

Fold me

“Moods can be contagious. Don’t catch or spread a bad mood.”
-Marilyn Suttle



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How to Get Out of a Bad Mood



Emotions are data. Negative emotions are telling us that something isn't right. Instead of covering them up or brooding over them, we need to stop and reflect. *I notice I'm feeling uneasy. I notice I'm feeling frightened. I notice I'm feeling peeved.* What are these feelings telling me about my current situation? What are they telling me about myself? What are the circumstances surrounding my feelings?

Emotions do serve a purpose, and the better we get at acknowledging them and naming them, the better we get at understanding why they are there and what we need to do to move through them.

Here are three powerful tips that can help.

1. Focus on someone else

A bad mood usually forces us to become overly focused on ourselves. Shifting our attention to others gets us out of our own world. When we turn the spotlight onto someone else, we can practice empathy, kindness and listening. Altruism is the principle and moral practice of concern for the happiness of other human beings or other animals, resulting in a better quality of life, both material and spiritual. So, offer to help a neighbor. Pay for the coffee of the person in line behind you. Take time to really listen to a friend's problem and help them see the way through. Building them up will lift your mood.

2. Get Yourself Moving

Psychologist Robert Thayer and colleagues identified a number of strategies people use to self-regulate their moods. Physical activity and exercise proved to be the most effective. In fact, the effects of exercise can happen so quickly that you might decide to keep going once you've started. For an even better boost, get outside. Research by Richard Ryan and colleagues shows that being in nature significantly increases our sense of vitality.

3. Think More Like An Optimist

Dr. Martin Seligman, a psychologist from the University of Pennsylvania, is considered the father of positive psychology. He has studied the thinking styles of optimism and pessimism. When an adverse event happens, like receiving an unexpected bill in the mail, pessimists are likely to think of it as being permanent and pervasive. They might say to themselves, "I'm always going to be behind on bills and my life sucks." Optimists, on the other hand, are more likely to describe the event as temporary and to compartmentalize it. An optimist might say, "I'll have to cut back for the next month to pay this off, but it will be OK. At least I'm great at what I do for a living." If your bad mood stems from a challenge or obstacle you're dealing with, try to focus on the control you have to change it, and be realistic about how much of your life it affects. And don't forget to smile. The simple act of smiling can improve your mood. For the greatest effect, give yourself a big authentic smile by finding something that genuinely makes you laugh. Not only will you feel better, you will start a ripple of positivity.