

Question 0: I'm going through some things with my feelings and myself. I barely sleep and I do nothing but think about how I'm worthless and how I shouldn't be here.

I've never tried or contemplated suicide. I've always wanted to fix my issues, but I never get around to it.

How can I change my feeling of being worthless to everyone?

Answer 0: If everyone thinks you're worthless, then maybe you need to find new people to hang out with. Seriously, the social context in which a person lives is a big influence in self-esteem. Otherwise, you can go round and round trying to understand why you're not worthless, then go back to the same crowd and be knocked down again. There are many inspirational messages you can find in social media. Maybe read some of the ones which state that no person is worthless, and that everyone has a good purpose to their life. Also, since our culture is so saturated with the belief that if someone doesn't feel good about themselves that this is somehow terrible. Bad feelings are part of living. They are the motivation to remove ourselves from situations and relationships which do us more harm than good. Bad feelings do feel terrible. Your feeling of worthlessness may be good in the sense of motivating you to find out that you are much better than your feelings today.

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Answer 1: Hello, and thank you for your question and seeking advice on this. Feelings of worthlessness is unfortunately common. In fact, most people, if not all, have felt this to some degree at some point in their life. You are not alone. Changing our feelings is like changing our thoughts - it's hard to do. Our minds are so amazing that the minute you change your thought another one can be right there to take its place. Without your permission, another thought can just pop in there. The new thought may feel worse than the last one! My guess is that you have tried several things to improve this on your own even before reaching out on here. People often try thinking positive thoughts, debating with their thoughts, or simply telling themselves that they need to "snap out of it" - which is also a thought that carries some self-criticism. Some people try a different approach, and there are counselors out there that can help you with this. The idea is that instead of trying to change the thoughts, you change how you respond to them. You learn skills that allow you to manage difficult thoughts and feelings differently so they don't have the same impact on you that they do right now. For some people, they actually DO begin to experience less hurtful thoughts once they learn how to manage the ones they have differently. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy may be a good choice for you. There is information online and even self-help books that you can use to teach you the skills that I mentioned. Because they are skills, they require practice, but many people have found great relief and an enriched life by learning them. As for suicidal thoughts, I am very glad to read that this has not happened to you. Still, you should watch out for this because it can be a sign of a worsening depression. If you begin to think about this, it is important to reach out to a support system right away. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. The text line is #741741. I hope some other colleagues will provide you more suggestions. Be well...Robin Landwehr, DBH, LPCC

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Answer 2: First thing I'd suggest is getting the sleep you need or it will impact how you think and feel. I'd look at finding what is going well in your life and what you can be grateful for. I believe everyone has talents and wants to find their purpose in life. I think you can figure it out with some help.

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Answer 3: Therapy is essential for those that are feeling depressed and worthless. When I work with those that are experiencing concerns related to feeling of depression and issues with self esteem. I generally work with my client to help build coping skills to reduce level of depression and to assist with strengthening self esteem, by guiding my client with CBT practices. CBT helps with gaining a better awareness of how your thought process influences your belief system, and how your beliefs impact your actions and the outcome of your behaviors. This process isn't easy but it helps teach an individual that we don't always have control over what happens in our lives but we can control how we interpret, feel, and behave. CBT is good for individuals dealing with depression, anxiety, toxic relationships, stress, self esteem, codependency, etc.

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Answer 4: I first want to let you know that you are not alone in your feelings and there is always someone there to help. You can always change your feelings and change your way of thinking by being open to trying to change. You can always make yourself available to learning new things or volunteering so that you can make a purpose for yourself.

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Answer 5: Heck, sure thing, hun! Feelings of 'depression' have a deeply-rooted base in physical structures that may not be functioning very well at present; and, we can certainly turn them on again using means that you are able to find around the house and with relative ease :) After that, emotional and spiritual support will be liberally applied.

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Answer 6: You are exhibiting some specific traits of a particular temperament type. Seek out a counselor who provides NCCA temperament therapy and discover the joy of being you -- God loves you as you are!

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Answer 7: That is intense. Depression is a liar. Sometimes depression places these glasses over our eyes, these dark sunglasses that change how we see things. Depression tells us things like "you're worthless" "no one likes you" "don't worry about doing anything." And it is so easy for us to listen and to be tricked into thinking that just because we feel something means it is true. Please know that even if you are feeling worthless right now, that doesn't mean you are worthless. The first step to working through this is recognizing what is going on. Recognizing when depression is telling you the same story (ie; being worthless) with different words (ie worthless here, worthless there) and making an effort to talk back. While I can not give you a diagnosis of depression, reading what you are going through, it sounds like you might need help to get back on track. Seeing a counselor can open an entirely new option up wherein someone who is not involved in your life can help you without judgement and with an objective perspective. This can do wonders in unwrapping these kinds of thoughts. Wishing you the absolute best!

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Answer 8: It sounds like you may be putting yourself last. You wrote that you want to fix your issues but never get around to it. I wonder how you are spending your mental and physical energy. Are you spending time taking care of and doing for others? I also wonder where the thoughts and feelings of being worthless are coming from - are you around people who treat you poorly or are hurtful? Or do you feel it is more of a worry you have but aren't really sure how others feel? It may be helpful to talk to someone about your feelings - a counselor perhaps - to clarify your feelings and move forward from those that are hurting you.

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Answer 9: It must be really difficult to experience what you're going through right now. It takes a lot of courage to reach out. It sounds like you want to get better, but perhaps need some help to get over the hump. Many of the symptoms you have described are consistent with a person who is dealing with depression. Depression is a treatable condition. Typically, if these symptoms have persisted for more than two weeks, then it is a good idea to seek professional help. Someone who is trained in dealing with depression. Initially, a comprehensive assessment would be completed to rule out any other causes for your symptoms and to determine the exact nature of your presenting concern. Then, in collaboration with one another, a tailored treatment plan would be developed, focusing on how to best help you reach your goals. The good news is that there is hope for getting better! You don't have to do it alone. Allow me to be your ally in healing.

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Answer 10: People who feel worthless were, in one way or another, were told that they are worthless. This is the lie that they are living with. The work of therapy is to help people see their true good selves. This gives them self esteem.

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Answer 11: I'm sorry to hear you're feeling this intense emotion of worthlessness. I'm glad to hear this has not reached the point of suicidal ideation; however, it does sound like you could use some additional support right now. I would recommend seeking out counseling to help you challenge the negative beliefs you have about yourself. Although many types of therapy would be helpful, cognitive-behavioral therapy has been shown to be a good approach for this type of struggle. A CBT therapist can help you identify your negative thoughts and beliefs, figure out the ways your thoughts are being distorted (for example, all-or-nothing thinking, or discounting the positives about yourself), and reframe your thoughts to be more positive. You might also consider EMDR therapy, which helps the brain reprocess traumatic or distressing memories and helps you move forward with more positive beliefs about yourself. Best wishes!

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Answer 12: It sounds like you may be struggling with depression. Depression can make you feel overwhelmed and paralyzed to change. I would suggest that you connect with a provider who can help you get to the root of where the worthlessness is coming from and help you develop a plan for recovery. In the meantime, small steps can go a long way. Self-care interventions such as journaling your feelings, mindfulness meditation, and regular exercise are all helpful to reconnecting with the present moment and gaining internal motivation. Focusing on one day at a time and bringing your thoughts back to the present can also be beneficial. There is hope!

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Answer 13: I'm glad you are interested in changing your feelings of worthlessness. Visiting your doctor is a great first step to address your lack of sleep. First, you want to make sure that you are physically healthy and that there isn't a physical condition causing your problem with sleep. Changing your feelings is something that is difficult to do, especially on your own. Make sure that you have someone you can trust and you can talk to about how you feel. This can be a friend or a family member. If you find that there isn't anyone you would feel comfortable talking to about this issue, find a therapist close to you who can help. One activity that people have found helpful in feeling better about themselves is keeping a

gratitude journal. You can do this by journaling daily about the things that you are grateful for. There is no right or wrong way of doing this, as long as you focus your journal entries on the things you are grateful for in life.

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Answer 14: You have

several things going on here. The sleep should be addressed with a primary care physician to rule out any physical issues. Sleep is the big reset and allows us to function in the day. What happens during a depression is that our thoughts race and it is as though our "brain won't shut off." Medication can help with this. I also use a Pranayama yoga breathing technique called the four fold breath which has great usefulness for relaxing us and often does work quite well with allowing

us to sleep.. You can read about it here:

<https://billleavitttherapy.com/breathing-techniques-the-four-fold-breath/>Your thoughts on feeling worthless to everyone fall under a heading of thinking error in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) known as overgeneralization. In CBT thoughts lead to emotions, so we are going to pick the statement apart and then reframe it. First list

the evidence that contradicts the thought. Has anyone in the past made positive comments toward you? This might be hard to recall if we are in a rut, but at some point in life we frequently have had some positives expressed towards us by others. "Everyone" is an absolute. The specifics on why you are thinking this need to be addressed. How are you arriving at this conclusion? There may be specific people that we want more validation from. Or specific people might have made offhand hurtful comments, (such as a family member, teacher or co-worker) but if I extrapolate that to a global and think that everyone thinks I am worthless, that thought is not rooted in facts.

What are

the Pros and Cons of thinking this way? What are the Benefits and Costs? There are very little pros or benefits to thinking this way. It's just going to continue to tear you down and make you feel bad. So can we reframe the thought about the situation? Is there another way of looking at the situation? Again, we need the specifics on how you are arriving at this conclusion, and a one on one therapist can definitely help you with this, but the thinking that you are using to arrive at the conclusion needs to be re-cast into a more helpful mindset.

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Answer 15: Hello, you sound like you have so much on your mind! I am relieved to hear that you have never tried or have contemplated suicide, but not being able to sleep, feeling

worthless, and like you shouldn't be here are big issues that need addressing. Please get around to counseling. Having someone to listen to you is a gift to yourself. You deserve the help of someone helping you change your feelings of worthlessness. You have not been able to do this alone. It's time to reach out for help. You can do this! Best to you!

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Answer 16: It sounds like you are having some pretty severe depression. Depression can cause insomnia, and make a person focus on their own perceptions that they are "worthless". It is important to remember that other people may not truly perceive you as worthless. This is the depression talking. I think that it is extremely important when you are this depressed, to sit down and write down some positives about yourself. What are your strengths? What are some positive things that you have done in your life? It concerns me that you are having suicidal thoughts. It sounds like now is the time to act on the idea of getting some help for yourself. If you feel like you might actually take your life, I would recommend that you go to a hospital emergency room, or a mental health crisis clinic right away to get some help. The most important thing right now is to keep yourself safe. If you are feeling like you are not going to hurt yourself despite your suicidal thoughts, I would recommend that you focus on finding a therapist as soon as possible. I don't know what your situation is in terms of insurance. The back of your insurance card should inform you how to obtain mental health services. There are also low cost services available with such places as Catholic Charities, and others. Your local county mental health agency should be able to refer you to some appropriate places. Good luck. Remember to identify your strengths, and the good things about yourself. Marie

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Answer 17: You can, for sure... and the first step is to believe you are worthy TO YOURSELF. Recognizing you are in a quest is already a big first step. Taking the time to start figuring out who you are is definitely the next... do so with SELF COMPASSION and kindness. Know this is a process and just look forward for what you might find. I do recommend you find someone to talk to (there are many options out there that can fit the situation you are in), and I also recommend you start by giving yourself the importance to invest some time and effort in this quest. YOU DESERVE IT. There are some excellent TED Talks you can google, great books you can read, or even joining a yoga practice, team or some kind of hobby may help. Anything that shows yourself you are worthy of this effort. Have patience and start!!!! the answer is out there waiting for you. Asking these questions already set you on the right path.

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Answer 18: Oftentimes we can change our feelings about ourselves by building a better relationship with ourself. It sounds like there is a very critical aspect of your self that is alive and taking over. Sometimes when we are stuck it is because a part of ourselves, a way that perhaps we learned to cope with difficult situations earlier in our lives, has decided to run the show. Like a highly critical part that may actually be desperately attempting to protect us from a past hurt. Slowing down and even forming a relationship with this critical internal part will help you get some space from it. When we can begin to observe parts of ourselves, be curious about them, get to know them like a new friend, then we have room for other ways of being. Beginning therapy could be a great way to change this feeling of worthlessness. Beginning to build a better relationship and understanding of yourself will deeply influence the relationships around you. This first step may feel hard, to reach out to someone, and it could be the beginning step to a path of radically shifting your relationship with yourself and others in your life.

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Answer 19: Feelings of worthlessness often originate from what you learned about yourself when you were young. Improving your self esteem needs focus on that original message from parents, teachers or siblings that may be suppressed. Most of us need help to uncover the "lie" because you were born valuable!

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Answer 20: The feeling of being worthless is caused by your inside being not matching your outside result. Your comparison to others and you thinking you need to be someone other than who you are. You are not worthless. No one is worthless. You need to find your worth and not let yourself talk yourself out of the good you find in yourself. I hope these words resonate with you and that you start looking for your worth even if it's as simple as I am able to get out of bed and call someone and make a joke.

