

MOOD-PROOF

Your Day!

Don't let these spirit-sappers rain on your parade

A FRIEND'S HARSH WORDS

Ouch! The pal you count on for sympathy and support just made an insulting remark, and you feel like you've been slapped. Yet while it's natural to be hurt, says **Dana Lightman, Ph.D., author of *POWER Optimism***, "ruminating over your friend's words can keep you locked in a 'feeling' state, when you need to move toward a 'thinking' one." If the comment rankled because there was some truth to it, ask, "How can I cast this in a light that makes me feel better?" (If the put-down was related to your weight, for example, remind yourself, "I exercised twice this week, and even though my friend can't tell, I know I've taken a positive step.") Once the initial sting subsides, explain to your friend that you were offended, and pay careful attention to her response. You may well discover her intentions weren't malicious, says David Baron, chairperson of the department of psychiatry and behavioral science at Temple University School of Medicine. "Maybe she snapped at you because *she* was having a bad day."

A FIGHT WITH HUBBY

Again, Lightman notes, the idea here is to move from an overly emotional state to one in which reason prevails. "Resolve to move your mood up the 'positivity ladder,' from anger to irritability to frustration to acceptance," via rational-thought baby steps. "This really made me angry, but he *does* have some good qualities" would be a good thought to start with. Once you've calmed down, make note of everything you're thinking and feeling. Not only is venting on paper more dignified than angrily ranting in front of a third party, but when it's time to reconcile, you'll know exactly what you want to say.

A COLD, GRAY MORNING

While you'd love nothing more than to feel the sunshine on your shoulders, ask yourself if there isn't something



>q&s tip

If you can't stop replaying TV news violence in your head, stay current by reading the paper, rather than sitting in front of the tube.

positive to be gleaned from the gloom, advises Lightman. "Remind yourself that although a brisk, outdoor walk isn't in the cards, you've got a great opportunity to lounge with a cup of hot chocolate and catch up on your reading." And if long hours of leisurely "me" time are also an impossible dream, simply thumb your nose at the day's dreariness by slipping into your most vibrant work outfit. Finally, think about the spectacular weather to come, and how you'll revel in it once this long, drab spell ends.

THE NIGHTLY NEWS

As devastating as it can be, says Baron, keep in mind that news stories are often sensationalized, and that material is routinely chosen for its potential to drive up ratings. But if your feelings stem from a genuine concern for the state of the planet, try asking yourself, "What can I do to help?" If you're deeply disturbed by the news from Iraq, for instance, mailing a care package to the troops or donating to a charity that supports Iraqi children can give you a sense that you're contributing something positive.