

DEPRESSION SELF HELP

*How to Deal with Depression, Overcome
Depression and Symptoms and Signs of Depression*



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Depression Self Help: How to Deal with Depression, Overcome Depression and Symptoms and Signs of Depression

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Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1: What is Depression?](#)

[Chapter 2: Types of Depression](#)

[Depression: How Common](#)

[The symptoms of all types of depression](#)

[Major depressive disorder \(major depression\)](#)

[Dysthymia](#)

[Psychotic Depression](#)

[Postpartum depression](#)

[Seasonal affective disorder \(SAD\)](#)

[Bipolar disorder or manic depressive disorder](#)

[Childhood Depression](#)

[Teen Depression](#)

[Double Depression](#)

[Secondary Depression](#)

[Treatment-Resistant Depression](#)

[Masked Depression](#)

[Chapter 3: Causes of Depression](#)

[Personality](#)

[Family history](#)

[Drug and alcohol abuse](#)

Serious medical illnesses

Conflict

Certain medications

Loss or death

Major events

Other personal problems

Chapter 4: Curing Depression

Medication

Drugs vs. Natural Cure

Drugs vs Depression

The Natural Way

Chapter 5: Stop and Think why you are Sad

What's Bothering You?

Conversation as Cure

Expression is Key

Therapy or Counselling

Seek help or Talk to Someone

Friendly Advice

Familial Advice

Expert Advice

Chapter 6: Effects of Depression

Physical

Physical Illness and Depression

Medical Illness and Depression

Chapter 7: Ways to Beat Anxiety

Smile

De-clutter your Mind

Show Gratitude

Eat Right

Breathe Properly

Meditate

Make a Vision Board

Play

Silence

Mindset to Beat Depression

Chapter 8: Setbacks, Suicide and Preventing Help

Chapter 8: Foods that Alleviate Stress

Foods that Alleviate Stress

Change in Diet: Step away from the sugar.

Chapter 9: Lifestyle Changes to Combat Depression

Chapter 11: Improving Your Self-Image In Order to Achieve Success.

Chapter 12: Why Most People Aren't Successful

The 5 Phases of Your Life

Chapter 13: How the Unlucky Man Became Successful

Poor People Who Became Wealthy

An Example of an Unfortunate Man Who Became
Wealthy

Conclusion

Introduction

Do you feel lost at times or confused? Do you feel sad? Do you always feel sad? It is normal for many to sometimes feel sad or depressed. It is a normal reaction to life's struggles, self-esteem issues or loss of a loved one.

However, depression is another case. It can be associated with intense sadness-hopelessness, worthless and helpless. When it hinders you from your day to day activities and it lasts for several days or weeks, it is definitely worthwhile to talk to an expert about it.

There are several ways to know if a person has depression. There is a manual called DSM-5 to determine if a person has mental disorders or depression. If you know anyone who is going through a hard time, these symptoms might manifest on them:

- A solemn mood that starts in the morning and continues the whole day
- Loss of the will to move or fatigue almost daily
- Feeling of guilt or worthlessness on an everyday basis
- Indecisiveness, impaired concentration
- Hypersomnia (oversleeping) or Insomnia (lack of sleep) can manifest throughout the day
- Diminished pleasure or interest in daily activities
- Recurring suicide or death thoughts
- The feeling of being slowed down or restlessness
- Significant weight gain or weight loss

When someone feels like they have lost interest in everything and all the activities they were happily doing before, it might be a sign of depression. The symptoms above are for people who are suffering depression. They usually will feel depressed daily or almost daily and will span for a minimum of two weeks. These symptoms should not be the effect of medication or drug for it to be called

depression.

Chapter 1: What is Depression?

We all felt sad in a particular time in our lives. We lost our job. We lost someone who we loved. Or something else tragic happened in our live. It is very ‘normal’ to feel sad or depressed when life struggles appear, it is the natural reaction from our brain to these circumstances. It shows that your brain is healthy and it is functioning fine. But what when the feelings don’t go away while the tragic circumstances went away or was a long time ago? This might be depression.

Feeling depressed or sad can be a normal reaction to life’s struggles, loss, or an injured self-esteem. This is our brain ‘telling us’ that there is something wrong. But if the brain ‘keeps telling’ that there is something wrong, while objectively, there isn’t, it may be clinical depression. A very serious but also a very treatable medical condition.

To summarize what depression is in one sentence:

Feelings of intense sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness or helplessness that last for more than days, weeks or even months.

About 5 in 100 adults have depression yearly. Sometimes it will last for just a couple of weeks. However, 1 in 4 woman and 1 in 10 men will get an episode of depression serious enough that requires treatment.

There are major two types of depression:

1. Major Depression



*This type of depression doesn’t last too long. It will only last for a week or two.
Image from Flickr by Anne Lee*

You will feel terrible or very sad for a couple times, but it goes away after a few weeks. Symptoms of major depression are: loss of interest in life, feeling guilty for no particular reason, suicidal thoughts, weight loss or gain, sleeping less or too much being tired all the time or trouble concentrating. It is also accompanied by low self-esteem, people with a low self-esteem are in higher risk to get major

depression.

2. Persistent Depressive Disorder (or Dysthymia)



It has the same symptoms as major depression, but the person experiences it for two years or more. Image from Flickr by Bryan

This is a more persistent version of major depression. It is very difficult for an individual to report this type of depression, this is due the fact that the symptoms became strong habits and the individual tends to think “they always were like this”. Also, it is more difficult for the surrounding of the individual to recognize if the individual has this type of depression. The surrounding of the individual will think that this is the nature of his personality.

No matter how you look at it, if someone struggles with negative thoughts or a negative mood longer than 2 weeks, you can almost certainly say that the individual is suffering from depression.

Chapter 2: Types of Depression

If you ever feel down after an especially tiring day, cry after a bad break up or feel utterly miserable after being sacked from your job this is a normal emotive reaction to have after an unpleasant situation or event. It is part of being human. However, when you feel unhappy for extended periods of time, weeks instead of hours and there seems to be no real reason for this sadness you may be experiencing major depressive disorder or clinical depression.

Depression: How Common

According to researchers, by 2020, depression can be the 2nd biggest problem next to ischemic heart disease when it comes to disability causes around the world. However, people are inflicted with this problem fail to understand or realize that there is a real cause behind their depressed stage.

Statistics done by National Institute of Mental Health shows that 14.8 million people suffer from depression in the U.S. The suicide tendencies of people with this problem are high. Unfortunately, most adults who have clinic depression do not want or seek treatment. If left, untreated, depression could result in suffering or even suicide.

The symptoms of all types of depression

There are several different types of depression that a person can be affected by. Listed below is a list of each type of depressive disorder together with its specific symptoms.

Major depressive disorder (major depression)



Major depressive disorder or clinical depression is an illness which can affect a person emotionally, socially and physically. Image from Flickr by Manny The symptoms of this depressive state are:

- A loss of appetite
- Feeling constantly sad or unhappy without any respite
- Feeling empty or drained of everything
- The inability to feel anything other than sadness. For example, not being able to feel excited for upcoming happy events, such as a birthday or wedding
- A feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. The future looks bleak and dark; there is not a speck of brightness in the horizon
- Activities which used to bring you immense pleasure or happiness are now met with disinterest
- A loss of energy. Feeling tired or lethargic all the time. You may wake up tired even after a good night's sleep
- Wishing to sleep all the time or not at all
- Weight loss or gain
- Low self-esteem. A general feeling that you are worthless

- A lack of interest in sex
- Suicidal thoughts

On an end note, if you EVER feel like you wish to end your life, seek help immediately.

Dysthymia



Dysthymia is a form of depression that has overall mild symptoms but these symptoms are chronic, as they can last for years. Image from Flickr by Hannah

The symptoms of this chronic state of mood are:

- Daily activities will hold no interest for you, so you will not be motivated to do any
- Sadness
- Hopelessness
- A lack of energy
- Being hyper critical of yourself
- Quick to anger. You may be frequently snappy towards friends and family
- Obsessing about your past actions
- Difficulties with sleeping
- Being described as a gloomy, pessimistic person will be a frequent occurrence in your life.

These symptoms will stay with a person for years, but will fluctuate in intensity over this time. So, you may have good and bad days. Though it is normal, to have the bad days lasting for months at a time with only a few good days thrown in.

Psychotic Depression



This is a type of depression that is characterized by some type of psychotic element. Image from Flickr by Mocha This means that alongside the classic depression symptoms, a person suffering from psychotic depression may experience hallucinations such as the hearing of voices, or misconceptions of the reality of a situation, for example the idea that you are worthless or sinful.

Postpartum depression



This is a type of depression which mothers experience after giving birth. Image from Flickr by Augustus This change in mood can begin anytime during the first year after childbirth. It has been shown that around 10-15 percent of all new mothers will experience some form of postpartum depression, which can interfere with the raising of your child. The symptoms of this depressive disorder are:

- A loss of appetite
- Resentment or hatred towards your baby
- A feeling of overwhelming anger
- Loss of sex drive
- A feeling of inadequacy
- An inability to connect or bond with your child

- Mood swings
- Inability to sleep
- Withdrawing from your husband, family and friends
- Thoughts of harming your child

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)



So a person who feels blue during the long winter months may be experiencing SAD or rather they may get really down during the long hot days of summer.

Image from Flickr by Nicole This form of depression is influenced by the seasons. Any depressive mood which is triggered by the seasons is classified as seasonal affective disorder. The specific symptoms experienced are dependent on the season which gets your down.

Winter:

- A feeling of heaviness
- Sleeping more often than usual
- Weight gain and cravings for fatty foods
- Irritability
- Not being people friendly during the winter months. So you may be extra snappy or irritable towards family, friends or even strangers.