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Answer 21: Hi there, I'm sorry you're feeling this way. Let me see if I can guide you in the right direction. Often when I talk to my clients about feelings of worthlessness we start with a little bit of self-exploration. We start with noticing. Start to notice when these feelings come up for you. Is there a particular time

of day, a specific person who brings it out, a phrase you hear? Just

start to notice. Usually it's tied to something but it may take a while to figure out what that something/someone is. Try to be patient. Next we start to explore. When did these feelings start? Where do you think they come from? Is there something - a statement - perhaps that repeats in your head over and over again? If so, whose voice is it? These are difficult questions, and just a few of them, so take your time answering them. (We usually do it over

a few sessions.) It might even be helpful to write them down somewhere. If you have a journal that would be a great place as research has shown that our brain works differently when we put pen to paper versus typing on a computer. Now comes the good news. Our brains are able to rewire themselves. This allows us to change habits we don't want as well as statements we say to ourselves that are no longer serving us. The next step is to select an ally. Someone who is or has been in your corner, someone who is always rooting for you. If you don't have someone like that, that's ok - a lot of us don't - you can just make someone up. Close your eyes and try to describe that person in great detail from the way they look to the way they act to the way they sound. Now, pick a phrase you would like that person to say to you whenever you start to think that you're worthless. Something that will help you feel better about yourself - a characteristic, a skill, a great joke you tell, a physical attribute. This also takes time and may involve you asking for help from someone who knows you. Once you have all of that together - the noticing, answers from where these feelings and statement(s) come from, your ally, your new statement, you can try to put it altogether. When the feelings come up, notice what is bringing them up and then call upon your ally to try to change the statement in your head from the self-defeating one to the more positive, uplifting one. I hope this was helpful. Again, I do this with my clients over quite a few weeks, if not months, and I am there with them the whole time. It is quite an involved process and can bring up a lot of very difficult feeling/memories. If at any point you find it too hard to go at alone, please seek help. If you take anything away from this reply, know that there is help out there and that it is possible to change the way you feel.

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Answer 22: I am sorry you are feeling this way. We all have narratives that we say to ourselves whether it is valid or not. In your case it would be beneficial to explore when and how this belief began and rewrite your story. There are different ways to explore and rewrite. This process requires commitment, self-reflection and courage.

Question 23: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 23: Let me start by saying there are never too many concerns that you can bring into counselling. In fact, most people who come to see me for counselling have more than one issue they would like to work on in psychotherapy and most times these are all interconnected. In counselling, we work together, collaboratively, to figure out which issues you would like to address first and then together we develop an individualized plan of care. Basically, it's like a road map of where you want to go, how are you going to get there, looking at stopovers, some scenic routes others possibly not so scenic, however, necessary. Of course, these plans can also change due to internal (what we have control over like our thoughts, feelings and behaviours) or external reasons (those things that are outside our control). I would encourage you to take the next step and reach out to a professional you can trust and build rapport with by co-journeying through whatever concerns you have by examining what has been working so far as you have learned to cope with some of your

issues like insomnia, depression and anxiety, as well as being a breast cancer survivor. Then to help you by developing new coping strategies. Psychotherapy can be such a powerful tool to help you get to where it is you want to be. I know you can do it and you will see first-hand how psychotherapy will help you to move past these points in your life where you are feeling stuck. I like to quote Nike where their motto is, "just do it." You can do it.

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Answer 24: It is never too late to get help and begin making significant changes and improvements in your life. The right time is when you feel ready and open to change. Sometimes when we have a history of trauma, like sexual abuse, the impact of that trauma can affect many areas of our lives as adults. Working with a therapist who specializes in trauma is a great way to begin developing skills to manage present day life, learn to regulate your emotions and nervous system when you become triggered, and then in a safe environment have the opportunity to process past traumas so you can live your present life with more ease and joy. People can and do recover from the impacts of trauma at any stage in their life. It is never too late and you can feel better

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Answer 25: You have been through so much and it sounds like you have a lot of things that have compiled over the years. Regardless of the struggles you have been through, you do not have too many issues for counseling. Many times when someone starts out their counseling and healing journey, there are multiple things they would like to address and work on. If you decide to start counseling, you and your therapist can decide collaboratively what you would like to process and work on first. Be sure to express to your counselor if any of the above experiences you've been through is causing a lot of distress, as many times the first things addressed are the ones that are presently affecting your life or you emotionally. Often times when we experience negative situations in our life, but do not address them, they bottle up inside us and can manifest in other ways, such as depression or even physical symptoms like IBS or neck pain. Counseling can give these bottled up emotions and situations a release. Given the situation you shared, not only do I not think that you have too many issues for counseling, but believe that you will be a great candidate and can get a lot from it.

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Answer 26: Absolutely not. I strongly recommend working on one issue/need at a time. In therapy you will set smart goals and objectives that will help you reach your goals. I see you as a survivor and not a victim. Best wishes to you.

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Answer 27: Absolutely not! In fact, most people have many issues. A lot of the issues you are describing commonly go hand in hand (in "therapy speak" we call it co-morbid conditions). I would venture that most of the feelings you are struggling with stem from your early trauma. You would benefit tremendously from counseling! A good therapist will develop a treatment plan that addresses all of your needs. With help you could definitely live a happy life without all of your anxiety and depression getting in the way!

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Answer 28: This is a great question! I personally don't believe that any client could ever have too many issues for counseling. In fact, that type of thinking may be stopping you from seeking counseling, so it may be hindering you from getting the help you need. In fact, all of what you described points to the importance of you seeking help in order to cope with the many challenges in your life. If you seek counseling, it will be important for you to understand that you may need to remain in counseling for a sustained period of time in order to work through each of these issues. All of these issues won't be able to be solved right away or in a brief period of time. Counseling will take commitment and hard work, but it is possible for you to recover and heal from all of the issues you described. Many clients come into counseling with numerous issues rather than just one particular thing. Most of the time, the issues relate to and exacerbate each other. We call these "comorbid" conditions, which means that two or more mental health problems exist at one time. A lot of the times, when you start to work on one issue, the other issues get better as a result. I encourage you to find a professional therapist that can help you learn how to cope with all of the mental health difficulties that you described. You deserve the help just as much as anyone else.

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Answer 29: Hi! Many people begin their therapeutic journey with histories just like yours and experience transformative shifts in their quality of life. I hope you are able to find a counselor you feel comfortable working with and do the work if you feel called. Best of luck on your journey!

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and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 30: Absolutely not. It sounds like you have significant trauma and it will continue to impact your depression until it is dealt with. Everybody has issues, though some more traumatic than others yet it is best to just start somewhere. I would encourage you to begin counseling and work through some of your history at your own pace in order to begin to impact and reduce your depressive symptoms.

Question 31: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 31: Most clients have many issues that need working out. It is normal to have many events in our lives that trouble us and remain with us without counseling help. The right type of counsellor will help you focus on the main and most troubling issue you have first and work your way through all that you are managing step by step, goal by goal. Sometimes, working on one issue helps to bring other issues to light in the context of your main problem. This can help you resolve some other issues that are connected. Look for someone with experience and specialty in your most pressing issue...even though you have had breast cancer, you may find that grief from your past is more troubling. Then you would look for a bereavement or grief specialist.

Question 32: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 32: Just go! You start with the most prevalent issue by talking with your therapist. Healing one issue can have a ripple effect and heal other issues as well.

Question 33: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 33: There is no such thing as too many issues for counseling. Many issues are often interrelated and can all be worked on with some time and patience.

Question 34: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 34: Hi, people who have only a few issues and people who have several issues are perfect for therapy. There is no such thing as having too many problems for therapy. Therapy

is great because it will help you process all that you are going through, heal from past and present pain, and gain clarity.

Question 35: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 35: Yeah, you might :)At least, it certainly feels like that, I bet...Not to mention that most counselors out there might generally feel overwhelmed with a "case" with so many problems. And, so, you will slog along week-to-week with gradual improvements occurring as she slowly does her best to chip away...The real issue is that these folks don't yet comprehend the integrative nature of each of these subjects and how generally simple it is to understand them, and then eradicate them.

Question 36: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 36: It could be said that you might be the perfect candidate for counseling! No one is beyond hope, and someone brave enough to be honest regarding their struggles, with the intention of reaching out for help is certainly a person a qualified counselor would be happy to assist. You may want to do some research on therapists in your local area who specialize in mind-body connection, or one of the struggles you have acknowledged in your post, in order to find a therapist that is best suited to meet your needs. Good luck on your search, and remember that the world is a better place with you in it.

Question 37: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 37: No, there are never too many issues to address in counseling. Therapy would begin by prioritizing what you feel needs to be addressed first. As one area improves, such as processing history of abuse you are likely to see improvement in other areas of your life...like sleeping better.

Question 38: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 38: Firstly, I would like to say how amazing that you have been able to live through breast cancer, sexual abuse as well as your depression and anxiety. You are stronger than you may believe at this moment for being able to continue to grow and live through these experiences. Take a moment to acknowledge your strength and know that this strength will be an asset during the therapeutic process that you will be able to tap into to find increased

self esteem and more strength to address the concerns you are having. There are never too many concerns to address in therapy sessions. I hope you can find a great therapist who you can trust to listen and work with you to identify and address the most concerning issues first. Once you begin to do this you may find an alleviation of symptoms and feelings which could allow you to grow your capacity to manage difficult feelings and situations and address additional concerns. Before you even realize it the issues you are having will begin to feel more manageable.

Question 39: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 39: Absolutely not! It is never too much. The most important thing is that you are reaching out to get help. Therapy helps you to develop healthier coping strategies and that can help reduce the anxiety and depression as well as improve your sleep. This can all be done at a pace that is best for you. Your therapist can help you process all of this in a safe and supportive space.

Question 40: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 40: No, it is natural for us to have a number of issues going on if we don't address the concerns we have in our lives. Seeking counseling can assist you in working on these issues individually as well as ways in which they intersect and impact each other.

Question 41: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 41: The most direct answer is no. I would venture to guess that several of the things you are feeling (symptoms) are connected. I would recommend a trauma counselor. You have several strengths (resources) that you are able to pull from and I would encourage you to focus on them as you deal with the issues you have placed on the back burner for so long. Sometimes people are afraid to address things because they feel or believe that they won't be able to handle it. Compare it to a tornado. The storm has passed, but you are still in hiding for fear of the aftermath (the mess left behind). A good therapist is like a personal organizer to help you.

Question 42: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 42: It's not really a question of whether you have too many issues for counseling but more what would you like to work on in counseling? You control the direction of sessions and depending on how you're feeling in a particular day can predict what direction that session takes. If you want to work on all the issues you've listed it will just take some dedication on your part to see through the counseling long enough to find a resolution to each of the issues that is satisfactory to you. You work at your own pace in counseling and it does seem like you may be overwhelmed with the ever-growing list. But you may just be in search of self improvement and making yourself better, which is a great thing. It seems as though you may need some form of resolution to what has happened in the past and to work through the trauma you have experienced. That may be the base of your counseling needs in which self esteem and depression/anxiety may fall underneath it as well. If you want to start counseling don't let what you need to work on overwhelm you. Find the counselor that best fits with you and together you both can tackle any issue.

Question 43: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 43: A person never has "too many" issues to address in counseling. Participating in counseling with a licensed professional offers a safe place and therapeutic relationship where healing can occur. A trained therapist can help a person unpack and process past and/or current wounds (or events) which may negatively impact day to day living. They can also help make sense of thoughts and emotions that sometimes feel overwhelming and confusing. If you want to experience more emotional freedom and gain some tools to help understand and cope with depression and anxiety, I'd encourage you to schedule an appointment with a therapist in your area.

Question 44: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 44: There is no such things as "too many issues". Many of the issues cited here are connected. For example, in this case working on the sexual abuse will possibly address the depression, the anxiety, the self esteem. There may be some grief to process around the impact of the cancer. Our body, mind and spirit are parts of one system. They are interconnected. Addressing these issues are important so you can be relieved of the burden and feel more spontaneous and enjoy life even more.

Question 45: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 45: Of course not. Counseling is a process, whereby you and your therapist will help you create goals- starting with issues that are most pressing and interfering with your daily

functioning. When anxiety and daily stress is more manageable then you and your therapist can examine more deep rooted or more chronic issues.

Question 46: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 46: You definitely don't have too many issues for counseling. In fact, counseling can help you understand how most of these things can be related to one another. For example, insomnia, depression, low self-esteem and anxiety are very common to experience after a traumatic event or events. Once you begin to work through processing these life altering events that you have experienced, the hope is that you would see a decrease in your other symptoms.

Question 47: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 47: You absolutely do not have too many issues for counselling. The fact that you are wanting to seek help is commendable and you should feel proud of yourself for reaching out for support. I know from my experience working with clients that some may say they have only one issue but when we explore it turns out they have many things that they want to discuss that are of equal importance. I believe that you deserve to feel happy, at ease and also get restful sleep amongst other things. Please do not feel hesitant because the fact that you know what you want to discuss and work on is amazing. You know the directions you want to go and the therapist just needs to help you get there. I suggest sitting down and making a list of what you want to discuss as well as what you feel is more important to address first. Perhaps the therapist can help you with that as well.

Question 48: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 48: Thank you for sharing your question. I imagine it feels overwhelming and discouraging at times if you feel like there are too many issues to address in a counseling session. I would encourage you to share these concerns with a counselor because a counselor can help you organize the concerns into a list of specific goals. For example, a list of goals may look similar to this: 1. "I will learn about the effects of medication on the symptoms of depression and anxiety." 2. "I will learn about the factors that affect insomnia." 3. "I will learn about resources and support groups in my local area to help me cope with my traumatic experiences." 4. "I will practice self-care exercises each day and write about my thoughts and feelings in a journal so I can measure whether or not I'm making progress." This is an example of some of the possible goals a counselor can help you work toward each week. Working toward a specific goal can lead to a feeling of

accomplishment once you've completed it, and this may have a positive impact on your self-esteem. I hope this information helps, and I wish you all the best!

