

# Tracking Your Mood

## Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts?  Heart?  Body?  None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



[MindfulnessExercises.com/Tracking-Your-Mood](https://MindfulnessExercises.com/Tracking-Your-Mood)

### ■ PURPOSE / EFFECTS

Often our moods can change so quickly and automatically that we are unaware of what actually caused them. Keeping track of your moods in a mood log can help you reflect on the factors and situations that affect your emotions.

Discovering the thoughts and situations that are linked to low moods can help you anticipate what factors (such as certain people, times of day, thoughts) are most challenging for you.

With the information learned from tracking your mood you can gain insight into your habitual reactions to triggering events and work with bringing awareness to your responses so that they are not as automatic.

### ■ METHOD

#### *Summary*

A few times a day, note your mood when you are upset and describe the situation (time, location, what is going on).

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### Long Version

**If possible, carry around a notebook with you to use for recording your mood.**

1. When you become aware that you are experiencing a difficult emotion note your situation, including the day, time, location, and what is occurring.
2. See if you can then become aware of and note what emotions you are experiencing (e.g. sad, lonely, scared, irritated) and rate their intensity from 1-100%.
3. Begin to pay attention to any thoughts that may be automatically occurring and see if you can notice and record the most common and gripping thoughts.
4. Once you have written down a few thoughts, examine their accuracy. Often when we are in a low mood our thoughts are unrealistically negative and pessimistic. If you can, begin to challenge the accuracy of your thoughts and create alternative, more realistic explanations.
  - If you have trouble challenging your thoughts, see *Disputing Negative Thoughts and Common Errors in Thinking* for help.
5. Once you have finished, reassess your mood and see if it has changed.
6. After a few days or weeks of tracking your mood, begin to examine your mood logs and look for any patterns or trends, such as times of day or specific people or events that are associated with low moods.
  - Becoming aware of this information can be very helpful. You may eventually come up with alternative possibilities and responses to prevent yourself from being automatically dragged into low moods.
  - You may also find ways to expect and prepare yourself for dealing with difficult situations and people. This can lead to feeling more in control of your mood and your responses.

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### ■ HISTORY

Keeping track of one's daily mood and challenging automatic thoughts is a primary component of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT was created and expanded upon by psychologists Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck in the 1950's and 60's.

Additionally, the method presented here was adapted from the CBT mood logs created by Dr. David Burns in his book *The Feeling Good Handbook*, and from psychologists Christine Padesky and Dennis Greenberger's book, *Mind Over Mood*.

You can read more about the history of CBT here: <http://www.nacbt.org/historyofcbt.htm>

### ■ CAUTIONS

It is not always easy to track your mood during various situations each day and please do not get discouraged or beat up on yourself if you are unable to record your moods with great consistency. Just beginning to pay attention to the various factors that influence your mood can be very helpful.

Additionally, becoming aware of your automatic thoughts can be illuminating but also unsettling if you notice that the content of your thoughts is very negative. Be aware of any tendency to criticize yourself for having critical or harsh thoughts and instead see if you can practice self-compassion for feeling the difficult emotion(s).