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Why do we cry at the movies? What is the best way to manage destructive feelings such as jealousy? Although emotions pervade our lives, their nature, causes, and effects have only recently been studied by social scientists and philosophers. Despite growing scientific interest in the subject, empirical findings have not yet caught up with our intuitive knowledge. In this book Aaron Ben-Ze'ev carries out what he calls "a careful search for general patterns in the primeval jungle of emotions." In an engaging, informal style he draws on a variety of theoretical approaches and popular sources to produce a coherent account of emotions in all their subtlety. All of the ideas are illustrated with examples drawn from everyday life.

The book is organized into two parts. The first presents an overall conceptual framework for understanding emotions. It looks at the typical characteristics and components of emotions, distinguishes emotions from other affective phenomena, classifies the emotions, and covers such related issues as emotional intelligence, regulating emotions, and emotions and morality. The second part discusses individual emotions, including envy, jealousy, pleasure-in-others'-misfortune, pity, compassion, anger, hate, disgust, love, sexual desire, happiness, sadness, pride, regret, and shame. The text is laced with insightful and often amusing quotations from sources ranging from Mae West to Montesquieu.