Question 49: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 49: There are never too many issues in living. In a way we take on too many issues at one time. Then we become over whelmed with "anxiety and depression." A skillful, caring therapist will help you find a place to start and deal with one issue at a time. when this helps the other issues. Then the other issues become more manageable. I gain. confidence I can take on life better and, importantly , enjoy living life more. My best to you. Dr. Spencer

Question 50: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 50: There are never "too many issues" to be addressed in therapy. Most people come in with multiple issues they want to address. The wonderful thing about therapy, is that often, as one or more significant issues begin to change and improve- the lead naturally without much effort to improvements in the other areas. (For example, as you begin to address trauma and betrayal from you past, you may find that the insomnia improves). Your therapist, with you input and direction, can help you to prioritize which problem areas to target first.

Question 51: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 51: You can be helped. Many of the people I see have multiple issues. These issues are often linked so that helping one issue will positively help the other issues.

Question 52: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 52: The short answer is: absolutely not! The longer answer is that it might take some time to process all of the issues, and it may feel quite "muddy" in the issues for a lot longer than is tolerable (which is why counseling may have been postponed to begin with for you.) It's important to be realistic when entering counseling of any sort, and that the therapist be realistic with you about what you might be able to expect working with that person (I use the words "might be able to expect" because therapy experiences can vary.) But that not having counseling about trauma that you have experienced much earlier in your life can play a significant role in the process and how long that process could take to unpack all that may

have been buried over time. It might also be helpful in counseling to work with the therapist on figuring out where to begin, but to also manage the feelings of being overwhelmed that may make it hard to continue to show up and do the work required, week in and week out. It isn't easy work trying to process past pain that you experienced, and so consistent practice of self-care, including leaning on support systems outside of therapy, is key.

Question 53: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 53: Usually people who struggle with depression also have symptoms of anxiety. These symptoms come about as a result of underlying causes. The obstacles you have been overcoming such as abuse, cancer and insomnia likely bring about similar feelings and emotions in you which affect your self-esteem. Counseling is meant to support people who have layers of difficulties. We see the difficulties as layers to an onion, peeling away the many layers.

Question 54: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 54: Often times when an individual begins the counseling process it is revealed that there is more than one thing going on. When we think about how much is wrong, it can be overwhelming and we may not know where to even start. Counseling can provide guidance to help you to begin working toward healing in a way that is most helpful for you to reach your goals.

Question 55: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 55: It is very common for people to have multiple issues that they want to (and need to) address in counseling. I have had clients ask that same question and through more exploration, there is often an underlying fear that they "can't be helped" or that they will "be too much for their therapist." I don't know if any of this rings true for you. But, most people have more than one problem in their lives and more often than not, people have numerous significant stressors in their lives. Let's face it, life can be complicated! Therapists are completely ready and equipped to handle all of the issues small or large that a client presents in session. Most therapists over the first couple of sessions will help you prioritize the issues you are facing so that you start addressing the issues that are causing you the most distress. You can never have too many issues to address in counseling. All of the issues you mention above can be successfully worked through in counseling.

Question 56: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression

and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 56: Absolutely not! When we have the courage to accept the challenge to address whatever is causing us pain, the solutions often generalize to many, if not all of our symptoms. I would suggest that unresolved trauma from sexual abuse is likely a primary contributing factor. However, it is important that you first build a trusting relationship with a therapist experienced in trauma treatment as this is an area of specialty that not all therapists are skilled in treating. Choosing one issue to work on, such as anxiety or depressive symptoms, and starting there will allow you the opportunity to get to know your therapist, learn coping skills for managing distressing symptoms, and establish emotional safety before jumping into trauma work.

Question 57: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 57: Hello there, No one has too many issues to address in counseling. Once you start counseling, your therapist will help you identify which issues to start working on first and which are causing you the most distress. Once you and your therapist prioritize your concerns, you can start to address each concern, starting with the one causing the most distress for you.

Question 58: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 58: It sounds like you are feeling pretty overwhelmed. But you are also a survivor and have the benefit of a long, stable marriage. You do not have too many issues to address in counseling. A good therapist will help you to prioritize your goals into smaller objectives and focus in on what's most pressing for you to address first in treatment.

Question 59: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 59: Hello! You may have heard the saying that counseling is like peeling the layers of an onion. Whether a person comes to therapy with many issues on their heart and mind or whether he/she comes with something specific, one issue leads to another. Please don't feel as though you have too many issues. You are important and worthy. On the plus side, you are a breast cancer survivor and have a wonderful marriage! Seek the help that you deserve.

Question 60: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression

and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 60: You do not have too many issues to address in counseling. And your perseverance will serve you well if you choose to engage in therapy. The trauma and medical event you experienced topped off with chronic sleepless nights would lead to feelings of depression for many. The emotional reaction you've had to these experiences sounds normal albeit troublesome and I would imagine intensely painful at times as well. Therapy can help prioritize what is the most impactful issue you are grappling with. I find in therapy that when the central issue is revealed, understood, processed, and understood again in its current context, many other areas of the person's internal experience improve. It sounds as though something has prevented you from seeking help from a counselor in the past, and it sounds as though you are more seriously considering it now. Therapy helps and it can help you when you're ready.

Question 61: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 61: Thank you for sharing your history. You do not have too many issues to address in counseling. It will help to prioritize what you would like to work on first in therapy. Your therapist will create a treatment plan with you, which can always be changed while working together. Therapy is a process in working towards your best life, and you deserve it.

Question 62: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 62: Not at all! Whatever issues you might have you can bring to the therapy room. Remember therapy is about YOU, not your therapist. You bring whatever you need to bring to the table. Keep in mind these issues are likely related. Remember you are a holistic being, more than just the sum of the parts. Just like any system, when you move something in one area, things start changing in other areas as well. Talk to your therapist to decide goals for counseling and establish priorities, and ENJOY THE RIDE! Growing, flourishing, and finally letting go of what hurts can be a beautiful and exciting process.

Question 63: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 63: You absolutely do not have "too many issues" for counseling. Your reaching out to ask this question shows you have a resilient spirit. Also, your happy marriage can be a support and strength to you as you embark on a counseling journey. I would recommend that

you find a counselor who specializes in trauma, sexual trauma and/or EMDR (a type of therapy that is proven to have a strong impact on healing from trauma). Good luck!

Question 64: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 64: I don't think you have too many issues for counseling. If a client came to me for help with the same issues that you have listed here I would first want them to meet with their doctor to get a physical to rule out any biological causes to your depression, anxiety, and insomnia. I would work with you on deciding which of these issues to tackle first. I usually suggest starting with the issue that is easiest. Reading through your symptoms I might choose anxiety to start with since you are in the early stages of it. I like to give my client skills they can use right away, so I would focus on teaching you breathing exercises to manage the anxiety as well as cognitive restructuring so that when an anxious thought pops up you can talk yourself through it. Once you felt that you had some control over the anxiety I'd start to work on some of your other concerns, but I would seek your input on what you felt like might be good to work on next. My gut is that some of these issues would be resolved as you worked on others. For example as you worked on your anxiety and began to process your trauma and as you began to work on self care and getting more sleep - your self esteem would probably improve. I encourage you to meet with a therapist and ask them how they might be able to help you. These are just some thoughts that came up for me on how I might help someone with the same or similar symptoms.

Question 65: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 65: The way it goes is that all your issues are connected. Once you work on one issue it will have a positive effect on all areas. Slowly each issue is addressed and actually less issues will need to be addressed directly since resolving one helps your overall wellness. So no, you do not have too many issues. Don't give up. Get help now and see how your life can change for the better.

Question 66: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 66: I think this is a very common question that people who have never been to counseling before have. There is a lot of anxiety in going to counseling for the first time. This is normal. In answer to your question, the answer is an absolute NO! An important thing to remember about getting counseling is that it is a courageous first step towards hope and healing. Getting help is like training to run a marathon, it is not a sprint. You have shared a lot of issues that you are dealing with from your past, that are now negatively impacting your present, but I believe that in getting the right kind of help and support, none

of them are impossible to overcome. Part of the therapeutic process is defining and prioritizing therapy goals. In collaboration with you, as a client, a therapist is there to help you with this process in determining what you would like to work on first. Not getting counseling, based on the history you have shared, has the potential to put you more at risk for mental and physical health issues. You are already seeing this happen as you begin to experience new symptoms, namely your anxiety. In therapy, you will gain understanding and insight, as well as learn skills and strategies to manage the symptoms you are experiencing. In conclusion, I would encourage you to reach out to a licensed counselor who has experience in treating trauma, grief/loss and will address shame. These are three areas that I have found that gets to the core issues that are contributing to your depression and anxiety. I believe you can get the help you need to find hope and healing. Best of luck to you!

Question 67: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 67: Hello, I'm so glad you decided to take the first step in opening a conversation first. Deciding to go to therapy can sometimes be difficult for some, but with the right therapist, healing is possible and obtainable, even with what you've described. To answer your question, no you do not have too many issues to go to counseling. You've been through a lot and have been strong and at times it's helpful to have someone else to help you through it. What I would say is to be sure and find a therapist who is experienced in sexual abuse and trauma overall. But you absolutely do not have too many issues for counseling. Please feel free to ask any other questions you may have regarding your situation and I hope you find the therapist you're looking for, there are many great ones out there. Many of the issues you're experiencing may be tied together from the trauma. Best Wishes. Laura Cassity, LMSW, LMAC

Question 68: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 68: Not at all my dear. Human beings are complex creatures, and in my opinion, our issues interconnect in a very nuanced web between our levels of being (for example, mind, body, and spirit). Everything you bring up affects all three. The truly beautiful thing about the human body is that when you begin to work on one, the others improve as well!! I would encourage you to seek out a counselor who's style and approach speaks to you and start with whichever issue feels most pressing to you. A skilled therapist will flow with you at your own pace and make recommendations to other professionals (e.g., physicians, holistic practitioners, EMDR specialists for trauma etc) as needed to complement the psychotherapy work you're doing with him or her to help you find the total healing you seek. I wish you well on your journey!

Question 69: I have so many issues to address. I have a history of sexual abuse, I'm a breast cancer survivor and I am a lifetime insomniac. I have a long history of depression

and I'm beginning to have anxiety. I have low self esteem but I've been happily married for almost 35 years.

I've never had counseling about any of this. Do I have too many issues to address in counseling?

Answer 69: Everyone has topics to discuss when they start therapy. There is no correct number of topics. Sometimes people go to therapy for one specific area of their life. Not everyone has the time or interest to utilize therapy just when a significant topic arises in their life. Since you are one person, no matter how many or few topics you would like to address in therapy, all the topics relate to you. Possibly the result of your therapy will be more transformational than if you talked only on one topic. Lucky you, to be on the cusp of clearing and resolving many vulnerabilities at once. You will feel brand new by the time you finish your therapy work!

Question 70: I have been feeling more and more down for over a month. I have started having trouble sleeping due to panic attacks, but they are almost never triggered by something that I know of.

Answer 70: Answers about our inner lives are most successfully reached from a sense of feeling grounded in oneself. First step is to accept your nervousness and restless sleep. As often as possible, sleep during daytimes in order for your body to catch up on its need for rest. Accept too about feeling down. It is normal to feel down once in a while. From this place of self-acceptance, trust any answers which come up to your mind. Often answers about complicated topics come in small pieces, not all at once as a whole unit. Also, your description about panic attacks is also completely normal. They often arise unrelated to particular conditions at a given moment. They are a healthy symptom your body is trying to expel bad feelings and does this by having the anxiety erupt at times. So, self-acceptance, tolerance of being on a process of clearing out worn out emotional clutter, and sleep at odd times if possible, are all ways to stabilize yourself, which will also feel calm and good!

Question 71: I have been feeling more and more down for over a month. I have started having trouble sleeping due to panic attacks, but they are almost never triggered by something that I know of.

Answer 71: It could be really helpful to see a counselor/therapist about your increasing depression/panic symptoms. Finding out the cause of depression/anxiety isn't always as straightforward as it seems, since both issues tend to become patterns we engage in rather than solely related to a specific trigger/reason. For example, if I am feeling down about a particular circumstance in my life, then I start seeing life through this lens of feeling down, and typically I'll start to see a lot more that I get down about, and it can really build very quickly on itself. Same with anxiety. Obviously, this is a very simplified example and it can be very difficult to see how the pattern is maintained, but that's where working with a counselor/therapist comes in. I would be curious about whether you can start to notice the initial sensations of panic, and if you can (through the panic attack) continue to maintain awareness of the actual physical sensations. Even better if you can talk yourself through the sensations you're feeling - such as saying to yourself "Okay, I'm breathing really rapidly, and my heart is racing, now my palms are sweaty and my chest is feeling really tight..."

Reminding yourself that it's just your body's reaction to stress, and while it might be overreacting right now, you're okay and eventually it will go away. I highly recommend the SAM for Anxiety Management app for the anxiety piece, and I wouldn't be surprised if addressing the anxiety helped to address some of the depression too.

Question 72: I'm facing severe depression and anxiety and I just feel like I'm going through a lot. This really distracts me and I can't get my mind off the things that are bothering me.

How do I overcome this anxiety and depression?

