

Gefühlsmonster – First Steps for Managers

- Do you sometimes have a stomach ache before entering a dialog?



- And are wishing to enter work conversations and team meetings in a relaxed manner?
- Are you looking for a magic potion to bring flow into stagnant conversations?
- Are you interested in a tool that can help you reflect upon yourself in your work life?

Then you are in the right place.



Decide for yourself during which situations the Gefühlsmonster could be helpful for you.

This works best if you experience the use of the cards for yourself. For that reason we wrote this piece for you.

Let's get started on the next page!

STEP 1: Familiarize yourself with the cards

Look at the cards that are spread out in front of you. Use a set of cards or the Gefühlsmonster®-Scan online.



- Are there monsters you instantly like?
- Do the graphics remind you of a situation you experienced?
- Do they remind you of other people with whom you have experienced this attitude?

This is exactly what the cards will do for you. Emotions and representations of emotions are contagious. That's why the cards you feel drawn to have to do with your own experience and can help you to understand yourself and others better.



Starting here you have two possibilities: If you feel like experiencing more for yourself use steps 2 to 4, as often as you like. This way you'll lay down a solid base for the use of the cards with others.

If you'd rather like to use the cards in a more playful way and have a partner to play with move straight to steps 5 and 6.

Step 2: Get to know the cards



To get to know the individual cards you can just experiment with them. Either use a set of

cards or the Gefühlsmonster®-Scan online.

For example, you could sort the cards by colours, by intensity of the emotion or by likes or dislikes. You'll notice that right away interesting thoughts will arise while you are working with the cards.

This is how you'll playfully arrive at...

STEP 3: Self-related work

Let your eyes wander across the spread out cards, or the online Gefühlsmonster®-Scan, in a relaxed way and ask yourself:

"How am I feeling?"

You might receive deeper insights if you don't actively search for an emotion that you had been thinking about, but rather aimlessly wander and let yourself be surprised which card shows up.

(More information with extensive instructions about this technique at the Gefühlsmonster®-Scan online.)

You'll notice that for each card that finds your attention there will be a situation or experience attached that has been on your mind. Take your time and take notes if that's helpful.

STEP 4: Focused self-related work

Do you have about ten minutes? Then you can work with the Gefühlsmonsters on an actual question.



Good news: if you become familiar with this technique the clarification will happen within minutes!

Choose a present question from your life that interests you. To get used to the new tool use a "minor" question, for example:

- a) *How am I doing with my project A?*
- b) *How is my teamwork with B coming along?*
- c) *How do I feel about the talk I'm supposed to give next Tuesday?*

Focus on your question and then look at the spread of Gefühlsmonster® Cards - aimlessly, as above, - and spontaneously pick the cards that you feel attracted to, that resonate with you.



It's a good idea to pick all the cards you feel drawn to before you start analyzing them.

Put them in front of you separately and quietly look at them one after the other. Ask yourself with each card:

"What does this card mean to me?"

If you are lucky you'll already be one step closer to answer the question you had asked at the beginning of this exercise.



Hint: If you feel challenged about the result close the exercise with the question:

"Which card will feel good to me right now?" or

"How do I want to feel?"

If you display this chosen card well in sight around your desk it might help you to stay in the frame of mind you had wished for.

More about this on our website under Self-Management.

STEP 5: Game "Making up Stories"

The Gefühlsmonster® Cards are spread out face down in front of you. You take turns with the other players picking a card, giving the monster you picked a name and talk about what it might have experienced just now. Each player does this in turn.

Example (Variation A):



This is Louise, having finished her project report just in time before the team meeting.

This is Max who would have preferred to sleep much longer today.



This is Katrin who just got good news about her promotion.

When you feel comfortable with this exercise you can start making up stories that connect the monsters.



Rule: The card you have picked must be used, no matter if it "fits" or not. This will improve your creativity...

And: Pick fictitious names, stories about present members could turn into unpleasant experiences, rather than the funny results you could achieve.

Example (Variation B):



This is Paul who just participated in a team meeting.

His colleague Daphne just returned from jogging and is asking him why he looks so upset.



Meanwhile another colleague, Jack, sits next to the coffee-maker and enjoys his morning coffee.

Paul says: "Leave me alone, I have to think!"