Summer:

- Weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Inability to sleep
- Anxiety

- Sadness

Bipolar disorder or manic depressive disorder



A person who is suffering from bipolar may feel euphoric one moment and the next be extremely depressed and unhappy. Image from Flickr by Faye Bipolar is marked by a series of swings in emotion.

Symptoms of a high mood:

- They will experience extreme happiness, to the extent of euphoria
- You will feel extremely good about yourself.
- Fast speech
- Poor decision making skills
- Quick to anger
- Irritability
- An increase in high risk activity. This could include unwise sexual habits, drinking too much or driving recklessly.
- A heightened interest in sex
- Ambition and motivation
- Carelessness in spending money
- Not sleeping too much

Symptoms of a low mood:

- Unhappiness
- A feeling of bleakness about the future
- Lack of appetite

- Loss of sex drive
- Difficulties sleeping
- Anxiety
- There will be a lack of pleasure in life. Usual hobbies that brought enjoyment will now be met with disinterest.
- Irritability
- Loss of energy

Childhood Depression



It can be just an everyday emotion while your child develops. Image from Flickr by Rona When your child is sad, it doesn't necessarily mean that she or he is depressed. However, if your child is persistently depressed on a daily basis, he or she might have an issue. Another symptom is if that emotion disrupts his day to day activities including schoolwork, family life and interest.

Teen Depression



It is best to talk to a doctor when you notice that your teen is depressed for 2 consecutive weeks. Image from Flickr by Goldie They might be aloof when you talk to them and they do not communicate with their parents well. They can also feel secluded and they minimize contact with their friends. There are effective

treatments that you can do to move on from depression. According to statistics, there is 1 in 8 teens that suffers from depression. This is a serious matter that needs to be addressed properly.

Double Depression



This happens when a person who is already inflicted with chronic depression experiences trauma which leads to major depression. Image from Flickr by Genevieve

Secondary Depression



Depression that roots from a known medical condition: parkinson's disease, stroke, AIDS or hypothyroidism. Image from Flickr by Kent It can also come from psychiatric problems: panic disorder, bulimia or schizophrenia.

Treatment-Resistant Depression



This type of depression might be chronic or longstanding. Image from Flickr by

Bryan Mills This is a condition that doesn't respond well to treatments such as antidepressant pills. Some suggests that electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is the way to go depending on the severity and nature.

Masked Depression



This type of depression hides behind the physical complaints of a person where in no cause can be pointed out. Image from Flickr by Angela

Chapter 3: Causes of Depression

There are several factors that can contribute to the development of depression. It usually isn't caused by one single event, but by the collective outcome of several events, personal factors and other long-term elements.

According to studies, continuing difficulties, such as being in an abusive relationship, long-term unemployment, extended exposure to work-related stress or long-term loneliness tend to cause depression more often than recent life events. However, recent negative events or a combination of these events with other factors can trigger depression in individuals who are already on edge due to their personal factors or bad experiences.

Some of the factors that may contribute to depression include the following:

Personality

Some people have a higher risk of suffering from depression because they are perfectionists, worry a lot, lack self-worth, are pessimists or are sensitive to being criticized.

Family history

People with a history of depression in their family are at a higher risk of experiencing depression. However, having a parent or a close relative with depression does not automatically make you depressed. There are still other personal factors and circumstances that are likely to determine whether you will experience depression or not.

Drug and alcohol abuse

This can lead to or cause depression. Many depressed people also deal with drug and/or alcohol problems.

Serious medical illnesses

Medical illnesses can cause depression directly or trigger it through stress and worrying, especially if the condition entails chronic pain or long-term management.

Conflict

Depression among people who are biologically vulnerable is often caused by personal conflicts or fights with family members or friends.

Certain medications

There are drugs, such as corticosteroids, the antiviral drug interferon-alpha and Accutane which may increase a person's risk of depression.

Loss or death

Overwhelming grief or sadness over the death of a loved one may add to a person's risk of being depressed.

Major events

Graduating, getting a new job or even getting married may cause depression; so can losing a job, moving, retiring or getting divorced. These are events that might be difficult to handle for some, especially because they also bring about major changes.

Other personal problems

Mental illnesses, social isolation or being an outcast may trigger depression.

Although depression is very common, it is usually misdiagnosed or ignored. However, leaving it untreated can lead to life-threatening situations, especially considering severe depression is associated with a high suicide rate. Awareness and early diagnosis can help you find qualified help. Once you notice that you or any of your loved ones show symptoms of depression, ask for help right away.

Chapter 4: Curing Depression

Once you have acknowledged the fact that you indeed do have depression, the next step you need to take is to find ways to alleviate the gloom. There are three different paths you can take on your journey to treat your depression, these being medication, therapy and lifestyle changes.

Medication

If you decide to go to a medical professional for help with your depression, they may recommend taking antidepressants. Antidepressants can be used to aid in relieving the symptoms of clinical depression, seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and dysthymia. There are a few different types of antidepressants available which can aid in easing the symptoms of depression. The most common class of medication prescribed are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors or SSRIs.

These work by increasing the levels of serotonin and noradrenaline, which are two chemicals in the brain that influence mood. Typical classes of antidepressants which are issued to patients now days are Citalopram, Paroxetine, Zoloft, Lexapro, Prozac, Cymbalta, Venlafaxine and Luvox.

But it is important to remember that there are a few negative side effects which a person can experience while taking antidepressants. These are:

- Nausea
- Fatigue
- A loss of interest in sex
- Increased anxiety
- Restlessness
- Dizziness
- Weight gain
- Dry mouth
- Changes in bowel movements
- Headaches
- Excessive sweating
- An increase in suicidal thoughts

Most of these side effects should ease after the first three weeks of starting antidepressants.

Antidepressants are far from being an addicting drug, but there can be issues if you suddenly stop taking them. In order to cease taking this type of drug you will need to discuss it thoroughly with a medical professional. He or she will formulate a safe plan to slowly and gradually wean you off them so minimal side

effects are experienced. If you suddenly stop taking antidepressants a whole host of unpleasant side effects can occur. These being:

- Nausea
- Headaches
- Anxiety
- Vomiting
- Extreme mood swings
- Insomnia
- Quick to rise to anger
- Dizziness
- Loss of coordination
- Brain shocks. A weird sensation where it feels as if your brain is being shocked. Sometimes these shocks can be felt in other parts of the body.
- The shakes

For psychosis depression, a different treatment method will be required in the form of hospital admission. While in hospital, the patient will be supplied with proper care and support alongside medication in the form of antidepressants and antipsychotic medications, which will help in stopping the hallucinations.

Drugs vs. Natural Cure

Like any other disease of the mind and psyche, a depression can easily be cured in a variety of ways.

In the 19th century, coinciding with the medical breakthroughs and the economic advances of the time, ideas on how to combat depression took center stage.

Many blamed that the Industrial Revolution, with its factories and workshops, for creating an atmosphere that made people feel alienated and insignificant.

Still, scientists have reason to believe that certain biological processes and factors in the physical world influence the onset of depression.

Today, however, experts are utilizing both natural and synthetic ways on how to better treat depression. But there seems to be a conflict between the two; a conflict that should determine which method is the way to go.

Here, we are trying to weigh the options.

Drugs vs Depression

Your nearby pharmacy may have wide array of drugs designed specifically for the treatment of depression. Indeed, modern innovations have helped produced medication helpful in alleviating such psychological maladies.

Antidepressants are available in numerous drugstores. However, specific types of these drugs are heavily regulated owing to the significant psycho-physical changes they produce.

Tricyclic anti-depressants are often the most effective. These drugs have the function of affecting two chemical messengers that influence depression, namely serotonin and norepinephrine.

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors, on the other hand, are also widely prescribed by doctors. These types of anti-depressants are known to be safe and are tolerated by most people.

For people having trouble sleeping, Reversible Inhibitors of MonoAmine oxidase are usually taken as substitutes for other types of anti-depressants since they are known to have fewer side effects. However, with respect to influencing the amount of neurotransmitters that motivates depression, these are considered far less effective.

Newer types of anti-depressants have penetrated most pharmacies.

Noradrenaline-Serotonin Specific Antidepressants can be easily purchased anywhere. The minimal side effects they promise are no reason to depend entirely on these drugs. Weight gain and changes in one's sexual appetite can be adverse effects.

These drugs have been proven to be effective in alleviating you from depression. However, you still need the advice from your doctor in order to make the way clear towards using these drugs, which we can all assume are not very wallet friendly.

The Natural Way

With consistent medication, you may as well tread the natural path to curing your depression. Bear in mind that although they are known to be effective, drugs can also irritate certain areas of your lifestyle. And dependence can be the least of your problems.

Your best bet, thus, is to ground your cure on an emotional auspice; anything that you feel can give you comfort.

Natural alternatives come in such activities as discovering a new hobby, or having a little chat with someone closest to you.

People have ways to cope with sadness, and it all depends whether you want salvation from this melancholic pit or not.

But not everyone can say that undergoing a depression is an easy ride.

Chapter 5: Stop and Think why you are Sad

Many patients undergoing depression are not entirely sure of how they ended up being sad. Others would deny themselves the reason or the bases of their sadness until they begin to tolerate their depression.

We have understood that the motivators behind a depression can take the forms of physical and emotional factors. To take a materialist view on things, it could be that chemical interaction within your body influences moods and thought processes, but this has yet to be verified within medico-academic circles.

With that in mind, we can only turn to one thing for clarity: the individual.

What's Bothering You?

Patients usually say they are confronted by certain thoughts or memories that remind them of traumatic experiences or merely life events deemed significant, in a negative light.

Studies have shown that nearly all people suffering from a depression have no clear idea why they are suffering in the first place, adding to the intrigue of the human mind.