Answer 72: Have you used meditation or hypnosis? Relaxing the mind and connecting with your true self is a great way to calm your thoughts and get to peace and calm. Hypnosis and meditation have helped a lot of people with anxiety and depression. Google hypnotherapists near me or write for a while about what is going on.

Question 73: I'm facing severe depression and anxiety and I just feel like I'm going through a lot. This really distracts me and I can't get my mind off the things that are bothering me.

How do I overcome this anxiety and depression?

Answer 73: Working with a great therapist who can help you learn ways to cope might be beneficial to you. Sometimes just the act of being able to talk about things with a nonjudgmental person helps take some of the burden off of you. A therapist can help you change your thought patterns and teach you coping skills to reduce your symptoms.

Question 74: I'm facing severe depression and anxiety and I just feel like I'm going through a lot. This really distracts me and I can't get my mind off the things that are bothering me.

How do I overcome this anxiety and depression?

Answer 74: Anxiety and depression is caused by ineffective functioning of the adrenals, kidneys, and the other systems that affects. A basic protocol of natural health makes quick work of it (about 2-3 months-ish; maybe shorter with a good constitution, in your body) :)

Question 75: I'm facing severe depression and anxiety and I just feel like I'm going through a lot. This really distracts me and I can't get my mind off the things that are bothering me.

How do I overcome this anxiety and depression?

Answer 75: Meditation may be able to assist you in lowering your anxiety and depressive symptoms. Meditation...Breaks Anxious Thought PatternsA common symptom of anxiety is having racing negative and obsessive thoughts that create a vicious cycle of worry within your mind. Meditation can reduce rumination and the break negative thought patterns by increasing your control over random unwanted thoughts and decreasing your tendency to worry by altering the way your brain responds to stress. For example, instead of following your negative thought down the rabbit hole, you learn to view your thoughts differently and recognize it for what it is – a thought – and let it go. Thank goodness to neuroplasticity and your brain's endless capacity to change! Balances Brain ChemicalsAnxiety is brought on by various factors (personality type, emotional trauma, genes, prolonged exposure to stress...) and sometimes causes an imbalance of chemicals within the brain (GABA and serotonin). A meditation practice can assist in restoring the balance of neurotransmitters within the brain by increasing GABA (neurotransmitter connected to feeling happy and relaxed) and serotonin (another neurotransmitter connected to being happy) and decreasing cortisol (stress hormone). Builds A Healthier BrainBased on research and scans, individuals who have a regular meditation practice show dramatically larger amounts of gray matter, the volume of the hippocampus, thickness of the cortex, increased blood flow to the brain, improved neural connections between various parts of the brain and decreased size of the amygdala (controls autonomic responses associated with fear, arousal, and emotional stimulation). View full article here:

<https://www.therapybyshannon.com/blog-2/2019/4/16/meditate-to-lower-anxiety-levels>

Question 76: I'm facing severe depression and anxiety and I just feel like I'm going through a lot. This really distracts me and I can't get my mind off the things that are bothering me.

How do I overcome this anxiety and depression?

Answer 76: Anxiety and depression are often linked. I don't consider them as diseases. Depression is a symptom of deep hurts to the sense of self that leaves a person feeling shamed. Anxiety is a symptom of not being given the proper emotional resources to handle the problems of life. It is also the result of being taught that life is a dangerous place that can't be managed.

Question 77: I'm facing severe depression and anxiety and I just feel like I'm going through a lot. This really distracts me and I can't get my mind off the things that are bothering me. How do I overcome this anxiety and depression?

Answer 77: Depression and anxiety can be disconcerting and disruptive to our lives in many ways. I am sorry that you are suffering so much. Depression and anxiety can arise due to experiences, genetics or a combination of both. I like for my clients look at their issues as whole persons so I would also recommend these tips: Physical: regular exercise, healthy balanced diet, rest and sleep Mental: how we think is how we feel. How are you interpreting the events that are happening to you? Try to interpret them in a less negative way.

Unfortunately we cannot stop our thoughts as our brain is always working. If you can't see your issues in a different way then stop struggling and allow and accept whatever the unhelpful thoughts are. Choose to take actions based on your values and what will give you a fulfilling life no matter what your thoughts are. Remember, your thoughts have no power unless you act upon them. Emotional: do not let feelings dictate your actions, even if something feels anxious take action again based on your values and how you want to live. Social: connect with healthy friends and family that will be a positive support. Take up some hobbies and recreation activities as well. If things do not improve I would encourage you to make an appointment with a talk therapist and discuss these issues. I would encourage you to also be open to consider an evaluation for anti-depressants with these issues as well. If you ever feel like you might hurt yourself please call 911 or go to your nearest ER.

Question 78: I'm facing severe depression and anxiety and I just feel like I'm going through a lot. This really distracts me and I can't get my mind off the things that are bothering me. How do I overcome this anxiety and depression?

Answer 78: Life can bring us all kinds of struggles. Depression and Anxiety are very common reasons people come into counseling. Both can be debilitating. Sometimes when life struggles and stresses build up anxiety and depression become prominent. Learning tools to ride the waves of life is a core part of counseling. If you are ready to manage the symptoms and come up with a plan visit staceybshapiro.com for more information.

Question 79: I'm facing severe depression and anxiety and I just feel like I'm going through a lot. This really distracts me and I can't get my mind off the things that are bothering me. How do I overcome this anxiety and depression?

Answer 79: Wanting to make changes and asking for assistance is the first step. Overcoming anxiety and depression is not an easy feat to do on your own, especially if it's been something you have been battling for years. There are some different routes you may go down in order to start the healing process: Therapy - find a therapist who has a lot of experience with anxiety and depression. You can do this by googling "anxiety depression therapist" in your city. CounselChat also has a directory of amazing therapists, as does Psychology Today Medication - Depending on what other symptoms you may be struggling with depends on what medication you will be prescribed. Be 100% honest with the doctor and ask about different side effects or potential risks associated with the medication. You more than likely will be prescribed an SSRI. Therapy & Medication - The outcomes are very good for those who decide to do both. Medication can help level out your mood and therapy can help you process through your emotions and keep you accountable for you

goals , as you will be seeing your therapist more often than your psychiatristTherapy & Homeopathy - Homeopathy could potentially be a good tool to use alongside with therapy in case you are not interested in going down the medication route. Arsenicum album is most commonly given to those who struggle with anxiety and depression.The choice is yours. My recommendation is to start with therapy and explore your options more in depth with your therapist.

Question 80: I'm facing severe depression and anxiety and I just feel like I'm going through a lot. This really distracts me and I cant get my mind off the things that are bothering me.

How do I overcome this anxiety and depression?

Answer 80: First, be patient because anxiety and depression are rooted in a person's outlook on who they are and how they handle situations and relationships.Changing these deep major structures in your life takes time to try new ways and see what develops, then fine tune accordingly.Most commonly, anxiety and depression relate to one's self definition.Reflect on your own opinion of yourself and whether you'd like making any adjustments to this. Then figure out what stops or inhibits you from doing this.Try new ways of thinking and interacting with other people. The changed impression you make on others will influence your own view of who you are.In America people take Pharma pills to not feel badly.If you prefer to make natural, long-lasting change then reflect, read, try therapy if it feels right to you.Eventually you will be better off this way than to take drugs to hide how you truly feel.

Question 81: How can I get to a place where I can be content from day to day?

Answer 81: Your question is a fascinating one!As humans we have the ability to reflect on situations in our lives.Even if nothing currently goes on in a particular moment, it's possible you're reflecting on a serious or upsetting matter.And, our emotions linger within us.Just because a particular moment feels calm, inside your feelings may be the sense of a strong unsettled emotion from the recent past.Good for you to be aware of your own sensitivity to living with awareness of your moods and thoughts.

Question 82: How can I get to a place where I can be content from day to day?

Answer 82: One thing that comes to mind is making a list of some things that happen each day. It could be that there are things that are affecting how upset you are, but because so many other things are going on, you may not notice.Another idea to try is to keep a list for a month of one good thing that happened each day. This way, when you're having a rough day, you have a list to think of and take a look at.Are you eating and sleeping in ways that are typical for you (typically at least two meals per day and roughly 8 hours of sleep that night (may be different depending on your age)? These two ideas are closely related to changes in your mood.From where do you have support? Friends or family?Can you take 5 or 10 minutes per day to do something that you enjoy?If you think back to the last time that you felt "content," what was contributing to that?Another possibility is to try to be mindful of things that you do every day. For example, rather than eating a turkey sandwich as fast as possible on your lunch break, consider actually tasting it and enjoying it. Also consider giving yourself praise for doing something well. For example, when you finish your paperwork, take a moment to notice that and maybe reward yourself by checking your e-mail, reading five pages of a book, or something else that can be done quickly before you get back to your next task.

Question 83: How can I get to a place where I can be content from day to day?

Answer 83: It's important to take a look inside and see what's going on with you to cause you to have these feelings. Please contact us in whatever way is most comfortable for you and we can get you set up with someone who will help you figure out this space in your life.

Question 84: I have a severe back problem. I've had 3 major and several minor operations, but I'm still in constant pain. How can I deal with the depression from this chronic pain?

Answer 84: Chronic pain at the back likely results from a few areas: L4-L5 kidney zone, most likely (lower back); Bone spurs, fused discs, and slipped discs, caused by connective tissue weakness, and calcium deposits used to neutralize highly acidic areas... The 'depression' will evaporate when the chronic pain is drained out, through natural means; Pharmaceutical means will simply extend the pain and cause it to deepen over time, not solving the problem; Remember, medical doctors suppress, natural doctors cure...

Question 85: I have a severe back problem. I've had 3 major and several minor operations, but I'm still in constant pain. How can I deal with the depression from this chronic pain?

Answer 85: Maybe if you started to address questions of an inner nature of what changed in your life as a result of the back problem. To know your limitations and the areas of your life which they affect, will greatly contribute to stronger self-knowledge within you. Greater awareness and sense of direction very often decreases depression.

Question 86: I suffer from adult ADHD, anxiety disorder, and depression. It has been difficult to find a doctor in my area and my primary physician won't help. I am unemployed and overwhelmed. What would you suggest I do?

Answer 86: If it is simply counseling that you seek, any number of faith-based outfits are very willing to listen and help out with these sorts of matters, free of charge :) Online messaging and social media is a secondary option, however this one may come with privacy concerns and consequences; If it were I, I would attempt to sweet-talk one or two counselors I come across to do a bit of work for folks who can't afford it :)

Question 87: I suffer from adult ADHD, anxiety disorder, and depression. It has been difficult to find a doctor in my area and my primary physician won't help. I am unemployed and overwhelmed. What would you suggest I do?

Answer 87: Look up online what the local hospital offers to people. Also, google some of the key words you just wrote here, like depression and counseling, low-cost counseling. Did your primary physician tell you their reason to not help you? If not, then ask the person to tell you their reasoning. Even if the specific doctor won't help you, by understanding their reason, you may be able to work with the answer you hear.

Question 88: I suffer from adult ADHD, anxiety disorder, and depression. It has been difficult to find a doctor in my area and my primary physician won't help. I am unemployed and overwhelmed. What would you suggest I do?

Answer 88: I would check out agencies that offer affordable counseling based on your income or very low cost counseling sessions, i.e., Pacific Clinics, Hathaway Sycamore, Pasadena Mental Health Center, Burbank Family Center. If you google affordable or low cost therapy in your particular area you will find resources to help you.

Question 89: A few years ago I was making love to my wife when for no known reason I lost my erection. Now I'm in my early 30s and my problem has become more and more frequent. This is causing major problems for my ego and it's diminishing my self esteem.

This has resulted in ongoing depression and tearing apart my marriage. I am devastated and cannot find a cause for these issues. I am very attracted to my wife and want to express it in the bedroom like I used to. What could be causing this, and what can I do about it?

Answer 89: First step always is to do a medical rule out so that you're sure the problem is psychological and emotion based, not a medical condition which requires care and attention. If you are medically clear in the reasons for losing your erection, then reflect on what may be creating a loss in confidence in either who you are and what you're doing with your life, or whether your wife has these sort of problems within herself. Often a problem

transfers ownership of who shows it. If you are a sensitive person its possible your erection problem reflects your wife's insecurities and self-doubt. If she is someone who is reluctant to talk about feeling unsure then in a certain way by you showing a problem, she can avoid looking at herself. There may not be a direct cause such as usually exists in a medical problem. Medicine looks for symptoms to treat. Our emotional lives are much more indirect. If you feel stress at work or are unhappy in the place you live, for example, then your frustration may show up in your sex life. Basically, do a broad inward search of your life and what it holds and maybe ask your wife to do the same. You may clear the air within yourselves and between each other so the problem goes away.

Question 90: A few years ago I was making love to my wife when for no known reason I lost my erection, Now I'm In my early 30s and my problem has become more and more frequent. This is causing major problems for my ego and it's diminishing my self esteem. This has resulted in ongoing depression and tearing apart my marriage. I am devastated and cannot find a cause for these issues. I am very attracted to my wife and want to express it in the bedroom like I used to. What could be causing this, and what can I do about it?

Answer 90: When I'm working with men with this type of situation, I always suggest a medical examination to rule out any type of organic reason for a difficulty in maintaining interaction. In cases where there is no medical reason for the loss of erection, I find that many men have a similar situation in experiencing negative intrusive thinking during lovemaking. My counseling approach for this situation is to incorporate the use of mindful sex.

