

Moody

*To be moody is to be subject to surges and depressions of feeling. A moody person may say 'I'm feeling great' when you meet her in the morning, then later in the day she may say 'I'm really feeling down, it's a bad day.' Upon inquiry you may well find that something—perhaps something little—has happened to Mary in the course of the day, that has redirected her good mood of the morning. You might not find out, by asking Mary what that little thing was, that threw her off track. (She may well not be able to trace it herself.) Or it may have been something that seemed big to **her**, perhaps an annoying change in her work schedule. It will have been just enough, in any case, to make the world as a whole look bad.*

Examples

1 Mood triggers

I am pretty even tempered, I think, and usually wake up in an even mood. Sometimes, though, later in the day, I feel either a mood of elation, which I can't explain, or a mood of depression, equally inexplicable. I may think for a minute about why this mood occurred, but it may not be apparent to me. Then far later in the day, and for no apparent reason, I come to with a start, saying to myself 'Oh that's what made me feel down' or 'That's what set me up.' Mood changing causes can be very small. *A guy passed me on the track and didn't say hello. I tried crossing on foot at the zebra, but a car shot through as if I weren't there. Some guy I don't know supplied the quarter I was short at the check out in WalMart.* Littleish things like these get under my skin. A larger development—disastrous earthquakes in the Hindu Kush mountains—will have no effect on my mood.

2 On being moody

What do we mean when we say, for example, 'I'm in the mood to go fishing.' How is this statement different from 'I want to go fishing' or 'Let's go fishing' or 'I'm determined to go fishing?' 'I'm in the mood for fishing' stresses a *quality* of attitude toward going fishing. The quality includes, of course, an implicit *yes, I want to go fishing*, but also suggests the life (mine) behind the statement of wanting to go fishing. The distinctive kind of guy I am wants to go fishing. Mood is about I'ness, yes, or you'ness or 'she'ness. I'm in the mood for love puts the stress on me, while *I want to make love* distributes the stress over the person who desires and what he desires with whom. To deal with a mood, your own or somebody else's, requires insight into that person.