But if we were to tap certain facets of a patient's thoughts, his whims and desires and musings, we might be able to come close to tapping the root of the depression and determine the most apt cure for it.

Conversation as Cure

The method is simple. If you are undergoing a depression, you are usually interrogated by an expert on clinical psychiatry. However, it has been a trend that most patients would rather not tell honest opinions about themselves, trying to mislead their interviewers with hazy answers and exaggerated anecdotes.

Most patients would choose to deny expressing themselves. It is more likely that they feel that no their depression will remain incurable for an indefinite amount of time or that they are so melancholic that any attempt towards social interaction is seen as taboo.

Yes, it can be a grueling task sometimes, but this method helps you to clear your thoughts of anything that may contribute to these morose feelings of uselessness and distrust. Your therapist is there to aid you in this process, and you can only trust that by sharing what you are really feeling and trying not to suppress yourself will gradually life the burden of sadness from you.

Expression is Key

Being depressed does not give you a reason to stay reclusive. But, on a positive note, you can use your reclusiveness to your advantage. It gives you the leeway to judge certain facets of your life and examine which of its aspects bothers you the most. Could it be that people have become too shallow for you? Were there events in your past that put you in your current situation today?

Try to be honest with yourself. Your depression did not come out of the blue, or we cannot just suppose that it resulted from the reactions of certain hormones in your body. Perhaps, there are things in your life that needs careful reflection, which can only be achieved when you choose to stop weeping and start confronting your life's realms.

Therapy or Counselling

This form of treatment can be done alongside medication or by itself and involves discussing issues or concerns which make you feel unhappy. The most important thing that you will need to decide in relation to this form of treatment is the person who you will be talking to. To accomplish this, first ask your doctor for a list of recommended therapists or counselors. Next make appointments with several of the names which appear on the list. Meet with them to see what you think of them. Do they make you feel comfortable? Or perhaps the opposite, do they make you feel awkward and uncomfortable? Furthermore, look at the space where the therapy will occur. Is it comforting and warm or sterile and cold? Find a place and person which will make for the most supportive environment. If this means meeting with several different people until you find the perfect one, then so be it. This is about **you** and trying to rid yourself of the deliberating sadness you have found yourself trapped within.

Therapy can be beneficial in alleviating depression for a number of reasons. It can be incredibly therapeutic talking through issues in your life that have caused grief or stress, such as a divorce or death in the family. Therapy can also provide strategies to cope with depression as well as trying to change certain thinking patterns or behavior, for example learning not to be so harshly critical of yourself.

Seek help or Talk to Someone

We have previously noted that seeking help from friends and loved ones can help you overcome depression.

Social relations have functions that go beyond utility. Sure, we can depend on our parents or friends for certain things like money or favors. But it is the emotional attachment of these relations that defines human experience.

And certainly, having known you for a long time, your friends and family can serve as emotional walls for you to lean on when sadness gets the better of you. In order to do this, you must first acknowledge the need to overcome social anxiety. Communication is vital and a real human need, and you certainly need to exercise it in order to confront the sadness.

Friendly Advice

Your friends can very serve the purpose of being your trusty confidants.

You have known each other for a long time. You have gone from hell and back, forging a type of brotherly or sisterly solidarity. And you would not hesitate to give each other advice on just about anything.

If the going gets tough as your depression progresses, the best thing to do is to ask for a lending hand from your friends. They have known you for quite a well, and it would strike them as odd when they see you depressed, granted that they have not witnessed you feeling this way before.

Open up with what you feel with your friends. It could be that your depression must have been caused by a sense of alienation, or simply a feeling that you are always left out.

Your friends may just be able to provide you with helpful advice as they have been acquainted with the way you view things.

Familial Advice

Next to friends, your family may also have an idea on how best to remedy your sense of loneliness. Your parents, since they have witnessed how you have grown over time, would invoke their wisdom in solving your problems, whatever forms they take.

Your parents, having the role as protectors, would also feel empathy towards you. You might have had a rough time at school or at work. You might have been devastated by a recent divorce or break-up. In such instances, you need to gain a sort of clarity, something that can shed a rational light on your situation. And with having their own experiences presented to the dialogue, your parents can provide you with knowledge on how best confront emotional blockades.

Try to open up with your siblings, too. They may as well be concerned with what their brother or sister is going through.

Expert Advice

Still, you can always consult people who are experts in the study of human emotions and the psychological and biological forces at work.

Contact a local psychiatrist. It may involve a large amount of money to pay for the sessions and the prescribed medication, but it can help in the long-term, especially when the depression is deeply rooted in the psyche.

Chapter 6: Effects of Depression

Physical

Depression has an effect on one's physical wellbeing. Here are several physical effects of depression:

1. 2 out of 3 people experience aches and pains
2. Daily fatigue
3. Decreased libido
4. Lack of sleep, insomnia or oversleeping at times

Lack of serotonin happens when brain wires differently. People who have chronic depression are sensitive to increased pain. Many of them complain about back pain. Serotonin also has an impact with the sex lives of depressed individuals. Depression can cause problems to relationships.

Sad to say, many people with depression including their families and doctors overlook the signs. There is a case where people who were found fatigued, with insomnia were dismissed with just aging but in reality they are depressed.

Physical Illness and Depression

When you are stressed, cortisol rises which increases your risk for several diseases. It can affect your body by targeting your immune system. When this happens, you will not be able to fend off infection. Even if you are vaccinated, its effect is not that strong anymore. There is also a report where depression leads people to drug abuse.

Medical Illness and Depression

Physical challenges that have brought upon to the person inflicted by depression are said to weaken one's immune system. In effect, existing illness might get worse. Physical changes that are caused by depression or illness might trigger or make the depression chronic.

Serious illnesses that are associated with depression are:

- Stroke
- Heart Attack
- Coronary Artery Disease
- Lupus or multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Cancer
- HIV/AIDS
- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Kidney disease

Depression can increase the risk for these diseases but there is no direct correlation to that.

Chapter 7: Ways to Beat Anxiety

Anxiety spells trouble for people who cannot control it. The Anticipation of the future makes one nervous but isn't necessarily founded on a basis. Cranky people are usual anxious about their day to day activities. They experience poor concentration, sleeping problems or just plainly distressed.

There are simple ways to escape stress. Here are just some of them:

Smile

Smiling is not rocket science. Anyone can do it. If you feel stressed out with work, it is best to just read something online or talk to co-workers about things that make you giggle. There is a research that points out to the idea of smiling decreases the effects of depression.

De-clutter your Mind

Escape stress by organizing your workspace. Wherever you are going to stay for numerous hours, tidy up. Cleaning your work area or home regularly makes things easy for your mind. It will also get your blood flowing.

Show Gratitude

Studies have shown that expressing gratitude to someone reduces anxiety. You can start by creating a journal and writing about the people you want to thank and appreciate.

Eat Right

People who are anxious do not usually eat the right type of food to begin with. Eat foods that have omega-3 and vitamin B. You can also add whole grain carbohydrates to the mix. It will help your body cope with the stress in the workplace or school. Eating sugar is definitely not helping anyone even if your body is telling you to indulge.

Breathe Properly

When you experience panic attacks, just breathe. Inhale, exhale. Inhale, exhale. Repeat until you calm down. Take long deep breaths to decrease the possibility of increasing your anxiety levels. When you consciously breathe, it will signify to your brain that it needs to calm down.

Meditate

Research says that by meditating, grey matter increases in the brain. It teaches the body to relax. Meditation also helps us analyze how our body's work and its trigger points. Also, there are positive effects of meditating such as decreases anxiety attacks, improves mood and eliminates some stress symptoms.

Meditation is great for people who want to relax and exercise their mind. Deep breathing or mantra of positive thoughts help a person calm down and de-stress. Originated in the Buddhist tradition, mediation is for spiritual enlightenment. Meditation can definitely help a depressed person sleep better by incorporating breathing techniques.

Meditation lowers stress and anxiety. Meditation also improves your confidence, relationships, self-acceptance, creativity and concentration. Your mediation session only needs to last for 5 minutes to see instant results. Meditation allows you to live in the moment and let all your worries, fears, phobias and negative thoughts go. Meditate for 20 minutes daily for maximum results. Allow yourself to relax in a quiet place, focus on your breathing and let all thoughts waver by.

Make a Vision Board

Creating a vision board helps you feel positive about things that lie for you in the future. Setting goals and seeing the results can take the anxiety off your shoulder. This board will definitely help you get moving towards your goals and projects.

Play

Do not marry your work. Go out and have fun once in a while. Do things that will help you escape stress. Create your own playtime. You can do sports, hangout with your friends or actually play.

Silence

Even in just 5 minutes, be silent and disconnect from the world. Do not answer emails, TV, phone, etc. Noise can actually put your stress levels up high. Silent time will do wonders to your overall mental health.

Mindset to Beat Depression

Depression is a serious problem. There are many people who think that their problems cannot be fixed at all. Many people turn to other unsafe medications when they feel down and it is never safe for them. Changing one's mindset is one way to go when you feel like the world is not cooperating well.

People who are depressed feel like they are useless and their lives are full of suffering. They want to deal with the problem but reality is proving too much to handle. One thing that proves to be working is analyzing the problem and dealing with it. Once you get your body moving, your mind will follow. Yoga also helps alleviate your stress. When you clear your mind, you get to think about your situation and the things that you can do about it.

Sadness is a normal emotion. People have to love their feelings of melancholy, anger, sadness and mourning. They have to embrace it to be happy. Changing your mindset is good for your mind and soul. Here are five things that can help you shift away from depression

Help yourself to questions. Ask vital things such as “what can I do to change the way I think?” “What is wrong?” These things help people grow and realize what needs to change.

Think about yourself and how you interact with other people might reveal something that will surprise you for the better.