Question 91: A few years ago I was making love to my wife when for no known reason I lost my erection, Now I'm In my early 30s and my problem has become more and more frequent. This is causing major problems for my ego and it's diminishing my self esteem. This has resulted in ongoing depression and tearing apart my marriage. I am devastated and cannot find a cause for these issues. I am very attracted to my wife and want to express it in the bedroom like I used to. What could be causing this, and what can I do about it?

Answer 91: For starters, know that this is a normal experience for many men at some point in their lives. While this can certainly cause some embarrassment, a diminished sexual esteem or relationship problems, it is important to know you are not alone. I am going to move forward assuming that you have already checked with a medical professional to rule out any medical problems that may be related to this. Assuming that is the case, for most this happens for two primary reasons. It is either a short term biological shortage of blood flow to the penis. This can be caused my diet, lack of exercise, even stress. Another primary reason for loss of erections are anxiety. Have their been recent relationship issues? Are you feeling as though you aren't satisfied in the bedroom? These are just a few aspects that can cause subconscious anxiety and loss of erection. My suggestion to you would be to seek out a counselor that specializes in sexuality that can assist you in moving forward with this. Best of Luck!

Question 92: A few years ago I was making love to my wife when for no known reason I lost my erection, Now I'm In my early 30s and my problem has become more and more frequent. This is causing major problems for my ego and it's diminishing my self esteem. This has resulted in ongoing depression and tearing apart my marriage. I am devastated and cannot find a cause for these issues. I am very attracted to my wife and want to express it in the bedroom like I used to. What could be causing this, and what can I do about it?

Answer 92: Erection maintenance is caused by connective tissue weakness as well as lymphatic stagnation of the area and accompanying channels. A proper detoxification is necessary to reverse the stagnation and get things flowing again. Lower circulation and

pituitary might also be indicated. Medical will likely not recommend anything useful in the long term (pharmaceuticals do not solve a problem, only suppress it; and, it will return again later and worse than before); Certain herbal protocols and natural protocols would be very warranted in getting things going again :)

Question 93: A few years ago I was making love to my wife when for no known reason I lost my erection, Now I'm In my early 30s and my problem has become more and more frequent. This is causing major problems for my ego and it's diminishing my self esteem. This has resulted in ongoing depression and tearing apart my marriage. I am devastated and cannot find a cause for these issues. I am very attracted to my wife and want to express it in the bedroom like I used to. What could be causing this, and what can I do about it?

Answer 93: If you haven't already, please see a doctor. ED can be caused by any number of physical conditions and you need to get checked out. Once you have ruled out any physical issues that interfere with getting an erection, it's time to look for more subtle causes.

Unfortunately, you may have gotten yourself into a mind set of "I hope I can, but what if I can't?" which is certain to interfere with performance. Again, rule out physical causes (can you tell I think that's important?), then talk with your wife about working together to find the right approach. It might be a good idea, for example, to take the pressure off by enjoying each other without intercourse. You can have great sex without penetration and you can have physical intimacy without sex, so slow down and experiment. You might find more pleasure than you expect when you can relax knowing there doesn't have to be a "finish line". Again, yes the third time, SEE A DOCTOR, just in case there's something going on. Once you get the all clear, find joy and spontaneity with your wife again by being creative and pressure free.

Question 94: A few years ago I was making love to my wife when for no known reason I lost my erection, Now I'm In my early 30s and my problem has become more and more frequent. This is causing major problems for my ego and it's diminishing my self esteem. This has resulted in ongoing depression and tearing apart my marriage. I am devastated and cannot find a cause for these issues. I am very attracted to my wife and want to express it in the bedroom like I used to. What could be causing this, and what can I do about it?

Answer 94: Assuming there are no medical explanations for this issue, many men I've worked with on this come to see it as essentially a form of Anxiety. There is a phenomenon called the Yerkes Dodson Law (see below; source: Wikipedia), which basically states that if we feel either too much or too little stress, pressure, or nervousness about a task, it will adversely impact our ability to do carry it out successfully. The ideal amount of stress/arousal is right in the middle - not too little and not too much. This applies to more things than we might often realize - from giving a presentation, to ordering food, to making a free throw, to driving, to sexual intimacy as in this case. A common suggestion that many men find helpful is initiating open and honest conversations with their partners about this issue, and for a temporary period of time, agreeing to physical intimacy and sexual pleasure in other forms, and without the expectation of intercourse. There are many ways to go about that (which are outside the scope of this blog article), but this can be a path to connecting intimately and renewing physical bonding without unhelpful anxiety - and over time, can lead back to intimacy in all the ways that have become elusive. Best of luck.

Question 95: I struggle with depression as well as pretty intense mood swings throughout the month. I experience highs where I feel amazing and energetic and then lows where I lack focus, energy, and generally have a more dark outlook on my life. How can I live a more balanced life?

Answer 95: It's fun to ride the roller coaster from time to time, isn't it? :) But, it's also weary-making, and leads to drainage that no man or woman can hardly anticipate! Balance comes with proper understanding of the different bodies you possess and how they function. And, to begin, we focus upon your physical, and move right up the latter to the spiritual, and begin cleaning you out. Unbalance is an experience of blocked energies that should be naturally flowing (call them what thou mayest); when blockages are removed, what is naturally there flows, and flows beautifully...

Question 96: I struggle with depression as well as pretty intense mood swings throughout the month. I experience highs where I feel amazing and energetic and then lows where I lack focus, energy, and generally have a more dark outlook on my life. How can I live a more balanced life?

Answer 96: Are you certain your highs and lows are directly related to your cycle? It's possible that there are at least some contributing factors, even if they are as a result of hormonal fluctuations. For example, at the start of your period, do you have that "I feel great" feeling, or are you tired and down? Mid-cycle (assuming your periods are regular), do you find yourself napping or ready to run a race? Either way, how you feel may be leading you to behaviors that contribute to your changes in energy and optimism. Let's say that the few days before your period, you feel cranky, bloated and want salty food. Your natural inclination might be to isolate, stay inside and eat chips. The next day, you feel even more tired, cranky and bloated. It STARTS with a hormonal symptom, but what you do with that can change how you end up feeling. So if you notice feeling cranky, bloated and craving salt, what if you pull up a restorative yoga video online, spend an hour being restful and centered in your body and have a good meal with a healthy balance of fats, proteins and carbs, with fresh veggies and fruits before you turn in early to give your body the rest it is asking for? That sets you up to feel MUCH better! And those "on top of the world days" - who doesn't love them?? But even those days, be mindful of how you are treating yourself. Exercise for sure, but don't do twice the workout you normally would just because you can! You might feel super energy and skip meals which sets you up for poor sleep and feeling crummy after a day or two. All that aside, if you have a couple rough days before your period, pay attention to what is bugging you. Christiane Northrup, MD, likens our menstrual cycle to the tide. When the tide is out (just before your period), you see all the garbage cluttering up your ocean floor, but you don't have the energy to address it, so there it stays, bugging you. At the height of physical and emotional energy (usually mid-cycle/ovulation), the tide is back in and you don't see all that annoying stuff you saw before. Since you have good energy at this time, take advantage of it by doing some "clean up" on the things you saw there when you felt crummy. Maybe it's that conversation you have been putting off with your partner, or having the long-delayed closet clean out, or searching for a job that feels/pays/fits you better. Whatever it is, those "PMS blues" may hold important messages for you. If taking good care of yourself, staying tuned in to your needs and keeping an eye on the "tides" don't help, then see your doctor. Something else may be going on - our hormones all work together like a symphony - it only takes one to be out of tune to throw the whole thing off!

Question 97: I struggle with depression as well as pretty intense mood swings throughout the month. I experience highs where I feel amazing and energetic and then lows where I lack focus, energy, and generally have a more dark outlook on my life. How can I live a more balanced life?

Answer 97: Depression and PMS symptoms can be so hard to navigate! Looking at this from a holistic standpoint can help you understand why you get these mood swings and what to do to balance yourself emotionally during this time. As a woman, we experience

peaks and dips during our hormonal cycles and right before menstruation, we tend to feel not ourselves and down. The bloating and extreme cravings do not help either. Making sure your schedule is light and you have things to assist you can be so helpful. Different essential oils like lavender may calm you down, or orange which can uplift your mood. Homeopathy can be effective and gentle during this time as well. Birth control is known to help reduce the extreme spikes in hormones and can reduce your emotional and physical pain. Perhaps even psychiatric medication like an SSRI can help. If you are interested in going down the medication route, be sure to ask the doctor about potential side effects and risks. Reducing your processed sugar intake may help a lot as well. Exercising, spending time outside, practicing stress management and avoiding caffeine and alcohol can all be useful as well.

Question 98: I struggle with depression as well as pretty intense mood swings throughout the month. I experience highs where I feel amazing and energetic and then lows where I lack focus, energy, and generally have a more dark outlook on my life. How can I live a more balanced life?

Answer 98: You may already be living a balanced life because you are aware of your ups and downs due to hormonal changes of your menstrual cycle. As much as possible, schedule activities around your expected mood swings. This way you'll avoid feeling even more tired from a busy schedule during a low energy time in the month. The hormonal cycle is normal. Opinions vary as to taking natural, homeopathic supplements or Pharma drugs which will influence your cycle and make your mood more even. There are side effects to at least the Pharma drugs, which is a consideration as to the value of taking them. Reflect on which is your style of living and what will make you feel successful in handling this problem. Sticking to a system which mirrors the type of person you are, means more than any one particular answer anyone gives you.

Question 99: I self-harm, and I stop for awhile. Then when I see something sad or depressing, I automatically want to self-harm.

Answer 99: In a way, self-harm can present somewhat like an addiction. According to new research within the field of neuroscience there is a valid explanation for this. When a person cuts or uses other forms of self harm, the body produces endorphins to help make a person feel better. If a person was dealing with depression or high anxiety, that might be misinterpreted by the brain as a way to help oneself feel better and a new neural network or map might form (addiction) that would utilize this new behavior. Another way to look at it would be thru a behavioral lens, a positive reward for a behavior, even though the behavior has other long term negative consequences. Consider working with someone who can both have you work on and address those items that trigger your behavior and the root causes, in this case sadness or depression, and second find someone who can help give you alternatives that take into account the neurological requirement by replacing the behavior with another behavior (such as snapping a rubber band on the wrist) and working to extinguish the unwanted behavior. Someone who is trained in Dialectic Behavior Therapy and/or Interpersonal Neurobiology would most likely have the skills and means available to address this with you.

Question 100: I self-harm, and I stop for awhile. Then when I see something sad or depressing, I automatically want to self-harm.

Answer 100: Self-harm has a way of becoming a go-to method of coping. When we get stuck using self-harm as a way to deal and manage emotions, when something serious happens it totally makes sense that that will be one of the first things to go through the mind. It is its own kind of addiction. There is a therapy, DBT or, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, which focuses on giving you new tools to get through hard times, understand and manage your emotions,

to stay present and to deal with relationships. This one of the most effective interventions there is for self-harm. If you are interested in DBT, reach a local therapist in your area and ask if they do DBT or can recommend you to a DBT program. This can help immensely. Self-harm recovery is totally possible, but it is definitely hard work!

Question 101: I have been diagnosed with general anxiety and depression by my family doctor. They wrote a prescription for me to have an emotional support dog, I have the paper work, and I gave it to my apartment manager. They said I can't keep the ESD because I'm not disabled. What do you suggest I do?

Answer 101: This can be a difficult situation. Typically, only animals that are specifically trained to accomplish a specific task are legally protected as Service Animals. Even though that can be very helpful, emotional support animals are not generally protected in the same way. You might not be able to make your landlord accommodate you. If possible, you may want to consider a different apartment that is more animal friendly.

Question 102: I have been diagnosed with general anxiety and depression by my family doctor. They wrote a prescription for me to have an emotional support dog, I have the paper work, and I gave it to my apartment manager. They said I can't keep the ESD because I'm not disabled. What do you suggest I do?

Answer 102: At present, the American Disability Association (ADA) only allows protection and guidelines for Service Animals, which fall under a separate distinction from Emotional Support Animals. Emotional support animals are untrained animals (typically pets or other domestic animals) that provide wonderful services to their owners, and there are many benefits to having one. Service animals who are trained to provide specific services for an individual with limitations that make them fall under what the ADA defines as "disabled" are protected under specific laws, and must be accommodated in public places where the human they serve is present. While it may be beneficial to request that the therapist who "prescribed" the dog to you write a letter to the apartment manager, it sounds like the manager is aware of ADA guidelines, and the simplest course of action may be to find an alternative residence, if that is a plausible option.

Question 103: I have been diagnosed with general anxiety and depression by my family doctor. They wrote a prescription for me to have an emotional support dog, I have the paper work, and I gave it to my apartment manager. They said I can't keep the ESD because I'm not disabled. What do you suggest I do?

Answer 103: Agree with the apartment manager's viewpoint that your disability is not a physical limitation. Ask the manager if they'd accept an explanatory letter from a therapist who is licensed to diagnose emotional disabilities. If the answer is yes, then find a therapist who's willing to cooperate with what you need from them and find out this particular therapist's terms of working with you to compose such a letter. If the manager tells you "no", then find out who is above this person or entity and find out how to formally introduce your request to the board or apartment owner, or whoever actually is the legal owner of the building.

Question 104: I have been diagnosed with general anxiety and depression by my family doctor. They wrote a prescription for me to have an emotional support dog, I have the paper work, and I gave it to my apartment manager. They said I can't keep the ESD because I'm not disabled. What do you suggest I do?

