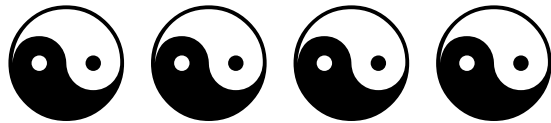


MOOD JOURNAL



A mood journal is exactly what it sounds like: it's a journal that you use to help you understand and process your emotions. Over time, you can use it to identify patterns of reaction, triggers and many things that can help you understand your emotions – and yourself – better.

A mood journal entry usually includes the following things:

- **Emotion ID:** What is the name of the emotion?
- **Cause ID:** What is/was the immediate cause of the emotion?
- **Reaction ID:** What was the reaction created by the emotion (my behaviors or actions)?
- **Reality Test:** Was the emotion/level of reaction appropriate to the situation?
- **Solution ID:** Is the cause something I can actually change? If so, how?
- **Self-soothing/Self-care:** What can I do to take care of myself in this situation in the future?

Once you've learned to identify all of these things, you can start working on tracing the emotional cause back and addressing the reason the immediate situation triggered the emotion the way it did. For example, if you feel rejected because a friend canceled plans with you, you can then look at what's behind that feeling. You might find that you're very sensitive to feeling rejected because you had an invalidating relationship with a parent, or because you had a marriage that ended with a betrayal that caught you totally off-guard and this created an internal narrative that you are somehow not good enough. Or maybe through studying the mood journal, you see a pattern of irritation and overreactions on your part creating arguments with your partner at dinnertime and you realize that it's because your job is exhausting and you're not getting enough rest.

In this way, we can start to really explore why we feel the way we do, what is causing our reactions to these feelings and what we need to address in order to heal these things. In the first situation, we might remind ourselves that there are many reasons someone might cancel plans, and regardless of the reason, the things people do are reflections of their feelings, not our value. In the second situation, we might have an honest conversation with our partner about our exhaustion and take practical steps to get more rest. By understanding ourselves better and taking control of our emotional reality, we can create healthier patterns in our lives.

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Self-soothing & Self-care: What can I do to take care of myself in this kind of situation in the future?

Additional observations:

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