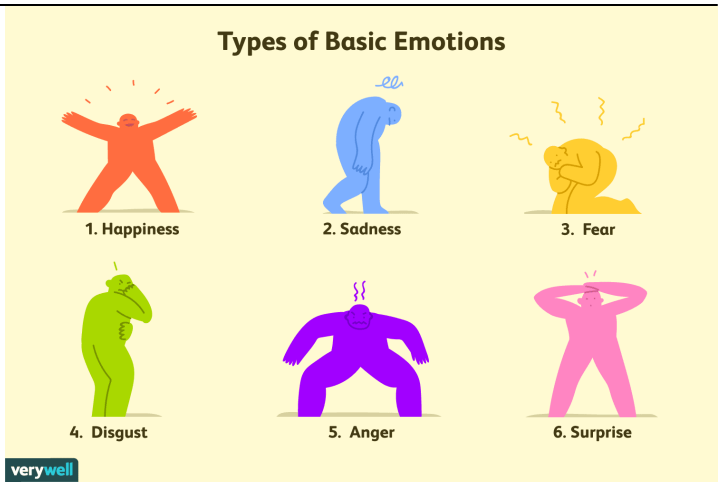
## 6 basic emotions




Many attempts have been made to characterize our basic emotions. During the 1970s, psychologist Paul Eckman identified six basic emotions that he suggested were universally experienced in all human cultures. These included happiness, sadness, fear, disgust, anger, and surprise.

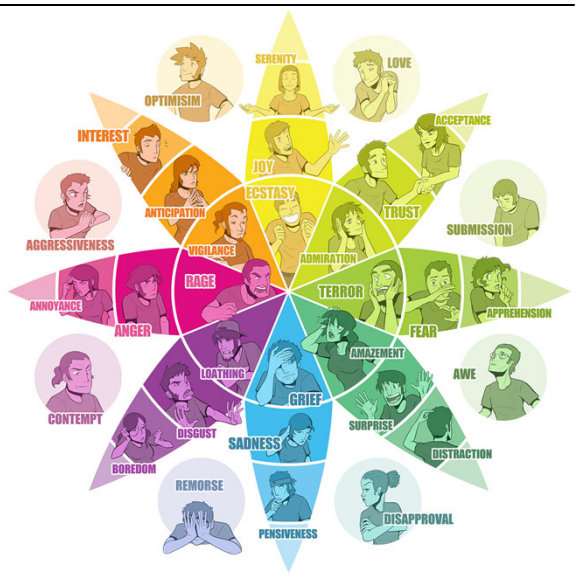
## 6 basic emotions

- Pride
- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Excitement



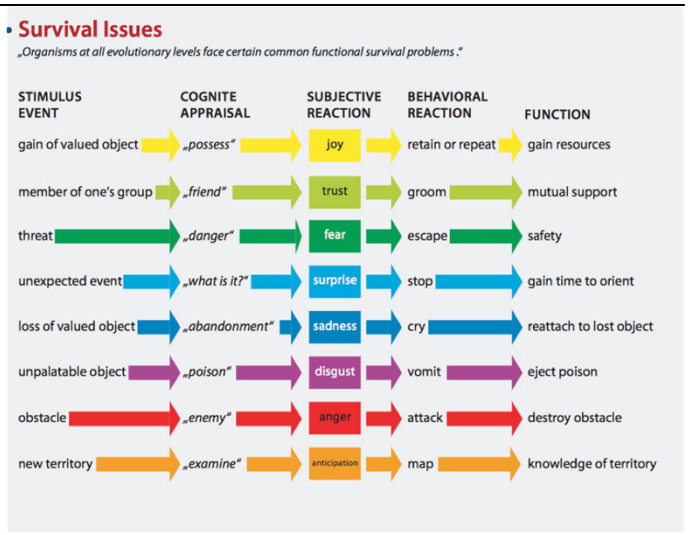

While other theories exist, this has become one of the more well-known. He later expanded his list of basic emotions to include such things as pride, shame, embarrassment, and excitement.