Start something for yourself. Do something that will make you feel good. You can turn to arts and crafts. You can write poem, a book, start a garden or finish that tree house that has been sitting in the backyard for years. Let your soul express itself.

Change your Actions. It is better to move your body than stay in the house and pity yourself. Open your soul and heart to a new adventure. Release the sadness and let good energy in.

Appreciate all the feelings that have been given to you and let it out. Cry if you want or break a cheap plate. Accept and see the goodness in your sadness. Acknowledging your feelings can sometimes lead you do good things.

Chapter 8: Setbacks, Suicide and Preventing Help

Depression is a difficult obstacle to overcome. The road to recovery is riddled with drawbacks which can put a snag in your progress of booting the blues.

The Common Inadvertent Slipups That Can Interfere With Recovery

There are a few things which a person can fall into that will actually hinder their recovery from depression. These include:

Drinking: People reach for that glass of whiskey because they hope to find happiness in that amber liquid. But this is far from the reality of the situation. Yes, you may feel relaxed and happy while drinking those first few glasses; however, this mellow mood can evaporate quickly as the night goes on. Furthermore, drinking heavily on a regular basis can have a significant negative impact on brain chemistry.

Let it out: It is easy to keep all your sadness, anger and resentment bottled up, but this is extremely unhealthy and will definitely not benefit you, in the long run. If you feel like it is getting a little too much and you feel awash with negative emotions, then the best course of action is to confide in a trusted individual. This could be your mom, dad, best friend, sister, brother or your therapist. This means basically anyone who you can trust to be supportive when you voice your emotions and issues.

Do not let the negative thoughts overrun you: While depressed, negative thoughts can quickly overwhelm a person. Dark and bleak thoughts will occupy the mind, things like “I am a failure”, “I am such a loser” or “No one likes me, I am just a burden”. These types of thoughts will bombard a depressed person constantly and there seems like there is little hope for respite from them. The best course of action is to stop and rationally think through these negative emotions. Remember that this is your warped point of view shining through and it is far from the reality of the situation. Repeat a positive mantra when you are feeling especially down about yourself. This could be something like, “I am a valued important person. I matter. My opinions matter. I am a brilliant, beautiful person”. Repeat positive and uplifting thoughts in your head. Your subconscious mind will start to believe this over time and eventually this will translate into better moods, a better self-image and a higher quality life.

Suicide

The sad truth of the matter is that people who suffer from depression have a higher risk of attempting or committing suicide. Suicidal thoughts can bombard a depressed person. Thoughts like, “I can finally rest and stop feeling so sad if I just killed myself”, “everyone would be better off without me here” or “they will regret everything when I’m gone”. If these thoughts get unbearable and you truly feel like you wish to end your life, and have actually started planning how to accomplish it, stop and get immediate help. This can be accomplished in the form of seeking support and help from a loved one or by calling your local suicide helpline. The world may look like a bleak wasteland from your current point-of-view, but this is your LIFE which you are contemplating extinguishing for good. Try to remember that this dark place you are presently living in is a temporary place and there is a future out there with lots of potential laughs, smiles and happiness awaiting you.

Signs of Possible Suicide

If you know someone who is depressed or have expressed suicidal thoughts, talk to her about it or call an expert. Do not wait for anything bad to happen. Call someone who knows and can handle what your loved one is going through.

Warning signals of suicide:

- Talking about suicide and wanting to do it
- Talking about harming others or harming one’s self
- Impulsiveness or aggressive behavior

A history of suicide increases the risk for future attempts on one’s own life. If you know someone who have mentioned suicide, serious actions must be done. If you are planning to take your own life, it is best to go to a hospital for treatment and evaluation.

How to Help a Friend or Family Member Who Has Depression?

Supportive and good relationships are integral elements of the recovery process with depression. The person who is going through depression will occasionally look to you for help, for a place to vent their emotions or share their concerns. It will be your job to be a nonjudgmental ear where they can voice their feelings without any fear of censure or reprove, such these incredibly insensitive remarks, “Harden up” or “Stop being such a crybaby”. Depression is not just the

blues, something you can easily shake off like a sprinkling of snow. Depression is a deep pit of despair that pulls the sufferer further and further in until darkness and desolation surround them. And it is incredibly hard to claw yourself up from this overwhelming darkness. Below is a little list of do's and do not's in regards to helping someone with depression.

Do:

Have Fun: This means spending quality time with your loved one. This does not have to be spent talking about their depression, rather try to center it upon having a good time. Ask them whether they wish to do something, it could be taking a walk around a lake, going to an art exhibit or catching a flick at the movies. This time should be relaxed and casual, with little stress and no expectations.

Open your ears and close your mouth: This is not about you, but them. This means try to let them do all the talking and you can just lend a supportive ear. However, this does not mean you can't give advice when prompted by them.

Support: Try to aid your loved one in getting help, either in the form of a doctor's appointment or encouraging them in lifestyle changes. This means when they go for a walk, ask if they want company, or you could make them a healthy fresh dinner.

Don't do:

Dial it down a bit: The most important thing which you have to remember when supporting someone with depression is not to push them. Let them come to you. Do not pry or pester them with constant questions about their mood. Do not ask them constantly if they are feeling okay or if they are feeling better. There is a big difference between being there for someone and smothering them.

Tough Love: Telling a depressed person to harden up or get over it is definitely not the best course of action. This is not something you can snap out of in a minute; depression is a serious illness with a long road to recovery. Also do not sprout inane platitudes such as "Hey, think of all the people worse off than you" or "It could be worse". This type of pep talk is really not helpful.

I have to go: Do not avoid the person who is suffering from depression. This will make them feel infinitely worse about themselves, and will definitely not help with their depression.

What happens if they do not want help?

Someone who is depressed may be reluctant to get help or talk about their feelings. It will be largely up to you, the friend or family member, to coax them in accepting that they have a problem and need help. If they at any time voice a desire to kill themselves, get him or her immediate help even if it is unwanted.

Chapter 9: Foods that Alleviate Stress

Foods that Alleviate Stress

You can try easing depression by eating foods that are rich in nutrients. However, there is no real connection between what types of food works for an individual with depression. Still, there is still reason to believe that a well-rounded diet will address the needs of people with depression.

Good nutrition and a healthy diet is a must in our daily lives. Deficiencies of omega-3, vitamin D, magnesium, vitamin B complex, folate, amino acids, iron, zinc, iodine and selenium are highly related with depression. But also a high consumption of processed sugar, saturated fat and trans fats are considered to trigger depression. When you eat allot of these foods, you don't give your body and brain the nutrition needed to function properly. Have balanced and healthy meals and cut all the processed sugars, saturated fats and trans fats to maximize your mood every day.

- **Eat Foods with Nutrients**

Nutrient rich foods support the growth, repair and wellness of one's body. Vitamins, carbohydrates, protein and minerals are all needed by everyone. Fat in one's diet wouldn't hurt. If you are not able to eat the right amount of nutrients, your body will not function properly and can even make you sick.

- **Essential Antioxidants on your Plate**

Normal body functions cause free radicals which causes dysfunction and aging. Antioxidants fight free radicals. Eat foods high in vitamin C, beta-carotene and vitamin E. The brain is at risk when it comes to free radicals, study shows. These power foods can keep free radicals at bay:

Foods rich in Beta-carotene: broccoli, apricots, carrots, cantaloupe, peaches, collards, spinach, sweet potato, pumpkin

Foods rich in Vitamin C: broccoli, grapefruit, blueberries, oranges, peppers, kiwi. Tomato, strawberries and potatoes

Foods rich in Vitamin E: seeds and nuts, vegetable oils, wheat germ and margarine

- **Eat the "Right Carbs" to Calm your Mind**

Serotonin, the “feel good mood” has a correlation between carbohydrates. There is a study which says that craving carbohydrates decreases serotonin. With this data in hand, making smart choices when it comes to eating carbs such as avoiding sugary foods, cookies and cakes can be the best choice.

- **Eat Protein and Boost Alertness**

Protein such as chicken, tuna and turkey are good to eat because of Tyrosine. This amino acid boosts dopamine and norepinephrine levels in your brain. It makes you feel alive and gives you enough energy to be alert and concentrate. Include protein in your diet on a daily basis.

Foods rich in protein: lean beef, peas and beans, low fat cheese, milk, fish, yogurt, soy products and poultry.

Yes, eat/drink up!

Now that we have gone through the food that can depress your mood, here is an array of foodstuff which will boost it. Foods which you should definitely seek out are:

- Nuts: More specifically almonds, cashews, walnuts and brazil nuts. Eating 1-2 brazil nuts a day is proven to boost an individual's serotonin levels.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables: It has always been a known fact that vegetables and fruit are good for you. The benefits have been regularly exclaimed by parents, books and the little pamphlets at the doctor's office. And your mind is definitely not exempt from these benefits; eating fresh produce can work at alleviating a depressed mood. Asparagus, avocado, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries are especially effective for boosting a mood.
- Chamomile and green tea: Chamomile tea should be drunk before you hit the hay as it promotes restful sleep. This means you may have a sleep that is not riddled with anxiety and discomfort. Green tea has a long winded list of benefits attached to it, including helping with depression. Try to drink 2 cups of green tea a day.
- Wholegrain bread
- Cottage cheese
- Oatmeal

- Brain Food: Eat a lot of food that contains omega-3, as this essential fatty acid can work at boosting your mood. Olive oil and most seafood are especially rich in this fatty acid.

Change in Diet: Step away from the sugar.

Diet is just as important as exercise when it comes to the state of your mood. What you put in your body will have a drastic effect on your overall frame of mind.

