

# Learn to live with your moods

Did you wake up smiling or snarling this morning? Jot down your feelings and begin plotting your "mood cycle"—a chart to smoother sailing in life

By FRANK P. THOMAS

HOW ARE YOU feeling today? That's not a polite, meaningless question this time. The answer, plus answers in the days to come, can help you chart a happier, better-adjusted life.

Dr. Rexford B. Hersey, a University of Pennsylvania psychologist who for years has investigated the emotional ups and downs of workers for large corporations, has discovered a "mood cycle" which is as inevitable in each of us as the changing tides of the ocean.

For example, if you're feeling like an unloved child in the big, cold world, take heart; in three or four weeks, your depression blues will have faded, and life will take on a rosy hue. These ups and downs can be charted for each individual in predictable rhythms. Neither the joys nor storms of life can upset their regular swing for very long.

About 60 percent of the people studied by Dr. Hersey had a cycle that traveled from one low to the next in 33 to 35 days. Others ranged from two to nine weeks.

A breakdown of the average person's cycle might look like this: one week or more, flying high; two-and-a-half weeks, pretty chipper; two days, no complaints; and three or four days, in the dumps.

Probably you've already realized how this discovery can help you. If you learn when to expect your normal ups and downs, you can adjust your living accordingly. You can learn to ride out the depressions and make the high spots work more efficiently for you.

Here are some tips on how to live with your moods, once you've charted your cycle as explained in the accompanying chart:

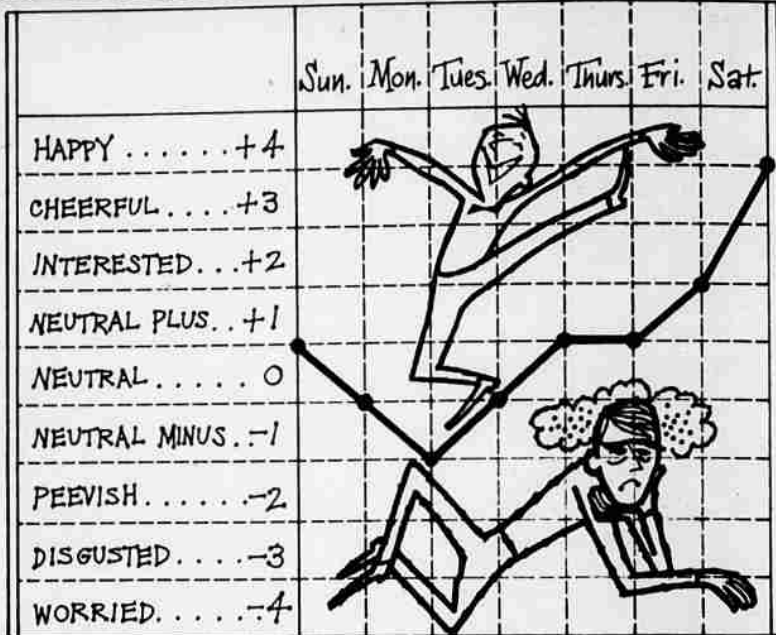
**1. Don't let moods worry you.** "Moods are nature's way of winding us up like a clock," Dr. Hersey explains. "She intends us, if we are to have a good life, to have our highs counterbalanced by our lows. The lows are for our protection. It is during lows that we recharge our batteries."

When you plot your own moods, you will find that, although we tend to magnify our lows, they account for only 10 percent of the cycle. Actually we enjoy life much more than we think and should remember the long periods of lightheartedness rather than the short periods of despondency.

**2. Take low spirits in your stride.** Since gloomy periods are nature's way of slowing us down to revitalize us, why not cooperate? One of man's most time-honored methods of renewing himself is to pray and visit a house of worship. Women may take time out to buy a hat, too. Some men may spend an evening with "the boys." A warm bath and soft music may soothe others. In each case, you'll notice, the person slows down with his emotions; he does not fight them and create the inevitable tensions.

**3. When feeling high or low, don't make any decisions.** In our down moods, we tend to magnify unimportant troubles. On the other hand, the overconfidence of high spirits sometimes leads us to bold actions we later regret. Obviously, neither

I sleep well last night?" ... "Am I interested in what I am doing?" Dr. Hersey suggests men rate themselves for at least six months, women for a year. Don't expect your cycle to span precisely the same period. It can vary as much as a week either way.



DRAWING BY WES MCKEOWN

## COVER:

As Arthur Sarnoff amusingly illustrates, some golf enthusiasts have met up with a pretty impasse and seem as indecisive as Mother Nature concerning their next move.

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