Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.

— David Hume

Emotions and Moods

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1 Differentiate emotions from moods.

2 Discuss the different aspects of emotions.

3 Identify the sources of emotions and moods.

4 Describe external constraints on emotions.

5 Discuss the impact emotional labor has on employees.

6 Discuss the case for and the case against emotional intelligence.

7 Apply concepts on emotions and moods to OB issues.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Emotions Can Be Powerful

Steve Wynn, the famous hotel mogul, is an emotional person.[1] He is known for his infectious enthusiasm, as well as his temper. He once shot off his index finger in his office. And when describing his new $2.7 billion hotel, which he named after himself, he broke into a song from a musical. When have you ever seen a CEO do that? Wynn's also given to making outlandish statements. He said of his new hotel, "This building is more complex than any other structure in the history of the world." He also once commented, smiling, that "Las Vegas is sort of like how God would do it if he had money."

Many regard Wynn as the most powerful man in Nevada, largely because he can both inspire and scare people. One politician stated, "Steve Wynn's control over politicians is all-encompassing. It's overwhelming. Either you work for him or he tries to get you out of office."

Those who know Wynn say his temper can erupt as fiercely as the volcano he put on the grounds of his flagship hotel and casino, The Mirage. At the same time, while Wynn was in charge of the Mirage, it was high on *Fortune's* list of *America's Most Admired Companies*.

Interestingly, in contrast to Wynn's volatile personality, his new hotel is meant to appeal to people's desire for calmness. Gone are the exotic public displays, such as volcanoes and caged tigers, that graced his earlier hotels. He even says that he'd get rid of the casinos if he could. No casinos in a Las Vegas hotel? Could Steve Wynn be bluffing? ■

I t's probably safe to assume that most of us are not as given to emotional extremes as Steve Wynn. If we were, could we be as successful as he in our professions? Given the obvious role that emotions play in our work and everyday lives, it might surprise you to learn that, until recently, the field of OB has given the topic of emotions little or no attention.[2] How could this be? We can offer two possible explanations.

The first is the *myth of rationality*.[3] Since the late nineteenth century and the rise of scientific management, the protocol of the work world has been to keep a damper on emotions. A well-run organization was one that didn't allow employees to express frustration, fear, anger, love, hate, joy, grief, and similar feelings. The prevailing thought was that such emotions were the antithesis of rationality. Even though researchers and managers knew that emotions were an inseparable part of everyday life, they tried to create organizations that were emotion-free. That, of course, wasn't possible.

The second explanation was the belief that emotions of any kind are disruptive.[4] When researchers considered emotions, they looked at strong, negative emotions—especially anger—that interfered with an employee's ability to work effectively. They rarely viewed emotions as constructive or able to enhance performance.

Certainly some emotions, particularly when exhibited at the wrong time, can reduce employee performance. But this doesn't change the fact that employees bring their emotional sides with them to work every day and that no study of OB could be comprehensive without considering the role of emotions in workplace behavior.

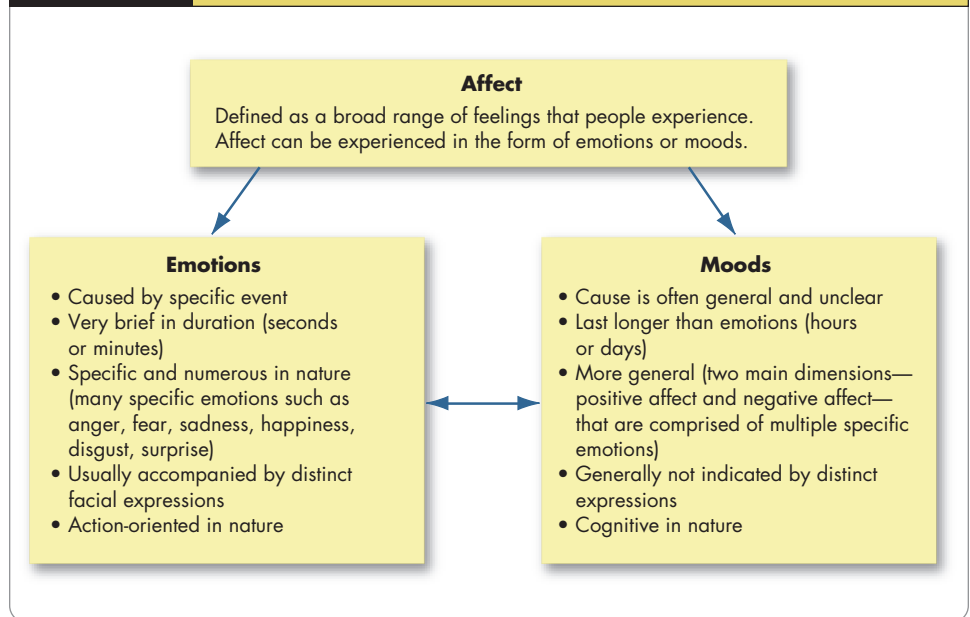# What Are Emotions and Moods?

Although we don't want to obsess over definitions, before we can proceed with our analysis, we need to clarify three terms that are closely intertwined: *affect, emotions*, and *moods.*

Affect is a generic term that covers a broad range of feelings that people experience. It's an umbrella concept that encompasses both emotions and moods.[5] **Emotions** are intense feelings that are directed at someone or something.[6] **Moods** are feelings that tend to be less intense than emotions and that often (though not always) lack a contextual stimulus.[7]

Most experts believe that emotions are more fleeting than moods.[8] For example, if someone is rude to you, you'll feel angry. That intense feeling of anger probably comes and goes fairly quickly, maybe even in a matter of seconds. When you're in a bad mood, though, you can feel bad for several hours.

Emotions are reactions to a person (seeing a friend at work may make you feel glad) or event (dealing with a rude client may make you feel angry). You show your emotions when you're "happy about something, angry at someone, afraid of something."[9] Moods, in contrast, aren't usually directed at a person or event. But emotions can turn into moods when you lose focus on the event or object that started the feeling. And, by the same token, good or bad moods can make you more emotional in response to an event. So when a colleague criticizes how you spoke to a client, you might become angry at him. That is, you show emotion (anger) toward a specific object (your colleague). But as the specific emotion dissipates, you might just feel generally dispirited. You can't attribute this feeling to any single event; you're just not your normal self. You might then overreact to other events. This affect state describes a mood. Exhibit 8-1 shows the relationships among affect, emotions, and mood.

First, as the exhibit shows, affect is a broad term that encompasses emotions and moods. Second, there are differences between emotions and moods. Some

Exhibit 8-1	Affect, Emotions, and Moods

Affect
Defined as a broad range of feelings that people experience. Affect can be experienced in the form of emotions or moods.

Emotions
- Caused by specific event
- Very brief in duration (seconds or minutes)
- Specific and numerous in nature (many specific emotions such as anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust, surprise)
- Usually accompanied by distinct facial expressions
- Action-oriented in nature

Moods
- Cause is often general and unclear
- Last longer than emotions (hours or days)
- More general (two main dimensions—positive affect and negative affect—that are comprised of multiple specific emotions)
- Generally not indicated by distinct expressions
- Cognitive in nature

of these differences—that emotions are more likely to be caused by a specific event, and emotions are more fleeting than moods—we just discussed. Other differences are subtler. For example, unlike moods, emotions tend to be more clearly revealed with facial expressions (anger, disgust). Also, some researchers speculate that emotions may be more action-oriented—they may lead us to some immediate action—while moods may be more cognitive, meaning they may cause us to think or brood for a while.[10]

Finally, the exhibit shows that emotions and moods can mutually influence each other. For example, an emotion, if it's strong and deep enough, can turn into a mood: Getting your dream job may generate the emotion of joy, but it also can put you in a good mood for several days. Similarly, if you're in a good or bad mood, it might make you experience a more intense positive or negative emotion than would otherwise be the case. For example, if you're in a bad mood, you might "blow up" in response to a coworker's comment when normally it would have just generated a mild reaction. Because emotions and moods can mutually influence each other, there will be many points throughout the chapter where emotions and moods will be closely connected.

Although affect, emotions, and moods are separable in theory, in practice the distinction isn't always crystal clear. In fact, in some areas, researchers have studied mostly moods, and in other areas, mainly emotions. So, when we review the OB topics on emotions and moods, you may see more information on emotions in one area and moods in another. This is simply the state of the research.

Also, the terminology can be confusing. For example, the two main mood dimensions are positive affect and negative affect, yet we have defined affect more broadly than mood. So, although the topic can be fairly dense in places, hang in there. The material is interesting—and applicable to OB.

affect   *A broad range of feelings that people experience.*

emotions   *Intense feelings that are directed at someone or something.*

moods   *Feelings that tend to be less intense than emotions and that lack a contextual stimulus.*

A Basic Set of Emotions

How many emotions are there? In what ways do they vary? There are dozens of emotions. They include anger, contempt, enthusiasm, envy, fear, frustration, disappointment, embarrassment, disgust, happiness, hate, hope, jealousy, joy, love, pride, surprise, and sadness. There have been numerous research efforts to limit and define the dozens of emotions into a fundamental or basic set of emotions.[11] But some researchers argue that it makes no sense to think of basic emotions because even emotions we rarely experience, such as shock, can have a powerful effect on us.[12] Other researchers, even philosophers, argue that there are universal emotions common to all of us. René Descartes, often called the founder of modern philosophy, identified six "simple and primitive passions"—wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy, and sadness—and argued that "all the others are composed of some of these six or are species of them."[13] Other philosophers (Hume, Hobbes, Spinoza) identified categories of emotions. Though these philosophers were helpful, the burden to provide conclusive evidence for the existence of a basic set of emotions still rests with contemporary researchers.

In contemporary research, psychologists have tried to identify basic emotions by studying facial expressions.[14] One problem with this approach is that some emotions are too complex to be easily represented on our faces. Take love, for example. Many think of love as the most universal of all emotions,[15] yet it's not easy to express a loving emotion with one's face only. Also, cultures have norms that govern emotional expression, so how we *experience* an emotion isn't always the same as how we *show* it. And many companies today offer anger-management programs to teach people to contain or even hide their inner feelings.[16]

It's unlikely psychologists or philosophers will ever completely agree on a set of basic emotions, or even whether it makes sense to think of basic emotions. Still, enough researchers have agreed on six essentially universal emotions—anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust, and surprise—with most other emotions subsumed under one of these six categories.[17] Some researchers even plot these six emotions along a continuum: happiness—surprise—fear—sadness—anger—disgust.[18] The closer any two emotions are to each other on this continuum, the more likely it is that people will confuse them. For instance, we sometimes mistake happiness for surprise, but rarely do we confuse happiness and disgust. In addition, as we'll see later on, cultural factors can also influence interpretations.

Some Aspects of Emotions

There are some other fundamental aspects of emotions that we need to consider. These aspects include the biology of emotions, the intensity of emotions, their frequency and duration, the relationship between rationality and emotions, and the functions of emotions. Let's deal with each of these aspects in turn.

The Biology of Emotions   All emotions originate in the brain's limbic system, which is about the size of a walnut and near our brain stem.[19] People tend to be happiest (report more positive than negative emotions) when their limbic system is relatively inactive. When the limbic system "heats up," negative emotions such as anger and guilt dominate over positive ones such as joy and happiness. Overall, the limbic system provides a lens through which you interpret events. When it's active, you see things in a negative light. When it's inactive, you interpret information more positively.

