The man woke up feeling weary one morning. Perhaps he had one too many beers last night when he went out to the bar with his friends for the game. He trudged to the bathroom and looked at his drooping face in the mirror. Eyes half-shut, he reached for his toothpaste and toothbrush and proceeded with his usual morning routine.

He didn’t realize his unusual slowness was not the result of a hangover until later that morning. He arrived at work, and as the receptionist barely uttered the first syllable of “Goodmorning”, he had already spoken the words himself in response. He did not understand why the look on her face was not the usual sweet smile she always wore and instead she looked puzzled. It became clear later that this was only the beginning to the strangeness that occurred that day.

He found that many of his coworkers seemed unhappy with him, as if he was not picking up normal social cues. He seemed to really upset Darren, the accountant in the office across the hall from his, with whom he spoke frequently. Darren became more frustrated each time they interacted that day, before just avoiding the man altogether. The man was very confused.

He started to realize that every time someone came up and spoke to him, they became increasingly more upset with him, but when he went up to others with a single question, they were happy to help. Could it be that the man was just overstaying his welcome?

By the end of the day, many of the man’s coworkers were avoiding him, and he felt ostracized, so he decided to pack up and leave his office 30 minutes early. As he was packing up, his boss walked by his office and gave him a disappointed look. The man ran out of his office after his boss and asked him the reason everyone was acting weird today.

His boss turned his head, and called over his shoulder, “See you tomorrow.” And before the man had a chance to respond, the boss had turned the corner and was no longer engaged.

On his walk to his car, the man saw a homeless woman and her child sitting against his building. He walked over to them and said, “Sure, here’s a couple dollars. I hope she feels better.” The woman, with her eyes wide and mouth open, drew back and said, “How did you know she was sick?” The man thought this was a strange question since she had just told him her daughter was sick and responded, “You just told me she was and that anything would help.” The woman stepped back further. She told him she had not spoken yet, but had been thinking of how to phrase her request, and that it was exactly in the way he had just told her.

This was when the man realized something was wrong.