## Wheel of Emotions



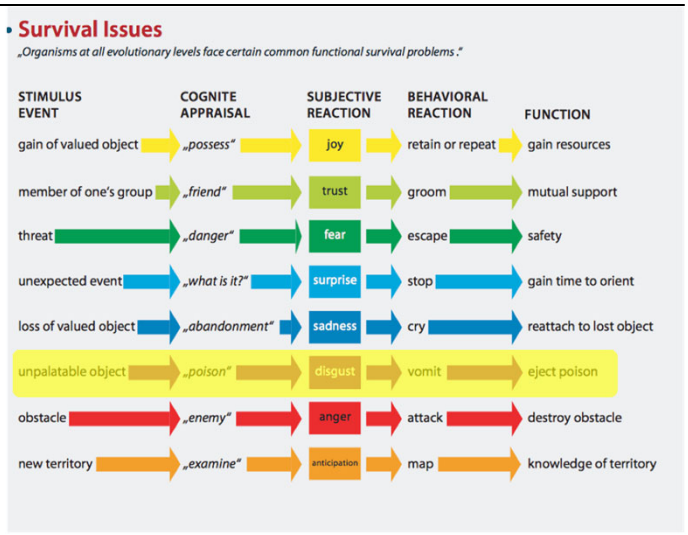

This may seem a little overly simplistic as you consider the range of emotions that we can experience. Psychologist Robert Plutchik put forth a "wheel of emotions" that works something like the color wheel. Based on a theory using 8 basic emotions, the emotions can be combined to form different feelings, much like colors can be mixed to create other shades. It works by using the basic emotions as building blocks to create the more complex, or mixed emotions we also feel. This concept could help to explain this wider range of emotions.

## Survival Instincts




Plutchik also proposed that our emotions developed as triggers to initiate survival actions necessary to reinforce survival instincts.

## Survival Instincts




For example, when our ancestor encountered an unpalatable object, it was identified as "poison", triggering the emotion of "disgust" which led to vomiting, which led to the ejection of the unpalatable, or poisonous, object.

Thinking of our emotional response in this context, it is no surprise that emotional responses can be very strong. Especially when we are in a situation where we feel threatened or like we are missing out.

## Masculinity

While understanding our emotions can be difficult, talking about our emotions openly can be even more difficult. Randy Weigel, former Extension Specialist, stated that the masculine identity generated by news media, artists, teachers, historians, parents, and public figures dominates how men think about themselves. And this stigma is even stronger within the culture of agriculture. Where the attitude of “I can do it myself” and “never show weakness” have been ingrained for centuries.

## Seeking Help

This can make men less likely to seek help or be willing to talk about how they are feeling, or their frustrations. In turn, other family members may also be less likely to talk about their emotions and how the actions of others are affecting them. Leading to the denying, ignoring, or covering up, of emotions within the family.

**Feelings**

*"The feeling is often the deeper truth, the opinion the more superficial one."*

Augustus William Hare

Augustus William Hare, a British Author, once stated: "The feeling is often the deeper truth, the opinion the more superficial one." If we think about this, it makes a lot of sense. We are always quicker to share an opinion than what our true feelings are. But, which is the deeper truth?

## Stigma

How can families break the stigma that often exists around discussing and expressing our emotions? How can families be more encouraging and supportive when family members are struggling with emotions such as feeling left out? In society today mental health and struggles that are associated with it are being talked about more and more. And talking about them openly can be the beginning of the process. This can lead to individuals feeling more open to sharing their own emotions. It is also important that family members try to validate the emotions of others in the family.

## Emotional Validation

Emotional validation involves understanding and showing acceptance for another person's feelings. When people receive this type of validation, they feel that their emotions are not only seen and heard by others but that these feelings are also accepted. This can help combat feelings of isolation or being left out. As well as opening the door further for the expression and understanding of family members emotions.

