

# How To Use The Daily Mood Log

**Purpose:** to help you overcome painful emotions such as loneliness, depression, anger, guilt, frustration, worry, and fear. There are four basic steps.

**1. Describe the Upsetting Event.** At the top of the sheet, write a brief description of the situation or problem that's bothering you. It might involve coming home to an empty house after work or having an argument with a friend.

**Make sure you are specific as to person, place and time when you describe the upsetting event. This is important!** The situation, "Life stinks," isn't specific! There's no way to work with this problem. Instead, describe what actually happened. You might ask yourself, "Where was I when I noticed the smell?" A more appropriate description of the upsetting event might be, "I had an argument with my roommate this afternoon. She has a new boyfriend and backed out on our plans to spend spring break together."

**2: Identify Your Negative Feelings.** Record your negative emotions and rate how intense they are between 0% (the least upset) and 100% (the most upset). For example, you might put: "hurt--80%; angry--80%; rejected--90%; sad--80%; disappointed--90%."

**3. Change Your Thoughts.** Write down the thoughts associated with your feelings in the column labeled "Negative Thoughts." Number them consecutively and indicate how much you believe each thought between 0% (the least) and 100% (the most).

In the middle column identify the distortions in your thoughts, using the "Checklist of Cognitive Distortions" on the back of the Daily Mood Log.

In the column labeled "Positive Thoughts," substitute other thoughts that are more positive and realistic. Indicate how much you believe each of them between 0% and 100%. Finally, evaluate how much you now believe each of your Negative Thoughts between 0% and 100%.

**4. Outcome.** Indicate how much better you now feel. Cross out your original estimates (0% to 100%) for each emotion and put new estimates.

# Daily Mood Log \*

Step One: Describe the Upsetting Event-- \_\_\_\_\_

Step Two: Record Your Feelings--and rate each one from 0 (the least) to 100 (the most). Use words like sad, anxious, angry, guilty, hopeless, frustrated, etc.

Emotion	Rating (0-100)	Emotion	Rating (0-100)	Emotion	Rating (0-100)

## Step Three: The Triple-Column Technique

Negative Thoughts: Record your negative thoughts and estimate your belief in each one from 0% (not at all) to 100%(completely).	Distortions: Use the Check-list on the back:	Positive Thoughts: Substitute more realistic thoughts and estimate your belief in each one from 0% (not at all) to 100% (completely).

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## Daily Mood Log (p. 2) \*

Negative Thoughts	Distortions	Positive Thoughts

### Checklist of Cognitive Distortions

1. **All-or-nothing thinking:** You look at things in absolute, black-and-white categories.
2. **Over generalization:** You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. **Mental filter:** You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.
4. **Discounting the positives:** You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities don't count.
5. **Jumping to conclusions:**
  - (A) **Mind-reading**—you arbitrarily assume that people are reacting negatively to you;
  - (B) **Fortune-telling**—you arbitrarily predict that things will turn out badly.
6. **Magnification or minimization:** You blow things way out of proportion or you shrink their importance.
7. **Emotional reasoning:** You reason from how you feel: "I feel like an idiot, so I must be one."
8. **Should statements:** You criticize yourself or other people with "shoulds," "shouldn'ts," "musts," "oughts," and "have tos."
9. **Labeling:** Instead of saying "I made a mistake," you tell yourself, "I'm a jerk" or "a loser."
10. **Personalization and blame:**
  - (A) You blame yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for;
  - (B) you blame other people and overlook ways that you contributed to a problem.

## Checklist of Cognitive Distortions \*

1. **All-or-nothing thinking:** You look at things in absolute, black-and-white categories.
2. **Over generalization:** You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. **Mental filter:** You dwell on the negatives.
4. **Discounting the positives:** You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities don't count.
5. **Jumping to conclusions:**
  - (A) **Mind-reading**--you assume that people are reacting negatively to you when there's no definite evidence;
  - (B) **Fortune-telling**--you arbitrarily predict that things will turn out badly.
6. **Magnification or minimization:** You blow things way out of proportion or you shrink their importance.
7. **Emotional reasoning:** You reason from how you feel: "I feel like an idiot, so I really must be one."
8. **"Should statements":** You criticize yourself (or other people) with "shoulds," "oughts," "musts" and "have tos."
9. **Labeling:** Instead of saying "I made a mistake," you tell yourself, "I'm a jerk," or "a fool," or "a loser."
10. **Personalization and blame:** You blame yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for, or you blame other people and deny your role in the problem.

## Troubleshooting Guide \*

If you still feel upset after you fill out a Daily Mood Log, ask yourself these questions about each step:

**Step 1.** Have I correctly identified the problem or upsetting event? Sometimes you can't put your finger on the problem that's bothering you. You will often discover what it is if you review your activities for the past day or two. Make your descriptions of the negative event specific: What happened? Where were you? What time was it? With whom were you involved? Avoid vague, general descriptions of problems such as "life stinks."

**Step 2.** Do I want to change my negative feelings about this situation? Use the Cost-Benefit Analysis to list the advantages and disadvantages of feeling upset.

**Step 3.** Have I identified my Negative Thoughts (NTs) properly? Remember not to put descriptions of feelings or upsetting events in the Negative Thought column. If you have trouble figuring out what your negative thoughts are, use the Stick Figure Technique.

Are my Positive Thoughts (PTs) convincing, valid statements or are they just rationalizations? Rationalizations won't make you feel any better. Positive Thoughts must be 100% true or nearly 100% true to be helpful.

Do my Positive Thoughts put the lie to my Negative Thoughts? To help, your Positive Thoughts must contradict your NTs. When you see that your NTs are not really valid, you'll feel better. Often, many PTs (and many weeks of work!) will be needed before you can put the lie to your NTs.

## Self-Defeating Beliefs \*

1. **emotional perfectionism:** "I should always feel happy, confident, and in control of my emotions."
2. **emotophobia:** "I should never feel angry, anxious, inadequate, jealous or vulnerable."
3. **conflict phobia:** "People who love each other shouldn't fight."
4. **entitlement:** "People should be the way I expect them to be."
5. **low frustration tolerance:** "I should never be frustrated. Life should be easy."
6. **performance perfectionism:** "I must never fail or make a mistake."
7. **perceived perfectionism:** "People will not love and accept me as a flawed and vulnerable human being."
8. **fear of failure:** "My worthwhileness depends on my achievements (or my intelligence, or status, or attractiveness)."
9. **fear of disapproval or criticism:** "I need everybody's approval to be worthwhile."
10. **fear of rejection or being alone:** "If I'm alone, then I'm bound to feel miserable and unfulfilled. If I'm not loved, then life is not worth living."