He actually feels like this, but he doesn't want to admit this to his colleagues.

The boss comes by and wonders annoyed what kind of a meeting they are having.



And on and on.....

This method lends itself as a beginning exercise for team meetings of any size.

STEP 6: Introduction Round

The following exercise will bring movement to the meeting and will help the group to focus.

To begin with, set your intention. Possible questions are:

- *How are things going for you outside of work?*
- *How do you feel just now at the beginning of this activity?*



Let yourself be surprised about how different the answers to these questions might be!

Or:

- *How do you feel about project XY (topic of the meeting)?*
- *How would you like to feel about project XY?*

An added question could be: What could you do for the project to feel the way you want? The answers could be noted for future reference.



Two techniques depending on the size of the group:

A) (3-15 people)

Lay the A6 size cards down in the middle of the room, forming a circle. All members move around and memorize the cards they feel drawn to. After taking their seats again they get up one by one, picking their card, holding it up, interpreting its meaning.

B) (16 – 80 people)

Put the large A4 cards on the floor (even the ones that are not laminated are protected and can be used this way) and invite the group members to wander around, moving from card to card.

Short introduction speech:

"Here you see 25 cards with depictions of emotions, called Gefühlsmonsters. Emotions are contagious. If you look carefully while wandering amongst them you will easily feel drawn to the cards that connect with how you are feeling in this moment. Stop at this card and think about what it means to you."

When people have found a card for themselves they one by one, picking their card, holding it up, talk in one or two sentences about its meaning. They might even talk about two or three cards. Then they sit down and the next participant talks about his card(s) until all people have taken their turn.



This exercise achieves high success in focusing and structuring the group, because it is interesting for everybody to hear the short statement of every person present.

In larger groups of 16 members or more the persons meeting at the same card can exchange for some minutes their thoughts about it. Then you can ask this smaller group about their interpretations in front of all members.



If there is only one person standing by a card invite them to see if there is another card that feels suitable so they find buddies to exchange their thoughts.



Within a short time you will gather information about which group members are motivated, who has concerns about the workshop or for whom their attention span is limited due to lack of sleep or personal or job related problem.

At this point it is up to you to decide how many personal topics will be addressed. Often members are grateful to be allowed to mention personal challenges and can participate more freely in the topics of the event afterwards.

This exercise lends itself as regular ritual at the beginning and at the end of an event.

STEP 7: Closing Round



A closing round can be designed just as mentioned above.



Be aware that toward the end of an event challenging emotions may arise that may require special care.

So, only use this technique when you

- a) feel that this exercise is suitable at this time, or
- b) have a sincere interest in the kind of evaluation that focuses on the team members' attitude towards the event.

If detailed feedback is desired, more than the usual "Everything okay...", this way to close a meeting can be helpful, as might be after all kinds of professional development workshops.

It is our experience that you will receive a deeper and stronger feedback than you will with the usual round of sharing (pictures say more than words - and are more memorable).

STEP 8: "Upside-down emotions"

Finally a fun game that works as an energizer. Most people love it!

To try it out children are your best partners. They will agree to it more readily and their laughter will be contagious. Choose the topic accordingly.

How it goes:

The cards are spread out on the table upside-down.

1. Choose a topic for your team, for example:
 - Your workplace event party
 - Meeting a new customer
 - Welcoming a new colleague
 - Inviting someone to a party
 - Holding a job interview
 - Participating in a quality management workshop
 - please gather ideas for topics with the group.
2. The first member of the group picks a card and hides it. They then act out the emotion from the card accordingly.

Last but not least

We hope that you and the people you work with will have great insights and much fun with the Gefühlsmonsters.

On our website you find more ideas for many areas of application. We invite you to have a look around, or search for special topics in the

The other group members may guess which monster it could depict. It's helpful if the group has an open set of cards or poster available to them to compare, unless they are very familiar with them already.



Not the exact body posture of the monster should be copied, but the mood the player experiences when looking at his/her card.

Then the next player takes their turn.

3. The next member picks a card, acts it out, the others guess, and on and on...

You will notice that the laughter will start as soon as the cards are chosen because they usually don't fit the topic!

searching area.

If you have any questions don't hesitate contacting us. We offer coaching for leaders and especially designed trainings for companies.

The Gefühlsmonster Team