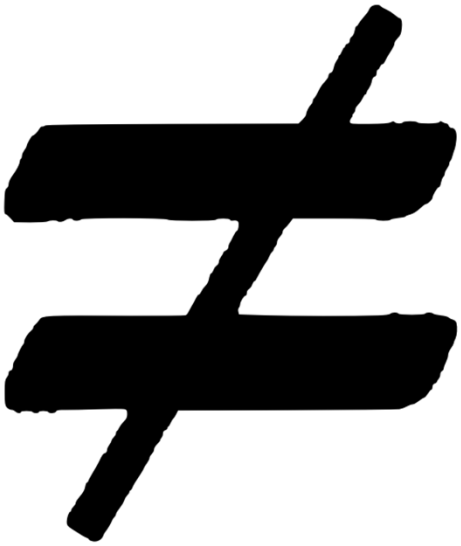
## Benefits of validating another person's emotions

1. **Communicating acceptance**: When you validate someone's emotions, you are showing that you care about and accept them for who they are
2. **Strengthening relationships**: People who show each other acceptance are able to feel more connected and build stronger relationships
3. **Showing value**: When you validate someone's emotions, you are showing them that they are important to you
4. **Better emotional regulation**: When people feel that others hear and understand them, it can help lessen the intensity of strong emotions. This can be particularly important when it comes to strong negative or distressing feelings. Some research suggests that offering people emotional validation may help them better regulate their emotions

Benefits of validating another person's emotions:

1. **Communicating acceptance**: When you validate someone's emotions, you are showing that you care about and accept them for who they are
2. **Strengthening relationships**: People who show each other acceptance are able to feel more connected and build stronger relationships
3. **Showing value**: When you validate someone's emotions, you are showing them that they are important to you
4. **Better emotional regulation**: When people feel that others hear and understand them, it can help lessen the intensity of strong emotions. This can be particularly important when it comes to strong negative or distressing feelings. Some research suggests that offering people emotional validation may help them better regulate their emotions

## Validation Does Not Mean



It is also important to understand that validating the emotion that someone else is experiencing does not imply that you share the same emotion or that you agree with them. Nor is an apology necessarily needed. But it can help to diffuse a situation and help the individual to better address the emotion and what the root cause of the emotion is or was.

## How to Validate Another's Feelings

While every situation is different, there are some general steps that can be taken to validate another person's feelings:

- **Identify and acknowledge the emotion**: This can be difficult if the person does not openly communicate their emotions. It might require that you infer what they are feeling by their behavior. Be sure to question them to make sure your inference is correct. Making broad assumptions can make the problem worse.
- **Identify the source of the emotion**: Ask the person what is causing this response? It might be that they are unable to identify the cause themselves. It is still important to acknowledge that the emotion is occurring and that you want to understand.
- **Validate the emotion**: Accept what they are feeling, even if you don't agree. And again, an apology isn't necessarily required if you don't feel it is warranted. Simply informing them that you accept their feelings can be very powerful in helping empower them to address the emotion themselves.

While every situation is different, there are some general steps that can be taken to validate another person's feelings:

- **Identify and acknowledge the emotion**: This can be difficult if the person does not openly communicate their emotions. It might require that you infer what they are feeling by their behavior. Be sure to question them to make sure your inference is correct. Making broad assumptions can make the problem worse.
- **Identify the source of the emotion**: Ask the person what is causing this response? It might be that they are unable to identify the cause themselves. It is still important to acknowledge that the emotion is occurring and that you want to understand.
- **Validate the emotion**: Accept what they are feeling, even if you don't agree. And again, an apology isn't necessarily required if you don't feel it is warranted. Simply informing them that you accept their feelings can be very powerful in helping empower them to address the emotion themselves.

## Body language

Created by Gan Khoon Lay
from Noun Project

Your body language can often convey more than your words. Assume an open, friendly position as you talk with the other person. Empathy can be a good way to put yourself in their shoes, even if you haven't necessarily experienced the same emotion. Asking questions can help you clarify what the other person means and shows that they have your attention, and that you are listening to them.

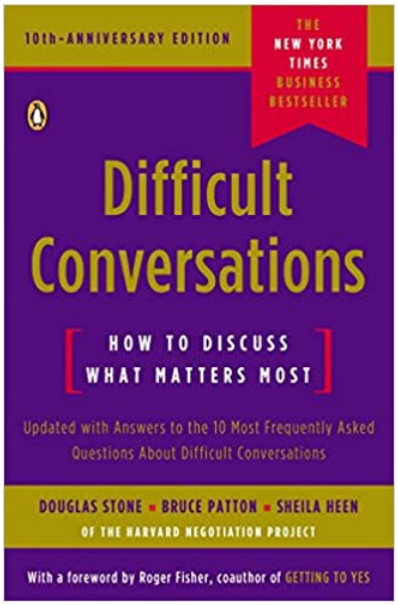
## Assigning Blame

Assigning blame is not necessary, nor is it helpful. The point isn't to assign blame, but to gain understanding. Using the "I statement" can help to express emotions without assigning blame. Use the format: When you _____, I feel _____. This can also help to diffuse a tense situation as you are avoiding the blame game and are rather simply expressing your own personal feelings. And identifying where those feelings are coming from.

