

*5 Simple Steps to*  
Manage Your Mood



# 5 Simple Steps to Manage Your Mood

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A Guide for Teen Girls:  
How to Let Go of Negative Feelings and  
Create a Happy Relationship with Yourself  
and Others

Book 1 of 3  
Words of Wisdom for Teens Series

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Section 1:  
Introduction to the  
5 Simple Steps to  
Manage Your Mood





## 5 Simple Steps to Manage Your Mood

**A**re you frustrated because one bad event can ruin your entire day or maybe even your entire week? Does it seem like no matter what you try to do, you just can't seem to shake those negative thoughts and feelings? Instead of being able to let go of things easily, do you often hang on to things long after everyone else seems to have forgotten about them?

If you answered “yes” to these questions, you are not alone. Many people have a hard time letting things go. Instead, when something goes wrong, they replay that scenario over and over in their head, causing them to feel worse about themselves or worse about the other person, or people involved.

Think about the last argument you had with someone that really bothered you. What was that like? Did you replay the argument over and over and beating yourself up for all the things you wished you had done or said differently? Did you make up conversations that didn't even take place and feeling even more upset? Did you think

about other similar situations and spiraling downward into sadness, anger, or pain?

Let's say that after the argument had taken place, you wanted to patch things up. Were you able to shake those negativities so you could do what you wanted to do, or were you weighed down and held back by your mood? Did you feel in control of your mood or did you feel as if your mood was controlling you?

For many people, shaking those negative feelings is difficult even when they want to let things go. This is because they don't understand just how much power and control, they do have over their emotions. Maybe this is where you are right now.

Understanding your feelings and knowing what to do with them may seem like a difficult task right now. However, with the right tools, this task can become manageable and even easy. When you use the 5 simple steps outlined in this book – which are really 5 simple questions – you will understand why you feel the way you do, and what you can do to let those feelings go. You no longer have to let negative feelings, or a bad mood ruin your day. Instead, you can take charge of your mood and focus on creating a happy relationship with yourself and the people you care about.

The great news is, once you understand how to use these 5 simple questions, you can use them to help you resolve problems with anyone whether it's a parent, a friend, an acquaintance, or even with yourself.

To illustrate how you can use these 5 simple questions, let's look at a scenario that happened between my sixteen-year-old client, Amie, and her mother, Beth.

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*Beth is at home anxiously waiting for her daughter, Amie, to return. It is 10 p.m., which is thirty minutes past Amie's curfew. Amie is late yet again. Beth continues to watch the clock. Minutes feel like hours. Beth becomes angrier. Beth can't understand why Amie continues to violate her curfew and disrespect her rules.*

*The fights between Beth and Amie have been escalating these past few months. After their last major argument, Beth grounded Amie for two weeks because Amie returned home three hours late. Amie did her best not to talk to Beth for the entire two weeks. When forced to interact, Amie limited her answers to one or two words. The anger, frustration, and resentment between Beth and Amie continued to grow.*

*In yet another fight, the following week, Amie screamed at Beth, accusing her of being unreasonable, unfair, and too strict with the curfew. Between sobs, Amie pleaded with Beth to see that she was grown up. Amie asked for some understanding, trust, and respect for her ability to make good decisions for herself.*

*Like many previous fights, this one ended up with Amie angrily stomping off to her room and slamming her door while Beth stood there feeling frustrated and helpless.*

*Since the last fight, Beth has been trying to be more lenient when Amie breaks curfew. Instead of yelling at Amie and grounding her, Beth does her best to calmly remind Amie of her curfew. Although Beth felt angry and disrespected inside, outwardly she stays in control and tells Amie, "I am not happy when you come home late. It would be nice if you came home at 10 p.m. I could trust and respect your decisions more that way." Noticing her anger rising, Beth leaves the house and goes for a walk to calm herself down. This happened at least four times in the previous two weeks.*

