A SAHILTAYAL.COM PRODUCTION · FIELD GUIDE · EDITION II

PERCEPTION.

The Village & The Weather

The village may be doing well. The weather may still be raining.
Both can be true. A field guide for telling them apart —
for individuals, friends, classrooms and teams.



sahiltayal.com/perception · Text and art CC BY 4.0 · Not medical or mental-health advice.

Contents & how to use it

1 The metaphor

2 Two ledgers of a life

3 The sunny-day study

4 A lexicon of inner weather

5 How weather paints the village

6 Twelve readings of rain

7 The forecasting error

8 A three-minute weather report

9 Village inventory (worksheet)

10 Fourteen-day weather log (worksheet)

11 A one-hour group session

12 When rain is information

13 Sources

Read straight through, or jump to the worksheets. Paragraphs marked **[Research]** summarise published studies; **[Interpretation]** is the author's reading; **[Metaphor]**, **[Fiction]** and **[Practice]** mean what they say. The interactive version, with a weather station and a private log, lives at sahiltayal.com/perception.

A note on care. This is a reflective art-and-ideas project. It does not measure, diagnose or treat anything. If low or anxious weather has lasted most days for two weeks or more, or you have thoughts of not wanting to be alive, please talk to a doctor, counsellor or someone you trust. In India, Tele-MANAS (Government of India) is free on 14416 or 1-800-891-4416.

1 · THE METAPHOR

The village and the weather

[Metaphor] Picture your life as a village. It has **people** you can call, **shelter**, **work and means**, a **body** that needs rest, **freedom** to choose your paths, and something that gives it **meaning** — a lighthouse at the edge. These are the conditions of a life. They change slowly, they can be inventoried, and someone else could, at least partly, check them.

Over the village there is weather: how living there feels from the inside, today. Clear and still. Drizzly. Foggy. Thundering. Weather changes quickly, sometimes hourly. It cannot be inspected from outside; it can only be reported.

The two are connected. Lasting trouble in the village tends to bring bad weather; long bad weather wears down the village. But they are not the same thing. The most common mistake people make with their own lives is to read one as if it were the other — to let a rainy Tuesday write the census, or to let a sunny mood hide a roof that genuinely needs repair.

> *Rain does not prove the village is ruined. A sound village does not make the rain imaginary.*

This guide offers a vocabulary for the weather, a method for walking the village, twelve alternative readings of common rainy-day sentences, and worksheets for keeping the two ledgers side by side.

2 · TWO LEDGERS

Conditions are not feelings. Feelings are not fiction.

[Research] Wellbeing researchers separate **life evaluation** — how you judge your life when you step back — from **emotional experience**, the felt quality of ordinary days (Diener, 1984). In a widely cited 2010 analysis, Kahneman and Deaton reported that income related differently to the two. Later work, including a 2023 adversarial collaboration between Killingsworth, Kahneman and Mellers, revised the picture for emotional wellbeing. The details remain debated; the distinction has held.

[Interpretation] Two honest people can give different answers to “How is your life?” depending on which ledger they consult. Both answers are data.

The village ledger	The weather diary
Relationships, shelter, work and means, body and rest, freedom, meaning. Slow-changing; can be inventoried; where practical problems — and practical help — live. **Typical error:** treating a strong ledger as proof the weather must be fine, then feeling guilty for the rain.	Ease, heaviness, worry, loneliness, joy, irritation, numbness. Fast-changing; reported from inside; carries signals — about the village, about sleep and body, or about nothing identifiable. **Typical error:** treating today’s sky as a reliable survey of the land.

The literal weather, and what it taught

[Research] In 1983 Norbert Schwarz and Gerald Clore telephoned people on sunny or rainy spring days and asked about their happiness and life satisfaction. People called on sunny days tended to report more satisfaction. But when the interviewer first asked casually about the weather, the difference largely disappeared. Their interpretation became the **feelings-as-information** idea: we consult our current feeling when judging our lives — unless something points to an irrelevant source for that feeling.

