

Bad Mood? - CUT IT OUT!  
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It takes a lot of awareness to recognize that: 1) you are in a bad mood and 2) to figure out where it came from. Unfortunately our loved ones tend to suffer if we don't take the time to reflect on our emotional states, especially our children who rely on us to take



responsibility for our behaviour. Often an adult will pass their bad mood on to a child, then the child will pass it on to a younger sibling and then the youngest will take it out on the family pet! If fluffy is wearing the brunt of your bad mood, you might want to - CUT IT OUT!

Every bad mood begins somewhere. You can learn to notice a bad mood as soon as it begins, to detect the trigger that got it started, to identify the feelings produced by that trigger, and to problem-solve around the situation to prevent the same thing happening next time. While this isn't easy, it is possible and the process is something that our children need to learn as well. Even if you can't figure it out, you can still "own" your feelings rather than blame those around you.

"I'm in a bad mood and it's your fault!" When we voice our negative emotions without taking it out on those around us, it creates a healthy boundary. We avoid getting intertwined in each other's emotional states.

What to do:

- Make an *I Statement* – I'm feeling grumpy, tired, irritated....and I'm not sure why. This gives people a chance to relax rather than becoming anxious thinking that they have done something wrong.
- Take a moment and try to articulate the feeling, ask yourself when it started. If you can identify where it came from that awareness might be enough to help you move on.
- Talk about "bad moods" with your kids when you are feeling calm and when you have the ability to explain that it isn't their fault.
- Come up with a humorous signal that gives you and your kids an *out* when they need some space like - grumpy mom, dad or kid alert.
- Agree to give each other some space when the alert is on.

