

Here's what makes your emotions more infectious to others

Can your friend catch your bad mood, or can your partner infect you with happy one?



Picture credit: Harriet Nobel

By [Christian Jarrett](#)

Published: December 14, 2023 at 10:00 am

If you've ever been in a jolly mood, with a spring in your step, then met

up with a friend who is feeling grumpy, you'll know how contagious emotions (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/psyp.13675>) can be. Before you know it, you realise that you're feeling down too. Happily, it can work the other way around too – when you've been sad, perhaps your friend's bubblyness has helped to lighten your mood.

Psychologists have shown that when people interact, a lot of mimicry (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S006526010800405X>) goes on without us even realising it. This is especially the case when we're interacting with someone we know and care about.

A lot of these processes have to do with effective communication and mutual understanding. One way we make sense of other people's feelings is to simulate those feelings in our own mind. **The net result of this mirroring is that we can infect each other with our emotions.**