



Book # 124
Event # 231

Emotional Equations

by **Chip Conley**
Reviewed by **Pat Whitty**

About the Authors

Rebel hospitality entrepreneur and *New York Times* bestselling author, Chip Conley disrupted his favorite industry... twice. At age 26 he founded Joie de Vivre Hospitality (JdV), transforming an inner-city motel into the second largest boutique hotel brand in America. He sold JdV after running it as CEO for 24 years, and soon the young founders of Airbnb asked him to help transform their promising start-up into the world's leading hospitality brand. Chip served as Airbnb's Head of Global Hospitality and Strategy for four years and today acts as the company's Strategic Advisor for Hospitality and Leadership. His five books have made him a leading authority at the intersection of psychology and business. Chip was awarded "Most Innovative CEO" by the San Francisco Business Times, is the recipient of hospitality's highest honor, the Pioneer Award, and holds a BA and MBA from Stanford University.

About the Book

Using brilliantly simple math that illuminates universal emotional truths, *Emotional Equations* crystallizes some of life's toughest challenges into manageable facets that listeners can see clearly—and bits they can control. Popular motivational speaker and best-selling author Chip Conley has created an exciting, new, immediately accessible visual lexicon for mastering the age of uncertainty. Making mathematics out of emotions may seem a counterintuitive idea, but it's an inspiring and incredibly effective one in Chip Conley's hands.

The Book's ONE THING

$Wisdom = \sqrt{Experience}$

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Emotions = Life

It seems like most of the great works of art and literature have come out of suffering. This book is no exception. Chip Conley turned his personal and professional suffering into a contribution for all of us who are suffering, especially now. As the founder and CEO of Joie de Vivre, America's second largest boutique hotel company, he suffered financial challenges during the economic downturn of 2008 coupled with devastating personal tragedies in his life.

After putting up the positive CEO persona for his employees every day, he would retreat to his home – ***“once my sanctuary but now a place filled with beautiful things and ugly thoughts.”***

In his search to make sense of his emotions, he turned to someone who had gone through far greater suffering, Viktor Frankl and his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*. He figured that if a man could withstand the agonies of a Nazi concentration camp, he could probably deal with the challenges of his own life. He knew that if he was to turn around his company, he would have to turn around his life.

The wisdom in Frankl's book coalesced around the first emotional equation:

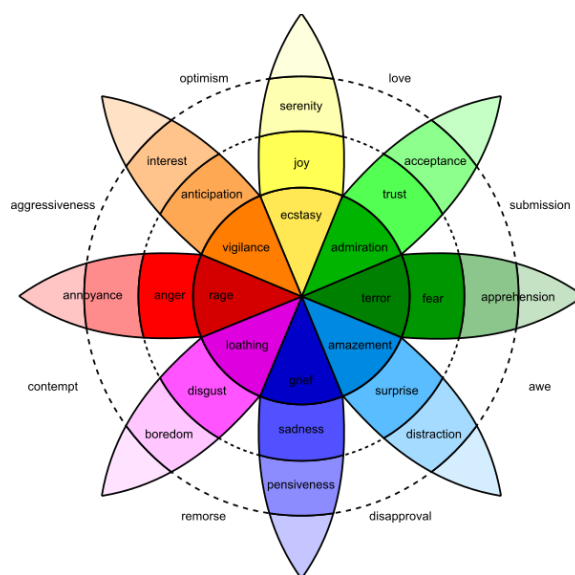
Despair = Suffering – Meaning

In this simple, yet complex, equation he saw that despair would inevitably result when suffering had no meaning. To reduce his feeling of despair, he would have to place his attention on growing his sense of meaning and discovering what he was supposed to learn.

How many emotions are there? Emotions aren't clearly defined. They show up in combinations like colors. Primary colors are red, yellow, blue. They seldom show up in their primary form.

- Yellow + red = orange
- Red + blue = purple
- Blue + yellow = green

According to psychologist Robert Plutchik, there are 8 primary emotions: Joy, Trust, Fear, Surprise, Sadness, Disgust, Anger, and Anticipation. They can be mixed and matched to create a subtle and virtually infinite number of combinations. We truly can have “mixed emotions.” He represented this with his Wheel of Emotions.





Joy = Love – Fear



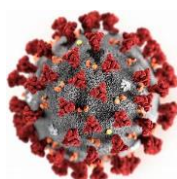
Chip relates the story of Sean Stephenson to illustrate one of his most powerful equations. Born with a rare genetic condition—osteogenesis imperfecta, or glass bone disease. He lived in a world where a fall could have caused major injury. Instead, he became one of the world’s most popular motivational speakers, as well as a clinical psychotherapist, writer, marketing consultant, and member of President Bill Clinton’s White House administration.

