

**REAL GUYS CONFESS:** What *Really* Turns Them On—And Off!

# seventeen

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Inside!

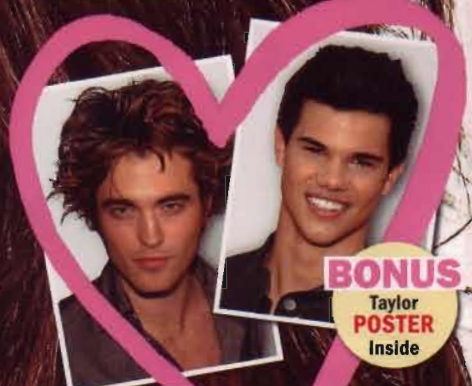
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# is it just a bad mood... or more?

You might get super-anxious before a big test or wake up feeling sad sometimes, but some mood swings are much more serious.

## moody...or really depressed?

Read each statement, and if it sounds like something you could hear yourself saying, check the box:

probably just moody

- "I usually feel cranky or sad before and during my **period**."
- "I get super-nervous or stressed when I have a **busy week** or lots of tests."
- "When something bad happens, like a breakup or a fight with a friend, I can't help **obsessing over it** for a few days."
- "I feel sad or **cry for no reason** at times, and it can last more than a few days."
- "I get so anxious sometimes that my **heart races**, or I get cold and sweaty."
- "I usually have a **hard time getting out of bed** in the morning and feel worse the more I think about facing the day."
- "I've kind of **lost interest** in doing the things I used to love to do (like hanging out with friends or playing sports)."
- "I sometimes think about **suicide** or what would happen if I died."

could be really depressed

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** It's natural to get stressed or have bad moods that last a couple of days, but if you're worried constantly or your negative feelings stick around for more than two weeks, it may be a sign of anxiety or depression. **See your doc or a school counselor now.** They can help you feel like yourself again.

**67%** of Seventeen readers have felt sad or depressed for no reason.

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Going through a difficult time? Find help at [seventeen.com/hotlines](http://seventeen.com/hotlines).

## mood busters!

You might think these things will make you feel better, but they can make you feel worse.

complaining to friends

**46%**

of you say that you do it when you're feeling down.

*The truth:* The longer you talk about a problem, the bigger it seems. Vent just once, then come up with a solution that you can act on—it will help you feel in control!

listening to sad music

**65%**

of you say that you do it when you're feeling down.

*The truth:* Hopeless lyrics may make you forget that things can (and will!) improve. So blast some upbeat music—research shows it can put you in a better mood!

eating too much

**60%**

of you say that you do it when you're feeling down.

*The truth:* Eating only distracts you from your emotions in the moment. Instead, go for a walk or a jog, since exercise makes your brain release mood-boosting chemicals called endorphins.

# what it's really like to have...



## anxiety disorder

“ In eighth grade I started getting so **stressed about school** that I'd stay home to avoid dealing with it, and I always had this **nauseous feeling** in my stomach that never went away. A few months

later, I started getting panic attacks that seemed to come out of nowhere: I'd sob, hyperventilate, and throw up. I couldn't control my body's reaction to stressful situations. So later that year, my mom took me to see a therapist and I went on anti-anxiety medication. Now I know that it really helps to get my worries out to someone, instead of keeping them bottled up. ”

—char, 17, new york



## clinical depression

“ I started feeling mentally **and** physically exhausted during my senior year, and stopped caring about friends and school. I would **skip class** to stay in bed, sleeping and crying. Sometimes little

things set me off, like fights with my stepmom, but more often, the sadness took on a life of its own. Even the things that used to cheer me up, like dance, didn't help. When you have depression, you can't just decide, Oh, I'll be happy today. It took therapy to help me sort out my emotions and **medication** to make me feel like myself again. ”

—christine, 20, new jersey



## bipolar disorder

“ When I started high school, my emotions went out of control. Sometimes I'd feel so depressed, I'd close myself off and ignore my friends. Other times, I'd feel so happy, invincible, and **impulsive** that I'd end up spending lots of money on

things I didn't really want or need. The highs and lows lasted for hours or days at a time. Nothing specific set me off, so I knew they weren't just mood swings. I told my mom and saw a **psychiatrist**, and now we've found a medication that helps me feel balanced. ”

—ashley, 19, louisiana

# sneaky things that can get you down

**53%**  
of girls say seeing what others are doing without them on Facebook or MySpace stresses them out.

**facebook** Checking photos or status updates over and over makes you **anxious**, plus it's hard to be happy with your life when you're constantly comparing it with everyone else's life!



## sweets and junk food

Sugar and refined carbs spike your blood sugar and give you a rush at first—but in an hour, you crash and feel crankier!



**alcohol** It's actually a depressant that stays in your body for days! A couple of drinks can make you overly emotional and then depressed the day after.



## the birth control pill

If you've been moody since you started your birth control pill, the hormones it contains could be to blame, so talk to your doc about switching. Every type of pill has a different dose of hormones. You'll find one that works for you!

# get help!

Mental and emotional problems are common (up to about 20 percent of teens experience them), so no one will judge you if you ask for help. **Talk to your parents, a school counselor, or your doctor, and don't wait for the feelings to just "go away"—you'll feel better once you open up.**

**JUST SAY, "I've been feeling pretty down, and I think I need to get some help. Can we talk about it?"**

If you or a friend is having **suicidal thoughts**, get help **immediately**. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **800-273-TALK**.