

## Planning to change? This year start small: Change the way you greet others!

### Hi, how are you?

I admit it. I have a soft spot for salutations. In this peculiar area of human behaviour, one can be formal and ordinary or choose to be slightly eccentric without people getting the wrong impression – much. Conventional greetings are fine, except they are monotonous and dull. I tend to get bored and tired:

“Good morning/evening.”

“How are you?”

“Not too bad, yourself?” (Not too bad? Good Lord ... what an expression.)

“Good, how are the kids?”

“Good to see you, have a nice day.”

I suggest you use your imagination and try to be resourceful and creative. All of us can afford to be slightly bizarre or uncommon in one facet of our behaviour. Now, if you are generally a bit odd or atypical in other aspects as well, it is probably best to avoid the following exercises, just in case people really begin to wonder.

#### Very high

Here are some alternative salutation ideas:

“Hello.”

“Yellow!”

“Good morning.”

“Isn’t it just!”

“How are you?”

“Delighted!”



“Hi!”

“Very high!”

etc.

#### The SentimenTable©

Today, probably late in the evening (I do not want you getting into trouble early in the morning), I suggest you print the table that you will find at the end of this article and post it on the usual spot: the fridge, the mirror in the bathroom, the elevator in your apartment block or office.

Every morning, before leaving your house, following the instructions, choose one of the words from the SentimenTable© below. When, during the day, people ask you: “How are you?” “How are you feeling today?” “Did you have a good time?” you will use the new, unexpected (for your conversational partner) word or phrase you happened to select from the table.

Let us assume you chose the word “exceptional.” During the day, regardless of how you are actually feeling, when asked you are obliged to answer “Exceptional!”

“How are you, dear Don, this fine day?”

“Exceptional, perfect, fabulous, fantastic, super-duper, great, tutto bene [all good, in Italian], tutti frutti [all ... fruits],” and getting better at time goes by!

These are the right answers!

#### But I am feeling lousy

Even if you have – for the sake of argument – the top five reasons in the world for feeling awful, changing your vocabulary and expressions towards a more positive outlook, creates an inconsistency in your mind: you are feeling one way but expressing quite another. If you pay

a little attention and eavesdrop, you may even catch yourself saying:

“What am I saying, I’m feeling awful!”

The notional conflict between exceptional and awful, which results from the dissonance between what you are saying and how you are actually feeling, produces a form of tension inside your skull. Our brain cannot cope for long with inconsistencies between thoughts and actions.

To reduce the tension, the brain chooses to modify the initial negative sentiment to a milder one (as it knows what is better for us before we have even thought about it). As a result, the distance between how you actually felt (awful) and your response (exceptional) decreases. Your mood shifts towards the middle values on the awful – exceptional axis.

When you try it, you will find difficult to control the goofy smile that will accompany the “semi-automatic” improvement in your mood.

Even if it does not work, if the change does not occur and you cannot convince yourself, at least you will ... confuse the other person! The bewilderment of your unsuspecting conversational partner “what’s got into Don this morning?” caused by the unexpected content of your response to their greeting will set in motion the transformation.

### **Our behaviour affects our emotions**

We all know that our emotions affect our behaviour. Few know that it’s the other way around too: our behaviour affects our emotions!

If you wish to test the validity of the aforementioned theory, next time you catch yourself feeling down, raise your arms up above your head [caution: do not attempt this exercise while riding a bike without support wheels], smile from ear to ear and try shouting at the top of your voice:

“I feel horrible; I’m in a mess, I am really depressed!”

Because your behaviour will be incongruent with your statements, you will probably feel ... ridiculous. As a result, you may burst into laughter, hence moderating once again the intensity of your initial emotions.

As always, there is a chance that people will make disapproving comments:

“What is he on ...?”

Do not pay any attention. Carry on regardless! Enjoy!

### **Instructions**

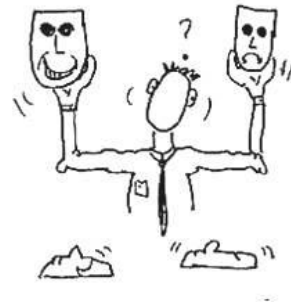
Pick any letter from A to D and a number between 1 and 40 (without looking at the table). E.g., C and 3.