[Research] Later, larger studies found the association between daily weather and life-satisfaction ratings to be very small (Lucas & Lawless, 2013), and direct tests found mood effects on wellbeing judgements weaker than the model predicted (Yap et al., 2017). The vivid original result may have been an overestimate.

[Interpretation] What survives is a useful mechanism: a feeling can be borrowed as evidence for a judgement it has little to do with, and naming the likely source of a feeling is one way to stop the borrowing.

Try the interviewer’s move

Question	Your answer
A recent judgement about my life:	
What was the weather inside me when I made it?	
Is there an ordinary cause nearby (sleep, body, one event)?	
Would I sign the same judgement on a different day?	
What would I do differently if this were weather, not a verdict?	

Sixteen kinds of sky

[Research] Finer emotional vocabulary — **emotional granularity** — has been associated with more flexible coping (Kashdan, Barrett & McKnight, 2015), and putting feelings into words can dampen their immediate intensity (Lieberman et al., 2007). [Metaphor] Weather words are a gentle on-ramp. Pairings below are the author's, arranged loosely on the pleasant–unpleasant and calm–charged axes of Russell's (1980) circumplex.

Sky	Plain words	What it does to the village	A question
Thunderstorm Unpleasant · charged	rage · panic · fury	Every house looks like a fire hazard. Small problems read as emergencies.	Is this moment asking me to act, or only to wait until it passes?
Squall Unpleasant · charged	agitation · frustration · irritation	Other villagers seem to be in the way. Everything feels slower than it should.	What did I want that I am not getting right now?
Distant thunder Unpleasant · charged	dread · apprehension · unease	The village looks fine but feels as though it is waiting for something.	What specifically do I expect to happen — and how likely is it?
Gale Unpleasant · charged	overwhelm · pressure · stress	Too many roofs to hold down at once. The whole village feels like it is moving.	What is one roof I could set down today?
Steady rain Unpleasant · calm	sadness · sorrow · grief	The village looks emptier. Absences become the most visible thing in it.	What or whom am I missing?
Drizzle Unpleasant · calm	disappointment · low mood · gloom	Nothing is wrong, exactly; everything is a little less.	Is this weather mine, or did I walk into someone else's?
Fog Unpleasant · calm	numbness · confusion · detachment	The village is hard to see at all. Even good houses look grey.	What can I feel in my hands or feet right now?
Low ceiling Unpleasant · calm	tiredness · heaviness · fatigue	Every errand looks uphill. Paths seem longer than they are.	When did I last rest without earning it?
Cold sleet Unpleasant · calm	loneliness · isolation	Every door looks closed, including ones that would open if knocked.	Who is one person I could knock for — even briefly?
Haze Unpleasant · calm	shame · embarrassment	You stop looking out of the windows so no one looks in.	Would I judge a neighbour this harshly for the same thing?
Bright wind Pleasant · charged	excitement · eagerness · joy	Every path looks possible; the gate seems wider than usual.	Which of these plans would I still want tomorrow?
Rainbow after rain Pleasant · charged	relief · gratitude · hope	The village looks freshly washed; what survived looks precious.	What helped the sky change?
Playful breeze Pleasant · charged	curiosity · amusement · interest	Unvisited lanes of the village become interesting.	What do I want to understand better?
Clear & still Pleasant · calm	contentment · ease · calm	The village is simply visible, as it is.	What is quietly working well that I rarely notice?
Golden hour Pleasant · calm	tenderness · love · belonging	The people in the village are what stands out most.	Who would I like to tell that they matter?

Sky	Plain words	What it does to the village	A question
Mild night Pleasant · calm	peace · rest · safety	The houses are lit and nothing needs doing until morning.	What made it safe enough to rest?

How weather paints the village

[Research] **Mood-congruent memory:** in a given mood, matching memories come to mind more easily (Bower, 1981). **Affect infusion:** mood shapes judgement most during open-ended, constructive thinking — like “how is my life?” (Forgas, 1995). **Emotional reasoning:** treating a feeling as proof of a fact, a named thinking trap in cognitive therapy (Beck, 1976; Burns, 1980). **Affective realism:** Barrett (2017) argues that feelings partly shape what we perceive, within her debated theory of constructed emotion.