Sean has told me, “I stayed alive because I’ve developed my heart muscle. I developed a habit of love. We don’t grow by just loving the people who are good to us. We grow by learning to love those who are less lovable, those who are pumped with fear in their lives. No one ever conquered fear with more fear. When I make a decision coming from a place of love, I never regret it. When I make a decision from fear, I almost always regret it.”

Chip related this story of negotiating the purchase of his first property, The Phoenix Motel in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco, with the owner, Art Norkus.

He sat in the gaudy suite of the motel nursing his 3 P.M. gin and tonic and unleashed this question on me: “What’s your biggest fear in life?” I fumbled for an answer and blurted out, “I guess being a failure.” Art shook his head and gave me a sly smile. “Then go get yourself a corporate job, sonny. You’ll feel like a success until you’re about fifty, when you’ll divorce your wife, get a young girlfriend, buy a sports car, and don a toupee. You’ll show the world you’re a success, but inside you’ll feel like a failure because you took the safe path. That’s why all those midlife corporate execs buy Harleys. It makes them feel like they didn’t sell out.” I didn’t know what to say, but I completely resonated with his message. Then he asked me, “So what’s really your biggest fear in life?” I asked his bartender wife to stir up a gin and tonic for me, too. As I sipped some courage, the following words tripped out of my mouth: “I guess my biggest fear is that I’ll disappoint myself—that I won’t pursue my dreams—that I will suffocate trying to live up to others’ expectations of me.” Art smiled and counseled, “Chip, drop your fears, and you’ll be shocked at how it will liberate you, and on the other side, you’ll likely find the love of your life—whatever that’s meant to be.”

Anxiety = Uncertainty x Powerlessness



There are two variables in this equation: what you don’t know (uncertainty) and what you can’t control (powerlessness). Typically, the combination is combustible: the more uncertain you feel, the more powerless you feel. Because feeling powerless is debilitating, this equation uses multiplication to produce an exponential result. Yet if you can influence one of the variables, so that you reduce it closer to zero, you can significantly reduce your anxiety quotient. Generally speaking, feeling less anxiety doesn’t just make you feel better, it puts you in a better place to respond to life. Feeling certain about something yet powerless to affect it may not be comfortable. In fact, you may feel resigned, but you’re less likely to feel anxious. Similarly, feeling uncertain yet powerful means that you’re comfortable with your ability to respond to whatever is thrown at you, and that means your anxiety dissipates.

What I Know	What I Don’t Know	What I Can Influence	What I Can’t Control

When anxiety strikes, create a balance sheet of what you know and what is within your influence. First, unravel the sense of mystery about what you don’t know. Anxiety lurks in the dark, so shine a flashlight on what it is that’s disturbing you.



$$\text{Happiness} = \frac{\text{Wanting What You Have (practicing gratitude)}}{\text{Having What You Want (pursuing gratification)}}$$

The pursuit of happiness is written into our Declaration of Independence as a fundamental right. However, Chip has pointed out that some definitions of pursuit are “to chase with hostility.” We sometimes pursue happiness (gratification) with such singular focus that we overlook the richness of our life right now (gratitude).

We jump on the aspiration treadmill as our means of pursuing happiness. We chase a moving target, keeping one eye on how everyone else is doing and the other on our own growing wants. Alas, the more we make happiness a target, the more widely we miss it. Somehow, along the way, we mix up our insatiable wants with our actual needs.

“He who is not contented with what he has would not be contented with what he would like to have” – Socrates

Equations for Dealing with Difficult Times

- Despair = Suffering – Meaning
- Disappointment = Expectations – Reality
- Regret = Disappointment + Responsibility
- Anxiety = Uncertainty x Powerlessness

Equations for Getting the Most Out of Your Work Life

- Calling = Pleasure/Pain
- Workaholism = What Are You Running From? / What Are You Living For?
- Flow = Skill / Challenge
- Curiosity = Wonder + Awe

Equations for Defining Who You Are

- Authenticity = Self-Awareness x Courage
- Narcissism = (Self-Esteem)² x Entitlement
- Integrity = Authenticity x Invisibility x Reliability

Equations for Finding Contentment

- Happiness = Wanting What You Have / Having What You Want
- Joy = Love – Fear
- Thriving = Frequency of Positive / Frequency of Negative
- Faith = Belief / Intellect
- Wisdom = $\sqrt{\text{Experience}}$

Create Your Own Emotional Equations

You are welcome to create equations for making money, making yourself physically beautiful, or making yourself famous, but the most effective will be less focused on what you’re getting and more focused on what you’re becoming. If you’re going to go to the trouble of developing your own equations, you might as well create some that can serve you for decades to come.