Not everyone's limbic system is the same. Moderately depressed people have more active limbic systems, particularly when they encounter negative information.[20] And women tend to have more active limbic systems than men, which,

Joanna Hayes expressed the emotion of joy after winning the gold medal in the women's 100m hurdle during track and field competition at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. Joy is one of the dozens of basic emotions that originate in our brain's limbic system to help us interpret events. As a positive emotion, joy expresses a favorable evaluation or feeling.

some argue, explains why women are more susceptible to depression than men and are more likely to emotionally bond with children.[21] Of course, as always, these are average differences—women are more likely to be depressed than men, but naturally that doesn't mean that all depressed people are women, or that men are incapable of bonding with their kids.

Intensity   People give different responses to identical emotion-provoking stimuli. In some cases, personality is responsible for the difference. Other times, it's a result of the job requirements.

People vary in their inherent ability to express emotional intensity. You may know people who almost never show their feelings. They rarely get angry. They never show rage. In contrast, you probably also know people who seem to be on an emotional roller coaster. When they're happy, they're ecstatic. When they're sad, they're deeply depressed. We'll explore the impact personality has on an individual's emotions in more detail later on in the chapter.

Jobs make different demands on our emotions. For instance, air traffic controllers, surgeons, and trial judges are expected to be calm and controlled, even in stressful situations. Conversely, the effectiveness of television evangelists, public-address announcers at sporting events, and lawyers can depend on their ability to alter their emotional intensity as the need arises.

Frequency and Duration   Sean Wolfson is basically a quiet and reserved person. He loves his job as a financial planner. He doesn't enjoy, however, having to give speeches to increase his visibility and to promote his programs. But he still has to give speeches occasionally. "If I had to speak to large audiences every day, I'd quit this business," he says. "I think this works for me because I can fake excitement and enthusiasm for an hour, a couple of times a month."

Whether an employee can successfully meet the emotional demands of a given job depends not only on what emotions need to be displayed and their intensity but also on how frequently and for how long they need to make the effort.

Do Emotions Make Us Irrational?   How often have you heard someone say, "Oh, you're just being emotional"? You might have been offended. The famous astronomer Carl Sagan once wrote, "Where we have strong emotions, we're liable to fool ourselves." These observations suggest that rationality and emotion are in conflict with one another and that if you exhibit emotion, you are likely to act irrationally. One team of authors argue that displaying emotions like sadness, to the point of crying, is so toxic to a career that we should leave the room rather than allow others to witness our emotional display.[22] The author Lois Frankel advises that women should avoid being emotional at work because it will undermine how others rate their competence.[23] These perspectives suggest that the demonstration or even experience of emotions is likely to make us seem weak, brittle, or irrational. However, the research disagrees and is increasingly showing that emotions are actually critical to rational thinking.[24] In fact, there has been evidence of such a link for a long time.

Take the example of Phineas Gage. Gage was a railroad worker in Vermont. One September day in 1848, while setting an explosive charge at work, a 3″7″ iron bar flew into Gage's lower left jaw and out through the top of his skull. Remarkably, Gage survived his injury. He was still able to read and speak, and he performed well above average on cognitive ability tests. However, it became clear that Gage had lost his ability to experience emotion. He was emotionless at even the saddest misfortunes or happiest occasions. Gage's inability to express emotion eventually took away his ability to reason. He started making irrational choices about his life, often behaving erratically and against his self-interests. Despite being an intelligent man whose intellectual abilities were

By studying the skull of Phineas Gage, shown here, and other brain injuries, researchers discovered an important link between emotions and rational thinking. They found that losing the ability to emote led to the loss of the ability to reason. From this discovery, researchers learned that our emotions provide us with valuable information that helps our thinking process.

unharmed by the accident, Gage drifted from job to job, eventually taking up with a circus. In commenting on Gage's condition, one expert noted, "Reason may not be as pure as most of us think it is or wish it were . . . emotions and feelings may not be intruders in the bastion of reason at all: they may be enmeshed in its networks, for worse *and* for better."[25]

The example of Phineas Gage and many other brain injury studies, show us that emotions are critical to rational thinking. We must have the ability to experience emotions to be rational. Why? Because our emotions provide important information about how we understand the world around us. Although we might think of a computer as intellectually superior, a human so void of emotion would be unable to function. Think about a manager making a decision to fire an employee. Would you really want the manager to make the decision without regarding either his or the employee's emotions? The key to good decision making is to employ both thinking *and* feeling in one's decisions.

What Functions Do Emotions Serve?   Why do we have emotions? What role do they serve? We just discussed one function—that we need them to think rationally. Charles Darwin, however, took a broader approach. In *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Darwin argued that emotions developed over time to help humans solve problems. Emotions are useful, he said, because they motivate people to engage in actions important for survival—actions such as foraging for food, seeking shelter, choosing mates, guarding against predators, and predicting others' behaviors. For example, disgust (an emotion) motivates us to avoid dangerous or harmful things (such as rotten foods). Excitement (also an emotion) motivates us to take on situations in which we require energy and initiative (for example, tackling a new career).

Drawing from Darwin are researchers who focus on **evolutionary psychology**. This field of study says we must experience emotions—whether they are positive or negative—because they serve a purpose.[26] For example, you would probably consider jealousy to be a negative emotion. Evolutionary psychologists would argue that it exists in people because it has a useful purpose. Mates may feel jealousy to increase the chance that their genes, rather than a rival's genes, are passed on to the next generation.[27] Although we tend to think of anger as being "bad," it actually can help us protect our rights when we feel they're being violated. For example, a person showing anger when she's double-crossed by a colleague is serving a warning for others not to repeat the same behavior. Consider another example. Rena Weeks was a secretary at a prominent law firm. Her boss wouldn't stop touching and grabbing her. His treatment made her angry. So she did more than quit—she sued, and won a multimillion-dollar case.[28] It's not that anger is always good. But as with all other emotions, it exists because it serves a useful purpose. Positive emotions also serve a purpose. For example, a service employee who feels empathy for a customer may provide better customer service.

But some researchers are not firm believers of evolutionary psychology. Why? Think about fear (an emotion). It's just as easy to think of the harmful effects of fear as it is the beneficial effects. For example, running in fear from a predator increases the likelihood of survival. But what benefit does freezing in fear serve? Evolutionary psychology provides an interesting perspective on the functions of emotions, but it's hard to know whether or not this perspective is valid all the time.[29]

Mood as Positive and Negative Affect

One way to classify emotions is by whether they are positive or negative.[30] Positive emotions—like joy and gratitude—express a favorable evaluation or feeling. Negative emotions—like anger or guilt—express the opposite. Keep in mind that emotions can't be neutral. Being neutral is being nonemotional.[31]

When we group emotions into positive and negative categories, they become mood states because we are now looking at them more generally instead of isolating one particular emotion. See Exhibit 8-2. In this exhibit, excited is a specific emotion that is a pure marker of high positive affect, while boredom is a pure marker of low positive affect. Similarly, nervous is a pure marker of high negative affect, while relaxed is a pure marker of low negative affect. Finally, some emotions—like contentment (a mixture of high positive affect and low negative affect) or sadness (a mixture of low positive affect and high negative affect)—are in between. You'll notice that this model does not include all emotions. There are two reasons why. First, we can fit other emotions like enthusiasm or depression into the model, but we're short on space. Second, some emotions, like surprise, don't fit well because they're not as clearly positive or negative.

So, we can think of **positive affect** as a mood dimension consisting of positive emotions such as excitement, self-assurance, and cheerfulness at the high end, and boredom, sluggishness, and tiredness at the low end. **Negative affect** is a mood dimension consisting of nervousness, stress, and anxiety at the high end, and relaxation, tranquility, and poise at the low end. (Note that positive and negative affect *are* moods. We're using these labels, rather than positive and negative mood, because that's how researchers label them.)

Positive affect and negative affect play out at work (and beyond work, of course) in that they color our perceptions, and these perceptions can become their own reality. For example, one flight attendant posted an anonymous blog on the Web that said: "I work in a pressurized aluminum tube and the

| Exhibit **8-2** | The Structure of Mood |
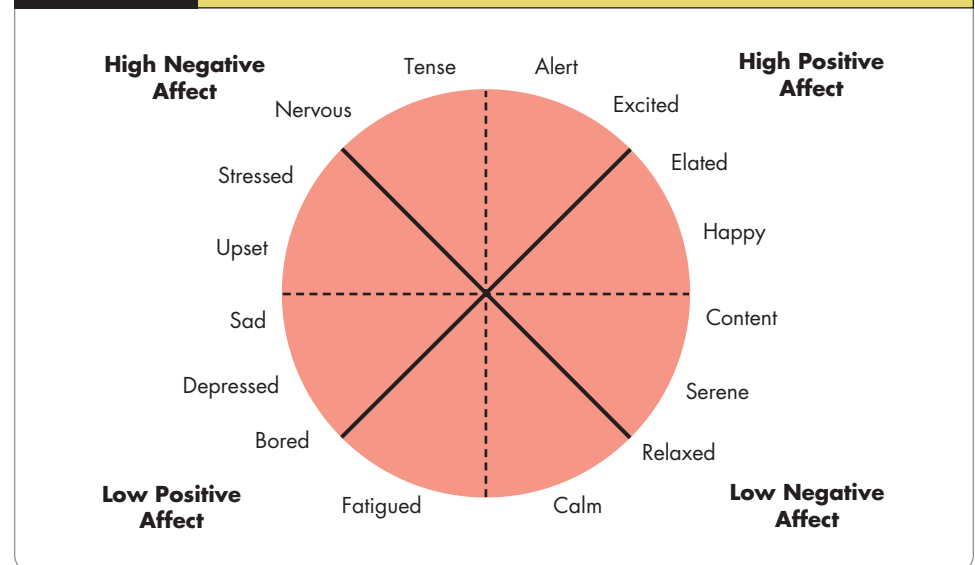
positive affect *A mood dimension consisting of specific positive emotions like excitement, self-assurance, and cheerfulness at the high end, and boredom, sluggishness, and tiredness at the low end.*

negative affect *A mood dimension consisting of nervousness, stress, and anxiety at the high end, and relaxation, tranquility, and poise at the low end.*

environment outside my 'office' cannot sustain human life. That being said, the human life inside is not worth sustaining sometimes . . . in fact, the passengers can be jerks, and idiots. I am often treated with no respect, nobody listens to me . . . until I threaten to kick them off the plane . . . "[32] Clearly, if a flight attendant is in a bad mood, it's going to influence his perceptions of passengers, which will influence his behavior in turn.

Importantly, negative emotions are more likely to translate into negative moods. People think about events that created strong negative emotions five times as long as they do about events that created strong positive ones.[33] So, we should expect people to recall negative experiences more readily than positive ones. Perhaps one of the reasons is that, for most of us, they're also more unusual. Indeed research shows that there is a **positivity offset**, meaning that at zero input (when nothing in particular is going on), most individuals experience a mildly positive mood.[34] So for most people, positive moods are somewhat more common than negative moods. The positivity offset also appears to operate at work. For example, one study of customer service representatives in a British call center (probably a job where it's pretty hard to feel positive) revealed that people reported experiencing positive moods 58 percent of the time.[35]

Sources of Emotions and Moods

Have you ever said to yourself, "I got up on the wrong side of the bed today"? Have you ever snapped at a coworker or family member for no particular reason? If you have, it probably makes you wonder where emotions and moods come from. Here, we pick up the discussion of moods again because, even though emotions are thought to be more influenced by events than moods, ironically, researchers have conducted more studies on the sources of moods than on the sources of particular emotions. So, now we'll turn to the main sources of moods, though a lot of these sources also affect emotions.