[Fiction] Take an invented, ordinary day: woke before the alarm; a colleague replied “ok”; finished a postponed task; ate lunch alone; a friend sent a funny video; the bus was eleven minutes late; a family member asked about your week; scrolled your phone in bed.

Through **rain**, the curt reply, the lonely lunch and the scrolling stand out; the finished task barely registers. Through **storm**, the bus and the reply are outrages. Through **sun**, the same day is a chain of small wins. Reading **both ledgers** puts facts and feelings on separate lines: “Village: request answered. Weather: read as coldness — unknown.”

Exercise. Write your own yesterday as eight events. Then gloss each one twice: once in today’s weather, once as a plain village fact.

Event	In today’s weather	As a village fact

Twelve readings of rain

[Interpretation] Any persistent rain has at least four honest readings: **a weather pattern**, **a real condition**, **both at once**, or **not yet known**. Below: twelve things rain says, a second reading, and one small, safe check. If a softer reading sounds false, it may be false — look at the village directly.

The rain says	Another reading	One small check
I feel behind, so my life must be behind.	Feeling behind is real weather. “Behind” is a measurement — and needs a timeline and a comparison to mean anything.	Behind whom, on what, by when? Write the comparison down and see if you still believe it.
I feel alone, so nobody cares.	Loneliness is accurate weather about connection feeling thin right now. It is weaker evidence about whether anybody cares.	Name three people who have shown care in the past year, then message one of them.
I’m anxious about it, so it must be dangerous.	Anxiety reliably reports that something matters to you. It is less reliable at reporting probability.	Write the specific feared outcome and give it an honest percentage. Revisit in a week.
I’m not excited, so this is the wrong path.	Many good paths have long flat stretches. Excitement is bright-wind weather; it does not last on any road.	Ask whether you would choose this path again on an ordinary, quiet day.
I feel guilty, so I did something wrong.	Guilt can be an accurate signal — or a habit triggered by setting any boundary at all.	Would you call it wrong if a friend did the exact same thing?
Everyone else seems happier.	You are comparing your weather with their village — the parts they show.	List what you actually know about one such person’s inner weather. It is usually very little.
I feel nothing, so nothing matters.	Fog hides the village; it does not remove it. Numbness can follow exhaustion, overload or loss.	Check the basics: sleep, food, daylight, movement. If the fog has lasted weeks, talk to someone.
I’m angry, so I must act now.	Anger is often a signal that something you value has been crossed. Its timing advice is less trustworthy.	Write the message; send it tomorrow if you still mean it.
Today was bad, so I am bad.	A day is weather. A self is closer to the whole village — and much more than one day.	Separate the event (“the meeting went badly”) from the verdict (“I am bad”). Keep only the first.
I feel great, so this decision is obviously right.	Bright weather can be wonderful and still borrow evidence it hasn’t earned.	Sleep on large commitments. If it is still right tomorrow, it is still right.
If it keeps raining, something must be wrong with me.	Persistent rain sometimes means something needs care — and needing care is not a defect.	Track it in the log for two weeks. If the rain is constant, see a doctor or counsellor.
The rain will never end.	This is the forecast the rain itself makes. It has been wrong before.	Recall one past stretch of weather that did change. What helped it change?

7 · FORECASTS

“It will always rain like this.”

[Research] People predict reasonably well whether an event will feel good or bad, and less well how strongly and for how long. Gilbert, Wilson and colleagues named the overestimate the **impact bias**, and our tendency to forget our own capacity to adapt **immune neglect** (Gilbert et al., 1998; Wilson & Gilbert, 2005).

[Interpretation] While it rains, the rain is the whole world. For ordinary rain, treat the mood’s forecast as a forecast — an estimate by an interested party — not as a measurement. For persistent heavy rain, see section 12.

