



The Four Emotional Stages

This set of descriptions is meant to help you self-identify where you are at on your journey to emotional health. The content is found on pages 168-170 in the book *“Emotionally Healthy Spirituality”* by Pete Scazzero. Keep in mind that your level of maturity may vary depending on the situation. Use this as a tool to help you learn where you need to grow, not to beat yourself up. We’re all a work in progress!

Stage 1: Emotional Infants

- Look for others to take care of them
- Have great difficulty entering into the world of others
- Are driven by a need for instant gratification
- Use others as objects to meet their needs

Stage 2: Emotional Children

- Are content and happy as long as they receive what they want
- Unravel quickly from stress, disappointments, or trials
- Interpret disagreements as personal offenses
- Are easily hurt
- Complain, withdraw, manipulate, take revenge, or become sarcastic when they don’t get their way
- Have great difficulty calmly discussing needs and wants in a mature, loving way

It’s impossible to be
spiritually mature
while remaining
emotionally immature.

- Pete Scazzero -

Stage 3: Emotional Adolescents

- Tend to be defensive
- Are threatened and alarmed by criticism
- Keep score of what they give so they can ask for something later in return
- Deal with conflict poorly, often blaming, appeasing, going to a third party, pouting, or ignoring the issue entirely
- Become preoccupied with themselves
- Have great difficulty truly listening to another person's pain, disappointments, or needs
- Are critical and judgmental

Stage 4: Emotional Adults

- Are able to ask for what they need, want, or prefer—clearly, directly, and honestly
- Recognize, manage, and take responsibility for their own thoughts and feelings
- Can, when under stress, state their own beliefs and values without becoming adversarial
- Respect others without having to change them
- Give people room to make mistakes and not be perfect
- Appreciate people for who they are—the good, bad, and ugly—not for what they give back
- Accurately assess their own limits, strengths, and weaknesses and are able to freely discuss them with others
- Are deeply in tune with their own emotional world and able to enter into the feelings, needs, and concerns of others without losing themselves
- Have the capacity to resolve conflict maturely and negotiate solutions that consider the perspectives of others

My "Bill of Rights"*

Respect means I give myself and others the right to:

- Space and privacy (e.g., knocking on doors before entering, not opening one another's mail, respecting each other's needs for quiet and space)
- Be different (e.g., allowing preferences for food, movies, volume of music, and how we spend our time)
- Disagree (e.g., making room for each person to think and see life differently)
- Be heard (e.g., listening to each other's desires, opinions, thoughts, feelings, etc.)
- Be taken seriously (e.g., listening and being present to one another)
- Be given the benefit of the doubt (e.g., checking out assumptions rather than judging one another when misunderstandings arise)
- Be told the truth (e.g., counting on the truth when asking each other for information—from "Did you study for the test that you failed?" to "Why were you late coming home?")
- Be consulted (e.g., checking and asking when decisions will affect others)
- Be imperfect and make mistakes (e.g., leaving "room" for breaking things, forgetting things, letting each other down unintentionally, failing tests when we have studied, etc.)
- Courteous and honorable treatment (e.g., using words that don't hurt, asking before using, consulting when appropriate, etc.)
- Be respected (e.g., taking one another's feelings into account.)