Here's one that I made up after thinking about my opening comments about how Chip Conley and Viktor Frankl found meaning in their suffering:

$$\text{Growth} = (\text{Adversity} + \text{Awareness}) \times \text{Learning}$$

In the last paragraph of the book, Chip illustrates that we can create Emotional Equations anywhere.



Parasto Niakian, one of the senior learning and development managers in my company, emailed me an image from Prague while I was working on this book. It was a photo of some graffiti near the John Lennon Memorial Wall that simply stated, “Perfect Happiness = Enthusiasm – Expectations.” Emotional Equations aren’t just a way to make sense of our lives; they are part of a bigger movement toward creating insight as we take off our psychological blindfolds. I wish you all the best as you begin to see yourself and the world with a new clarity—assisted by the logic and lyricism that can be found in Emotional Equations.

Bools by Chip Conley

[Emotional Equations: Simple Truths for Creating Happiness + Success](#)

[Wisdom @ Work – The Making of a Modern Elder](#)

[PEAK: How Great Companies Get Their Mojo from Maslow – Revised and Updated](#)

[The Rebel Rules: Daring to be Yourself in Business](#)

[Marketing That Matters: 10 Practices to Profit Your Business and Change the World \(SVN\)](#)

Additional Resources

[Measuring What Makes Life Worthwhile](#) (TED Talk)

[What baby boomers can learn from millennials at work – and vice versa](#) (TED Talk)

[Modern Elder Academy](#)

[A Wisdom School for Midlife](#)

[Subscribe to Chip’s Wisdom Well and receive daily blog posts](#)



A Retrospective of our last ten books ONE THING

Occasional Magic	"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." Aristotle
The Surrender Experiment	Surrender is about peaceful acceptance, listening and being open to what life is putting in front of you. Surrender is not passive.
Work is Love Made Visible	Leaders should focus on who they are, not just on what they do. Recognize your purpose in life!
Think and Grow Rich	"All achievement, all earned riches, have their beginning in an idea!" It is what you APPLY in life that will CHANGE your life.
7 Essential Traits of Coaches	Integrate more Coaching Traits and Best Practices in Developing Your Unique Leadership Coaching Style.
Talent is Never Enough	If you want your life to be a magnificent story, then realize that you are its author. Every day you have the chance to write a new page in that story. I want to encourage you to fill those pages with responsibility to others and yourself. If you do, in the end you will not be disappointed." John Maxwell
Big Magic	Creativity is a paradox between sacredness, and unimportance, between fear and courage, between art as a crushing chore and as a wonderful privilege. Only when we are at our most playful can divinity finally get serious with us. Make space for all these paradoxes to be equally true inside your soul, and you can make anything. The treasures that are hidden inside you are hoping you will say yes.
A Republic if you can Keep It	For the American republic to have any chance of continuing, we must be able to listen as well as speak, to learn as well as teach, and to tolerate as well as expect tolerance.
Man's Search for Meaning	Forces beyond our control can take away everything we possess except one thing, our freedom to choose how we will respond to the situation.
The Alchemist	Pick one - 1. Listen to your heart. (be quiet) 2. Follow your dream (Take action) 3. Look for signs along the way. (People & Omens) 4. Don't give up!



Let's Pan for Some Gold

What thought, or idea had the biggest impact on you today?

What is your ONE THING? What one specific action you will take TODAY from what was discussed?



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Calendar of Events

San Antonio	San Antonio	Corpus	San Antonio	West Side/Houston
"1st Friday"	Wine & Cheese	2nd Tuesday	"4th Friday"	3rd Wednesday
7:30AM	5:30 PM	5:30 PM	8:00 AM	12:00 Noon
6-Mar	11-Mar	10-Mar	27-Mar	18-Mar
Judy Zimmerman Work is Love Made Visible	Peter Braeuler Think & Grow Rich	Peter Braeuler Think & Grow Rich	Robyn Tresnak Talent is Never Enough	Phil Bohlender 7 Essential Traits of Coaches
3-Apr	8-Apr	14-Apr	24-Apr	15-Apr
Marisa Ortiz Big Magic	Robert Schmidt A Republic. If You Can Keep It	Robert Schmidt A Republic. If You Can Keep It	Pat Whitty Man's Search for Meaning	Robert Schmidt The Alchemist
1-May	13-May	13-May	22-May	20-May
Pat Whitty Emotional Equations	Malcolm Coon Sapiens	Malcolm Coon Sapiens	Judith Cutright The Obstacle is the Way	Catherine Lester Power of Moments
5-Jun	10-Jun	9-Jun	26-Jun	17-Jun
Pat Whitty The War of Art	John Rugh Education of Millionaires	John Rugh Education of Millionaires	Robert Schmidt Talking to Strangers	Marisa Ortiz The Four Agreements