Something weighing on me	My forecast: how long at this strength?	A similar past difficulty	How long did its strongest phase actually last?

8 · PRACTICE

A three-minute weather report

[Practice] Six steps, about thirty seconds each. It combines **labelling**, a source check and **reappraisal** — changing how a situation is interpreted to change its emotional impact (Gross, 1998). In correlational studies, habitual reappraisal is associated with better wellbeing than habitual suppression (Gross & John, 2003). This is not therapy.

01 **Name the weather.** As precisely as you can: “drizzly and lonely”, not “bad”.

02 **Locate it.** Where is it in the body?

03 **Check the forecast.** Hours, days, weeks? Has sleep, food or health changed?

04 **Walk the village.** One true sentence each for people, shelter, work, body, freedom, meaning. True, not grateful.

05 **Choose a reading.** Weather pattern, real condition, both, or not yet known?

06 **One small act.** If weather: something kind and ordinary. If village: one concrete step toward the actual problem.

9 · WORKSHEET

Village inventory

Walk the village slowly. For each district, write what is true now — not what you wish, not what you fear. Rate 0 (in real trouble) to 4 (strong). Then name one small, concrete step.

District	What is true right now	0–4	One concrete step
People Who could I call? Who calls me?			
Shelter Is home safe and stable enough?			
Work & means Is there enough to live on? Is the work survivable?			
Body & rest Sleep, food, movement, health care?			
Freedom Where can I choose? Where am I stuck?			
Meaning What is worth doing, even on bad days?			

Today’s weather, in one or two precise words: _____

Which reading fits? ☐ weather pattern ☐ real condition ☐ both ☐ not yet known

Fourteen-day weather log (1 of 2)

One line a day. Mark the weather on the small compass (P = pleasant, U = unpleasant, C = calm, A = activated) and rate the village average 0–4. After a week, look for days when the lines move apart.

Day / date	Weather (words)	U ← → P	C ← → A	Village 0–4	What happened · which reading?
Day 1					
Day 2					
Day 3					
Day 4					
Day 5					
Day 6					
Day 7					

Fourteen-day weather log (2 of 2)

Day / date	Weather (words)	U ← → P	C ← → A	Village 0–4	What happened · which reading?
Day 8					
Day 9					
Day 10					
Day 11					
Day 12					
Day 13					
Day 14					

A one-hour group session

For a class, team offsite, support circle or friends around a table. No one should be asked to share their personal weather; offer every prompt as optional, and allow people to speak about a fictional villager instead of themselves.

Minutes	Segment	What happens
0–5	**Opening**	Read the cover line aloud. Draw a village and a sky on a board. Agree ground rules: optional sharing, no advice unless asked, what is said stays here.
5–15	**Two ledgers**	Pairs list three things that belong in a village ledger and three in a weather diary. Share a few with the room. Discuss the typical errors on page 4.
15–25	**The sunny-day study**	Present section 3, including its later revisions. Ask: where else do we borrow a feeling as evidence?
25–35	**Lexicon**	Everyone picks one sky from the lexicon that they have known — not necessarily today. Optional: say why it fits.
35–50	**Readings**	Small groups take three of the twelve rainy-day sentences. Write their own “another reading” and “small check” before comparing with the guide.
50–58	**Practice**	Run the three-minute weather report silently, with a facilitator calling each step.
58–60	**Close**	One word each: what will you notice this week? Share the help information in section 12.

Materials: this guide (one per person or projected), paper, pens. **Adapting:** for younger groups, use only sections 1, 4 and 8. For teams, pair the session with Upkeep (sahiltayal.com/upkeep) or The Handoff Lab (sahiltayal.com/handoff-lab).

12 · CARE

When rain is information

Difficult feelings are not always “just weather”. Grief is the right weather for loss. Dread can be a reasonable response to an unsafe situation. Exhaustion can be reporting that the village has carried too much for too long.