Answer 104: This is tricky because there are different types of emotional support dogs. The ones that are officially trained actually go through months of training and then are paired with someone for whom they perform specific tasks. You may benefit from looking at the blog written by Valerie Parrott, who has an emotional support dog due to severe anxiety and

panic. I will warn you that her blog is very blunt, but she is honest and she has gone through this process:

<https://thedogintheroom.wordpress.com/2016/06/20/what-makes-a-service-dog/#more-508>

Question 105: I tried telling my husband I was depressed, and he ignored me. He said "you're always sad or depressed." And he picked up his phone and ignored me. I said, "Please don't exaggerate, that isn't true." And he said, "Whatever babe. You just want to be sad."

How can I get through to him so he will take me seriously?

Answer 105: Ouch. It's really hard to deal with a spouse that isn't taking you seriously. In this case, I would plan for and schedule a time to talk with him about this. I would tell him that you need about 30 minutes to talk to him with minimal interruptions about something that is important to you. Schedule a time, write notes if you need reminders about what you need to express, and tell him how you feel. Ideally, you would focus more on I-statements instead of telling him what he is doing wrong. For example, I feel ignored vs You always ignore me. By focusing on how you feel, he is less likely to feel attacked and get defensive. Some people go to couples or marriage counseling for help with communication. Chances are there are things that BOTH of you do that hurts your communication. Overall, try to talk to him directly and try not to get defensive. If he continues to say, you're always sad - then stay calm, say "okay, can you help me understand that more?" or "That's interesting. Tell me what you see." Reach out to a couples counselor for more help with communication strategies. Sometimes a 3rd party can help you both see things in a different perspective. Hope this helps!

Question 106: I tried telling my husband I was depressed, and he ignored me. He said "you're always sad or depressed." And he picked up his phone and ignored me. I said, "Please don't exaggerate, that isn't true." And he said, "Whatever babe. You just want to be sad."

How can I get through to him so he will take me seriously?

Answer 106: This is so hard. It is hard for someone to understand what depression is without having experienced it themselves. Unfortunately people without depression sometimes mistake it as feeling sorry for ourselves or just moping around, which is not what depression is at all. Sometimes I think that it is easier for family members to see it as a choice than to admit that someone they love is hurting and they don't know what to do. If he is willing, I wonder if there may be a depression support group in your area such as NAMI or DBSA where he could hear from others living with depression and their families. If not, I wonder if you all might watch a documentary together such as No Kidding Me Too or Call me Crazy. If not that, I've sometimes encouraged folk to just leave some information on depression and how family can help like a pamphlet or handout on a table or around the house. We tend to get curious and read things we find on the table. Wishing you the best!

Question 107: I tried telling my husband I was depressed, and he ignored me. He said "you're always sad or depressed." And he picked up his phone and ignored me. I said, "Please don't exaggerate, that isn't true." And he said, "Whatever babe. You just want to be sad."

How can I get through to him so he will take me seriously?

Answer 107: It can be hard for husbands to hear that their wife is unhappy. By nature men tend to be more of the fix it type. So if they are sad, they fix it. If their wife is sad, they fix it. He may feel helpless to help you and that may be why he is saying those things to you. It's not that he doesn't care or that he doesn't take them seriously, he might just have no idea how to help. I would start by making an appointment to talk with a therapist about your sadness. Meeting with a therapist may help you to learn some tools and strategies that can

help you to manage some of the sadness you are feeling. A therapist can also help you to gain some understanding and insight into why you might be experiencing sadness. Depression is not something you have to sit with, therapy can help. Once your husband sees that you are being proactive in addressing your sadness/depression he will probably be more open to listening to you and supporting you. He might start to have ideas and input on how you two can work together to change some of the situations or things that might be holding you back.

Question 108: I tried telling my husband I was depressed, and he ignored me. He said "you're always sad or depressed." And he picked up his phone and ignored me. I said, "Please don't exaggerate, that isn't true." And he said, "Whatever babe. You just want to be sad."

How can I get through to him so he will take me seriously?

Answer 108: Oh dear. From what you write, your husband doesn't have any interest to know about you and your sad feelings. Stay clear in understanding that you already did your part by asking him to listen and care about the way you feel. In this example, he told you he doesn't care. It's up to him to open his mind and heart to you. Depending on how motivated to continue asking him to hear you, try until you feel satisfied that you've given him enough chances to know who you are. At a certain number of tries at this, you'll either have success or not. Just don't try forever because doing so will increase your depressed feelings.

Question 109: It's not entirely true to say I enjoy being sad, but I always find a way to feel that way. I listen to sad music, read tragic stories, and, in a twisted way, like how bad it makes me feel. I focus on negative aspects of my life even if they aren't legitimate or I just make it seem negative.

Answer 109: It sounds like you are noticing that you are drawn towards sad and negative content and it's hard to understand why. This may sound counter-intuitive, but sometimes we do things that on the surface may look problematic (or even cause us some real problems) because it serves us in some unseen way. A simple example would be somebody who is addicted to a substance; their addiction may be causing serious problems in their life, and they may even know it, but the addiction serves them by helping them to avoid painful feelings that they anticipate having if they quit using. Now I am not saying that what you describe is an addiction, it is just a really illustrative example of the unseen benefit. One thing I would be wondering about is what is the unseen benefit of seeking out sad and negative content? I'd also be wondering what your relationship is to other feelings. These are things you may benefit from exploring with a competent therapist.

Question 110: It's not entirely true to say I enjoy being sad, but I always find a way to feel that way. I listen to sad music, read tragic stories, and, in a twisted way, like how bad it makes me feel. I focus on negative aspects of my life even if they aren't legitimate or I just make it seem negative.

Answer 110: I applaud your courage in asking this question to gain some deeper insight into what is happening in your life. This is one of the most common things that I personally have seen in the population of individuals who suffer from depression. It is often that I notice clients focusing on the negative to the complete dismissal of the positive when they are dealing with depression. It is inspiring that you have noticed this in yourself because many clients are not aware that this is a pattern for them, or are not yet willing to face that depression has become a pattern they cling to. Depression, if dealt with for extended periods of time, can become a way of life, an identity of sorts, that is very difficult to part from. While you desperately desire happiness, who would you be without the depression? Sometimes it is scarier to journey into the unknown (in this case, happiness), than it is to stay in the

known, and the often times comfortable space of your depression. Human beings, for the most part, fear and stray away from change in general, especially a change that is so impactful. Allowing yourself to confront the possibility of change as positive with the support of a professional counselor is often extremely helpful.

Question 111: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 111: Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.) is a term that reflects how many people are affected by the changing seasons, especially fall to winter. Everyone suffers with some form of this (lessened activity levels, increased isolation, etc.) while some find that this time of year can put them into a deeper depression. If you have noticed that this happens frequently, there are some ways you can definitely help yourself going forward: 1. Attend therapy to learn strategies and tools to help you to manage your mood. It's important to stay within the therapy until you feel you have mastered these tools. 2. Push yourself to interact more with your social groups and other positive activities. It's easy to go out and spend the day outside in the summer months, when the temperature is warm and the sun shines for long periods of the day, but it seems harder to find fun ways to spend your time when the temperature drops and darkness comes on so quickly. Perhaps winter time could become the time of year where you and your friends have weekly board game nights, complete with hot chocolate and a fire? 3. You may want to consider the purchase of a S.A.D. Light. These are lights that expose you to additional ultra violet light to increase the vitamin D in our bodies, as well as the release of growth hormone (which releases when we wake up). There are mixed reviews of these products, however, and they can be expensive.

Question 112: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 112: I would suggest some holistic approaches, such as getting your Vitamin D and iron levels checked. Make sure you are eating well, exercising, and getting outside when you can. Take a trip to someplace warm if possible. Use a sun lamp in the morning for 30 minutes to simulate sunlight. Seek professional health to gain coping skills and other ways to manage symptoms.

Question 113: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 113: Thank you for sharing. It seems like since the "winter blues" happens to you every year it may also be impacting your quality of life and possibly relationships. What you report sounds like you may be experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and is quite common to many from about fall thru winter seasons; but, also can impact folks during the Spring and summer months. The best care and treatment for SAD includes discussing it with your PCP (primary care physician), integrating light therapy (full-spectrum lighting) throughout home and workplace (where possible), psychotherapy, and possibly medications (e.g. Wellbutrin XL, Aplenzin). Be sure to exercise good self-care and checkout the Mayo Clinic's website for SAD here:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/basics/definition/con-20021047>.

Question 114: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 114: Light therapy is very helpful. You are not alone. The name for the condition is Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). You might want to see a therapist to assist you putting in place a behavioral program to help change the way you feel.

Question 115: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 115: I am glad that you are getting ahead of this by noticing this seasonal pattern to your depression. Winter depression (seasonal affective) is something that affects a lot of people both people who also deal with other kinds of depression that happens to get worse in the winter as well as people who just deal with depression in the winter. Light affects how our bodies release and absorb neurotransmitters such as serotonin and most believe that a major contributing factor for winter depression is that we get less light when it is colder outside and darker outside. Exposure to light can make a big difference. If you are someone who is awake during the day (not someone who works the night shift :))---one simple change you can make is keeping your curtains in your bedroom light enough as to let some light in in the morning. This will give you light right off the start of the day and can make it easier to get going in the morning. Beyond this, keeping windows cleared from blinds so that you get that natural light or even taking a short 10 or 15 minute walk each day can get you both light and exercise to help fight off the depression. Outside this, as others have suggested a light box is a popular method of warding off the depression however some of these may expose you to UV light and so this is something to check in with both with the light box manufacturer and with your doctor to make sure you have a good understanding of the risks and benefits for that. Lastly, just making sure you continue to do things that lift your mood, that you have time with other people, and that you reach out if you do find yourself in a space of needing help are all things you can do to ward off the depression. Wishing you well!

Question 116: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 116: This is actually pretty common. When winter hits, we tend to find ourselves huddled inside from the cold. Not to mention the sun is out for a much shorter time. It will be helpful to get as much sunlight as possible. Get outside when you can. Open up the blinds and drapes. Use a sunlight if you want to (amazon has some for reasonable prices). Stay connected to friends and family. Try to engage in activities that make you feel positive, productive, and connected.

Question 117: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 117: Cold climate is often accompanied by grey skies, snow and ice. The elements along with wind, windchill and severely cold temperatures may lead to feelings of sadness, anxiety, and low energy. For some people these symptoms occur each year from late fall to early spring and may be suffering from a condition known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Whether you have been diagnosed with SAD or are finding yourself struggling with the "winter blues" for the first time here are some suggestions for feeling better and staying healthy.1. Nutrition Most likely you have heard the term "comfort food." These foods and snacks are high in carbohydrates, sugar and fat. Avoid overeating cookies, cakes and candy. Chose vegetables, fruit and protein for snacks and plan balanced meals. If you find yourself wanting to eat or snack throughout the day, ask yourself why you are eating. Are you hungry? Or Are you eating because you are bored?2. AlcoholKeep in mind that alcohol is a depressant so consuming wine, beer or liquor when already feeling sad, anxious or depressed will only add to your symptoms. Do not consume alcohol while engaging in outdoor activities such

as snow removal, skiing, or ice fishing. If you find yourself reaching for an additional glass of wine or beer be mindful and ask whether you are doing it due to boredom. Instead of mindlessly taking another glass of alcohol, drink a glass of water. 3. SunlightGet

out in the sunlight or brightly lit spaces, especially early in the day.4. Be activeIf you are unable to go to your favorite gym, exercise class or go for a run, find a way to stay active in your home. There are a lot of short, instructional programs available on YouTube that you can follow to do some gently yoga, dance, or do strengthening exercises using only your body weight.5. Reach out for help

Confide in someone you trust about how you are feeling. Do not hesitate to contact a counselor if you feel that you are becoming more depressed and anxious. If you experience thoughts of suicide call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Question 118: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 118: First of all, it is excellent that you are self aware and able to identify the pattern to your moods. Many people suffer from the winter blues, which is called Seasonal Affective Disorder. Some people notice that during the Fall and Winter months, they tend to struggle with signs and symptoms of depression such as sadness or hopelessness, lethargy, sleeping too much or too little, changes in appetite, loss of interest in usual interests, and possibly suicidal thoughts. It would be best to consult with a therapist experienced in this disorder, as they will be able to guide you towards possible solutions such as changing negative thought patterns, light therapy, exercise, nutritional support, and possibly medication.

Question 119: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 119: Many people suffer from changes in mood when the winter time comes. The amount of daylight hours decreases significantly. Most times it is dark when you go to work and dark when you return home. There are special lights that can be used during the winter season to counteract the "winter time blues." Also, paying attention to self care. Are you sleeping enough, attending to physical illness? Exercising and eating a balanced diet? Make sure to schedule fun activities and spend time with loved ones.

