

## *In-depth analysis on the Sonder emotion*

### THE SONDER EMOTION: WHAT IT IS?

Sonder: A relatively new term, coined by artist and writer John Koenig as part of his project "The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows." This project aims to create new words to describe complex emotions and nuances of human experience that do not yet have a precise name.

Sonder is that sudden feeling when you realize that the people around you—strangers on the street, faces glimpsed through a car window, distracted passersby—have lives full of experiences, emotions, and dreams, just like you. It is a way to emphasize the uniqueness of each individual and the depth of their experiences.

The Sonder emotion is important for developing empathy and understanding others, because it allows us to understand the effect we have on those we encounter.

Possible sections of the exhibition:

- Windows into the lives of others: screens showing fragments of anonymous stories, reconstructed from real testimonies.
- Voices of the City: Audio collected on the street, snippets of conversations that reveal moments of life.
- Invisible Portraits: Photographs of strangers with fictional or real stories about their existence.
- The Visitor Becomes History: An installation in which viewers leave a piece of their story to become part of the museum.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT**

The emotion of sonder, though it may seem simple, has a profound impact on our psyche and our relationships with others. Here are some of the most significant effects:

- Increased empathy: Sonder encourages us to recognize that each person has a personal story, emotions, and challenges. This makes us more empathetic and understanding towards others, helping us build more meaningful relationships.
- Reduced egocentrism: When we experience sonder, we realize that we are not the center of the universe. This helps us overcome egocentrism and see things from a broader perspective.
- Increased curiosity about others: Sonder encourages us to want to know more about the people around us, to discover their stories and points of view.
- Feeling of connection: Experiencing sonder makes us feel more connected to others, part of a single humanity.
- Reduced loneliness: Knowing that everyone else has their struggles and joys makes us feel less isolated.
- Appreciation for Diversity: Sonder teaches us to value the diversity of people and experiences. We understand that each of us is unique and has something special to offer.

In short, sonder is an emotion that makes us more human, more empathetic, and more connected to others. It helps us build a better world, based on mutual understanding and respect for differences.

## **WHERE DO WE FEEL THE EMOTION OF SONDER**

Sonder is a subjective experience, so there's no specific spot in the body where it's physically felt. Rather, it's a sensation that involves our entire being.

Where can we feel sonder?

- In the heart: You might feel a slight warmth or a feeling of expansion in your chest.
- In the mind: You might have deep, reflective thoughts about the lives of others, and experience a sense of wonder and respect.
- In the soul: You might feel a deeper connection with other human beings, as if we were all part of a great community.

Why can't it be localized to a specific part of the body?

- It's a complex emotion: sonder involves many aspects of our mind and heart, not just a single physical sensation.
- It's a subjective experience: each of us experiences emotions differently, so the physical sensation associated with sonder can vary from person to person.
- It's more of a mental attitude than a physical sensation: sonder is a way of seeing the world, an open-mindedness that allows us to connect with others on a deeper level.

## **NEGATIVE ASPECTS**

Although it's a predominantly positive emotion, sonder also has its negative aspects:

- It can lead to loneliness: Sometimes, being too aware of the complexity of others' lives can make us feel small and insignificant, leading to feelings of loneliness.
- It can generate anxiety: Excessive concern for the lives of others can cause anxiety and stress.
- It can hinder concentration: Being too focused on the emotions and stories of others can distract us from our goals and responsibilities.
- It can lead to idealizing others: Sometimes, sonder can make us idealize people, attributing to them qualities that they do not actually possess.