



RATING YOUR MOODS

Just like hospitals rate pain on a scale of 1-10 to effectively assess and treat it, you are going to learn to identify where, on a 10-point scale, your mood falls and how to appropriately match it to external events. Moods are rated on a scale of intensity and events on a scale of severity.

MOOD



EVENT

A 10 event would be something like the death of a parent. A 9 would be your house burning to the ground. An 8 event would be a full home burglary. A 7 would be getting fired. Daily arguments and issues with family members, peers, and co-workers fall between a 1 and 3 in terms of event severity. However, most of my clients come to me reacting to all events in their lives with an intensity level of something between an 8 and a 10. Now, how much credibility do you think a person has when they are reacting to daily stressors with the same emotional reactivity as they would to the death of a parent? Not much, right?

Poorly modulated mood states undermine our credibility, both to the outside world and to ourselves. To the outside world, people that react too intensely to small negative events are considered dramatic. More importantly, poor mood modulation undermines our internal belief in our resiliency in the world. It sets up a





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cognitive background where we believe we don't have the emotional landscape to cope with what we need to manage.

When you're in a situation and you can feel your mood escalating, ask yourself, "Over the course of my life does this level of an event warrant this intensity of a mood reaction?" If the answer is "no," then try to bring the intensity of your mood down to a level that matches the severity of the event. So, a level 3 event should yield a level 3 intensity mood rating and a level 1 event should yield a level 1 mood rating.

My clients do this by using a combination of self-talk around mood/event consistency, as well as identifying the thinking errors that are contributing to the poorly modulated mood. For example, what are the thoughts around a flight delay that are starting to make it feel catastrophic? And can you think of more adaptive thoughts in this situation?

Then you can add in the rubber band, thought-stopping technique to stop the maladaptive thought patterns. By combining these techniques, you rein in your mood to match the level of the event.

It's important to note that in situations where someone has experienced traumatic life events, this rating scale may not be appropriate, and its use should be evaluated by a professional.