The number-letter pairs (C-3) form the coordinates of the words in the Table that follows below. Now look at the table. Find the word that corresponds to the specific coordinates. In this case, C-3 = glittering.

Throughout the day, use the sentiment you have come up with either as an adjective or as an adverb to describe how you feel when asked “how are you, how are you feeling, how are you doing” etc. Respond thus: “I usually feel very good but at the moment I’m feeling ... [the word you’ve come up with].”

If you wish, you can supplement your own words to the table. You may also create new compound phrases using the words in the table plus one or more of the following: hyper, super, mega, giga, extra, special, etc. For example, extra-juicy, super-attractive, hyper-bright.

A number of primary school teachers tested it with kids. The kids loved it and had a ball! I know, you are not a kid, but why not - go on, give it a try, see how you go!



## The SentimenTable©

	A	B	C	D
1	ace	effervescent	gifted	mmmm
2	admirable	elated	glamorous	no 1
3	adorable	electrifying	glittering	outstanding
4	attractive	elegant	glorified	overjoyed
5	awesome	elevated	glorious	passionate
6	beaming	empowered	glowing	peaceful
7	blessed	energized	grand	precious
8	bombshell	enlivened	groovy	priceless
9	brave	enormous	handsome	prominent
10	breezy	enthusiastic	happy	purposeful
11	bright	euphoric	heavenly	radiant
12	brilliant	exceptional	heroic	refreshed
13	bubbly	excited	high	relaxed
14	buzzing	exhilarated	immaculate	remarkable
15	calm	exotic	in control	replenished
16	carefree	explosive	in high spirits	revitalized
17	champion	exquisite	in love	royal
18	charismatic	extraordinary	incomparable	seductive
19	charming	extra-special	incredible	sensational
21	cheerful	exuberant	infatuated	sexy
20	cherished	fabulous	intrigued	smashing
22	chic	fantastic	invigorated	spectacular
23	collected	fascinated	invincible	spicy
24	cool	festive	irresistible	splendid
25	confident	first-class	jolly	stirring
26	connected	flashing	jovial	stunning
27	courageous	floating	jubilant	superb
28	crisp	floral	juicy	superhuman
29	cuddly	flourishing	kissable	supreme
30	cute	flowing	knockout	terrific
31	daring	focused	legend	top-quality
32	dazzled	fortified	lively	unbeatable
33	debonair	fortunate	loved	unique
34	decisive	fragrant	luminous	untouchable
35	delicious	fresh	magnetic	vibrant
36	delighted	free	magnificent	vigorous
37	deluxe	fulfilled	marvellous	wonderful
38	dependable	full of life	muscular	wow!
39	dynamic	genius	mesmeric	youthful
40	ecstatic	giddy	mighty	v.i.p.

Excerpt from [Idiots are invincible](#): The fool-proof “Ro” method for solving problems, dealing with challenges - and enjoying the process! by [Dr Angelos Rodafinos](#). All rights reserved.

## Reader feedback

Find below some of the reactions and the comments I received when I posted and tested this exercise on LinkedIn’s [Effective and Fun Training Techniques](#) group. Their comments add confidence in publishing and pursuing this idea further.



**What a great idea!** Thank you for sharing - it helps with finding different words for how I feel. Much appreciated. [Susanne Baessler](#) International Management Consultant, MBA, MA

**This is TERRIFIC!!!** [Patience Edremoda](#) Independent Consultant

**This is really fantastic,** Angelos! Am definitely going to use it. English Language Trainer and Examiner at British Council [Liza Thomas](#)

Thank you Angelos. **Very practical (and FUN) resource!** [Mari Adams](#) Coach, Educator, EQ Programme Developer and Facilitator at LifeInAbundance Ltd

Thanks for sharing Angelos...**love it !** [Aparna Shekar](#) Certified Soft skills trainer, Freelance writer, L&D Professional

**Great idea! funny as well :)** [Raluca Butnaru](#) Business Analyst at Endava This reminds me of the "BOFH excuse calendar".

