



Understanding Emotions at The Wall

How can you recognize and plan for the emotions you may encounter at
The Vietnam Veterans Memorial?

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Emotions – who needs them?



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Emotions – who needs them?



EMOTIONS

Men Don't Show Them & Cutting Onions Is No Excuse.



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What are emotions?

People often think "emotions" and "feelings" are synonyms. Yet they are two different steps in a psychological process: emotions are the **physical body's reaction** to a stimulus, while feelings are the **mind's interpretation** of those reactions.

EMOTIONS



Occur as immediate reactions to stimuli.



Innate and universal, shared across cultures and species.



Typically short-lived, lasting seconds to a few minutes.



Can be measured objectively through physical responses.



Elicit physiological responses, like changes in heart rate or facial expressions.



Generated in the subcortical areas of the brain, such as the amygdala.

 IMOTIONS

FEELINGS



Develop over time as emotions are processed and understood.



Shaped by individual experiences, beliefs, and cultural context.



Can endure for hours, days, or even longer as they are reflected upon.



Often measured subjectively through self-report methods and introspection.



Involve a subjective experience, influenced by thoughts and memories.



Processed in the neocortical regions, reflecting cognitive appraisal.

Powering Human Insights

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What emotions have you observed or experienced at The Wall?



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What emotions have you observed or experienced at The Wall?

REMEMBERING AWE HONORING *Courage*
TEARFUL *SOBER* Tragedy PATRIOTISM TRAGEDY
OVERWHELMED REFLECTION SACRIFICE
SORBER **HUMBLLED** **HONOR** Solidarity
DISBELIEF *GRATITUDE* SADNESS *Love*
UNITY Shock **RESPECT** **PAIN** SOLACE
SILENCE LOSS MEMORY
FEAR *Quiet* **PAIN** APPRECIATION
DISAPPOINTMENT UNWORTHY *Guilt*
PRIDE Empathy NOSTALGIA **TRUTH** SOLMEN ANGER
EMPATHY **DISPERIATION** Somber PRIDE *Unity*
SHOCK REVERENCE *INSPIRATION*
SOLIDARITY RESILIENCE

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What emotions have you observed or experienced at The Wall?

- **Deep Grief and Sorrow:** Sadness, pain, grief, tearful, loss, heartbreak.
- **Reverence and Respect:** Humbled, honor, awe, solemn, reverence, respect.
- **Introspection and Memory:** Reflection, remembering, silence, nostalgia, memory.
- **Patriotic Pride:** Gratitude, patriotism, unity, solidarity, appreciation.
- **Healing and Closure:** Peace, solace, comfort, healing - even laughter.
- **Secondary or Complex Emotions:** Anger, guilt, shame, feeling unworthy, shock, disbelief.

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Why does The Wall evoke emotions?



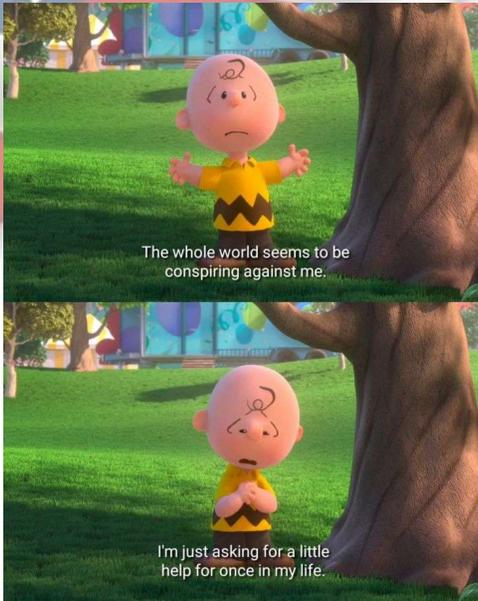
- Maya Lin designed The Wall as a “cut” in the earth – a reflective space focusing on the human cost of the war and not just the heroism.
- Designed as a “wound that is closed and healed,” the v-shape and dropping walkways draw visitors into a quiet, contemplative, and somber space. There you must experience your own personal emotions rather forcing a collective narrative of the war.
- The reflective dark granite compels the visitor to reconcile their image alongside the names. It forcefully merges the present and the past.



