

Editorial Graphics and Publishing Services

Sourpuss Words?

Some words are sourpusses. They're negative through and through, and have no positive counterparts. I'm thinking of words like *unkempt*, *inept*, *disgruntled*, and *uncouth*. We might joke about looking 'kempt' or being 'couth,' but in fact the negatives have no opposite forms—they're either obsolete rarities or whimsical inventions.

Other negatives with nonexistent or obscure opposite numbers include *debunk*, *disappointing*, *disconcerting*, *disconsolate*, *disheveled*, *dismayed*, *immaculate*, *impeccable*, *inadvertent*, *incapacitated*, *inclement*, *incognito*, *incommunicado*, *incorrigible*, *indefatigable*, *inevitable*, *indomitable*, *insipid*, *misnomer*, *mistake*, *nonchalant*, *noncommittal*, *nondescript*, *nonpareil*, *nonplussed*, *unassuming*, *unbeknownst*, *ungainly*, and *unwieldy*.

Taken from *Woe Is I*, by Patricia T. O'Connor