

## Moods

Moods color our whole world and everyone and everything that comes into it. Normally when we think about moods, what comes to mind are people in ‘bad’ moods or moodiness. Moods affect us—however invisible they may be. They are inescapable, automatic assessments we make about our possibilities for the future.

Moods are the context for how things occur for us: we usually tend to interpret them as being positive or negative in terms of how they make us ‘feel’. Our moods come from:

- Our personal history, including the moods of our family and how we were raised as children
- Responses to similar events that occurred in our past (over time, they can become habitual)
- Our culture of origin
- The spirit of the times in which we are living.

We can recognize an individual’s mood by looking at the openness or receptiveness of their body and by listening to the tone of their voice. We see smiles on the faces of those for whom the world is a safe place with abundant possibilities. Satisfaction or frustration are also apparent in the face. Someone in a “good mood” will excitedly, happily talk about the future. Someone in a “bad mood” will sound unexcited, tired, gloomy, perhaps even afraid of what lies ahead.

## Moods & Leadership

Developing an awareness of your moods and how you affect other people is important for any leader. How you conduct yourself on a daily basis—your body language, energy level and the tone of your voice—contribute to your leadership presence. These key indicators of your mood speak louder than your words or your actions.

### Key Indicators of Mood

- Approachability
- Behavior
- Body language
- Energy level
- Eye contact
- Personality
- Tone of voice

As leaders, we can learn how moods influence our behavior in organizations and how to manage our own moods and the moods of our colleagues. We can also learn how to cultivate new moods—ones that are more useful and empowering.

## Shifting Moods

Often our moods are transparent to us. The first step in shifting a mood is to recognize that we are “in a mood.” We think the way we see the world is the way that it is. It is important to remember that, as human beings, **we are always in a mood**. We cannot escape this fact of life. Given that we are human beings, we will always have moods. It is therefore essential to remember that **the way we are experiencing the world is never the “true” way the world is**. It is always being filtered through our mood.

These are some of the common moods that impact situations at work and at home:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Boredom
- Calm
- Compassion
- Confrontation
- Confusion
- Creativity
- Cynicism
- Despair
- Empathy
- Enthusiasm
- Humor
- Impatience
- Joy
- Openness
- Panic
- Patience
- Peacefulness
- Relentless
- Resentfulness
- Resignation
- Resignation
- Resistance
- Sadness
- Skepticism
- Suspicion
- Trust
- Urgency
- Wonder

Moods are ultimately—at their core—assessments. These assessments may not necessarily be ones we explicitly or intentionally make. We can, therefore, change our mood or the mood of others by finding and changing our underlying assessments.

Once we recognize our mood, we can look at what underlying assessment lies behind it. If the assessment is ungrounded, then we can commit to actions that will create new possibilities. In taking new actions, our mood will begin to automatically shift.