Personality   Do you scream at the TV when your team is losing a big game while your friend seems like she could care less that her team has no chance of winning? Consider another situation. Noel and Jose are coworkers. Noel has a tendency to get angry when a colleague criticizes her ideas during a brainstorming session. Jose, however, is quite calm and relaxed, viewing such criticism as an opportunity for improvement. What explains these different reactions? Personality predisposes people to experience certain moods and emotions. For example, some people feel guilt and anger more readily than others do. Others may feel calm and relaxed no matter the situation. In other words, moods and emotions have a trait component to them—most people have built-in tendencies to experience certain moods and emotions more frequently than others do. Consider Texas Tech basketball coach Bobby Knight. He is infamous for his tirades against players, officials, fans, and the media. Clearly, he is easily moved to experience anger. But take Microsoft CEO Bill Gates, who is known for his relatively distant, unemotional, analytical nature. He rarely displays anger.

So Bobby Knight and Bill Gates have tendencies to *experience* a particular mood or emotion. But, as we mentioned earlier, some people are predisposed to experience *any* emotion more intensely. Such people are high on **affect intensity**, or "individual differences in the strength with which individuals experience their emotions."[36] While most people might feel slightly sad at one movie or be mildly amused at another, someone high on affect intensity would cry like a baby at a sad movie and laugh uncontrollably at a comedy. We might describe such people as "emotional" or "intense." So, emotions differ in their

intensity, but people also differ in how predisposed they are to experience emotions intensely. If a person gets really mad at a coworker, he would be experiencing an emotion intensely. But if that person gets mad, or excited, really easily, then he would be high on the personality trait of affect intensity.

Also, positive events are more likely to affect the positive mood and positive emotions of extraverts, and negative events are more likely to influence the negative mood and negative emotions of those scoring low on emotional stability.[37] To illustrate, let's say there are two friends who work together—Paul and Alex. Paul scores high on extraversion and emotional stability. Alex scores low on both. One day at work, Paul and Alex learn they're going to earn a commission for a sale their work group made. Later the same day, their boss stops by and yells at them for no apparent reason. In this situation, you'd expect Paul's positive affect to increase more than Alex's because Paul is more extraverted and attends more to the good news of the day. Conversely, you'd expect Alex's negative affect to increase more than Paul's because Alex scores lower on emotional stability and therefore tends to dwell on the negative event that day.

Day of the Week and Time of the Day   Most people are at work or school Monday through Friday. For most of us, that means the weekend is a time of relaxation and leisure. Does that suggest that people are in their best moods on the weekends? Well, actually, yes. As Exhibit 8-3 shows, people tend to be in

Exhibit **8-3**	Our Moods Are Affected by the Day of the Week
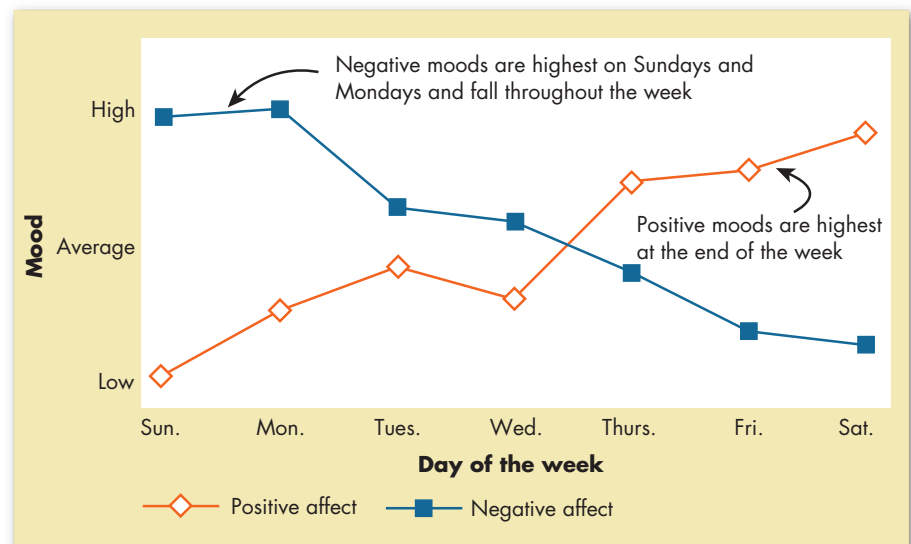
Source: D. Watson, *Mood and Temperament*, New York, Guilford Publications, 2000.

positivity offset   *Tendency of most individuals to experience a mildly positive mood at zero input (when nothing in particular is going on).*

affect intensity   *Individual differences in the strength with which individuals experience their emotions.*

their worst moods (highest negative affect and lowest positive affect) early in the week and in their best moods (highest positive affect and lowest negative affect) late in the week.[38]

What about time of the day? When are you usually in your best mood? Your worst? We often think that people differ, depending on whether they are "morning" or "evening" people. However, the vast majority of us follow a similar pattern. People are generally in lower spirits early in the morning. During the course of the day, our moods tend to improve and then decline in the evening. Exhibit 8-4 shows this pattern. Interestingly, regardless of what time people go to bed at night or get up in the morning, levels of positive affect tend to peak around the halfway point between waking and sleeping. Negative affect, however, shows little fluctuation throughout the day.[39]

What does this mean for organizational behavior? Asking someone for a favor, or conveying bad news, is probably not a good idea on Monday morning. Our workplace interactions will probably be more positive from mid-morning onward, and also later in the week.

It does seem that people who describe themselves as morning people are more alert early in the morning.[40] However, these morning people experience only slightly better moods (more positive affect) in the morning compared to those who describe themselves as evening people (and vice-versa).[41]

Weather   When do you think you would be in a better mood? When it's 70 degrees and sunny or when it's a gloomy, cold, rainy day? Many people believe their mood is tied to the weather. However, evidence suggests that weather has

Exhibit **8-4**	Our Moods Are Affected by the Time of the Day
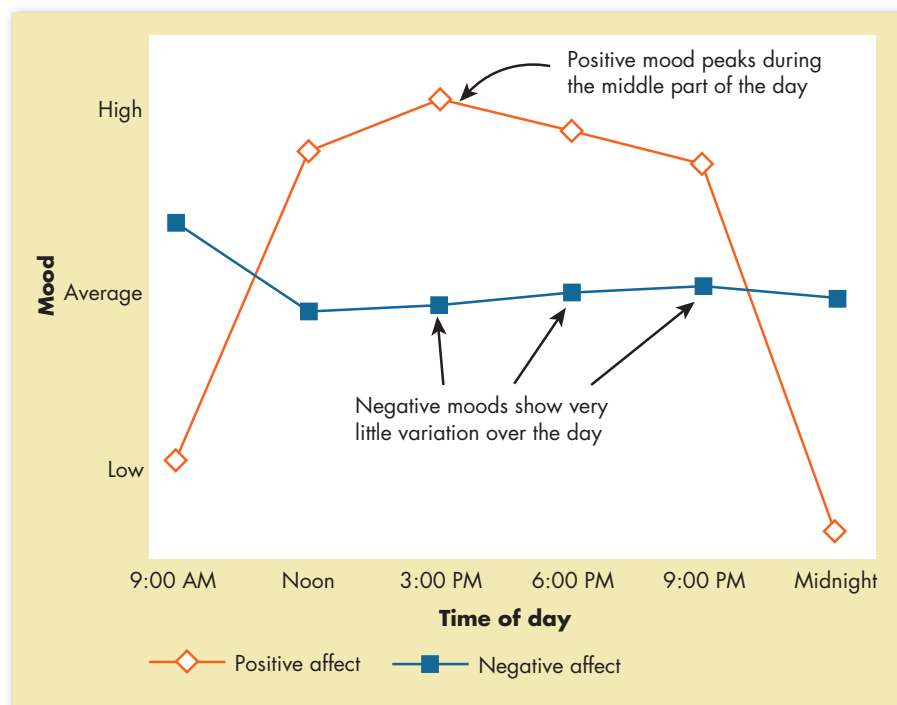
Source: D. Watson, *Mood and Temperament*, New York, Guilford Publications, 2000.

little effect on mood. One expert concluded, "Contrary to the prevailing cultural view, these data indicate that people do not report a better mood on bright and sunny days (or, conversely, a worse mood on dark and rainy days)."[42] *Illusory correlation* explains why people tend to *think* that nice weather improves their mood. **Illusory correlation** occurs when people associate two events but in reality there is no connection.

For example, over time, there has been a positive correlation between the length of women's skirts and the Standard and Poor's 500 stock market price. When the length goes up in the fashion world, so does the S&P 500. Does this mean that if we could convince women to shorten their skirts, it would cause a stock market boom? Of course not. There are all sorts of correlations that aren't causal (another example—the salaries of Presbyterian ministers in Massachusetts and the price of rum in Havana). People often associate things as causal when in fact there's no true relationship. That appears to be the case with weather and moods.

Stress   As you might imagine, stress affects emotions and moods. For example, students have higher levels of fear before an exam, but their fear dissipates once the exam is over.[43] At work, stressful daily events (a nasty email, an impending deadline, the loss of a big sale, being reprimanded by your boss, and so on) negatively affect employees' moods. Also, the effects of stress build over time. As the authors of one study note, "a constant diet of even low-level stressful events has the potential to cause workers to experience gradually increasing levels of strain over time."[44] Such mounting levels of stress and strain at work can worsen our moods, and we experience more negative emotions. Consider the following entry from a worker's blog: "i'm in a bit of a blah mood today . . . physically, i feel funky, though and the weather out combined with the amount of personal and work i need to get done are getting to me." Although sometimes we thrive on stress, for most of us, like this blogger, stress begins to take its toll on our mood.[45]

Social Activities   Do you tend to be happiest when you are at a barbeque with friends or out to dinner to celebrate a family member's birthday? For most people, social activities increase positive mood and have little effect on negative mood. But do people in positive moods seek out social interactions, or do social interactions cause people to be in good moods? It seems that both are true.[46] And, does the *type* of social activity matter? Indeed it does. Research suggests that physical (skiing or hiking with friends), informal (going to a party), or Epicurean (eating with others) activities are more strongly associated with increases in positive mood than formal (attending a meeting) or sedentary (watching TV with friends) events.[47]

Social interactions even have long-term health benefits. One study of longevity found that being in the company of others (as opposed to social isolation) was one of *the* best predictors of how long someone lives—more important than gender, or even blood pressure or cholesterol levels.[48] One of the reasons for this is positive affect. A study of nuns 75–95 years old showed that the degree to which the nuns experienced positive moods in their 20s predicted how long they lived six decades later.[49]

illusory correlation   *The tendency of people to associate two events when in reality there is no connection.*

Myth or Science?   *Does Sharing Good News Affect Our Mood?*

When good things hapen to you, do you immediately call a friend or run over to your coworker's office to share the joy? If this isn't your style, you might reconsider. A study shows that those who sought out others when good things happened to them were consistently happier than those who did not share their good news. Additionally, this "capitalizing" effect held irrespective of the events themselves, meaning that if two people both had positive things happen to them, the happier person would be the one who shared the good news. The study ruled out alternative explanations for these findings. For example, personality did not play a role, given that the results were not due to high levels of extraversion in the study's participants.