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The Stimulus



Emotions require a stimulus and you've given them plenty.

- By your very actions and planning you create many on an Honor Flight.
 - Anticipation
 - Schedule
 - Pomp & Circumstance – send off, travel, arrival, events
 - Their surroundings – other visitors, weather
 - Those around them – Guardians, Hub leadership and other crew members.
 - They're amongst their own - fellow veterans. They can be 19 again.
- By its very design, The Wall is a stimulus.
- Which will effect them? How?

Your task is to identify and recognize the effects of these stimuli and change what you can.

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Managing the Madness



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What lane are you in?

Travel Lanes



"I know where I'm going. Yet I might need help."



- Everyone in these lanes is willing to go to The Wall but may have a different pace.
 - Some may want to find a giant list of names – slow lane
 - Some may have a few names, but they're prepared – middle lane
 - Some know how it's organized, where the name is – they don't need a rubbing, they're focused and prepared
- They may have already been to The Wall or a traveling version.
- They may often be considered "adapted" or untroubled.
- Generally, these are the most common and easiest participants.
 - **Is it true or is it hubris?**
 - **Will the slow lane veterans have enough time?**
 - **What would cause them to become emotional?**

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What lane are you in?

HOV Lane

"I know what I need and stay out of my way."

- Probably visited The Wall or a traveling version
- May not have any tie to anyone on The Wall or someone who served in Vietnam
- If they served during Vietnam, their return wasn't as disturbing or they have sought therapy
 - **Is it true or is it hubris?**
 - **What would cause them to become emotional?**
 - **How can you leverage them for other veterans or your hub?**



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What lane are you in?

Entry/Exit Lane

"I don't like this, but I can do it on my terms."

- May have expressed no interest in The Wall
- May not have served in Vietnam or "in-country"
- May have been treated poorly upon return
- They may slowly warm to the idea of going to The Wall or may "break down" on the benches.
- They may hate everything The Memorial stands for.
 - **Can you easily identify them beforehand?**
 - **Do you allow for enough time for them to go through this process?**
 - **What activities might be impossible because of their approach?**



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What lane are you in?

Breakdown Lane

"Everything seemed fine, but then it just stopped."



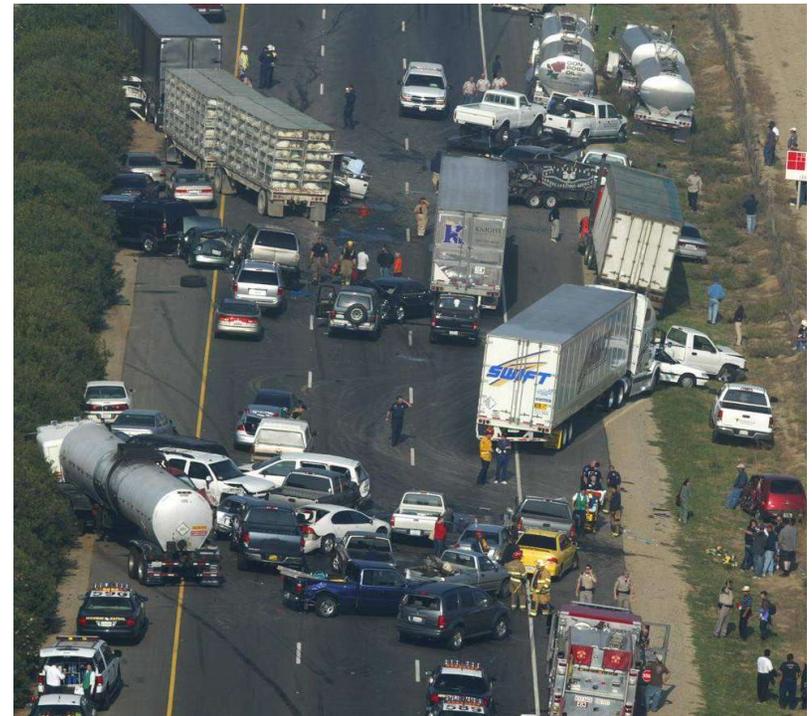
- Came home, threw away everything and never wanted to talk about it. Who will listen? Who will understand?
- May be personally connected with someone on The Wall and they freeze upon sight.
- Probably never visited The Wall or perhaps even other memorials
- May not have wanted to come on the Honor Flight.
 - **Can you do anything beforehand to identify them or prepare them?**
 - **What activities might be impossible because of this reality?**
 - **Is it imperative that they must go to The Wall?**
 - **Who is going to serve as AAA and pick them up?**