*Beth thinks she is handling herself well, but the anger and resentment haven't gone away, in fact, it's been steadily rising. Today, she can no longer contain herself. As the minutes continue to pass, her anger builds. Beth recalls all the times that Amie has violated her trust or in any way acted entitled or ungrateful. Beth becomes livid.*

*The moment Amie walks in the house, Beth rages at Amie, telling her how she is sick and tired of being disrespected. She adds, "I raised a much better daughter than you. I don't know what I did to deserve this. You are selfish, untrustworthy, and all you do is cause me pain."*

*Amie stands speechless and confused about what is happening. It's only 10:40 p.m., twenty minutes earlier than previous times when she came home at 11 p.m. to a calm and reasonable mother.*

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As you can imagine, neither mother nor daughter is happy with the exchange. Both feel angry and disappointed.

Throughout this book, we will examine how Beth and Amie used the 5 simple questions to change their mood by letting go of negative feelings and ultimately create a happier relationship with themselves and with each other.

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***REMEMBER:*** *While helpful, these 5 questions are not meant to replace professional help. If your situation is difficult to handle, or you don't know how to proceed, please talk to your parents or a trusted adult and ask for help.*

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*“Happiness is not something ready-made.  
It comes from your own actions.”*

~ DALAI LAMA XIV





## Question 1: What Am I Feeling?

Identifying your emotions is an important first step to managing your mood. By identifying your emotion, you can evaluate it and decide what to do with it. Too often, we over-generalize our emotional state as "bad" or "mad." In reality, feeling "bad" has many meanings. When you say, "I feel bad," you could mean "I feel sad," or "I feel lonely," or maybe, "I feel anxious," or even "I feel guilty." Similarly, "I am mad," could mean, "I am disappointed," or "I am irritated," or maybe "I am annoyed," or even "I am furious."

When you use a general word to express your emotions repeatedly, that term (and emotion) becomes stronger and feels heavier and heavier. This makes it more difficult to change your mood or let go of your unwanted feelings. When you identify the specific emotion, it becomes smaller, lighter, and much easier to let go.

Here's an example to help you understand this idea clearly. Imagine a moving day—the day you pack your household in preparation to move. Imagine putting

everything from your bedroom (your bed, a dresser, a closet full of clothes, etc.) into one gigantic box and label it "bedroom." Would you be able to move the box easily? Would it be easy or difficult to find individual items within this box quickly? When you need to retrieve an item and look inside that box, does it look easy—or is it overwhelming or daunting?

Instead of one gigantic box, what if you separated your belongings into many little boxes and labeled them correctly? Imagine having 20-30 clearly labelled boxes: winter clothes, shoes, books, games, and so on. If you need to move one of those boxes, would you be able to move it easily? What if you need to find a pair of shoes? Wouldn't it be easy to grab the box labeled "shoes" and open it?

The same is true with your mood. When you pack your emotions under one big label, they remain cluttered, heavy, and unmanageable. Instead, take a second to identify your emotions and decide what you want to do with them.

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*It's easy for Beth and Amie to blame the other person to feel justified in their anger. However, when they looked inward, they discovered a range of emotions and options for handling them.*

*Beth reported feeling angry, disrespected, disappointed, resentful, violated, frustrated, unloved, misunderstood, taken advantage of, and unappreciated.*

*Amie reported feeling confused, angry, annoyed, disappointed, sad, afraid, helpless, unloved, accused, misunderstood, and frustrated.*

*Beth discovered her strongest emotions were feeling disrespected and taken advantage of, while Amie felt confused and frustrated.*

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**REMEMBER:** *When you identify your specific emotion, it becomes smaller, lighter, and much easier to let go.*

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Did you know that there are over several hundred words in the English dictionary to describe emotions? Yet, most people use only eight to ten words to describe how they feel. The words I most often hear in my practice when I ask a client to describe how they feel about their problems are: bad, sad, angry, hurt, disappointed, anxious, and scared.