The number one cause of depression, anxiety or other mental disorders is inflammation. Inflammation is caused by consuming too much gluten and/or sugars. This cause is very subtle, because we don't tend to link mood disorders with the food that we eat. Study shows that the most people who suffer from mood disorders are gluten-sensitive. Literally, the food that you eat is not only meant for your body, but also for your brain. This is why we need to consume much nutritious foods.

No, stay away!

Below is a list of foods that may contribute to worsening depression and preventing an improvement in your mood. Foods that you should stay away from include:

- **Refined Sugar:** Eating sugary food is sure to make you feel good for a while as you embrace that divine sugar rush. However, this will not last as the inevitable sugar crash hits you like a ton of bricks. This can leave you feeling sluggish and lethargic.
- **Artificial Sweeteners:** Avoid drinks and foods that contain artificial sweeteners as these can contribute to a depressive mood.
- **Alcohol:** Alcoholic beverages act as a depressant. This means that icy cold glass of beer can actually contribute to an imbalance in the chemicals in your brain. Regular drinking, especially the partaking of excessive drinking, will over time lower your serotonin levels, which is the neurotransmitter responsible for the state of your mood. Alcohol will also increase your anxiety and stress. Lastly, drinking alcohol is a vicious cycle when it comes to mood. A person drinks to feel good and become relaxed, however alcohol will actually depress your mood over time. Despite this, people will still reach for the bottle striving for that good feeling and a chance to rid themselves of their sadness. And therein lies the vicious cycle. If you are experiencing depression, it is best to stay away from alcohol for at least a while.

- Caffeine: Studies have shown that people who drink excessive amounts of caffeine are more likely to be depressed compared to people who do not drink caffeinated beverages. With a world filled with coffee and tea drinkers, it is a little much to ask to sustain from caffeine altogether. So, it is best to drink caffeinated drinks sensibly. Limit yourself to 2-3 cups of coffee or 3-4 cups of tea.

Chapter 10: Lifestyle Changes to Combat Depression

Depression is not easy on anyone. To combat depression in 30 days, aside from eating healthy foods and changing your mindset, there are certain things that you need to change with your lifestyle:

1. Exercise



Going to the gym or doing just a 30-minute walk can improve your mood tremendously. Image from Flickr by Ella

Exercise produces hormones to combat depression. It is a natural anti-depressant. Duke University did a study where it was revealed that 30 minutes a day for up to 4 months of exercise helped people with depression by improving their mood, reducing stress, provide a great night's sleep and boosts self-esteem.

. Physical activity stimulates brain chemicals that promotes relaxation and euphoria. Exercise burns off the tension that leads to depression. You also will feel allot better about your appearance when you exercise, this boosts your confidence. .

Put on your running shoes, neon spandex dancing gear or your flashy swimsuit and get out there and be active. Being active for only 20-30 minutes a day can have a significant improvement on your mood. This is because exercise boosts your serotonin levels as well as releasing endorphins. Exercise is an easy and inexpensive way to try and chase away the gloom. Try to mix it up so monotony does not arise. The last thing you want is for the exercise which is meant to make you happy becoming a tedious chore which you dread. So, trek through beautiful mountain trails one sunny Saturday, swim laps Tuesday and go for a run Thursday. Mix it up and have fun.

Benefits of Exercise and the Types that You Can Do

There is a study that says depression has a correlation with exercise. As people

move and produce endorphins, they also feel better as exercise improves their mood and help them concentrate.

Psychological Benefits of Exercise

When you exercise, endorphins are released to your body. It reduces the feeling of pain in your body. It also triggers a good feeling in your body. It can be related to morphine. After a quick run, many people feel “euphoric” or another word for it is “runner’s high”. They feel much alive and it is complemented with a positive outlook.

Endorphins are called natural analgesics because they diminish the feeling of pain. They are created in a person’s spinal cord, brain and other parts of your body where neurotransmitters exist. The neuron receptors where endorphins bind are the same ones that pain medicines bind to. The good thing about endorphin is it is not addictive like morphine.

Benefits of Regular Exercise:

- Boost self-esteem
- Reduce stress
- Pushes depression and anxiety away
- Lowers blood pressure
- Strengthens your heart
- Increases energy levels
- Builds and strengthen bones
- Improves strength and muscle tone
- Reduces body fat
- Makes you healthy and fit

Exercise is not often used as treatment for moderate depression. There are certain types of exercise that are more helpful for people with depression:

- Dancing
- Biking
- Golf
- Gardening

- Jogging
- Housework
- Aerobics
- Walking
- Swimming
- Yoga
- Yard work

Joining a group class might be beneficial for people with depression because of the much needed support group. You can also exercise with your friends. Doing group exercises will give you emotional comfort when you know that there are other people supporting you.

If you have always been moving, joining exercise classes is alright. However, if you are not active and you are over 50 years old or you have medical conditions, it is best to talk to your doctor first before starting an exercise program.

Are you wondering how often do you need to exercise to alleviate the symptoms of depression? To get the endorphins going, it takes at least 30 minutes of 3x a week of exercise. If you have a lot of time, exercising more is better. If you are just starting out, it is wise to take it easy.

Before you start an exercise program, think first about an easy routine that you can maintain and follow. It can be dancing, running or whatever you enjoy doing just as long as you are comfortable with the activity and the time that you are giving. If you are going to start as soon as possible, try to incorporate it into your daily routine. Schedule it and put it on the things to do for the day. Variety is important. If you play multiple sports when you were young, schedule that. Try to mix and match and find people that you can work out with. Do not spend a lot of money when it comes to exercise. Canvass first before buying gym memberships, canvass first. Also, do exercise on a regular basis. In order to combat depression, exercise needs to be habitual.

2. Weight Loss



Losing weight improves your overall health and self-esteem. Image from Flickr by Justin Kendrick

It also gives your mind some needed clarity. You do not have to drastically drop your weight. You can eat right and exercise on a daily basis. There is no need to hop on a fad diet. It will not do you any good and chances are, the weight that you will lose is not permanent. It will come back with a vengeance when you return to your normal eating habits. Do not for fad diets where you need to eat a certain juice or type of food for a week to drop weight. You need to eat foods that are nutritious to calm you down.

3. Sleep



Fatigue feeling from sleep deprivation can heighten the depression symptoms. Image from Flickr by Wesley

People with depression have a hard time sleeping. Lying awake at night is hard especially when your brain doesn't want to calm down. There can also be times when you wake up for no reason at all and can't get back to sleep afterwards. To get some shut eye, make a bedtime routine that follows a sleep schedule.

Change your sleep routine in a healthy good night's rest. Try to sleep 8-10 hours a day. Maximize the quality of your sleep by sleeping in a very dark room, turning off all electric devices and by waking up without an alarm. Waking up without an alarm can be difficult at first, but this is a habit that you can train very easily. Try to sleep 8-10 before you need to wake, this will help you to wake up automatically.

It can be learned that depression and insomnia are correlated.

Depression has its roots in the neuro-physical processes of the body and can directly affect sleeping patterns. In fact, the main symptoms that define depression included the inability to sleep or the lack thereof.

People suffering from a depression describe their ordeal as grueling, especially when they are unable to sleep at night. Besides from food and shelter from natural forces, sleep has been a fundamental aspect of human life as much as it is an important need for many other organisms. Our bodies need to recharge and rejuvenate in order to maintain its functionality vis-a-vis daily existence. Sleep enables our organs, especially the neurotransmitters in our brains, to get enough rest to replace worn out cells. But it should not imply that the whole body is shutdown momentarily. It continues to function. Sleep merely limits physical energy, and thus gives more ample time for worn out cells to rejuvenate.

It does seem awfully boring to go to sleep at the sensible time of 10:30-11pm, but a solid 7-8 hours of sleep a night can have a significant impact on your mood. If you stay up late glued to the internet [Tumbler I am looking at you], then you will more than likely be cranky and irritable, and in regards to the bigger picture, it will worsen your depression. Hours of peaceful and calm sleep are essential to your plan to kick depression in its gloomy backside. It is clear that sleep is an important part of life. Lacking some well-earned sleep can have both emotional and biological consequences that are not far from being significant.

Lacking Sleep

Patients of depression find it difficult to shut their eyes at night as they are usually kept awake by thoughts that instigate melancholy.

Some pointed out that they are hard-pressed at urging themselves to sleep, while others reported a difficulty to stay asleep. Still, others suffer from daytime sleepiness as a result of staying awake at night.

Especially when one has a stable career, it can be difficult to cope with trying to stay productive. Depressed people are not at their most efficient when they suffer from an excruciating lack of sleep. The depression deepens when insomnia has significantly taken over one's consciousness.

Sufferers also say that with insomnia comes paranoia. Not having the rest and the time it needed to replace worn out cells, the mind will react to certain stimuli in peculiar ways. Insomniacs will find it hard to maintain a logical flow of

thoughts, resulting in awkward conversations and the inability to socialize with colleagues. Some sufferers can also get easily irritated by the subtlest things and will come across as rude and misunderstood to other people in the workplace.

On a biological note, sufferers are prone to fits of nausea. They may also feel limp and there is a sensation of discomfort in certain limbs.

Getting Sleep

It is no doubt that sleep is an indispensable part of every day human life, and it can very well be a cure to depression.

It is possible to be depressed while getting amount of sleep. And it is possible that sleep can form an apt remedy by allowing your mind to relax itself. Sleep also has the ability to render your mind less agitated by the thoughts that keep it awake.

If you are indeed having sleeping problems, consult with your doctor who may prescribe appropriate medication.

Trying to limit caffeine intake and eating a well-balanced diet can also be vital steps in combating sleep-deprivation.

4. Relationships



It is best if you connect with your loved ones and friends to help you overcome this problem. Image from Flickr by Bryan

Depression can be hard on an individual. Supportive that talks about positivity will help you get through dark times in your life.