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Managing the Madness



- Try and identify what “lane” each of your participants is likely to travel. Identify the natural leaders and healers.
- Leverage people and resources to serve the most troublesome (HOV, Entry-Exit, Breakdown)
- Recognize the impacts that your schedule and planned events may have on evoking emotions. We want emotions, but we want to avoid hysterics.
- Be prepared when they change lanes (often without a blinker) or totally break down.
- Call in reinforcements to assist:
 - Be prepared beforehand with knowledge and plans
 - Do the name rubbings in advance
 - Have extra “guardians” for those not in the central travel lanes



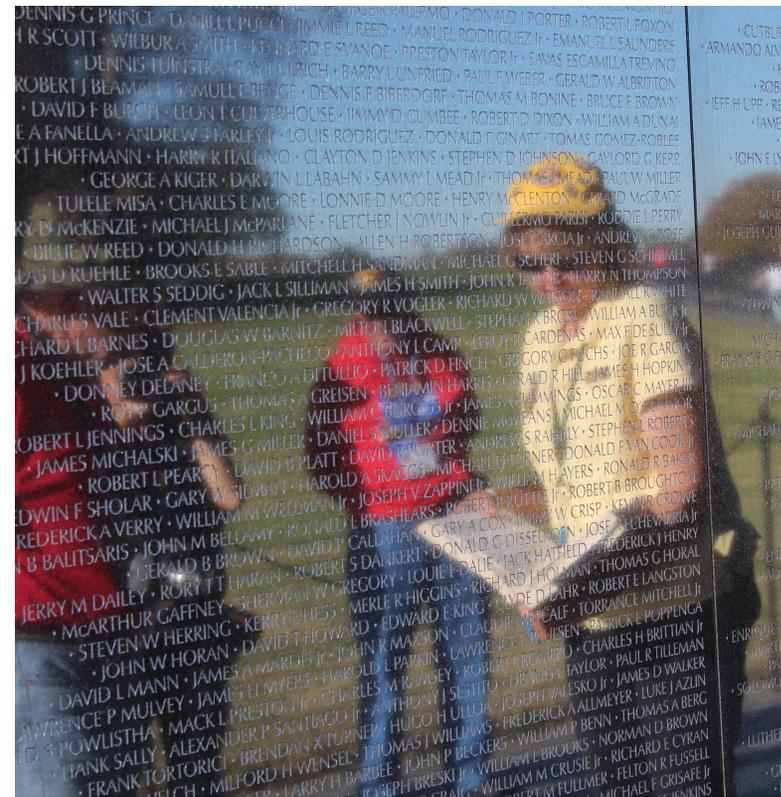
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Perfecting Your Vietnam Veteran's Experience

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) will work with your hub for each flight to:

- Assist with planning, information, and materials
- Facilitate volunteers and staff to enhance experience at The Memorial
- Provide other materials for "memory packages" or "read aheads"



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