When you use one word to express an emotion repeatedly, that emotion feels big and difficult to change. To help you let go of a negative emotion easier, get specific with your words and challenge yourself to use a different label each time. Get creative, have fun, and get ready to be amazed to discover just how much control you do have over your emotions.

On the next few pages are a list of common emotions. This is not a complete list of all emotions, just a select few to get you to think about different ways to express yourself. On the list, I left out many words that might make you feel

worse because they imply judgment or suggest that something is wrong with you. The idea is to keep your emotion as light as you can while expressing your feelings. This will help your mind release it faster.

Accused	Afraid	Aggravated
Aggressive	Agitated	Alienated
Alone	Ambivalent	Annoyed
Antsy	Anxious	Apprehensive
Attacked	Awkward	Baffled
Beat	Bitter	Blamed
Bleak	Blocked	Bored
Bothered	Bruised	Bummed
Burdened	Burned	Cheated
Combative	Concerned	Conflicted
Confused	Crabby	Cranky
Criticized	Cross	Crummy
Crushed	Deceived	Defeated
Defenseless	Deflated	Deprived
Despair	Detached	Disappointed
Disconnected	Discouraged	Disgruntled
Disillusioned	Dismay	Disorganized
Displeased	Disrespected	Dissatisfied
Distress	Disturbed	Doubtful
Down	Drained	Dread
Edgy	Embarrassed	Empty
Enraged	Excluded	Exhausted
Fear or fearful	Fidgety	Flustered
Forced	Fragile	Framed
Frantic	Frightened	Frustrated

Furious	Gloomy	Grouchy
Grumpy	Guarded	Guilty
Gullible	Heated	Heavy
Helpless	Hesitant	Hindered
Horrible	Horrified	Hostile
Humbled	Hurt	Icky
Ignored	Impatient	Inconvenienced
Indecisive	Indifference	Ineffective
Inhibited	Insecure	Insulted
Invalidated	Irked	Irrational
Irritated	Isolated	Jaded
Jealous	Judged	Jumpy
Lazy	Leery	Limited
Lonely	Loopy	Lost
Low	Mad	Manipulated
Meek	Miserable	Misled
Mistaken	Misunderstood	Moody
Neglected	Nervous	Numb
Offended	Overwhelmed	Perplexed
Pissed	Pooped	Pressured
Provoked	Puzzled	Rattled
Regretful	Resentful	Responsible
Restless	Ridiculed	Ridiculous
Robbed	Ruffled	Scared
Self-Conscious	Sensitive	Sheepish
Shocked	Shook up	Sick
Skeptical	Sorrow	Sorry
Spiteful	Startled	Strained
Stressed	Stuck	Stumped

Suppressed	Suspicious	Tense
Terrified	Threatened	Thrown
Trapped	Uncertain	Undermined
Unhappy	Unhinged	Unsure
Uptight	Vulnerable	Weigh down
Wired	Withdrawn	Worn

Let's have some fun with slang words from [urbandictionary.com](http://urbandictionary.com)

Bent	Blown	Butt-hurt
Cheesed-off	Cut	Driddy
Durpy	Furt	Limp
Peeved	Petro	Poxy
Salty	Shut-down	Skerred
Stumb	Wacked	Wrecked

It's your turn to come up with other words you can use to describe your negative emotions. Think of words you use and words you have heard other people use and make your own list. You can even make up words if you like. I have a client, Helen, who used to say, "I'm so stupid," whenever she made a mistake, and that statement made her feel terrible about herself. After going through this exercise, Helen decided to make up her own words and now says, "Abba tea toe tea" and laughs it off whenever she makes a mistake. Those words she made up make no sense and are so funny, she and others can't help but shake it off and move on. In fact, a few of her friends are now using the same words to keep things light so they, too, can move on.







*“Remember, happiness doesn’t depend upon who you are or what you have, it depends solely upon what you think.”*

~ DALE CARNEGIE



## Question 2: Why Do I Feel This Way?

**A**nswering this question will give you insight into your mood and insight into yourself. As with the first question, this question allows you to sort your emotions and helps you to release the negative feelings that are holding you back so you can focus on reclaiming your happiness.