## Another Perspective

To address these issues on a deeper level, it is also important to understand the situation from the other person's perspective. Ask each party involved what happened and they will each provide a different perspective about the level of communication occurring within any given family operation. Dad might think that coffee on Sunday morning is enough to talk about what is going on and make a plan for the week. While his son is tired of hearing his Dad tell him what to do all the time, while never listening to any of his ideas. While neither party is wrong, they obviously have different perspectives and emotions regarding the situation. How can they come together to gain a better understanding of where each is coming from?

## Difficult Conversations




The Ag Legacy newsletter titled “DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: How Do We Discuss What Really Matters?” is based on the book by the same name. It discusses how to address these different perspectives and how to share them in a way that is non-confrontational. Helping each party better understand the three stories. Find it at AgLegacy.org, click on Newsletters.

## Difficult Conversations

The first story is what you believe occurred, the second story is what the other person believes occurred, while the third story is what actually occurred. Coming together to share and try to better understand each other can help both parties come to an understanding of the third story, and gain a better understanding of what actually happened.

## Moving Forward

Depending on the situation, when a person is hurt by another, forgiveness might be required. Forgiveness is the conscious and deliberate decision to release resentment or anger. Forgiveness doesn't necessarily mean reconciliation. The person who forgives is not required to return to the same pattern of relationship or accept the same harmful behaviors from another. In addition, forgiveness is critically important for the mental health of anyone who has been harmed or victimized. It allows people to move forward, rather than holding them back to reexperience a past injustice or injury. More on forgiveness and the role it can play in your Ag Legacy can be found in the Ag Legacy newsletter titled "Should Forgiveness Have a Place in Your Ag Legacy?" Available at Aglegacy.org, click on Newsletters.

## Moving Forward Without Validation

There may be times that you don't receive this validation from other family members. If other family members are reluctant to acknowledge and validate the emotions being expressed, then moving forward through self forgiveness might be the next step. This can also empower an individual to act for themselves.

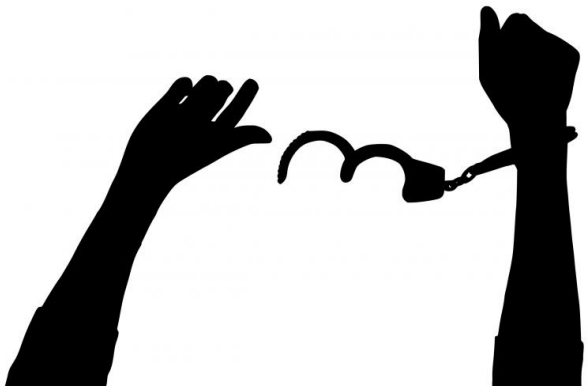
## Moving Forward Without Validation

### *Questions to ask yourself*

- Why do you feel left out?
- What happened?
- What can you change?

Asking questions to get at the cause of the emotions, and what can be done about it, a person may ask themselves:

## Moving Forward Without Validation



Always relying on others to validate your feelings may, at times, leave you wanting. No one can force another person to acknowledge their own or someone else's emotions. Be willing to address the concerns internally and move forward.

## A Better Understanding

Coming together as a family when potentially difficult decisions have to be made, or tough choices are being faced is difficult enough without having to also deal with the burying of emotions. Seek ways to open the lines of communication and to create an environment where emotions can be shared openly. It may feel awkward at first, but the relief that is felt can also be freeing as family members grow closer and gain a better understanding of what each person is feeling, experiencing, and what they have to contribute to the family's Ag Legacy.

- Modules
- Newsletter
- Learning
- Materials
- External Links

If you have found this presentation helpful, we also recommend that you check out the newsletter on the same topic. You can find it on our website at Aglegacy.org. And while you are there, be sure to check out our other materials including modules, newsletters, and additional materials to help you in creating your own Ag legacy.

# THANK YOU!

Thank you!