**I'm definitely going to use this.** I'm saddened by today's enriched vocabulary being reduced down to simpleton phrases of "ahh-sum!" by the oh-my-god-squad. My mission: to produce a unique response with each question. **Spin that wheel!** [Dave Smith](#) IT Trainer | ITIL Expert | Consultant

**Funny and clever. Thanks! ;o)** [Gail Dennison](#) Movement Educator; Author; Co-developer of Educational Kinesiology and the Brain Gym® and Vision Gym® Programs

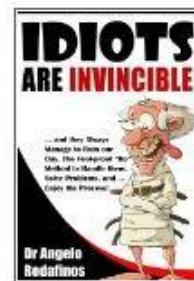
**The spin wheels are great!** The question "How are you?" is often asked as a formality and no one usually has the time to listen to the response and some do not really care and others might silently think "why is he telling me so much - I wish he would stop or go away" when someone responds properly to this question. So one of these answers may actually stop the person asking the question and make them consider why the response was what it was and might result in genuine engagement. Definitely a great way to set the tone for the day. Thank you Angelos.

[Sai Bhupalam](#) Consultant & Coach at Inner Power Consulting Services

**Very creative and interesting.** Thanks :-)  
[Neetu Arora](#) GE Capital America

**This really cheered me up** at the start of my day as I tried to imagine some of the people I regularly come into contact with using some of the words I selected. Even just the cartoon to introduce it where the head is responding with "yellow" I liked. I am going to try it today. **Thank you for starting my day with me smiling Angelos!** [Shona Dagless](#) Learning Products & Services Director - EMEA at TTi Global

**Fantastic,** thank you Angelos! [Mandy Stephens MInstSMM](#) Director at PhoneCoach Limited and expert in portable telephone role-play training equipment and live call recording



Idiots are invincible

Average Rating:



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**Fun idea!** I'll have to try this out. [Andrea Anthony](#) Learning and Development Specialist

**This is a great resource** thank you. I also learnt from a Dale Carnegie seminar to link the word to the day so: marvellous on a Monday, terrific on a Tuesday etc. Nice and easy to remember. [Helen Barnes](#) Coaching and Training Specialist

**Really liked this one!** :D [Daniela Valente](#) Psicóloga, Recursos Humanos

**Great fun!** Just eaten fab, huge meal and the word which came out for me was fulfilled - very apt!! :-)  
[Suzette Verrill](#) Owner, B-Learning & Development Ltd

**This is great.** Thank you Angelos! :) [Nimisha Raj](#) Instructional Designer Dear Mr Angelos,

Thanks Angelos, for the great reminder. [Vinod Kumar](#) Project Management Consultant & Trainer

**I like the thought behind this.** Specifically where Dr. Rodafinos writes this can “shift your current mood (to positive),” How often do we ask that question and not want a real answer? How often do we give a true answer? Unfortunately people do not want to hear it. If you answer “euphoric” (B11) enough times you will start to feel it. Just to help, I am downloading a random number generator to make picking one easier. Thanks for sharing! [Tim Munsey](#) Time & Labor Management Support Technician at Payroll People Inc.

Thank you for enlightening me on the various propositions when communicating abroad with my audience. May find it preposterous at the beginning due to cultural diversity and mind-set but given some encouragement and behavioral values in this approach, may turn out to be valuable to their future undertakings and progress at work as well as in the society.  
[Thum Yeow Keon PJK, PJM](#) Leading, Inspiring, Motivating

**This sounds like a fun way to answer to an otherwise bland question.** Thanks [Larry Kellogg](#) Senior Nuclear Electrical Instructor at Millistone

Thanks for this resource :) [Dr Rie Natalenko](#) Director and Principal Trainer, "The Write Impression", Business writing, copywriting, writing training, screenwriting.

A fun and creative way out of a daily dilemma, and yes, positive words accompany us through the day and have some effect. [Kirsten Butterweck](#) General Manager bei FARBEN Advertising

Great answers ... till now I just replied (mostly) "I'm great!" and got puzzled looks as in my country people like to say: "well bad because..." or "Not so good because..." and so on :) [Jaroslav Berce](#) Author of "Leadership by Virtue"

Very original thinking on topic we all have trouble with. When I feel in the dumps and someone asks me, I hate letting them into my personal grief. It's natural to be truthful but negativity can make us feel even better. We have to change our mind set by putting happy words in our mouths and our brains will follow. Good topic [linda Ramadan](#) Independent Writing and Editing Professional

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