How many times have you said, “I don’t know why I feel [insert your emotion here]? I just do.” Or maybe you’ve said, “I am really anxious right now, but I don’t know why.”

When you say, “I don’t know why,” in response to someone’s question about your feelings, it may be an automatic answer because you don’t want to talk about it. Or, perhaps, you really don’t understand your feelings because you haven’t stopped to examine them.

When you respond in this manner, you are basically claiming, “I am powerless. My feelings are beyond my understanding and control.” By not understanding why you feel the way you do, you become a victim of your feelings.

You also place yourself in a situation of being powerless to change it.

You might wonder, “But I really don’t know why I feel the way I do. Does that mean I am powerless?” Not at all. If you stop and look inward, you will find the reason for why you feel the way you do.

In life, there are only three causes for upset feelings, and they are very simple:

1. Unmet expectations
2. Thwarted intentions: something that stops or keeps you from what you’ve intended to do or have happened
3. A miscommunication or misunderstanding that leads to #1 or #2 above

Understanding the causes of your upset feelings will help you break free from your burden.

The next time you are having a relationship challenge, take a deep breath in and ask yourself:

1. What were my expectations in this situation and were they met?
2. Were my expectations realistic for this situation? Remember, just because you want things a certain way, doesn’t mean it’s realistic.
3. What were my intentions and did something happen that prevented me from completing my intentions?
4. Did I communicate my expectations or intentions to others clearly?
5. Did I understand the expectations or intentions of the other person(s)?

When you answer these questions honestly, you will find the reason for your upset feeling. Once you identify your emotion and the reason behind it, you reclaim your power to do something about it. From a place of understanding and strength, you can decide what to do that is best suited to create the results you want.

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*Beth feels entitled to her sense of being disrespected and taken advantage of. After all, Amie knew her curfew time but continued to disrespect it. Beth has tried to avoid a fight by speaking calmly to Amie, but rather than appreciating this, Amie took advantage of her kindness and continued to show a lack of care.*

*When Beth stops to reflect on the reasons for her upset feeling, she discovers:*

- 1. She expected Amie to follow the previously stated curfew time, and her expectation was not met.*
- 2. She felt her expectation was realistic for this situation.*
- 3. Her intention was to avoid a fight. Amie's continued disrespect made it hard for her to continue to be kind and understanding.*
- 4. She realized she did not communicate her expectations clearly. She realized when she said, "I am not happy when you come home late. It would be nice if you came home at 10 p.m. I could trust and respect your decisions more that way," without enforcing previous consequences,*

*she opened up the situation for interpretation and confusion.*

- 5. She wasn't aware of Amie's expectations or intentions.*

*Amie feels confused and frustrated about what happened. She doesn't understand why her mom is enraged and accuses her of being selfish, untrustworthy, and causing her pain when she made a conscious decision to make her mom proud tonight. Amie thought they came to a new understanding about her curfew after the last fight when she begged her mom for some leeway. Since her mom started acting "cool" when Amie came home at 11 p.m., Amie assumed that was the new curfew time. Tonight, she decided to surprise her mom by coming home early.*

*When Amie examines her feelings, she discovered:*

- 1. She expected her mom to be happy that she came home twenty minutes earlier than she had been lately.*
- 2. She came home a little earlier than 11 p.m. to show her mom she could be responsible for her decisions. She was proud of herself for making this decision and was expecting her mom to show appreciation and encouragement.*
- 3. She did not communicate her intentions or expectations. She never confirmed the new curfew time. She was just happy that they were not fighting anymore and that her mother was beginning to see her as capable of making smart decisions for herself.*

*Amie realizes that she did not fully understand her mom's expectations. Even though her mom had said, "It would be nice if you came home by 10 p.m.," Amie decided that was only a guideline since there were no consequences like before.*