Peoples' responses to an individual's good news are also important. Only when others reacted with genuine enthusiasm (as opposed to indifference or feigned happiness) did sharing make people happier. So happiness is not just the result of sharing joy, rather, it is also a result of sharing good news with the right people.

But how does capitalizing on positive events affect an individual's job satisfaction? Sharing news about a promotion, a new hire, or a closed sale—contributed to positive moods at work and satisfaction with one's work. Again, the type of response mattered—that is, employees were happiest when they shared positive events with others who were truly happy for them. ■

To keep employees in shape and in touch with coworkers, Ford Motor Company provides fitness centers and fitness challenges for employees. Ford believes that exercise increases positive moods, resulting in happier, healthier, and more productive employees. The company also sponsors recreational clubs for activities such as bowling, racquetball, skiing, and softball that allow employees to get a good physical workout while interacting socially with other employees. Shown here is an employee with Ford's fitness director at an assembly plant in Hazelwood, Missouri.

Sleep   According to a recent poll, people are getting less and less sleep. On average, Americans sleep less than seven hours per weekday night—below the eight-hour recommendation. And the number of people who actually sleep eight or more hours a night has steadily decreased over the past few years to about one in four. Roughly 75 percent of those polled reported having at least one symptom of a sleep problem a few nights a week or more within the past year.[50]

As you might imagine, sleep quality affects mood. Undergraduates and adult workers who are sleep-deprived report greater feelings of fatigue, anger, and hostility.[51] One of the reasons why less sleep, or poor sleep quality, puts people in a bad mood is because it impairs decision making and makes it difficult to control emotions.[52] A recent study suggests that poor sleep the previous night also impairs people's job satisfaction the next day, mostly because people feel fatigued, irritable, and less alert.[53]

Exercise   You often hear that people should exercise to improve their mood. But does "sweat therapy" really work? It appears so. Research consistently shows that exercise enhances people's positive mood.[54] It appears that the therapeutic effects of exercise are strongest for those who are depressed. Although the effects of exercise on moods are consistent, they are not terribly strong. So, exercise may help put you in a better mood, but don't expect miracles.

Age   Do you think that young people experience more extreme, positive emotions (so-called "youthful exuberance") than older people do? If you answered yes, you were wrong. One study of people aged 18 to 94 years revealed negative emotions seem to occur less as people get older. Periods of highly positive moods lasted longer for older individuals and bad moods faded more quickly.[55] The study implies that emotional experience tends to improve with age so that as we get older, we experience fewer negative emotions.

Gender   The common belief is that women are more in touch with their feelings than men are—that they react more emotionally and are better able to read emotions in others. Is there any truth to these assumptions?

The evidence does confirm differences between men and women when it comes to emotional reactions and the ability to read others. In contrasting

the genders, women show greater emotional expression than men;[56] they experience emotions more intensely; and they display more frequent expressions of both positive and negative emotions, except anger.[57] In contrast to men, women also report more comfort in expressing emotions. Finally, women are better at reading nonverbal and paralinguistic cues than are men.[58]

What explains these differences? Researchers have suggested three possible explanations. One explanation is the different ways men and women have been socialized.[59] Men are taught to be tough and brave. Showing emotion is inconsistent with this image. Women, in contrast, are socialized to be nurturing. This may account for the perception that women are generally warmer and friendlier than men. For instance, women are expected to express more positive emotions on the job (shown by smiling) than men, and they do.[60] A second explanation is that women may have more innate ability to read others and present their emotions than do men.[61] Third, women may have a greater need for social approval and, so, a higher propensity to show positive emotions, such as happiness.

External Constraints on Emotions

An emotion that is acceptable on the athletic playing field may be totally unacceptable when exhibited at the workplace. Similarly, what's appropriate in one country is often inappropriate in another. These two factors play a role in determining what emotions we'll display. Every organization defines boundaries that identify which emotions are acceptable and the degree to which employees may express them. Cultures set boundaries, too. In this section, we look at organizational and cultural influences on emotions.

Organizational Influences   If you can't smile and appear happy, you're unlikely to have much of a career working at a Disney amusement park. And a manual produced by McDonald's states that its counter personnel "must display traits such as sincerity, enthusiasm, confidence, and a sense of humor."[62] There is no single emotional "set" that all organizations worldwide

When it comes to expressing positive emotions, Southwest Airlines imposes few external constraints on employee behavior. It encourages employees to be passionate about their work and gives them freedom in expressing their passion. Southwest's emotional "set" of appropriate behaviors among employees includes caring, nurturing, and fun loving. Displaying these emotions on the job delight Southwest's passengers, as the flight attendant shown here readies to embrace a tiny traveler.

seek in their employees. However, in the United States, the evidence indicates that there's a bias against negative and intense emotions. Expressions of negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, and anger tend to be unacceptable except under fairly specific conditions.[63] For instance, one such condition might be a high-status member of a group conveying impatience with a low-status member.[64] Moreover, expressions of intense emotion, whether negative or positive, tend to be unacceptable because management regards them as undermining routine task performance.[65] Again, there are instances when such expressions are acceptable—for example, a brief grieving over the sudden death of a company's CEO or the celebration of a record year of profits. But for the most part, the climate in well-managed American organizations is one that strives to be emotion-free.

Cultural Influences   Does the degree to which people *experience* emotions vary across cultures? Do people's *interpretations* of emotions vary across cultures? Finally, do the norms for the *expression* of emotions differ across cultures? Let's tackle each of these questions.

Does the degree to which people experience emotions vary across cultures? Yes. In China, for example, people report that they experience fewer positive and negative emotions than those in other cultures, and whatever emotions they do experience are less intense than what other cultures report. Compared to Mainland Chinese, Taiwanese are more like Americans in their experience of emotions: On average Taiwanese report more positive and fewer negative emotions than their Chinese counterparts.[66] In general, people in most cultures appear to experience certain positive and negative emotions, but the frequency of their experience and their intensity does vary to some degree.[67]

Do people's interpretations of emotions vary across cultures? In general, people from all over the world interpret negative and positive emotions the same way. We all view negative emotions, such as hate, terror, and rage, as dangerous and destructive. And we all desire positive emotions—such as joy, love, and happiness. However, some cultures value certain emotions more than others. For example, Americans value enthusiasm while Chinese consider negative emotions to be

In expanding their stores to other countries, Wal-Mart has learned that cultural norms govern emotional expression. The Chinese people, for example, are accustomed to vendors hawking their goods in street markets. When Wal-Mart employees in China shout out special prices for products, customers view the emotional expressions in a positive way as showing excitement and enthusiasm. But these expressions would not be acceptable in countries like Sweden where people place a low value on assertiveness.

Emotional Recognition: Universal or Culture-Specific?

EARLY RESEARCHERS STUDYING HOW WE UNDER-stand emotions based on others' expressions believed that all individuals, regardless of their culture, could recognize the same emotion. So, for example, a frown would be recognized as indicating the emotion of sadness, no matter where one was from. However, more recent research suggests that this universal approach to the study of emotions is incorrect because there are subtle differences in the degree to which we can tell what emotions people from different cultures are feeling based on their facial expressions.

One study examined how quickly and accurately we can read the facial expressions of people of different cultural backgrounds. Although individuals were at first faster at recognizing the emotional expression of others from their own culture, when living in a different culture, the speed and accuracy at which they recognized others' emotions increased as they became more familiar with the culture. For example, as Chinese residing in the United States adapted to their surroundings they were able to recognize the emotions of U.S. citizens more quickly. In fact, foreigners are sometimes better at recognizing emotions among the citizens in their non-native country than are those citizens themselves.

Interestingly, these effects begin to occur relatively quickly. For example, Chinese students living in the United States for an average of 2.4 years were better at recognizing the facial expressions of U.S. citizens than the facial expressions of Chinese citizens. Why is this the case? According to the authors of the study, it could be that they, limited in speaking the language, rely more on nonverbal communication. What is the upshot for OB? When conducting business in a foreign country, the ability to correctly recognize others' emotions can facilitate interactions and lead to less miscommunication. Otherwise, a slight smile that is intended to communicate disinterest may be mistaken for happiness.

more useful and constructive than do Americans. In general, pride is seen as a positive emotion in Western, individualistic cultures such as the United States, but Eastern cultures such as China and Japan tend to view pride as undesirable.[68]

Do the norms for the expression of emotions differ across cultures? Absolutely. For example, Muslims see smiling as a sign of sexual attraction, so women have learned not to smile at men.[69] And research has shown that in collectivist countries people are more likely to believe that emotional displays have something to do with their own relationship with the person expressing the emotion, while people in individualistic cultures do not think that another's emotional expressions are directed at them.[70]

For example, in Venezuela (a highly collectivistic culture), someone seeing an angry expression on a friend's face would think that the friend is mad at her, but in America (a very individualistic culture), a person would generally not attribute an angry friend's expression to something she had done. Such norms play a role in *emotional labor*, which we'll learn about in the next section.

In general, it's easier for people to accurately recognize emotions within their own culture than in those of other cultures. For example, a Chinese businessperson is more likely to accurately label the emotions underlying the facial expressions of a fellow Chinese colleague than those of an American colleague.[71]

Interestingly, some cultures lack words for standard American emotional terms such as *anxiety, depression*, and *guilt*. Tahitians, as a case in point, don't have a word directly equivalent to *sadness*. When Tahitians are sad, their peers attribute their state to a physical illness.[72] Our discussion illustrates the need to consider cultural factors as influencing what managers consider emotionally appropriate.[73] What's acceptable in one culture may seem extremely unusual or even dysfunctional in another. Managers need to know the emotional norms in each culture they do business in so they don't send unintended signals or misread the reactions of locals. For example, an American manager in Japan should know that while Americans tend to view smiling positively, Japanese are apt to attribute frequent smiling to a lack of intelligence.[74]

Emotional Labor

If you ever had a job working in retail sales or waiting on tables in a restaurant, you know the importance of projecting a friendly demeanor and a smile. Even though there were days when you didn't feel cheerful, you knew management expected you to be upbeat when dealing with customers. So you faked it, and in so doing, you expressed emotional labor.

Every employee expends physical and mental labor when they put their bodies and cognitive capabilities, respectively, into their job. But jobs also require **emotional labor**. Emotional labor is an employee's expression of organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions at work.[75]

The concept of emotional labor emerged from studies of service jobs. Think about it. Airlines expect their flight attendants, for instance, to be cheerful, we expect funeral directors to be sad, and doctors to be emotionally neutral. But really, emotional labor is relevant to almost every job. Your managers expect you, for example, to be courteous, not hostile, in interactions with coworkers. The true challenge is when employees have to project one emotion while simultaneously feeling another.[76] This disparity is **emotional dissonance**, and it can take a heavy toll on employees. Left untreated, bottled-up feelings of frustration, anger, and resentment can eventually lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout.[77] It's from the increasing importance of emotional labor as a key component of effective job performance that an understanding of emotion has gained heightened relevance within the field of OB.

Felt Versus Displayed Emotions

Emotional labor creates dilemmas for employees. There are people with whom you have to work that you just plain don't like. Maybe you consider their personality abrasive. Maybe you know they've said negative things about you behind your back. Regardless, your job requires you to interact with these people on a regular basis. So you're forced to feign friendliness.

