

New Book Seeks to Improve Emotional Literacy

D. Earl Johnston Publishes Cross-Disciplinary Reference Defining 272 Emotional States

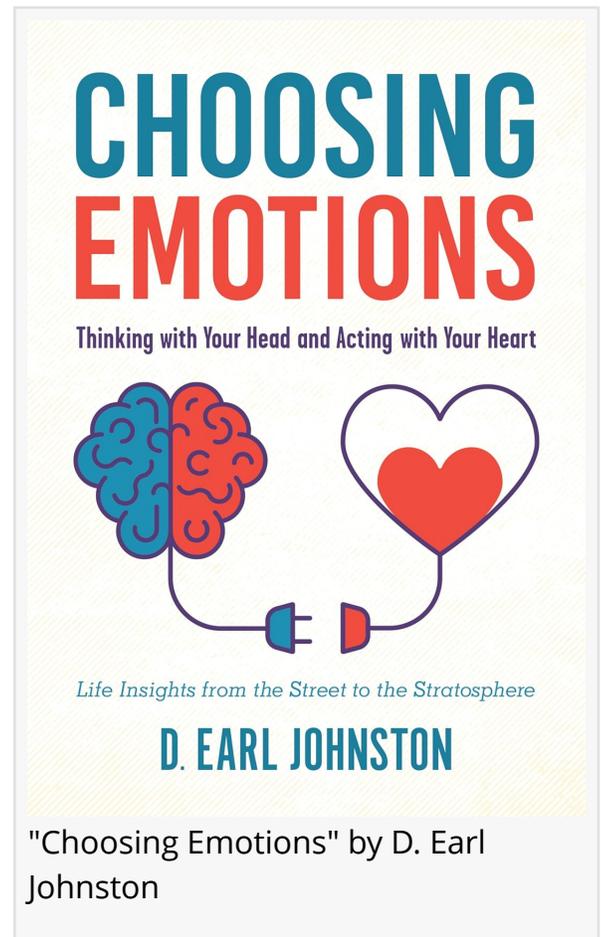
HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, February 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For centuries, people have debated, measured, regulated and theorized about emotion. But no single work has attempted to define the full landscape of everyday emotional states across disciplines — until now. "Choosing Emotions: Thinking with Your Head and Acting with Your Heart" by D. Earl Johnston presents what is described as the first fully cross-disciplinary reference defining 272 emotional states drawn from 3,000 years of recorded thought in the fields of philosophy, science, linguistics, psychology, art and spiritual traditions.

Going far beyond primal feelings of fear, anger, joy and sorrow, "Choosing Emotions" seeks to address what Johnston describes as a foundational gap in emotional literacy, or the ability to understand, express and regulate emotions.

According to the book's research notes, roughly one quarter of the 272 emotional states included in the book are not found in major psychology dictionaries or other references, including commonly used terms such as admiration, confidence, procrastination and zeal. The work expands the discussion beyond psychology, incorporating definitional perspectives from seven fields and more than 30 faith and philosophical traditions.

Structured as an accessible "Emotionary," the book allows readers to browse individual emotional states while also engaging three overarching conceptual frameworks that Johnston introduces:

- Emotions function as a continuous internal "Operating System."
- Emotions act as the "Gears of Life," translating internal states into behavior.
- Emotions serve as a cultural and cognitive "Rosetta Stone," bridging traditions and disciplines.



Johnston also advances an original linguistic framing of emotion as an “adverbial driver” of behavior — suggesting that emotions modify how actions are carried out, similar to adverbs in language. The book includes multidisciplinary sub-definitions and cross-referenced commentary intended for both general readers and academic audiences.

With the book’s launch in January, it has now ranked among the Top 10 titles in three of Amazon’s categories – Positive Psychology, Emotions & Mental Health, and Adult & Continuing Education.

Designed for general readers, business leaders, educators, clinicians and scholars, “Choosing Emotions” combines reference-style organization with quotations and observations from thinkers including Plato, Aristotle, Leonardo da Vinci, Immanuel Kant, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Niels Bohr, Noam Chomsky and contemporary psychologists and neuroscientists.



D. Earl Johnston, author of "Choosing Emotions"

“Choosing Emotions: Thinking with Your Head and Acting with Your Heart” is available in print and digital editions through major online booksellers.

ABOUT D. EARL JOHNSTON

D. Earl Johnston is a former corporate executive, testifying expert, and world champion sailor. Over a multi-decade career spanning banking, private equity, and litigation consulting, he developed a sustained interest in language, motivation, and emotional definition. "Choosing Emotions" represents nine years of research across disciplines and traditions. Learn more at choosingemotions.com.

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