5. Read Every Day



Study shows that if you just read for just a half hour a day it will provide many positive benefits. Reading stimulates tranquility and relaxation. Image from Flickr by Cherissa

When you read spiritual books it can lower your blood pressure and make you relaxed. Reading self-help books helps people to deal with suffering and mood disorders. Reading books also improves mental stimulation and brain memory. When you read a book, you are exerting mental effort and this allows you to train your brain. The brain requires exercise to improve (just like a muscle). Other benefits of reading are: stress reduction, knowledge improvement, and vocabulary expansion, concentration improvement, better writing skills and improving analytical skills.

6. Don't Isolate Yourself



When you surround yourself with people, you don't allow yourself to buy-in to all your negative thoughts. Image from Flickr by Hugh

Talking to a trusted friend, support group or family member can improve your mood and make you feel better about yourself. You need a supportive mastermind who lifts you up when you don't feel motivated to cope with your depression. Also, try to provide value when you are with people. Value can be provided in the form of: positivity, someone who listens to others, helping people or even a smile. Providing value helps to remove the pressure and focus from yourself.

The common mistake that most people undergoing a depression make is to cut off ties with the world. And we do not mean trying to isolate oneself from a society he is entirely dependent on. But it involves more of trying to avoid any social contact with friends or family members or people who just wanted to help you go through the melancholy.

Depressed people make it a reason for their condition that the world has decided

to turn on them; that it cannot be controlled no matter how firmly we set our minds to it. Patients do not acknowledge the fact that the world acts in unfathomable ways. We cannot always get that grade or promotion we wanted, or attract our childhood crush. The universe revolves around probabilities, but sadly most of us try to deny such a situation.

We might as well rebel against the world, huh? But can it really help at all?

Conditions, conditions

Depressed people feel they are vulnerable, which explains a diminished amount of self-esteem and a lack of motivation to do anything productive. And we can always assume that forging social relations can be a productive endeavor.

We need people as much as plants need the sun in order to survive. By depriving yourself of any social interaction, you are trying to convince the world that you do not need friends or family in order to enjoy your life. Some melancholic patients will go as far as pointing out that their friends and family contributed to their depression, but this only passes as a mere illusion.

Social Needs

Man is a social animal, and he always has been as it is constituted within his nature. He can benefit from having a meaningful relationship with his fellow. Material things aside, one can feel safe just by having a friend.

Depressed people have always failed to understand that trying to isolate yourself can help you become a better person than when you were surrounded by the warmth of human company. The reality behind this assumption is that it works adversely.

Depriving yourself of any contact with your friends and loved ones can only deepen your emotional crisis and morph it to incredible lengths. Without any emotional auspice to retreat to and convincing yourself that only you can stop the misery can only promise an extended period of ennui.

Feeling sad does not justify the need to be alone. Depression can be a personal confrontation, but it will take assistance from others who are close to you and who have a clear understanding of your troubles to overcome the problem before it begins to overwhelm the impulses.

Spend time with other People

To help cure you from depression, having fun with your friends and family will

do the trick.

Your mind needs to let off some steam, and nothing but a healthy conversation with your best friend or a hearty meal with your parents can help you best in surviving the melancholy.

7. **Be Active**



By allowing yourself engage in mental and physical labor, you can gradually decrease the effects of depression. Image from Flickr by Paul

Feeling depressed forces you to skulk. Sadness saps you of a significant amount of energy needed for productive and recreational work.

Depression, to be concise, puts you in a condition of feeling utterly useless. You will eventually try to convince yourself that life, being dull and absurd, is not worth living.

This only entails a paradox. The longer you remain in an idle situation, the more you become melancholic, which in turn gives a perceived reason to remain idle. What's more, your mind, and faced with no other tasks at hand and engulfed by the depression, will suffer as well.

The situation becomes worse over time until the sufferer declares he has had enough.

Action is a way to solve this problem.

Caring for your Career

A person who has a career can deem it difficult to carry on his duties and tasks in his workplace. Sadness tries to pull him down and demotivates him from doing day-to-day tasks effectively. He is also forced to abhor any sort of contact with his colleagues. The adverse effect of this is that his reputation within the working environment diminishes and the possibility of earning more opportunities suffers.

If you, indeed, feel that work has become lonesome and dull for you, then you may have to see it in a different light. Look to your career for an apt cure that can help you stand on your feet and become the life of the office again.

You can do so by setting your mind on your daily tasks. Occupied by work, your mind can easily focus on other things and will begin to set aside thoughts that caused the depression.

8. Exercise your Mind

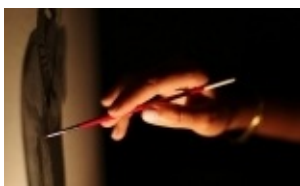


*Try to engage in recreational and intellectual activities during your free time.
Image from Flickr by Tristan Yu*

Work cannot be the only thing you should depend on to counter the effects of depression.

Read books, solve crossword or sudoku puzzles, or, unless you are alone, strike up an interesting conversation with another person in the room. Doing any of these can help get your mind off the things, things which make you sad as well as stimulate your cognitive faculties.

9. Hobbies Matter



There is also a need for you to engage in your favorite hobbies, especially those that are creative. Image from Flickr by Alex

Whether it's painting or writing songs or composing poems, you can never go wrong with engaging in your creative passions.

Through these, you can effectively express yourself in a way that suits you.

Creative work also encourages you to liberate your mind from anything that gets you down in the dumps. It also comes across as a form of therapy that lets you put your sadness on paper or canvass. This has been a tried and tested method that psychologists urge their patients to undergo.

10. Try Something New



Take the risk of trying new things, and your mind might just acquire a reason to forget being depressed. Image from Flickr by Randy

If the depression can get so heavy, then you might as well try a different approach. And by that, we mean try new things.

Do you always want to skydive or bungee jump? Or do you have that itch to travel to a place you have yet to get acquainted with?

11. Avoid Negative People



Negative people tend to bring you down emotionally. Image from Flickr by Leslie

When you are vulnerable to negative thoughts, a negative person can undo all the hard work that you did to become and remain positive in a snap. When you hang out with negative people long enough, it doesn't matter how much willpower you have, your subconscious will grab on and take over their

mindsets. This will result you in becoming very negative. So the best way to deal with negative people is to avoid them and slowly remove them from your life. If the negative person is someone who you can't avoid easily, then there are other techniques on how to avoid them subtle. Some techniques:

- **Firstly, don't engage with their negativity.**

It's easy to get sucked in the negativity of someone. But, don't engage. Not engaging doesn't mean that you simply ignore that person, but it means that you take your emotional distance from the person. When someone focuses on negative talk, choose to answer in a very short way. Again, you don't need to be rude. Answering short, nonchalant but at the same time positive is the perfect mix!

- **Be supportive.**

Be willing to listen to the person with a compassionate ear and provide help if they ask for it (don't try to force your beliefs, this will seldom help)! Sometimes someone just has a negative day or period and needs help. If the person tends to continue their negativity with the same topic, then it's time to disengage from them.

- **Disarm their negativity with positivity.**

The best way to disarm their negativity, is to redirect the negative topics into positive ones. Don't be abrupt with it, because that can look like you don't care about them. Be subtle and gently redirect the topic with something funny or a well-meant compliment.

- **Minimize the alone time between the two of you.**

When you are hanging out with the negative person, try to hang out with them in groups. This will allow the negative person to take over the positivity from the whole group. And it also makes it a lot easier for you because the person doesn't only focus his negativity into you, but into the whole group.

- **Set boundaries.**

Realize, that their negativity is not your responsibility. If they still bring you down, it's time to avoid them as much as possible. If it's a colleague, cut them short. If it is a family member, try to spend time away from them or you can even choose to refuse answering their calls.

12. Reduce Time Spend On Social Media, TV, The News, Movies and Games



We tend to compare ourselves to other people when exposed to a lot of social media. Image from Flickr by Melissa

These things overstimulate the brain.. This leads to low self-esteem, it sabotages you to accomplish your goals and it can lead to depression. TV overstimulates the brain and can trigger addictions and a sense of instant gratification. The news can trigger anxieties (while sometimes providing allot of misleading news). Movies and video games are powerful emotional stimulus for either happiness or depression.

13. Alcohol



Drinking allot of alcohol can make you depressed in the long term. Image from Flickr by Vince

This creates a vicious cycle of depression (due to alcoholism) and binge drinking to cope with depression. Alcoholism is also linked to the habit of making bad decisions and being impulsive. These habits can result in becoming jobless, ruining several important relationships or going in debt.

14. Smoking



Smoking can constrict the blood vessels in the brain. Image from Flickr by Jessica

This can trigger mental disorders. Also, the act of trying to quit smoking and binge smoking continuously can be bad for your mental health and confidence.

15. Reframe Everything



Reality is made in our mind, so the art is to reframe everything into something positive. Image from Flickr by Andy

Many times when we become depressed and are flooded with negative thoughts this is because we approach the ups and downs in our life in an improper way.. What will tend to happen is that our subconscious mind will adopt these mindsets eventually and you will become happier in the long run. For example, when you are having a bad day you can either think: “I am having a bad day, I am feeling down.” Or you can think: “Bad days are a part of the journey in becoming something greater. So essentially, it’s not a bad day!”

16. List Your Accomplishments



It is one thing to look at your past failure and to reflect but it is another to fixate and being too hard on yourself because of your past failures. Image from Flickr

by Christian

We tend to give our past failures more “airtime” than our accomplishments. Start writing your accomplishments every day before going to bed. Your mind will process this in your sleep and you will feel more positive every day.