It can help you, on the job especially, if you separate emotions into *felt* or *displayed*.[78] **Felt emotions** are an individual's actual emotions. In contrast, **displayed emotions** are those that the organization requires workers to show and considers appropriate in a given job. They're not innate; they're learned. "The ritual look of delight on the face of the first runner-up as the new Miss America is announced is a product of the display rule that losers should mask their sadness with an expression of joy for the winner."[79] Similarly, most of us know that we're expected to act sad at funerals regardless of whether we consider the person's death to be a loss and to pretend to be happy at weddings even if we don't feel like celebrating.[80]

Effective managers have learned to be serious when giving an employee a negative performance evaluation and to hide their anger when they've been passed over for promotion. And the salesperson who hasn't learned to smile and appear friendly, regardless of his true feelings at the moment, isn't typically going to last long on most sales jobs. How we *experience* an emotion isn't always the same as how we *show* it.[81]

The key point here is that felt and displayed emotions are often different. Many people have problems working with others because they naïvely assume that the emotions they see others display is what those others actually feel. This is particularly true in organizations, where role demands and situations often require people to exhibit emotional behaviors that mask their true feelings. In addition, jobs today increasingly require employees to interact with customers. And customers aren't always easy to deal with. They often complain, behave rudely, and make unrealistic demands. In such instances, an employee's felt emotions may need to be disguised. Employees who aren't able to project a friendly and helpful demeanor in such situations are likely to alienate customers and are unlikely to be effective in their jobs.

Yet another point is that displaying fake emotions requires us to suppress the emotions we really feel (not showing anger toward a customer, for example). In other words, the individual has to "act" to keep her job. **Surface acting** is hiding one's inner feelings and forging emotional expressions in response to display rules. For example, when a worker smiles at a customer even when he doesn't feel like it, he is surface acting. **Deep acting** is trying to modify one's true inner feelings based on display rules. A health-care provider trying to genuinely feel more empathy for her patients is deep acting.[82] Surface acting deals with one's *displayed* emotions, and deep acting deals with one's *felt* emotions. Research shows that surface acting is more stressful to employees because it entails feigning one's true emotions.[83]

As we've noted, emotional norms vary across cultures. Cultural norms in the United States dictate that employees in service organizations should smile and act friendly when interacting with customers.[84] But this norm doesn't apply worldwide. In Israel, customers see smiling supermarket cashiers as inexperienced, so managers encourage cashiers to look somber.[85] Employees in France are likely to experience a minimal degree of emotional dissonance because they make little effort to hide their true feelings. French retail clerks are infamous for being surly toward customers. (A report from the French government itself confirmed this).[86] And Wal-Mart has found that its emphasis on employee friendliness, which has won them a loyal following among U.S. shoppers, doesn't work in Germany. Accustomed to a culture where the customer traditionally comes last, serious German shoppers have been turned off by Wal-Mart's friendly greeters and helpful personnel.[87]

And what about gender differences? Do you think society expects women to display different emotions than men, even in the same job? This is a difficult question to answer, but there is some evidence that upper management does expect men and women to display different emotions even in the same

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emotional labor *A situation in which an employee expresses organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions at work.*

emotional dissonance *Inconsistencies between the emotions we feel and the emotions we project.*

felt emotions *An individual's actual emotions.*

displayed emotions *Emotions that are organizationally required and considered appropriate in a given job.*

surface acting *Hiding one's inner feelings and forging emotional expressions in response to display rules.*

deep acting *Trying to modify one's true inner feelings based on display rules.*

job. In professional and managerial jobs, for example, women report having to suppress negative feelings and display more positive feelings than men to conform to what they say their bosses and colleagues expect.[88]

Are Emotionally Demanding Jobs Rewarded with Better Pay?

You may wonder how well the labor market rewards jobs that are emotionally demanding. You might think, for example, that the job of funeral director, which may include mortician duties and arranging funerals with grieving families, should pay well. But it seems that jobs that are emotionally demanding (jobs that are taxing or require an employee to "put on a good face") may be rewarded less well than jobs that are cognitively demanding (ones that require a lot of thinking and that demand a complex set of skills).

A recent study examined this issue across a wide range of jobs.[89] The authors of the study found that the relationship between cognitive demands and pay was quite strong, while the relationship between emotional demands and pay was not. They did find that emotional demands matter, but only when jobs already were cognitively demanding—jobs such as lawyers and nurses. But, for instance, child-care workers and waiters (jobs with high emotional demands but relatively low cognitive demands), receive little compensation for emotional demands.

Exhibit 8-5 shows the relationship between cognitive and emotional demands and pay. For jobs that are cognitively demanding, increasing emotional demands lead to better pay. However, for jobs that are not cognitively demanding, increasing emotional demands lead to *worse* pay. The model doesn't seem to depict a fair state of affairs. After all, why should emotional demands be rewarded in only cognitively complex jobs? One explanation may be that it's hard to find qualified people who are willing and able to work in such jobs.

| Exhibit 8-5	Relationship of Pay to Cognitive and Emotional Demands of Jobs
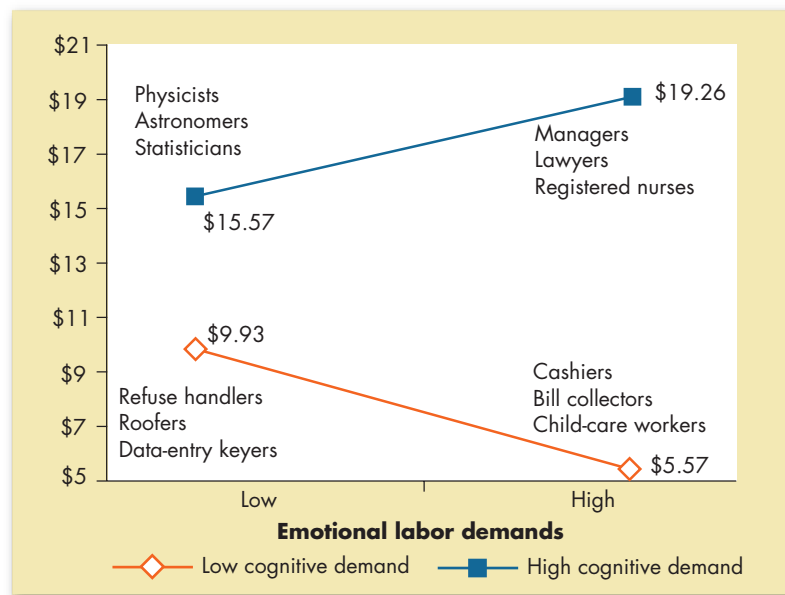
Source: Based on: T. M. Glomb, J. D. Kammeyer-Mueller, and M. Rotundo, "Emotional Labor Demands and Compensating Wage Differentials," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol 89(4), Aug 2004, pp. 700–714.

Affective Events Theory

As we have seen, emotions and moods are an important part of our lives, especially our work lives. But how do our emotions and moods influence our job performance and satisfaction? A model called **affective events theory (AET)** has increased our understanding of the links.[90] AET demonstrates that employees react emotionally to things that happen to them at work and that this reaction influences their job performance and satisfaction.

Exhibit 8-6 summarizes AET. The theory begins by recognizing that emotions are a response to an event in the work environment. The work environment includes everything surrounding the job—the variety of tasks and degree of autonomy, job demands, and requirements for expressing emotional labor. This environment creates work events that can be hassles, uplifts, or both. Examples of hassles are colleagues who refuse to carry their share of work, conflicting directions by different managers, and excessive time pressures. Examples of uplifting events include meeting a goal, getting support from a colleague, and receiving recognition for an accomplishment.[91]

These work events trigger positive or negative emotional reactions. But employees' personalities and moods predisposes them to respond with greater or lesser intensity to the event. For instance, people who score low on emotional stability are more likely to react strongly to negative events. And their mood introduces the reality that their general affect cycle creates fluctuations. So a person's emotional response to a given event can change depending on mood. Finally, emotions influence a number of performance and satisfaction variables such as organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, level of effort, intentions to quit, and workplace deviance.

Exhibit **8-6**   Affective Events Theory
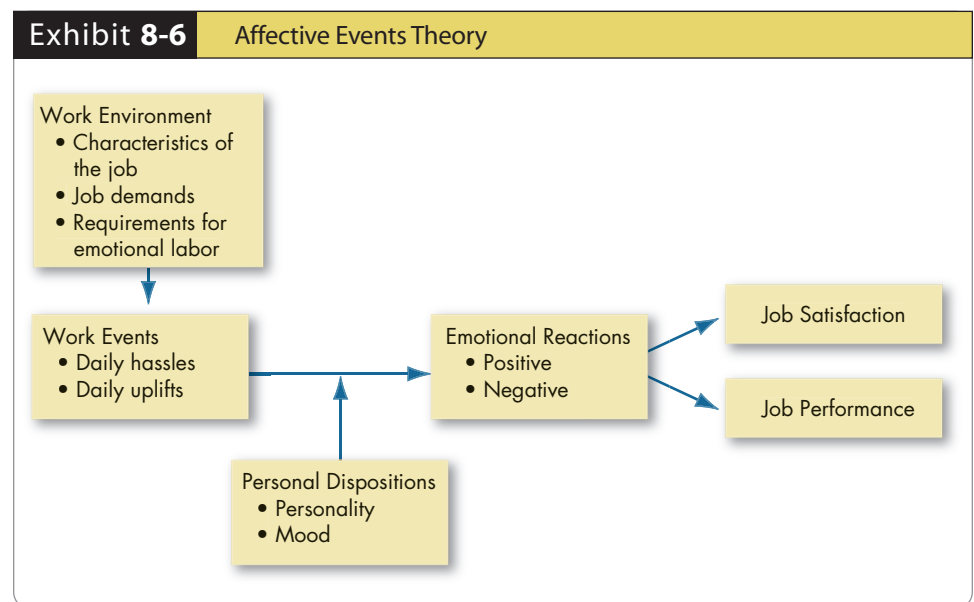
Source: Based on N. M. Ashkanasy and C. S. Daus, "Emotion in the Workplace: The New Challenge for Managers," *Academy of Management Executive,* February 2002, p. 77.

affective events theory   *A model which suggests that workplace events cause emotional reactions on the part of employees, which then influence workplace attitudes and behaviors.*

In addition, tests of the theory suggest that (1) an emotional episode is actually a series of emotional experiences precipitated by a single event. It contains elements of both emotions and mood cycles. (2) Current emotions influence job satisfaction at any given time, along with the history of emotions surrounding the event. (3) Because moods and emotions fluctuate over time, their effect on performance also fluctuates. (4) Emotion-driven behaviors are typically short in duration and of high variability. (5) Because emotions, even positive ones, tend to be incompatible with behaviors required to do a job, they typically have a negative influence on job performance.[92]

An example might help better explain AET.[93] You work as an aeronautical engineer for Boeing. Because of the downturn in the demand for commercial jets, you've just learned that the company is considering laying off 10,000 employees. This layoff could include you. This event is likely to make you feel negative emotions, especially fear that you might lose your job and primary source of income. And because you're prone to worry a lot and obsess about problems, this event increases your feelings of insecurity.

It also puts into place a series of smaller events that create an episode: You talk with your boss and he assures you that your job is safe; you hear rumors that your department is high on the list to be eliminated; you run into a former colleague who was laid off six months ago and still hasn't found work. These events, in turn, create emotional ups and downs. One day you're feeling more upbeat and that you'll survive the cuts. The next day, you might be depressed and anxious. These emotional swings take your attention away from your work and lower your job performance and satisfaction. Finally, your response is magnified because this is the fourth largest layoff that Boeing has initiated in the last three years.