Question 120: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 120: About 3 million people in the United States suffer from seasonal affective disorder. Seasonal affective disorder or seasonal depression occurs during the same season every year. You might have felt depressed the past two winters, but cheered up during the warmer months. Or you may have felt down during the summer. Everyone could get seasonal depression, but it tends to be much more common in :People who have families who have SADWomenIndividuals between 15 and 55 years oldIndividuals who live in an area where winter daylight time is very shortNo mental health experts are exactly sure of what specifically causes SAD, but many think lack of sunlight is a big trigger. This lack of light could mess up your circadian rhythms or cause problems with serotonin which is the chemical that affects your mood.You might be wondering if you have seasonal depression or SAD. Here are the symptoms:Feeling grumpy, sad , nervous or having mood swingsAnhedonia or lack of pleasure in things you normally loveEating much more or less than usualGaining weightSleeping a lot more than you normally do, but still feeling

sluggingDifficulty concentratingIt is so important to look at SAD in a holistic manner before getting diagnosed. In addition to therapy, it's crucial to see your doctor so she or he can run blood tests to rule out any other conditions that may be making you feel blue. One of these common ones is hypothyroidism or low thyroid. At Makin Wellness, we could do the mental health assessment .TreatmentThere are multiple ways to help treat seasonal depression. Light therapy can be used, but counseling is one of the most effective ways of treating SAD. Cognitive behavioral therapy with a skilled therapist can help you learn more about seasonal depression , how to manage your symptoms and ways to prevent future episodes. Medication can also be prescribed and taken to help alleviate some of your symptoms. Antidepressants such as Zoloft, Effexor and Wellbutrin are most commonly prescribed for SAD. Be sure to talk with your doctor and therapist about any side effects from your medication.

Question 121: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 121: One theory is that instead of "fighting" your feelings, accept your sad feelings and work with them. Feeling sad may open many doors to reflect and make peace with the source of your sadness. Also, I believe fighting against the natural cycle of rest and hibernation may not even be possible to succeed. Winter for most creatures is a time of withdrawal and slowdown. Our bodies and moods are part of nature as well. Fighting what is part of nature seems like a tiring fight which the person will lose. Last point, there are the winter holidays to break up the dark and cold of winter. Maybe you can invent some of your own winter celebrations so you'll have a few gatherings to look forward to hosting.

Question 122: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 122: Sometimes it's quite literally the lack of sunshine that can affect our mood - in these cases it can be worth experimenting with a sun lamp, to boost your dose of vitamin D, when the sun isn't naturally out. Also consider, what is it that the change in weather, changes in your life? If for example, when it's sunny you are an outdoorsy, active person and when the weather changes, your whole activity level changes along with it, you could explore how to get some of that activity replicated indoors in the winter months.

Question 123: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 123: Change your total daily routine, different route, different lunch, different afternoon. Sit outside for 10 minutes three times every day, use a therapy light during the day, aroma-therapy oils for stimulation, but....keep your routine bedtimes and wake up times.....and exercise at least 3 times per week, if after several weeks you are not feeling better....talk with your doctor.

Question 124: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 124: Seasonal depression can be difficult due to the weather being a primary trigger. Understanding that we have very little control over the weather, therefore we can focus on the things we can change. Exercising, meditation, guided imagery, and deep breathing can be beneficial to combat seasonal depression. It may help to join a support group and seek out therapy to assist you on this healing journey.

Question 125: Every winter I find myself getting sad because of the weather. How can I fight this?

Answer 125: There can be lots of different factors contributing to this. Here are some possible tips: Consider if you know anything about what specifically is making you feel sad? If

you're looking for activities because you cannot participate in what you like to do in the warmer months, consider finding some indoor winter activities. Connect with others. One idea is to join a group (such as a book club) that meets regularly. This could give you something to look forward to regardless of the colder weather. Enjoy the sunshine from indoors. You may notice that sometimes looks are deceiving; women is bright and sunny outside, but is also quite cold when you open the door. If you are staying inside for the day, consider allowing yourself to enjoy the sunlight without specifically considering that it is also cold. Consider using a light box. Certain types of light boxes are designed to help with the "winter blues." You can find more information here:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/light-therapy/home/ovc-20197416> Recently, one of the nurse practitioners that I work with has been checking a lot of vitamin D and vitamin B12 levels and she says the lower levels of these vitamins can contribute to feelings of less motivation or energy than is desired. Each of us has days when we are not thrilled about the weather and may be feeling sort of "bummed" or "down." If you find yourself having these days frequently or for several consecutive days in the above strategies are not helping, consider talking with a therapist about more specific strategies that may be of help to you. Also, because if everything you would see is likely to live in your area, they would be familiar with the weather patterns where you are and may have some tips that they use for themselves or With other clients.

Question 126: I am going through a divorce. He is extremely angry. He refuses to physically assist me with our teenager daughter. I have no extended family support. Often times, I feel overwhelmed, tired, and joyless. I feel out of control, sad and depressed on a daily basis. I am just going through the motions of life every day. I am in my mid-50s. I have almost 29 years on my job. How can I handle this?

Answer 126: Going through a divorce is often a very low point for the people involved. Are you surprised that your soon to be ex doesn't help with your teenage daughter? Usually patterns and dynamics in parenting are not sudden developments. Is it possible that what you're feeling now is more intensity to the stress of parenting by yourself, not that this is a sudden problem? This is relevant because you may be more familiar and more capable than you're giving yourself credit. The lack of emotional support is definitely stressful. Your parenting skills may still be at the level at which they were prior to the divorce. Take your emotional weariness seriously and reflect on the various ways of stress relief which are available and interest you. Give yourself extra time to rest, nurture yourself and be flexible in finding what feels right for stabilizing yourself. Since you talk about your daughter and help in physical ways, if it is a matter of strength that you need, talk with your attorney so that the child custody agreement includes whatever is physically necessary in the way of strength, in taking care of your daughter. The Courts are very good at making effort that the custody agreement offers proper care to the kids.

Question 127: I am going through a divorce. He is extremely angry. He refuses to physically assist me with our teenager daughter. I have no extended family support. Often times, I feel overwhelmed, tired, and joyless. I feel out of control, sad and depressed on a daily basis. I am just going through the motions of life every day. I am in my mid-50s. I have almost 29 years on my job. How can I handle this?

Answer 127: You are in the midst of a really hard time and it sounds like you have no help at all. Search out a local support group through community counseling type centers. If you can't find a group, at least get in to see a therapist who can help you manage stress and upset better. Your sadness, depression and out-of-control feelings don't mean there is something wrong with you - they just mean that your circumstances are too big for your

current resources to handle, so get some help. Take care of YOU and you'll be able to get through this.

Question 128: I just don't know what I want in life anymore. I'm can't figure out what it is that is keeping me distracted and unfocused. I can't put things into perspective at all. I'm just stuck, and I'm disappointed with my lack of accomplishments.

Answer 128: If you are a people-pleaser type or a natural caretaker, you can slowly "lose yourself" over time if you are always tending to the needs of others and neglecting yourself. If this sounds like a familiar pattern for you, this may have happened without you even realizing it if you were raised in a family where you had to pick up the slack alot. Maybe your parents were addicts or they might have even just worked all the time and you learned to "take care of everything" because that is what you had to do to help the family run smoothly. Over time, a person who grows up in this type of environment learns that you put the needs of others before your own. You might also be stuck in these types of patterns in intimate relationships as well; if you completely give yourself over to your significant other and you don't create a life for yourself with your own interests and supportive friends, you are at risk of losing what is unique and amazing about you. If you grew up in a family where you learned this role out of survival or because it was needed to take care of your family, it's easy to re-create this in adult relationships. In both scenarios, if there is no awareness that this "self sacrifice at the expense of others" is going on, your identity is shaped around being a caretaker/enabler/people-pleaser and down the road it can lead to depression, low self esteem, and a confused sense of self. Basically, you spend so much time helping other people that you don't make time for yourself or create a life of fulfillment. Before you realize it, you have been living a life for others instead of yourself and you have no idea who YOU are. Supporting loved ones and friends is important and certainly admirable, but if you are always that person that rescues, those that rely on you begin to take advantage of you and they will suck you dry if you let them. In conclusion, learning to set boundaries with those in your life that are too needy becomes a really important part of the process when you begin to recognize that you are unhappy and unfulfilled in life. It sounds like you may be at that crossroads right now. Take one small step at a time. Identify the worst offenders in your life that suck time and energy, and limit your contact and/or set some strong boundaries with those people so you can refocus and do some soul-searching. Meanwhile, engage in pleasurable activities with people you enjoy being with, get yourself outside in the fresh air, get some good sleep, and eat some nourishing food!

Question 129: I just don't know what I want in life anymore. I'm can't figure out what it is that is keeping me distracted and unfocused. I can't put things into perspective at all. I'm just stuck, and I'm disappointed with my lack of accomplishments.

Answer 129: Give yourself credit for what you already know. For instance, you do know that you're unsure about your life direction. Take off any pressure on yourself to decide an answer in a certain amount of time. Inner reflection work takes time and has its own course. Trust that answers will show once you've done the work to understand yourself and circumstance, and the relationships in your life. From what you describe, your interest is in a broad scope life change. One direction is to start with only one specific part of your life you would like to change. By examining one area in detail you will gain self-trust and confidence in handling your life. And, you will have clarity as to which area to change first.

Question 130: I just don't know what I want in life anymore. I'm can't figure out what it is that is keeping me distracted and unfocused. I can't put things into perspective at all. I'm just stuck, and I'm disappointed with my lack of accomplishments.

Answer 130: Thank you for sharing! It can be very disorienting not to know what you want and where you are headed. Sometimes we are so focused on something we haven't achieved yet or on comparing ourselves to others that we lose touch with what we actually want and need. At times like this, it's important to go back to basics. Try out this simple exercise, take a few minutes to write down all your present responsibilities. For example: make meals, complete homework...etc. Then in the column next to it, write down the things that you do for yourself to recharge yourself and to enjoy your time. Is your list of responsibilities way longer than your list of stuff you do for yourself? It is easy to get lost in the sea of responsibilities and disconnect from what you want and need. To fix that, write another list of things that you enjoyed doing in the past for yourself and start incorporating them into your schedule on a regular basis. This will help you re-connect with yourself, and bring focus and clarity to your life.

Question 131: I just don't know what I want in life anymore. I'm can't figure out what it is that is keeping me distracted and unfocused. I can't put things into perspective at all. I'm just stuck, and I'm disappointed with my lack of accomplishments.

Answer 131: Check this blog out: [Four-ways-add-self-esteem-friends-list](#) Hope you find a few nuggets of helpfulness in this.

Question 132: I just don't know what I want in life anymore. I'm can't figure out what it is that is keeping me distracted and unfocused. I can't put things into perspective at all. I'm just stuck, and I'm disappointed with my lack of accomplishments.

Answer 132: It sounds as if you would benefit from talking with a local mental health professionals so you can discuss some details. Having said that, I wonder if you could consider how you would define yourself to someone who doesn't know you. For example, honest, adaptable, fun-loving, dependable, compassionate, open-minded, dedicated, etc. If you're looking for a list of adjectives, try these:

<https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/adjectives-personality-positive.htm> . There is a list of negative ones here too. If you're going to use those, try to use three positive ones for each of the negative ones. You could also try asking yourself what you love about yourself and/or what others love about you. Sometimes it's easier to consider what others see as our positive points and if this is difficult for you, try asking someone who you trust to help you with the list. The idea here is to look at your relationship with yourself. I don't mean this in a way that you would be talking to yourself and receiving answers, but rather looking at yourself in a way that you deserve the same kind of loving and compassion that you give to others or want others to have. I'm also curious as to whether you are eating and sleeping okay, as these things can really affect your focus and many other changes, such as differences in your emotions. Also, you saying that you are struggling to put things into perspective leads me to believe that you are going through some things right now that are not typical for you, if so, consider from whom you have support and the ability to talk about what you are going through. Consider Metta meditation here to help give yourself loving kindness: <http://www.mettainstitute.org/mettameditation.html>

Question 133: I'm not suicidal and wouldn't take my own life, but sometimes, I've wished for an accident to occur and take it. I feel like I just shouldn't be here and wish I wouldn't have been born so I didn't have to go through life. For me, it's a chore, but I don't know if that's normal or a sign of something.

Answer 133: Sounds like a sign of great unhappiness, or sadness, or insecurity. The real way you'll find out what this feeling is about is to ask yourself your own question. Inside you are the only one who will feel when you discover the true answer to your question. Everyone feels some amount of discontent in their lives once in a while. Its normal to not feel entirely

happy all the time. Try to accept your unhappiness as motivation to learn more about who you are, what you like, whom you like. Study yourself bc this way you increase the chance to find a road which feels right and happy.

Question 134: I can't even smile or fake one. I can't feel happiness about anything and I can't show love towards another person not even my girlfriend. I hate myself sometimes. All I see is ugly.

I can't get over the loss of a loved one and I'm not close to my family. What can I do?

Answer 134: Trust and believe your own feelings. Emotions are real and reflect how someone feels about a situation. Since you're sad about losing a loved one, be patient w your feelings about this. Basically, be guided by how you feel and eventually you will feel different emotions which I hope will be happier ones.

Question 135: My girlfriend just quit drinking and she became really depressed. She told me that she wants to move. What can I do to help her? I want her to stay.

Answer 135: You're probably not going to like my answer. Your question says a lot about what YOU want rather than what she wants or what may be best for her. Sometimes, what's best for a person is the hardest thing to do, and may be completely opposite of what YOU want. Addictions don't happen in a vacuum. If you've had any experience with addicts at all, then I'm sure you've heard the term "enabler". A lot of the times, when people think they're "helping", they're actually enabling the addict to continue their self-destructive behavior. Tough love and clear boundaries are needed in a lot of situations, but especially with addictions. Family and friends are often the biggest contributing factor to someone choosing to use/drink, continuing to do so, or relapsing back into it. You said she recently quit. You said she is depressed. She wants to move. When a person receives counseling for addictions, they are encouraged to make changes like this. They need to break the habit, and this means removing people from their lives at times. It means moving to new locations. Anything that may trigger a relapse needs to be identified and removed. Not only that, but the addict needs to do a lot of personal reflection to figure out WHY they use/drink in the first place, and not only break the physical addiction to it, but deal with whatever is the root cause that led them to use in the first place. She may need some time alone to figure out who she is as a person, time to make some decisions for herself and do what she needs to do to be healthy. Don't pressure her to stay. Let her have the freedom to do what she needs to do. If she stays, the decision needs to be hers and hers alone. It doesn't need to be made under pressure. That will only lead to resentment. Support her, but don't try to change her or make her do anything, especially for selfish reasons. Let her go. It sounds like she needs some time to focus on herself right now. It wouldn't be a bad idea for you to do the same.