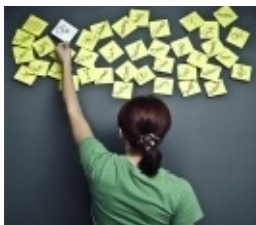
17. Laugh And Smile More



You simply can't think negative while smiling and laughing all day long. Image from Flickr by Thomas

Physically smile and laugh more. The mind follows the body. Try to find everything funny, even the smallest things. Do remember when you would use to laugh about everything when you were little? It is the same thing. Or think about a baby who laughs about everything. Depression or negative thoughts are products of our environment. If you are a “realist” and don't like to “fake it”, you can reframe every event into something funny (see practical way nr. 10).

18. Set Daily Goals

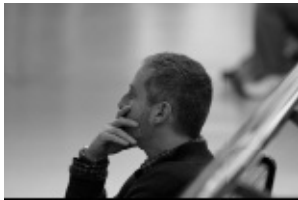


The best way to start the day is to set small goals that you actually can accomplish. Image from Flickr by Anna

When we are depressed we tend to have low self-esteem. We can easily get more self-esteem by accomplishing goals. Pick 5 things that you want to achieve the

next day. Make sure that these goals are small, but challenging enough to go for. For example, the 5 things that I want to achieve tomorrow is: No consumption of processed sugar, going to the gym, give 5 people an honest compliment, going to bed early and calling my sister to say that I love her. When you achieve those 5 small goals every day, you will get self-esteem. This due the fact that you are providing proof for your brain that you actually can achieve everything you want.

19. Challenge Your Negative Thoughts



You need to challenge your thoughts and go all the way. Image from Flickr by Alyssa Benitez

Just by stating that a specific thought isn't true, is not enough. Your brain is smart enough to realize that you are resisting a thought without a legitimate reason. Challenge them by logical and objective standpoints. So for example, if your thought is: "I am worthless." Continue by asking: "Why am I worthless." A reason will pop-up and you need to challenge that reason again. What about all the people that would say that I really provided value for them? So on and so forth.

20. Make Time For Yourself



Go on a holiday by yourself, read a book, go for a hike or do something that you really enjoy and where you can charge your mental battery. Image from Flickr by Mario

If you are depressed because you are overworking or constantly are having responsibilities without ever having the time to chill, you need to take a little time off. But, if you are someone who is always locked up, I encourage you to take the other route. Call your good friends, spend time with family, go and socialize with people or do something else where you are getting in touch with positive people.

21. Stop Criticizing Yourself



We all have the image in our head of the person that we need to be right now. Image from Flickr by Caleb

This is in a sense a positive mindset, but also a very negative one. We are holding standards for ourselves and want more out of life. But at the same time, it can occur that we are not appreciating what we have, who we have in our lives and what our strengths are. This can discourage us and give us the feeling of being worthless. If you want to improve yourself, you should be honest about your flaws but let them go at the same time. Acknowledge your flaws, work hard every day to improve and don't think about the flaws that you have in the moment. Besides, you really can't change them in the moment. Worrying or criticizing doesn't help.

22. Don't Take On Too Much



You need to keep a balance and take your thoughts one step at a time. Image from Flickr by Pauline

When you are up, it can occur that you try to take on too much. This is a way to overcompensate for all the previous failings. Divide your bigger goals into small daily goals and choose one big goal to focus on at a time. You need to eat the elephant piece by piece.

23. Don't Try To Be Perfect

Realize that it's not all or nothing. Nothing is bad or good. Most of the time when we fail, this is to teach us a lesson. Analyze the "failings" and learn that you need to step up or take a step back. Society teaches us that the most successful people "came out of nowhere" or are "lucky". But this is not the case. The most successful people worked hard for what they had, but this is rarely promoted. Realize that making mistakes is part of the journey and that you don't need to be perfect. Edison failed 10.000 times before he made the electric light. So don't be discouraged by setbacks!

Chapter 11: Improving Your Self-Image In Order to Achieve Success.

These chapters aren't directly about depression or about curing depression. These are about achieving the success you want in life. I think that these chapters are essential to everyone especially for people dealing with depression. I struggled with depression for a long time and overcame it without medicines. I used a lot (and still use) the techniques in the following chapters.

In my opinion, a lot of doctors or scientist do not have the proper answer yet, but I think that I know why we have depression. The reason for me to know this, is because I've been heavily depressed for several years but I got myself out the rut without medical attention. I've been 'depression'-free for over 3 years now and only had some minor setbacks, but that is because I still was learning how to fully overcome depression.

The most common reason for us to be depressed is because we don't live the life that we really want. We tend to dwell in negative and destructive thoughts and by repeating this often they will be forced into habits. Habits are mere programs of our minds that can be broken and replaced by healthier ones, thus overcoming depression.

I am not a doctor, if you want to overcome depression by taking medicines, then that's totally up to you. But I can almost certainly say that this is not needed. The motivation chapters will explain the following:

- How to improve your self-image
- How to redesign your life
- An example on how an unlucky guy became successful in spite of all his past unfortunate events

Feel free to skip these chapters if you think that it doesn't fit your depression healing process.

The Subconscious and Conscious Mind

Our mind exist of two 'minds'. The subconscious mind and the conscious mind. The conscious mind is the part where we take decision based on logic. We go to work because it is 8 AM, we eat because we get hungry and we don't use foul language because we know that it is bad. We have total control of our conscious

mind. The conscious mind is very objective.

The subconscious mind on the other hand is subjective. It is like a huge memory bank. The capacity is unlimited and it stores everything that happened to you. The function of the subconscious mind is to store and retrieve past data. It will make everything you do and say fit a pattern of your consistent self-concept. It is an unquestioning servant and it works day and night to make your behavior fit into the pattern that is consistent with your hopes, desires, thoughts and beliefs.

The subconscious is stronger than the conscious mind. When it believes a certain mindset, it will ensure that you act consistently according to that mindset. No matter how hard you try to change something. So for example, if you think and belief “I will always be fat”, you will never lose weight. Even if you would try really hard to lose weight. You will sabotage yourself when you are seeing results. Your subconscious mind will send red flags saying that you need to refer to your old habits.

Reprogramming the Subconscious Mind

So it is very important to reprogram the subconscious mind into a mind that promotes success. This will help you to achieve success while never sabotaging yourself. In the modern world this is referred to as ‘confidence’, believing that you can achieve something. To reprogram your subconscious mind, you need to communicate with it daily. As I stated earlier, it is an unquestioning servant, so it will do whatever you order it to do.

To reprogram it, you will need to use your conscious mind in order to communicate with your subconscious mind. You can achieve this by doing daily visualization.

Visualization

Visualization is a powerful concept where you imagine yourself having a particular result. This technique was and still is used by almost all successful people. Jim Carrey once told Oprah Winfrey that when he was broke that he visualized himself having money, he did this every day. He continually wrote himself a check of 10 million dollars for acting services and dated it thanksgiving 1995. Years after that around thanksgiving 1995 he found out that he would receive 10 million dollars from dumb and dumber.

This sounds crazy, but there is a science behind it. When you are repeating certain thoughts and mindsets, your subconscious mind will accept it as true. As

I mentioned before, your subconscious mind is an unquestioning servant. Thus when you are constantly showing that it is possible for you to achieve a certain result, it will change your mindsets and habits accordingly.

Practicing Visualization

Practicing visualization is very simple, yet it needs to be done every day to see results. There are 5 steps into visualizing. These are the steps:

Step 1: Decide *exactly* what you want to achieve.

Step 2: Determine what the exact date is when you plan to have achieved the result that you desire. Be realistic, you can't say that you want to have a six-pack in one week if you have a beer belly!

Step 3: Determine what you intend to do in order to achieve the result. Realize that you can't get something for nothing. What value are you going to offer the world?

Step 4: Create a definite plan that will lead you into achieving the result on the date that you determined in step 2.

Step 5: Summarize step 1-4 into a clear statement.

Step 6: Repeat this statement daily and visualize as if you already achieved the goal. Once in the morning and once before you are going to sleep. This will help you to remember your goal(s) throughout the day and gives your subconscious mind the opportunity to reprogram itself when you are asleep.

I am now going to show how I managed to lose weight while I never did it before and while I was very obese.

Step 1: I decided that I wanted to lose 50 pounds

Step 2: I gave myself an exact year to do so.

Step 3: I was willing to change my diet, exercise often and stick to my plan every day.

Step 4: My plan was to get in a caloric deficit of 300 calories every day, train 3 times a week, plan my meals the day before, stick to that plan and have a cheat day once in a month.

Step 5: (My statement): I will lose 50 pounds by *the established date*. I am willing to change my diet, exercise often and stick to my plan every day. I will get into a caloric deficit of 300 calories every day, go to the gym 3 times a week,

plan my meals the day before, don't eat junk food and have 1 cheat day once in a month.

Step 6: I repeated this daily to change my mindset and to show my subconscious mind what was possible. I also visualized myself as if I already achieved the goal in order to change my self-image. My self-image went from a kid who was fat, to a gentleman who had a healthy and beautiful body

Eventually I lost 52 pounds.

As a side note: do not expect that you will achieve the results only by reprogramming your subconscious mind. You'll also need to take the *right* action and the right *amount* of action. Many people fail because they don't take right action. Or they do not reprogram their subconscious mind properly or they fail to take the right (amount) of action.

Chapter 12: Why Most People Aren't Successful

In this chapter I will explain why most people are unsuccessful. Many people think that they need more talent or skills to achieve great things, but the history of successful people have shown that this is just not true. I've been unsuccessful for many years in my life. I always had a drive to succeed but I didn't know how to translate this into real results. At some point I accepted 'my fate'. The fate that I shouldn't be successful because I was fat, short and poor.

Eventually I came to realize that this 'fate' was nothing more than a limiting belief. This belief was sabotaging me from achieving the results that I wanted. The 'funny' part was, that I even didn't came up with that belief. It was installed in me by other people who didn't had the fate in themselves.