In summary, AET offers two important messages.[94] First, emotions provide valuable insights into understanding employee behavior. The model demonstrates how workplace hassles and uplifts influence employee performance and satisfaction. Second, employees and managers shouldn't ignore emotions and the events that cause them, even when they appear to be minor, because they accumulate.

Emotional Intelligence

Diane Marshall is an office manager. Her awareness of her own and others' emotions is almost nil. She's moody and unable to generate much enthusiasm or interest in her employees. She doesn't understand why employees get upset with her. She often overreacts to problems and chooses the most ineffectual responses to emotional situations.[95] Diane Marshall is someone with low emotional intelligence. **Emotional intelligence (EI)** is one's ability to detect and to manage emotional cues and information.

People who know their own emotions and are good at reading others' emotions may be more effective in their jobs. That, in essence, is the theme underlying recent EI research.[96]

EI is composed of five dimensions:

- *Self-awareness*—being aware of what you're feeling
- *Self-management*—the ability to manage your own emotions and impulses
- *Self-motivation*—the ability to persist in the face of setbacks and failures
- *Empathy*—the ability to sense how others are feeling
- *Social skills*—the ability to handle the emotions of others

Several studies suggest that EI plays an important role in job performance. One study looked at the characteristics of Lucent Technologies' engineers who

Meg Whitman, CEO of eBay, is a leader with high emotional intelligence. Since eBay founder Pierre Omidyar selected Whitman to transform his startup into a global enterprise, she has emerged as a star performer in a job that demands interacting socially with employees, customers, and political leaders throughout the world. Whitman is described as self-confident yet humble, trustworthy, culturally sensitive, and expert at building teams and leading change. Shown here, Whitman welcomes Gloria Arroyo, president of the Philippine Islands where eBay has an auction site, to eBay headquarters.

were rated as stars by their peers. The researchers concluded that stars were better at relating to others. That is, it was EI, not IQ, that characterized high performers. Another illuminating study looked at the successes and failures of 11 American presidents—from Franklin Roosevelt to Bill Clinton. They were evaluated on six qualities—communication, organization, political skill, vision, cognitive style, and emotional intelligence. It was found that the key quality that differentiated the successful (like Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Reagan) from the unsuccessful (like Johnson, Carter, and Nixon) was emotional intelligence.[97]

The Case for EI

EI has been a controversial concept in OB. It has its supporters and detractors. In the upcoming sections, we'll review the arguments for, and against, the viability of EI in OB.

Intuitive Appeal   There's a lot of intuitive appeal to the EI concept. Most everyone would agree that it is good to possess street smarts and social intelligence. Those people who can detect emotions in others, control their own emotions, and handle social interactions well will have a powerful leg up in the business world, so the thinking goes. As just one example, partners in a multinational consulting firm who scored above the median on an EI measure delivered $1.2 million more in business than did the other partners.[98]

EI Predicts Criteria That Matter   Evidence is mounting that suggests a high level of EI means a person will perform well on the job. One study found that EI predicted the performance of employees in a cigarette factory in China.[99]

emotional intelligence   *The ability to detect and to manage emotional cues and information.*

Another study found that being able to recognize emotions in others' facial expressions and to emotionally "eavesdrop" (pick up subtle signals about people's emotions) predicted peer ratings of how valuable these people were to their organization.[100] Finally, a review of 59 studies indicated that, overall, EI correlated moderately with job performance.[101]

EI Is Biologically Based   One study has shown that people with damage to the part of the brain that governs emotional processing (lesions in an area of the prefrontal cortex) score significantly lower on EI tests. Even though these brain-damaged people scored no lower on standard measures of intelligence than people without the same brain damage, they were still impaired in normal decision making. Specifically, when people were playing a card game in which there is a reward (money) for picking certain types of cards and a punishment (a loss of money) for picking other types of cards, the participants with no brain damage learned to succeed in the game, while the performance of the brain-damaged group worsened over time. This study suggests that EI is neurologically based in a way that's unrelated to standard measures of intelligence, and that people who suffer neurological damage score lower on EI and make poorer decisions than people who are healthier in this regard.[102]

The Case against EI

For all its supporters, EI has just as many critics.

EI Is Too Vague a Concept   To many researchers, it's not clear what EI is. Is it a form of intelligence? Most of us wouldn't think that being self-aware or self-motivated or having empathy is a matter of intellect. So, is EI a misnomer? Moreover, many times different researchers focus on different skills, making it difficult to get a definition of EI. One researcher may study self-discipline. Another may study empathy. Another may look at self-awareness. As one reviewer noted, "The concept of EI has now become so broad and the components so variegated that . . . it is no longer even an intelligible concept."[103]

EI Can't Be Measured   Many critics have raised questions about measuring EI. Because EI is a form of intelligence, for instance, then there must be right and wrong answers about it on tests, they argue. Some tests do have right and wrong answers, although the validity of some of the questions on these measures is questionable. For example, one measure asks you to associate particular feelings with specific colors, as if purple always makes us feel cool not warm. Other measures are self-reported, meaning there is no right or wrong answer. For example, an EI test question might ask you to respond to the statement, "I'm good at 'reading' other people." In general, the measures of EI are diverse, and researchers have not subjected them to as much rigorous study as they have measures of personality and general intelligence.[104]

The Validity of EI Is Suspect   Some critics argue that because EI is so closely related to intelligence and personality, once you control for these factors, EI has nothing unique to offer. There is some foundation to this argument. EI appears to be highly correlated with measures of personality, especially emotional stability.[105] But there hasn't been enough research on whether EI adds insight beyond measures of personality and general intelligence in predicting job performance. Still, among consulting firms and in the popular press, EI is wildly popular. For example, one company's promotional materials for

an EI measure claimed, "EI accounts for more than 85 percent of star performance in top leaders."[106] To say the least, it's hard to validate this statement with the research literature.

Whatever your view of EI, one thing's for sure: The concept is here to stay.

Now that you know more about emotional intelligence, do you think you are a good judge of people? Do you think you can determine what makes someone tick? Check out the Self-Assessment feature determine your EI.

OB Applications of Emotions and Moods

We conclude our discussion of emotions and moods by considering their specific application to OB. In this section, we assess how an understanding of emotions and moods can improve our ability to explain and predict the selection process in organizations, decision making, creativity, motivation, leadership, interpersonal conflict, negotiation, customer service, job attitudes, and deviant workplace behaviors. We also look at how managers can influence our moods.

Selection

One implication from the evidence to date on EI is that employers should consider it a factor in hiring employees, especially in jobs that demand a high degree of social interaction. In fact, more and more employers are starting to use EI measures to hire people. A study of U.S. Air Force recruiters showed that top-performing recruiters exhibited high levels of EI. Using these findings, the Air Force revamped its selection criteria. A follow-up investigation found that future hires who had high EI scores were 2.6 times more successful than those who didn't. By using EI in selection, the Air Force was able to cut turnover rates among new recruiters in one year by more than 90 percent and save nearly $3 million in hiring and training costs. At L'Oreal, salespersons selected on EI scores outsold those hired using the company's old selection procedure. On an annual basis, salespeople selected on the basis of emotional competence sold $91,370 more than other salespeople did, for a net revenue increase of $2,558,360.[107]

Decision Making

As you saw in Chapter 5, traditional approaches to the study of decision making in organizations have emphasized rationality. They have downplayed, or even ignored, the role of sadness, anxiety, fear, frustration, happiness, envy, and similar emotions. Yet it's naive to assume that feelings don't influence our

decisions.[108] Given the same objective data, we should expect that people may make different choices when they're angry and stressed out than when they're calm and collected.

OB researchers continue to debate the role of negative emotions and moods in decision making. One well-cited article suggested that depressed people (those who chronically experience bad moods or negative emotions such as sadness) make more accurate judgments than nondepressed people.[109] This suggestion led some researchers to argue that the saying "sadder but wiser" is true. However, more recent evidence has suggested that people who are depressed make poorer decisions than happy people. Why? Because depressed people are slower at processing information and tend to weigh all possible options rather than the most likely ones.[110] Although it would seem that weighing all possible options is a good thing, the problem is that depressed people search for the perfect solution when rarely is any solution perfect.

Positive people, in contrast, know when a solution is good enough. Indeed, positive emotions seem to help decision making. Positive emotions can increase problem-solving skills and help us understand and analyze new information. For example, someone in a positive mood may be better able to infer that a subordinate's performance problems were due to some nonwork problems.[111] People in good moods or those experiencing positive emotions are more likely to use heuristics, or rules of thumb,[112] to help them make good decisions quickly. Sometimes, however, these heuristics can be wrong and can lead to stereotyping. So people need to make sure that their positive moods don't cause them to rely on dangerous stereotypes, like women are less dedicated, Muslims are violent people, and so on.

People use their heart as well as their head when making decisions. Therefore, failure to incorporate emotions and moods into the study of decision making will result in an incomplete, and often inaccurate, view of the process.

Creativity

People who are in good moods are more creative than people in bad moods, say some researchers.[113] They produce more ideas, others think their ideas are original, and they tend to identify more creative options to problems.[114] It seems that people who are experiencing positive moods or emotions are more flexible and open in their thinking, which may explain why they're more creative.[115] Supervisors should actively try to keep employees happy because this will create more good moods (employees like their leaders to encourage them and provide positive feedback on a job well done), which in turn leads people to be more creative.[116]

Some researchers, however, do not believe that a positive mood makes people more creative. They argue that when people are in positive moods, they may relax ("if I'm in a good mood, things must be going OK, and I must not need to think of new ideas") and not engage in the critical thinking necessary for some forms of creativity.[117] However, this view is controversial.[118] Until there are more studies on the subject, we can safely conclude that for many tasks, positive moods increase our creativity.

Motivation

As we saw in Chapter 6, motivation theories propose that individuals "are motivated to the extent that their behavior is expected to lead to desired outcomes . . . the employee essentially trades effort for pay, security, promotions, and so forth."[119] But as the Affective Events Theory demonstrated, people aren't cold,

unfeeling machines. Their perceptions and calculations of work events are filled with emotional content that significantly influences how much effort they exert. Moreover, when you see people who are highly motivated in their jobs, they're emotionally committed. People who are engaged in their work "become physically, cognitively, *and* emotionally immersed in the experience of activity, in the pursuit of a goal."[120]

Are all people emotionally engaged in their work? No. But many are. So if we focus only on those who are not, we won't be able to explain behaviors such as the biologist who forgets to have dinner and works late into the night, lost in the thrill of her work.[121]

Two studies have highlighted the importance of moods and emotions on motivation. The first study had two groups of people solve a number of word puzzles. One group saw a funny video clip, which was intended to put the group in a good mood before having to solve the puzzles. The other group was not shown the clip and just started working on solving the word puzzles right away. The results? The positive-mood group reported higher expectations of being able to solve the puzzles, worked harder at them, and solved more puzzles as a result.[122]

The second study found that giving people feedback—whether real or fake—about their performance influenced their mood, which then influenced their motivation.[123] So, a cycle can exist in which positive moods cause people to be more creative, which leads to positive feedback from those observing their work. This positive feedback then further reinforces their positive mood, which may then make them perform even better, and so on.

