Can people voluntarily control their emotions?

**Five Biological Aspects of Emotion**

- Autonomic Nervous System
  – arousal & regulation of the heart, lungs, & muscles

- Endocrine System
  – activation of glands, hormones, & organs

- Neural Brain Circuits
  – limbic brain structures such as the hypothalamus

- Rate of Neural Firing
  – how quickly information is processed

- Facial Feedback
  – patterns of facial musculature

**The Contemporary Perspective**

- Distinctive patterns of ANS activity associated with anger, fear, disgust, & sadness

- Distinctive patterns of CNS activity associated with joy, fear, rage, & anxiety

**Neural Activation**

- As per Tomkins, different emotions are activated by different rates of neural firing

- the rates of increasing, decreasing or constancy is largely dependent upon environmental events

**Differential Emotions Theory (Izard)**

- Motivation arises from ten discrete emotions, each of which is defined in terms of its:
  – unique subjective feeling
– facial expression
– rate of neural firing
– behavioral consequences

• Emotions are motivational systems that prepare us to act in adaptive ways

**Facial Feedback Hypothesis**

• Emotions arise from:
  – movements of the facial musculature
  – changes in facial temperature
  – changes in glandular activity in the facial skin

Food for Thought!
If you intentionally exaggerated your naturally occurring facial expressions while watching an emotion-generating movie (e.g., one capable of generating fear, sadness), would you feel relatively intense fear or sadness? If you intentionally suppressed your naturally occurring facial expressions, would you feel relatively subdued fear or sadness?

**Can we voluntarily control our emotions?**

• Biological interpretation

• Cognitive interpretation

• ??

**Cognitive Theories of Emotion**

• Emotions only occur with an antecedent appraisal of a stimulus event

• The appraisal, not the stimulus event, causes emotion
Appraisal of Emotion (Arnold)

- Emotion results from the interaction of cognition, neurophysiology, and arousal

  Perception

  Appraisal (positive or negative)

  Emotion (like or dislike)

  Action (approach or avoid)

Primary & Secondary Appraisal (Lazarus)

- Primary Appraisal - automatic evaluation of the relevance of an event

- Secondary Appraisal - assessment of how to cope with emotion-generating event

Emotion Knowledge

- Experience leads to an understanding of different variations of emotions

Knowledge is necessary to make appraisals

Emotion Recognition

- By 7 months of age, we are able to discriminate emotional expressions, even dynamic ones

- As infants we are more sensitive to facial expressions made by our primary care giver

Emotion Recognition & Childhood Abuse

  - Compared nonabused, physically abused and neglected 3-5 year olds on emotion discrimination task
  - Neglected children less able to differentiate negative emotions
  - Abused children over-identified anger (nonabused tended to under-identified anger)
Emotion Recognition & Aggression

- Walz and Benson (1996)
- Larkin et al. (2002)

Social & Cultural Construction of Emotion

- Most emotions originate in social interaction
- Appropriate or expected emotions are defined by social situations
- Emotional Contagion
- Emotional Socialization
- Managing Emotions

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.

- 5 components of EQ
  - Self-Awareness
  - Self-Management
  - Using emotions to maximize intellectual processing and decision-making
  - Developing Empathy
  - Social Skills

Strategies for promoting EQ

1. Become emotionally literate: label your feelings, rather than labeling people or situations
2. Distinguish between thoughts and feelings.
3. Take more responsibility for your feelings.
4. Use your feelings to help them make decisions.
5. Show respect for other people's feelings
6. Feel energized, not angry.
7. Practice getting a positive value from emotions.
8. Validate other people's feelings.
9. Don't advise, command, control, criticize, judge or lecture to others.
10. Avoid people who invalidate you.