As a disclaimer, this chapter contains some harsh personal statements and mindsets. It is not my intention to hurt someone's feelings, but these are the type of mindsets that helped me to get out of my own life struggles and how I created an outstanding life for myself. So if you do not like the tone of this chapter, feel free to skip it.

The 5 Phases of Your Life

Firstly, to say it out blunt. The results in your life right now are your own fault. This sentence may offend many people, but let's stop and think about it. Why are you working a shitty job (if you have one)? Because *you* decided to apply for the job and to stay there. Why are you obese or mildly obese? Because *you* are constantly choosing to overeat and to skip the gym. Why are you broke? Because *you* are choosing to spend more than you have.

Again, this is not to insult you, but I want to give you another look at things.

However, I understand the result of some people's life due circumstances. Some people have eating disorders, some people struggle with low self-esteem because something bad happened to them. Some people have a very busy family life so they can't pursue their dreams. I understand that, but these are *short term results*. I am talking about *long term results*. These are results that you have for a long period of time, while you can choose to change them. I believe that there are 5 phases in our lives. Everything what happens in phase 2 and 3 aren't our fault. But everything after phase 3 is our own responsibility, we can choose to create the results we want after phase 3. To explain it in-depth:

- **Phase 1: Your life without any circumstances**
- **Phase 2: Your life after nature's influence**
- **Phase 3: Your life after life's influence**
- **Phase 4: The action you take to improve your life**
- **Phase 5: Your life redesigned**

Phase 1 is the life we live if we wouldn't have any struggles in our life. This is (mostly) the life that we would choose for ourselves. A perfect life without any difficulties, thus living an outstanding life. For some this would be a life where they weren't so short, for some it would be a life where they weren't so tall. Some people would want to be thinner, while others would want to be a bit thicker. This is life 'like it should use to be'.

Phase 2 is your life after nature's influence. When you are born, nature will decide how your genetics will be, thus how tall, good looking or how smart you are and what your talents will be. You can do totally nothing about this. This is totally outside your power. So if our genes decide that we will be short, so be it. If our genes decided that we are good in basketball, great! But there is absolutely

nothing you can do about this phase.

Phase 3 is your life after life's influence. These are the random influences of life. Sometimes these are the struggles you can't do something about it. For example, you had a car accident. You did everything right, but it was someone else that was drunk behind the steer and rammed into your car. Or you were beaten up when you was a kid, or worse you were raped.

Also, every bad thing that you did when you was younger than approximately 18 years, is not your fault. Your brain was not fully developed yet so you couldn't objectively know what was wrong or right. You also couldn't know what the consequences would be of your actions, you was still in a learning phase.

However, phase 3 doesn't only needs to be negative. You can be born in a wealthy family or everyone always praised you when you were a child. These are some positive things in your life that will help you to receive positive results in your life. But this is also outside of your power.

I call the results of phase 3 the *short term results*. These are the results that are outside of your control.

Phase 4 however is the phase that you can influence. This is when you are an adult and where you can choose to take action to improve your life. This is the phase where most people get stuck. They'll think that everything what happened in phase 2 and 3 are their fault and that they can't change them. This is not true.

Phase 5 is the life you live after every phase. This is the phase that I meant when I said that all the results are your responsibility. If you are still experiencing a bad life in phase 5 of your life, you need to take proper action to improve it (thus, going back to phase 4). So when people say "I am too short" or "I had a bad childhood", these are only excuses. It is true that they couldn't do anything about it (phase 2 and 3), but when you hit phase 4, you can choose to improve your life.

I will go more in-depth in this concept in the next chapter. Explaining to you how you can achieve all the results you want in spite of the circumstances you are in now.

Chapter 13: How the Unlucky Man Became Successful

Poor People Who Became Wealthy

There are numerous examples of people who were born disabled, poor, or with other unfortunate upbringings and are still achieving a lot of success. Some examples are Jim Carey, Oprah Winfrey, Jay-Z, Mark Wahlberg and countless others. In fact, out of 100 rich people, only 27 inherited their money, the rest are self-made. While all this information is at hand, we still tend to believe that the richest people were born rich or had a lot more advantages that we don't have. But, this is not true. Countless examples show us that the richest people are self-made.

Another common belief is that many rich and famous people had a talent for something. This is true in a sense, but not every rich or famous person had talent for the particular skill they were practicing. Many even were misfits and they succeeded by practicing more than others and by keep trying even when they failed many times. A book that debunks these myths is the book *The Talent Code* by Daniel Coyle. The author did in-depth research in talent hotbeds, places where a group of people contain an outstanding talent for a particular skill. And he discovered that the difference between someone who is very skilled at something and someone who isn't skilled at all, is a lot of *good* practice sessions.

An Example of an Unfortunate Man Who Became Wealthy

In this paragraph I will show you why the following person still became successful in spite of his failures and unlucky situations. This is his story:

This man was born in very poor family where he had to watch his brothers and sisters continually. Thus not having the chance to attend a proper education. He was short, obese and didn't had any notable talent for any significant skill in his life. He was bullied by people of his same age for being so fat, short and because he didn't had any friends.

The only 'skill' that he had was the drive to become successful. He acknowledged al the unfortunate events that he experienced and decided to work to achieve the success he wants. He managed to become very healthy, financially stable and marry a very beautiful and smart woman.

A very happy ending for an 'unlucky guy'. When we analyze his story we can analyze all the phases in his life. We can use this as an example to see where the most of us get stuck. Let's analyze his story:

This man was born in very poor family where he had to watch his brothers and sisters continually. Thus not having the chance to attend a proper education. He was short, obese and didn't had any notable talent for any significant skill in his life. He was bullied by people of his same age for being so fat, short and because he didn't had any friends.

The only 'skill' that he had was the drive to become successful.

Phase 1: Phase 1 for him would be a life where he wouldn't be born in a poor family and where could attend a proper education. Basically, a life where he would get equal chances as the rest.

Phase 2: Nature's influence him negatively in most aspects. He was short and obese. However, he couldn't do anything about these shortcomings. This is where most people feel sorry for themselves (I am too short, I am too tall, I can't because I am too fat, etc.).

Phase 3: This is the phase where he was influenced by life's struggles. He was born in a poor family, he couldn't attend college, people bullied him and he didn't had any friends. Again, this is the phase where he (nor we, if we would live in the same situation) could do anything about the circumstances. The best

way for him to deal with this is by acknowledging the fact that his childhood was awful and by forgiving the other children who bullied him.

Phase 3 is the phase where the most of us tend to get stuck. We accept the unfortunate events that led us to the success we have or don't have. But a lot of people fail to realize that it is not their fault what happened in phase 2 and 3. Everything what happened or what you did when you was young, is not your responsibility. Also if you experienced bad things while you couldn't do anything about it, it wasn't your responsibility. However, everything after phase 3 is your responsibility. You can influence everything after phase 3. Let's analyze the rest of his story:

He acknowledged all the unfortunate events that he experienced and decided to work to achieve the success he wanted. He managed to become very healthy, become financially stable and marry a very beautiful and smart woman.

Phase 4: Is where he knew that it was his responsibility to work hard for what he wanted. He acknowledged that the short term results he had received from phase 2 and 3 in his life were unfortunate but he also realized that it wasn't his fault and that he was good enough to pursue his dreams. This is the phase where we all need to see that it is our responsibility to achieve success, in spite of our past.

Some may have it harder to achieve success due their past failures, but this is not a reason to feel sorry for ourselves. Life can be unfair, especially for the good people, but we need to accept that fact. Think about it, how many times did you work for something only to see that you wouldn't get the credits for the work? Or how many times did you see someone work hard for something where it eventually was stolen by someone who didn't work for it at all? These all are unfair things, but realistic things. We shouldn't be discouraged by this. In fact, we need to use this as fuel to work even harder and protect the things we have in our lives.

Phase 5: Is his life redesigned. He transformed his inner drive to succeed into real success. This is what we should do as well. It is very hard, but it is definitely worth it! Don't be stuck in phase 4, decide to choose the right decisions to succeed.

Conclusion

Depression should be taken seriously. Loved ones should be able to show their support to their family or friend with depression. People can and will commit suicide when this is not resolved properly. If you are the one who needs counseling, talk to an expert. Do not let this problem eat you up. There are people around you that love you and will be there for you when the going gets tough. You also need to help yourself by changing your mindset, eating good foods and incorporating exercise into your diet. It is always best to talk to people who understand what you are going through.

Never give up. Suicide should and not be a solution to the problem. If you feel depressed all the time for almost 2 weeks, you need to see a health care provider now. Life is too much precious and should be appreciated. Do not let depression wreak havoc on your life. 30 days of consistently moving and doing something about your problem will make an impact to your life. Make it a habit to exercise, change how you think about your life and determine the things that contribute to your depression. It is time that you fight back and conquer your life. Do not let depression trample your life. It is now or never. It is always necessary to do something about your problem. There are a lot of reasons why depression kills. Do not let this problem control your life. Always look on the bright side of things and ask help from people. Do not hide in your room. Seek a solution and always reach out to people. There are telling signs if you have depression.

From the author

Thank you for purchasing this book.

I really enjoyed writing it, and I've already had some great feedback from readers who enjoyed the book. I hope you too enjoyed it.

I appreciate that you chose to buy and read my book over some of the others out there. Thank you for putting your confidence in me to help you. If you enjoyed the book and you have a couple of spare minutes now, it would really help me out if you would like to leave me a review (even if it's short) on Amazon. All these reviews really help me spread the word about my books and encourage me to write more books!

Sincerely Yours,
Richard Foreman

Let me recommend you to read my other popular books: [A Comprehensive Guide in Quitting Drinking: Stop Drinking and Back to Sober Life](#)

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