[Interpretation] When the same weather keeps pointing at the same part of the village, take that part of the village seriously. When it blames a different part every day, look at the weather itself — sleep, body, season, stress — before rebuilding houses.

[Research] Repetitive, passive dwelling on distress — **rumination** — has been linked with deeper and longer low moods (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco & Lyubomirsky, 2008). Walking the village is meant to be short and specific. If it becomes an endless audit, stop and talk to someone.

If the rain has been heavy for a long time

If low or anxious weather has lasted most days for two weeks or more, is getting in the way of work, sleep, eating or relationships, or comes with thoughts of not wanting to be alive, please talk to a doctor, counsellor or someone you trust. In India: **Tele-MANAS**, the Government of India’s free mental-health helpline — **14416** or **1-800-891-4416**. Elsewhere, contact your local emergency number or a national helpline. If you are in immediate danger, contact emergency services now.

A CLOSING LINE

Care for the village. Be kind to the weather.

> *The point was never to stop the rain. It was to stop the rain from writing the census.*

References

Schwarz, N., & Clore, G. L. (1983). Mood, misattribution, and judgments of well-being: Informative and directive functions of affective states. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45*(3), 513–523.

Lucas, R. E., & Lawless, N. M. (2013). Does life seem better on a sunny day? Examining the association between daily weather conditions and life satisfaction judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 104*(5), 872–884.

Yap, S. C. Y., Wortman, J., Anusic, I., Baker, S. G., Scherer, L. D., Donnellan, M. B., & Lucas, R. E. (2017). The effect of mood on judgments of subjective well-being: Nine tests of the judgment model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 113*(6), 939–961.

Kahneman, D., & Deaton, A. (2010). High income improves evaluation of life but not emotional well-being. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 107*(38), 16489–16493.

Killingsworth, M. A., Kahneman, D., & Mellers, B. (2023). Income and emotional well-being: A conflict resolved. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 120*(10), e2208661120.

Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin, 95*(3), 542–575.

Russell, J. A. (1980). A circumplex model of affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39*(6), 1161–1178.

Kashdan, T. B., Barrett, L. F., & McKnight, P. E. (2015). Unpacking emotion differentiation: Transforming unpleasant experience by perceiving distinctions in negativity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 24*(1), 10–16.

Lieberman, M. D., Eisenberger, N. I., Crockett, M. J., Tom, S. M., Pfeifer, J. H., & Way, B. M. (2007). Putting feelings into words: Affect labeling disrupts amygdala activity in response to affective stimuli. *Psychological Science, 18*(5), 421–428.

Torre, J. B., & Lieberman, M. D. (2018). Putting feelings into words: Affect labeling as implicit emotion regulation. *Emotion Review, 10*(2), 116–124.

Bower, G. H. (1981). Mood and memory. *American Psychologist, 36*(2), 129–148.

Forgas, J. P. (1995). Mood and judgment: The affect infusion model (AIM). *Psychological Bulletin, 117*(1), 39–66.

Beck, A. T. (1976). *Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders.* International Universities Press.

Burns, D. D. (1980). *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy.* William Morrow.

Barrett, L. F. (2017). *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Gilbert, D. T., Pinel, E. C., Wilson, T. D., Blumberg, S. J., & Wheatley, T. P. (1998). Immune neglect: A source of durability bias in affective forecasting. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*(3), 617–638.

Wilson, T. D., & Gilbert, D. T. (2005). Affective forecasting: Knowing what to want. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 14*(3), 131–134.

Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology, 2*(3), 271–299.

Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*(2), 348–362.

Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Wisco, B. E., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). Rethinking rumination. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3*(5), 400–424.

Tele-MANAS — National Tele Mental Health Programme, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Helpline 14416 / 1-800-891-4416.

Method. Research summaries are in the author's words. The metaphor, lexicon pairings, readings, exercises and facilitation plan are the author's own syntheses, not validated instruments. Text and original art © 2026 Sahil Tayal, licensed CC BY 4.0 — share and adapt with credit and a link to sahiltayal.com/perception.