

HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY?

A few weeks ago, my friend asked me how I was feeling. She followed her question by providing this image of a strong tall tree surrounded by multiple small, animated characters. Each character tells a story. As you can see some of the little animations appear to be doing well, while others could have had better days. My friend then asked me, "Which one of these characters represents how you feel today?". I thought about it for a moment, then I chose #3. It struck me how closely I resonated with the demeanor of this little character.

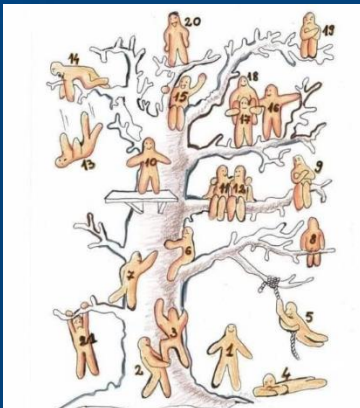
As #3 climbs up the tree, feelings associated with the word "determined" came to my mind. Looking down at the legs of the character, I am sure you noticed another small character acting as a base for #3 as the animation tries to climb the tree. This observation may instantly deliver words to your mind such as "supported" or "encouraged". Whatever descriptive feelings came to your mind when you viewed the actions and postures of either of these characters, I am sure you tapped into your imagination. What a gift imagination is. The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines imagination as, "the ability of the mind to be creative and resourceful". God not only gave each of us the astounding capacity to be imaginative with our brains, but He also equipped us with the means of being more descriptive with our emotions. How many of you still answer the age-old question, "how are you" with a mere "good"? I can vouch for being guilty of doing so, more often than I wish to admit.

A powerful piece of Scripture from Psalm 139:23 tells the words of the Psalmist's desire to understand his inner feelings and bring them before God. He humbly writes,

*"Search me O God, and know my heart;
Test me and know my anxious thoughts."*

What are your thoughts and feelings today? Does your heart require a moment of stillness today to reflect deeper into your spirit? Although I wish to hide the frequency of how often I use the word "good" when portraying my feelings, there does not have been space for guilt. Sometimes, we merely do not know what else to say when being asked "how are you feeling?". Nevertheless, a healthy dose of transparency between members of a community is important. Who is a part of your community this semester? Have you taken a moment to truly ask one another how you are doing?

If you take a moment to google the question, 'how are you?' a short children's music video will pop up. In the song, a line reads out, "Now I know just how you feel, and that's how it should be". The message of the song is based on encouraging children to use descriptive words when answering how they are doing, and alongside that, to reinforce the message of being honest with our emotions. Apart from the use of 'good' to express enjoyment, a plethora of descriptive feeling words can be chosen from joyful, amused, or even content. This is where our imaginative minds can help us select a better word than just "good".



My hope is that this little image displayed here reminds you of something important. **You have a gift of expressing your feelings to both yourself and to others in a manner of depth.** A community can learn to better support one another from a place of honesty. May the words of the Psalmist remind you to continually search your heart before God to stay honest before Him, but to also stay honest with your community.