Both of these studies highlight the effects of mood and emotions on motivation and suggest that organizations that promote positive moods at work are likely to have a more motivated workforce.

Leadership

The ability to lead others is a fundamental quality that organizations look for in employees.

When Carlos Ghosn took over as president and CEO of the nearly bankrupt Nissan Motor Corporation, he used emotionally charged speeches in presenting his plan to revive the company. In communicating his vision of returning Nissan to profitability, Ghosn convinced managers and employees to accept the changes of reducing the number of Nissan suppliers, eliminating 20,000 jobs, closing five plants, meeting new performance goals, adding new car models, and entering new markets. Under Ghosn's leadership, Nissan achieved a dramatic turnaround to profitability and revenue growth.

Effective leaders rely on emotional appeals to help convey their messages.[124] In fact, the expression of emotions in speeches is often the critical element that makes us accept or reject a leader's message. "When leaders feel excited, enthusiastic, and active, they may be more likely to energize their subordinates and convey a sense of efficacy, competence, optimism, and enjoyment."[125] Politicians, as a case in point, have learned to show enthusiasm when talking about their chances of winning an election, even when polls suggest otherwise.

Corporate executives know that emotional content is critical if employees are to buy into their vision of their company's future and accept change. When higher-ups offer new visions, especially when the visions contain distant or vague goals, it is often difficult for employees to accept those visions and the changes they'll bring. So when effective leaders want to implement significant changes, they rely on "the evocation, framing, and mobilization of *emotions.*"[126] By arousing emotions and linking them to an appealing vision, leaders increase the likelihood that managers and employees alike will accept change.

Interpersonal Conflict

Few issues are more intertwined with emotions than the topic of interpersonal conflict. Whenever conflicts arise between coworkers, you can be fairly certain that emotions are surfacing. A manager's success in trying to resolve conflicts, in fact, is often largely attributable to an ability to identify the emotional elements in the conflict and to get the parties to work through their emotions. The manager who ignores the emotional elements in conflicts, focusing singularly on rational and task-focused concerns, is unlikely to resolve those conflicts.

Negotiation

Negotiation is an emotional process; however, we often say a skilled negotiator has a "poker face." The founder of Britain's Poker Channel, Crispin Nieboer, stated, "It is a game of bluff and there is fantastic human emotion and tension, seeing who can bluff the longest."[127] Several studies have shown that negotiators who feign anger have an advantage over their opponent. Why? Because when a negotiator shows anger, the opponent concludes that the negotiator has conceded all that she can, and so the opponent gives in.[128]

Displaying a negative emotion (such as anger) can be effective, but feeling bad about your performance appears to impair future negotiations. Negotiators who do poorly experience negative emotions, develop negative perceptions of their counterpart, and are less willing to share information or be cooperative in future negotiations.[129] Interestingly, then, while moods and emotions have their benefits at work, in negotiation, unless we're putting up a false front (feigning anger), it seems that emotions may impair negotiator performance. In fact, one 2005 study found that people who suffered damage to the emotional centers of their brains (damage to the same part of the brain as Phineas Gage) may be the *best* negotiators, because they're not likely to over-correct when faced with negative outcomes.[130] Consider another example. When Northwest Airlines faced a strike from the mechanics union, the company coolly prepared for the strike by hiring replacement workers in advance, and when the union struck, hired replacement workers and calmly asked for even more concessions.[131]

Customer Service

A worker's emotional state influences customer service, which influences levels of repeat business and levels of customer satisfaction.[132] Providing quality customer service makes demands on employees because it often puts them in a

state of emotional dissonance. Over time, this state can lead to job burnout, declines in job performance, and lower job satisfaction.[133]

In addition, employees' emotions may also transfer to the customer. Studies indicate a matching effect between employee and customer emotions, an effect that OB practitioners call **emotional contagion**, the "catching" of emotions from others.[134] How does emotional contagion work? The primary explanation is that when someone experiences positive emotions and laughs and smiles at you, you begin to copy that person's behavior. So when employees express positive emotions, customers tend to respond positively. Emotional contagion is important because when customers catch the positive moods or emotions of employees, they shop longer.[135] But what about negative emotions and moods? Are they contagious too? Absolutely. When an employee is cranky or nasty, these negative emotions tend to have negative effects on customers.

Job Attitudes

Ever hear the advice "Never take your work home with you," meaning that people should forget about their work once they go home? As it turns out, that's easier said than done. Several studies have shown that people who had a good day at work tend to be in a better mood at home that evening. And people who had a bad day tend to be in a bad mood once they're at home.[136] Evidence also suggests that people who have a stressful day at work have trouble relaxing once they get off work.[137]

Even though people do emotionally take their work home with them, by the next day, the effect is usually gone.[138] So, though it may be hard or even unnatural to "never take your work home with you," it doesn't appear that, for most people, a negative mood resulting from a bad day at work carries over to the next day.

Deviant Workplace Behaviors

Negative emotions also can lead to a number of deviant workplace behaviors.

Anyone who has spent much time in an organization realizes that people often behave in ways that violate established norms and that threaten the organization, its members, or both. As we saw in Chapter 1, these actions are called workplace deviant behaviors.[139] Many of these deviant behaviors can be traced to negative emotions.

For instance, envy is an emotion that occurs when you resent someone for having something that you don't have but that you strongly desire—such as a better work assignment, larger office, or higher salary.[140] It can lead to malicious deviant behaviors. An envious employee, for example, could then act hostilely by backstabbing another employee, negatively distorting others' successes, and positively distorting his own accomplishments.[141] Evidence suggests that people who feel negative emotions, particularly those who feel angry or hostile, are more likely than people who don't feel negative emotions to engage in deviant behavior at work.[142]

How Managers Can Influence Moods

In general, you can improve peoples' moods by showing them a funny video clip, giving them a small bag of candy, or even having them taste a pleasant beverage.[143] But what can companies do to improve their employees' moods?

emotional contagion   *The process by which people's emotions are caused by the emotions of others.*

OB IN THE NEWS

Workplace Grief Costs U.S. Employers Billions

American workers mourn the deaths of 2.4 million loved ones each year. In 2002, Don Lee was one of them. A drunk driver killed his 20-year-old daughter. He returned to work 2 days after her funeral, but it was hard for him to concentrate. "I put in my full eight-hour day," he says, "but for six months, I didn't do more than four hours of work each day."

Workplace grief has been estimated to cost U.S. businesses over $75 billion a year in reduced productivity and increased errors and accidents. For instance, mourning the death of a loved one costs nearly $38 billion; divorce and marital woes cost $11 billion; family crises cost $9 billion; and death of an acquaintance costs $7 billion.

Most organizations offer paid bereavement leaves. But these leaves are usually for four days or fewer. And as Don Lee's experience illustrated, this is rarely enough. It often takes workers months before they're back to their pre-grief-stricken level of productivity.

Some companies take active steps to help deal with this problem. For instance, Hallmark Cards created a program called Compassionate Connections. It's a support network of employees who have faced a personal crisis and offer their time to help mentor others with similar experiences. Eighty-five employees have volunteered to help others with personal crises including Alzheimer's, childhood illnesses, AIDS, infertility, and house fires.

Source: Based on "J. Zalow, "Moving On: Putting a Price Tag on Grief—New Index Aims to Calculate the Annual Cost of Despair," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 20, 2002, p. D1.

Managers can use humor and give their employees small tokens of appreciation for work well done. Also, research indicates that when leaders are in good moods, group members are more positive, and as a result the members cooperate more.[144]

Finally, selecting positive team members can have a contagion effect as positive moods transmit from team member to team member. One study of professional cricket teams (cricket is a sport played in countries such as Great Britain and India that's a little like baseball) found that players' happy moods affected the moods of their team members and also positively influenced their performance.[145] It makes sense, then, for managers to select team members who are predisposed to experience positive moods.

Summary and Implications for Managers

Emotions and moods are similar in that both are affective in nature. But they're also different—moods are more general and less contextual than emotions. And, events do matter. The time of day and day of the week, stressful events, social activities, and sleep patterns are all factors that influence emotions and moods.

Can managers control their colleagues' and employees' emotions and moods? Certainly there are limits, practically and ethically. Emotions and moods are a natural part of an individual's makeup. Where managers err is if they ignore their coworkers' emotions and assess others' behavior as if it were completely rational. As one consultant aptly put it, "You can't divorce emotions from the workplace because you can't divorce emotions from people."[146] Managers who understand the role of emotions and moods will significantly improve their ability to explain and predict their coworkers' behavior.

Do emotions and moods affect job performance? Yes. They can *hinder* performance, especially negative emotions. That's probably why organizations, for the most part, try to extract emotions out of the workplace. But emotions and moods can also *enhance* performance. How? Two ways.[147] First, emotions and

moods can increase arousal levels, and motivate employees to work better. Second, emotional labor recognizes that certain feelings can be part of a job's requirements. So, for instance, the ability to effectively manage emotions in leadership, sales, and customer service positions may be critical to success in those positions. At the same time, organizations that shun the display of positive emotions, or encourage employees to suppress negative emotions, may find that both take a toll on their workforces.

What differentiates functional from dysfunctional emotions and moods at work? Although there is no precise answer to this, some analysts have suggested that the critical moderating variable is the complexity of the individual's task.[148] The more complex a task, the less emotional a worker can be before interfering with performance. While a minimal level of emotional arousal is probably necessary for good performance, high levels interfere with the ability to function, especially if the job requires calculative and detailed cognitive processes. Given that the trend is toward jobs becoming more complex, you can see why organizations are likely to become more concerned with the role of emotions—especially intense ones—in the workplace.

Point / Counterpoint

The Costs and Benefits of Organizational Display Rules

Point

Organizations today realize that good customer service means good business. After all, who wants to end a shopping trip at the grocery store with a surly checker? Research clearly shows that organizations that provide good customer service have higher profits.[149] An integral part of customer service training is to set forth display rules to teach employees to interact with customers in a friendly, helpful, professional way.

As one Starbucks manager says, "What makes Starbucks different is our passion for what we do. We're trying to provide a great experience for people, with a great product. That's what we all care about."[150] Starbucks may have good coffee, but a big part of the company's growth has been the customer experience. For instance, the cashiers are friendly and will get to know you by name if you are a repeat customer.

Asking employees to act friendly is good for them, too. "Forced" smiles can actually make people feel better.[151] And, if someone feels that being asked to smile is bad for him, he doesn't belong in the service industry in the first place.

Counterpoint

Organizations have no business trying to regulate the emotions of their employees. Companies should not be "the thought police" and force employees to feel and act in ways that serve only organizational needs. Service employees should be professional and courteous, yes, but many companies expect them to take abuse and refrain from defending themselves. That's wrong. As the philosopher Jean Paul Sartre wrote, we have a responsibility to be authentic—true to ourselves—and within reasonable limits organizations have no right to ask us to be otherwise.

Service industries have no business teaching their employees to be smiling punching bags. Most customers might even prefer that employees be themselves. Employees shouldn't be openly nasty or hostile, of course, but who appreciates a fake smile? Think about trying on an outfit in a store and the clerk automatically says that looks "absolutely wonderful" when you know it doesn't and you sense the clerk is lying. Most customers would rather talk with a "real" person than someone enslaved to an organization's display rules. Furthermore, if an employee doesn't feel like slapping on an artificial smile, then it's only going to create dissonance between her and her employer.[152]

Finally, research shows that forcing display rules on employees takes a heavy emotional toll.[153] It's unnatural to expect someone to smile all the time or to passively take abuse from customers, clients, or fellow employees. Organizations can improve their employees' psychological health by encouraging them to be themselves, within reasonable limits.

Questions for Review

1. What are the differences and similarities between emotions and moods?

2. How does the time of the day, the day of the week, and the weather influence peoples' moods?

3. Are there differences in the degree to which men and women show emotions in the workplace? What types of workplace situations might bring to light these different emotional reactions?

4. Are there cultural differences in the degree to which people experience emotions? What about in the expression of emotions?

5. What is emotional labor, and why is it important to understanding OB?

6. If you were a manager at a busy clothing store, how would you balance increasing positive customer experiences with preventing the loss of good employees who might be worn down by nasty or hostile customers?

7. Explain Affective Events Theory. What are its implications for managing emotions?

8. What is emotional intelligence and why is it important?

9. As a manager, what steps would you take to improve your employees' moods? Explain your answer.

Questions for Critical Thinking

1. In your opinion—and drawing from the arguments in the chapter—are there core or fundamental emotions that everyone experiences? If so, what are they?

2. What has research shown on the relationship between emotions and rational thinking? Do these findings surprise you? Why or why not?

3. Do emotions and moods matter in explaining behavior in organizations? How so?

4. What, if anything, can managers do to *manage* their employees' emotions? Are their ethical implications in any of these actions? If so, what are they?

5. Give some examples of situations in which the overt expression of emotions might enhance job performance.

Team Exercise

WHO CAN CATCH A LIAR?

Earlier in the chapter we discussed how people determine emotions from facial expressions. There has been research on whether people can tell whether someone is lying based on facial expression. Let's see who is good at catching liars.

Split up into teams, and follow these instructions:

1. Randomly choose someone to be the team organizer. Have this person write down on a piece of paper "T" for truth and "L" for lie. If there are, say, six people in the group (other than the organizer), then three people will get a slip with a "T" and three a slip with an "L." It's important that all team members keep what's on their paper a secret.

2. Each team member needs to come up with a true or false statement depending on whether he or she

holds a T or an L slip. Try not to make the statement so outrageous that no one would believe it (for example, "I have flown to the moon").

3. The organizer will have each member make his statement. Group members should then examine the person making the statement closely to try to determine whether he is telling the truth or lying. Once each person has made his statement, the organizer will ask for a vote and record the tallies.

4. Each person should now indicate whether the statement was the truth or a lie.

5. How good was your group at catching the liars? Were some people good "liars"? What did you look for to determine if someone was lying?

Ethical Dilemma

ARE WORKPLACE ROMANCES UNETHICAL?

A large percentage of married individuals first met in the workplace. A 2005 survey revealed that 58 percent of all employees have been in an office romance. Given the amount of time people spend at work, this isn't terribly surprising. Yet office romances pose sensitive ethical issues for organizations and employees. What rights and responsibilities do organizations have to regulate the romantic lives of their employees?

Take the case of former General Electric CEO Jack Welch and Suzy Wetlaufer. The two met while Wetlaufer was interviewing Welch for a *Harvard Business Review* article, and Welch was still married. Once their relationship was out in the open, some accused Wetlaufer of being unethical for refusing to disclose the relationship while working on the article. She eventually left the journal. Others accused Welch of letting his personal life get in the way of the interest of GE and its shareholders. Some even blamed the scandal for a drop in GE stock.

Welch and Wetlaufer didn't even work for the same company. What about when two people work together in the same work unit? For example, Tasha, an account executive at a Chicago advertising firm, started dating Kevin, one of her account supervisors. Their innocent banter turned into going out for drinks, and then dinner, and soon they were dating. Kevin and Tasha's bosses were in-house competitors. The problem: Sometimes in meetings Kevin would make it seem that Tasha and Kevin were on the same side of important issues even when they weren't. In response, Tasha's boss began to isolate her from key projects. Tasha broke up with Kevin, who then tried to have her fired. Tasha said, "I remember times when I would be there all night photocopying hundreds of pages of my work to show that [Kevin's] allegations [of her incompetence] were unfounded. It was just embarrassing because it became a question of my professional judgment."

These examples show that while workplace romances are personal matters, it's hard to keep them out of the political complexities of organizational life.

Questions

1. Do you think organizations should have policies governing workplace romances? What would such policies stipulate?

2. Do you think romantic relationships would distract two employees from performing their jobs? Why or why not?

3. Is it ever appropriate for a supervisor to romantically pursue a subordinate under his or her supervision? Why or why not?

4. Some companies like Nike and Southwest Airlines openly try to recruit couples. Do you think this is a good idea? How would you feel working in a department with a "couple"?

Sources: "Cupid in the Cubicle, Says New Vault Survey," *Vault, Inc.* (www.vault.com); S. Shellenbarger, "The Nasty Downside of Office Romances," *The Wall Street Journal* (www.wsj.com) (2005); J. Amber, "Office Romance" (www.yourpurelife.com).

Case Incident 1

THE UPSIDE OF ANGER?

A researcher doing a case study on emotions in organizations interviewed Laura, a 22-year-old customer service representative in Australia. Below is a summary of the interview (with some paraphrasing of the interviewer questions):

Interviewer: How would you describe your workplace?

Laura: *Very cold, unproductive, [a] very, umm, cold environment, atmosphere.*

Interviewer: What kinds of emotions are prevalent in your organization?

Laura: *Anger, hatred towards other people, other staff members.*

Interviewer: So it seems that managers keep employees in line using fear tactics?

Laura: *Yeah. [The General Manager's] favorite saying is, "Nobody's indispensable." So, it's like, "I can't do that because I'll get sacked!"*

Interviewer: How do you survive in this situation?

Laura: *You have to cater your emotions to the sort of situation, the specific situation . . . because it's just such a hostile environment, this is sort of the only way you can survive.*

Interviewer: Are there emotions you have to hide?

Laura: *Managers don't like you to show your emotions . . . They don't like to show that there is anything wrong or anything emotional in the working environment.*

Interviewer: Why do you go along?

Laura: *I feel I have to put on an act because . . . to show your true emotions, especially towards my managers [Laura names two of her senior managers], it would be hatred sometimes. So, you just can't afford to do that because it's your job and you need the money.*

Interviewer: Do you ever rebel against this system?

Laura: *You sort of put on a happy face just so you can annoy [the managers]. I find that they don't like people being happy, so you just annoy them by being happy. So, yeah. It just makes you laugh. You just "put it on" just because you know it annoys [management]. It's pretty vindictive and manipulative but you just need to do that.*

Interviewer: Do you ever find that this gets to you?

Laura: *I did care in the beginning and I think it just got me into more trouble. So now I just tell myself, "I don't care." If you tell yourself something for long enough, eventually you believe it. Yeah, so now I just go "Oh well."*

Interviewer: Do you intend to keep working here?

Laura: *It's a means to an end now. So every time I go [to work] and every week I just go, "Well, one week down, one week less until I go away." But if I knew that I didn't have this goal, I don't know if I could handle it, or if I would even be there now.*

Interviewer: Is there an upside to working here?

Laura: *I'm so much better at telling people off now than I ever used to be. I can put people in place in about three sentences. Like, instead of, before I would walk away from it. But now I just stand there and fight . . . I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing.*

Questions

1. Do you think Laura is justified in her responses to her organization's culture? Why or why not?

2. Do you think Laura's strategic use and display of emotions serve to protect her?

3. Assuming Laura's description is accurate, how would *you* react to the organization's culture?

4. Research shows that acts of coworkers (37 percent) and management (22 percent) cause more negative emotions for employees than do acts of customers (7 percent).[154] What can Laura's company do to change its emotional climate?

Source: J. Perrone and M. H. Vickers, "Emotions as Strategic Game in a Hostile Workplace: An Exemplar Case," *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004), pp. 167–78.

Case Incident 2

ABUSIVE CUSTOMERS CAUSE EMOTIONS TO RUN HIGH

Telephone customer-service representatives have a tough time these days. With automated telephone systems that create a labyrinth for customers, result in long hold times, and make it difficult for them to speak to an actual human being, a customer's frustration often settles in before the representative has had time to say "hello." Says Donna Earl, an owner of a customer-service consulting firm in San Francisco, "By the time you get to the person you need to talk to, you're mad."

Erin Calabrese knows all too well just how mad customers can get. A customer-service representative at a financial services company, she still vividly recalls one of her worst experiences—with a customer named Jane. Jane called Calabrese over some charges on her credit card and began "ranting and raving." "Your #%#% company, who do you think you are?" yelled Jane. Though Calabrese tried to console the irate customer by offering a refund, Jane only called Calabrese an "idiot." The heated conversation continued for almost 10 minutes before Calabrese, shaking, handed the phone to her supervisor and left her desk.

Sometimes customers can be downright racist. One customer-service representative finally quit her job at a New Jersey company because she constantly heard racial remarks from customers after, she contends, they heard her Spanish accent. "By the time you leave, your head is spinning with all the complaints," she said.

Unfortunately, these employees have little choice but to take the abuse. Many companies require customer-service employees to keep positive emotions at all times to maintain satisfied customers. But the result could be an emotional nightmare that doesn't necessarily end once the calls stop. Calabrese stated that she would frequently take her negative emotions home. The day after she received the abusive call from Jane, Calabrese went home and started a fight with her roommate. It was "an all-out battle," recalls Calabrese, "I just blew up." The

former customer-service representative who worked in New Jersey also recalls the effects of the abusive calls on her family. "My children would say, 'Mom, stop talking about your work. You're home.' My husband would say the same thing," she said.

Emma Parsons, who quit her job as a customer-service representative for the travel industry, was frustrated by the inability to do anything about abusive customers and the mood they'd put her in. "Sometimes you'd finish a call and you'd want to smash somebody's face. I had no escape, no way of releasing." She said that if she did retaliate toward an abusive customer, her boss would punish her.

Some companies train their representatives to defuse a customer's anger and to avoid taking abuse personally, but the effort isn't enough. Liz Aherarn of Radclyffe Group, a consulting firm in Lincoln Park, New Jersey, says customer-service employees who work the phones are absent more frequently, are more prone to illness, and are more likely to make stress-related disability claims than other employees. Thus, it is apparent that in the world of customer service, particularly when interactions take place over the phone, emotions can run high, and the effects can be damaging. Although the adage "the customer comes first" has been heard by many, companies should empower employees to decide when it is appropriate to put the customer second. Otherwise, employees are forced to deal with abusive customers, the effects of which can be detrimental to both the individual and the company.

Questions

1. From an emotional labor perspective, how does dealing with an abusive customer lead to stress and burnout?

2. If you were a recruiter for a customer-service call center, what personality types would you prefer to hire and why? In other words, what individual differences are likely to affect whether an employee can handle customer abuse on a day-to-day basis?

3. Emotional intelligence is one's ability to detect and to manage emotional cues and information. How might emotional intelligence play a role in responding to abusive customers? What facets of emotional intelligence might employees possess who are able to handle abusive customers?

4. What steps should companies take to ensure that their employees are not the victims of customer abuse? Should companies allow a certain degree of abuse if that abuse results in satisfied customers and perhaps greater profit? What are the ethical implications of this?

Source: Based on S. Shellenbarger, "Domino Effect: The Unintended Results of Telling Off Customer-Service Staff," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 5, 2004, p. D.1.

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