Question 136: My girlfriend just quit drinking and she became really depressed. She told me that she wants to move. What can I do to help her? I want her to stay.

Answer 136: I would say talk to her about her depression. The best thing you can do is let her know that you are there for her as a support system. I would encourage her to talk more if it helps and encourage her to get move involved in doing activities she likes to do. Also, getting connected in a community of people is important to help with feeling depressed. Encourage her to speak with a therapist or counselor to address her depression as she has made a major change in her life by deciding to stop drinking. She may believe moving is the best to help with this. You can share with her that you want her to stay and express to her how you feel. Ultimately, you will have to respect her boundaries and the decision she chooses to make. She may want to move and this may be what she feels is best for her life. If she does choose to move that will be her decision. It sounds like she is trying to do what is

going to make her happy. Maybe staying in the city she is currently in is causing her more feelings of sadness.

Question 137: My girlfriend just quit drinking and she became really depressed. She told me that she wants to move. What can I do to help her? I want her to stay.

Answer 137: People often have very different values and opinions when they are drinking excessively and when they stop drinking so much. Did the two of you share drinking as an activity? If yes, then did you stop drinking too? Often when partners meet each other as drinking buddies when one gets sober, the relationship ends. Once the terms of any relationship changes, one possibility is that it dissolves. The best way to go is to start the conversation of what you genuinely want. This is the only way she'll really know your thoughts. Ask her to give serious consideration and discussion over at least a few weeks or months, to moving away from you. This is a fair request since you are in a relationship. If she's changed so much by giving up drinking, which is possible, that she no longer wants to be in relationship to you, then you are better off being without a drinking gf, even if the truth she delivers is a hurtful one.

Question 138: My girlfriend just quit drinking and she became really depressed. She told me that she wants to move. What can I do to help her? I want her to stay.

Answer 138: After stopping the abuse of alcohol, depressive symptoms are common. She may benefit from exploring why she wants to move and see if she would still want to move if she did not feel depressed. 12 step meetings can also be helpful.

Question 139: My girlfriend just quit drinking and she became really depressed. She told me that she wants to move. What can I do to help her? I want her to stay.

Answer 139: You should start by speaking with her about what has her so down. Have there been some significant events in her life that have affected her? Have there been significant events in your relationship that can be affecting you both? If she just stopped drinking, she may be struggling to finding an alternative and healthier behavior. This is something the two of you can explore together. Also, if need be perhaps she can speak to a therapist to discuss her feelings about quitting alcohol. It sounds like you really care and right now she could use all the support she can get despite her pushing you away.

Question 140: I'm a teenager. My dad has been jail for the last five years. It's tough, but my mom really tries to give a normal life to my two sisters, my brother, and I. I feel like I took upon a parent role when I'm the second youngest, and I'm not stable. My mother and sisters say I'm overdramatic. I'm just so hurt, and I keep breaking down.

Answer 140: Each person handles themselves differently in any situation. Since you are willing to speak about how you feel, keep looking for blogs and forums on whatever topics you feel most describe your current circumstance. Your mother and sister, even though they are family seem to prefer the opposite method to yours. Find your own path of supportive other people and possibly a therapist. This way you'll have understanding and validation which your mom and sister don't want to give you right now.

Question 141: I'm a teenager. My dad has been jail for the last five years. It's tough, but my mom really tries to give a normal life to my two sisters, my brother, and I. I feel like I took upon a parent role when I'm the second youngest, and I'm not stable. My mother and sisters say I'm overdramatic. I'm just so hurt, and I keep breaking down.

Answer 141: It sounds like you have a lot of weight on your shoulders. I'm not sure what you mean when you say you're not stable and you are breaking down. If you are crying because you're sad, that is okay. If you are crying a lot or having trouble eating or sleeping, that's different than just crying sometimes because you are sad. It may be helpful to talk with a local mental health professional in your area. They can help you to figure out what you could

do differently to have the role in your family that you would like while also supporting yourself and what you want.

Question 142: I'm in my mid 20s with a husband and children. I love my family, but I feel like I've lost my identity, and I don't know who I am other than a mom and wife. At times, all I can think is what I gave up and how I feel unhappy and trapped, but I know I'd feel like worse without them. I loathe myself at times. I have an amazing life, so why can't I just enjoy it?

Answer 142: Good for you on being sensitive to your human need for personal evolution. Wife and mother are meaningful positions. And in your case, in order to feel your own growth, other areas of who you are would like your attention. Give yourself time to allow your interest to wander in order to find the area of growth which will satisfy you. Just like you know now that you'd like more than your current situation, trust yourself to know you will also know when you've arrived at another road you'd like to take for your own happiness.

Question 143: I'm in my mid 20s with a husband and children. I love my family, but I feel like I've lost my identity, and I don't know who I am other than a mom and wife. At times, all I can think is what I gave up and how I feel unhappy and trapped, but I know I'd feel like worse without them. I loathe myself at times. I have an amazing life, so why can't I just enjoy it?

Answer 143: Being a parent can be all-consuming. And there are more societal pressures on mothers to be everything to their children and families. In that effort to be everything (cook, housekeeper, planner, social organizer, teacher, etc) it can be easy to forget about being you. We can certainly acknowledge that becoming a mother likely means giving up or sacrificing parts of yourself for motherhood. There are parts of becoming a mother that can be wonderful and magical, and parts of it that can be just flat out hard. I think it is very important however, for all parents to ask for what they need and to carve out the time to nurture their individuality. This may not only be supportive to you, but it sets a great example for your kids about how to advocate for their needs, and teach them about the depth and interests of their mother.

Question 144: I'm in my mid 20s with a husband and children. I love my family, but I feel like I've lost my identity, and I don't know who I am other than a mom and wife. At times, all I can think is what I gave up and how I feel unhappy and trapped, but I know I'd feel like worse without them. I loathe myself at times. I have an amazing life, so why can't I just enjoy it?

Answer 144: It is not easy being a wife and mother. You have shifted roles in your life. You went from having a career to focusing on your family. Transitioning can be hard, especially when we feel we gave something up that we really wanted. I want to acknowledge you for wanting to be the best wife and mother you can. I think it is great that you are self-aware and want to work on this. Feeling "unhappy and trapped" may also mean that you are believing these negative thoughts are absolutely true. We have lots and lots of thoughts throughout the day. Sometimes we pay a lot of attention to some and some we ignore. Right now these thoughts are getting a lot of your attention and perhaps you are thinking because you are thinking them they are true. Is it really true that you are trapped? You also said that you have an amazing life. It doesn't sound like you are only having negative thoughts. You have some positive ones, too. However, you are giving a lot of weight to the negative thoughts, more weight than the positive ones. I also wonder if you are struggling with the fact that you are even having this thought. One thing that can be helpful is to recognize that you are having a thought, that it is a negative thought, that thinking it does not make it true, and to let it go. This is the basis for mindfulness work that can be really helpful. It is a great place for you to start so you can balance out your thoughts and emotions. Best of luck to you!

Question 145: I'm in my mid 20s with a husband and children. I love my family, but I feel like I've lost my identity, and I don't know who I am other than a mom and wife. At times, all I can

think is what I gave up and how I feel unhappy and trapped, but I know I'd feel like worse without them. I loathe myself at times. I have an amazing life, so why can't I just enjoy it?

Answer 145: It sounds like there are some parts of your life that you really enjoy it and also some things that you wish were different. You say you feel like nothing more than a wife and mom, so I wonder if you could make a list of what else you are (friend, daughter, etc.). I also wonder if you could list your positive attributes or skills. I don't know what you gave up, but I wonder if there is some way that you could spend an hour or so a week working on things that you like and/or spending some time with what you did before you had children. For example, if you're missing a certain part of your career, maybe you could work with your husband to come up with a plan where you could do whenever that is for one day a week. There are often a lot of small changes that can lead you in that direction. Of course, that is assuming that you want to continue being involved with what you were doing before. If not, what else do you want to do? What is it that makes you feel happy? What do you look forward to? Remember that looking forward to having an hour or two where you can do something for yourself does not mean that you are not a good mother or wife. These ideas can coexist. Can you talk with your husband about how you are feeling? Do you have trust for one another with feelings such as these?

Question 146: I have been dealing with depression and anxiety for a number of years. I have been on medication, but lately my depression has felt worse. Can counseling help?

Answer 146: Thank you for asking this important question. I find that there are three steps to getting ready for treatment. Step one is expressing interest in wanting to receive treatment for the outcome of positive behavioral change. Congratulations you did the first step! You are showing your readiness to start counseling by asking this question. Now the second step is to find a counselor who specializes in treating clients with Anxiety and Depression. The therapeutic orientations I have found to be helpful in treating clients with Anxiety and Depression are a combination of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with Mindfulness, and Solution Focused Brief Therapy. Receiving medication for your symptoms is part of the treatment, and the other part is receiving counseling to increase your resilience for future events. Research has found that medication and psychotherapy treatments together shows the most effective outcome for Depression. The third step is to increase your positive self-talk to motivate yourself to attend treatment. As counselors, we are aware of the anxieties and fears that are associated with talking to a new professional for the first time. However, remind yourself that you are doing this to improve your well being. I hope this was helpful, and good luck with your treatment journey.

Question 147: I have been dealing with depression and anxiety for a number of years. I have been on medication, but lately my depression has felt worse. Can counseling help?

Answer 147: Certainly counseling can help. However, there is a caveat, namely, you will need the right counselor with the right approach. This leads to two questions: 1) What are the identifiers for the right counselor, and 2) What is the right approach? 1) What are the identifiers for the right counselor? The right counselor will almost certainly have a lot of experience. He or she will have done a lot of personal work and have an ongoing practice of inner work both on their own and with the support of an experienced therapist. This person will be viewing you as a human being with challenges, not as a diagnostic category. He or she will be willing to work with you over an extended period of time and have experience doing such work. Further they will be well versed in approaches that are responsive to you in the moment and overall. The in-depth work will be collaboratively designed in an ongoing way that is responsive to you, the moment, your overall life experience, and their in-the-moment experience. It goes without saying that you will subjectively evaluate the felt sense of

connection with this person and the feeling that they are invested in their work with you, value you as a human being, and value the connection. As well, it is crucial that you feel this connection and that your therapist 'gets you.' 2) What is the right approach? As Carl Jung stated, "When the doctor sits down with the patient he (or she) must drop all theories and learn the theory of this person." The approach must include a bond between you and your therapist that is in a continuous process of development, attention to pre-verbal imprinting, development of awareness ability, ongoing development of the ability to attend to and stay with inner experience, development of a process orientation, attention to egoic structures that were seeded from the earliest days in the service of perceptions of threats to needs being met, identification of current egoic states and work with these inner selves and their relationship with each other to facilitate movement from developmental points of arrest, increased ability to access and contain non-ordinary states of consciousness, attending to what is, and working with this in the service of moving towards optimal human development. depression is generally experienced as the system shutting down. anxiety is a signal that something is wrong. anxiety is not the problem. it is a sign that there is a problem. the core of these issues is a lack of inner security that is the outcome of insufficient bonding. the work of psychotherapy is to establish an environment and relationship that will facilitate work with the bonding ruptures and re-initiation of the developmental process that stopped at an early stage.

Question 148: I have been dealing with depression and anxiety for a number of years. I have been on medication, but lately my depression has felt worse. Can counseling help?

Answer 148: My initial response: consider a more comprehensive MH assessment to determine other factors. A medical evaluation is warranted to rule out poor health issues. Blood work is helpful. Review what hadn't helped.

Question 149: I have been dealing with depression and anxiety for a number of years. I have been on medication, but lately my depression has felt worse. Can counseling help?

Answer 149: From whom do you get anti-depressants? This person should be talking with you to know whether the pills are helping or not. Trust your own instinct that the pills aren't helping you. Pills work differently for everyone and not all people feel better from them. It is also possible the particular pills have lost their effectiveness because after around six to eight months, this usually happens. Try to understand what is depressing you. This is slow work since you may have many theories. Just by addressing your own emotional needs and life structure in a caring and respectful way, may improve your mood so that you'll feel less depressed.

Question 150: There are many people willing to lovingly provide me with a home. I have food, clothes, and a university education, but I never feel like I belong. Even when I have a good time with people who are supposed to be close, I feel like I'm just out with friends and I never go home.

Answer 150: From the little bit you wrote, my guess is you haven't figured out where and how to lay down your own set of roots. Usually people who have a university level education are old enough to work in order to support themselves. Unless you have a medical condition which limits or prevents you from working a full-time job, would you guess that the effort and thought involved in deciding in what professional area and geographic location to look for work, would offer you a way to establish your identity? My suggestion is to pay more attention to your own likes, dislikes, and interests. To know these areas more deeply would define the type of people with whom you identify, have a common interest and with whom you'd like to socialize. The more you realize who you are, the easier time you'll have to find like-minded others and feel securely at home with them and yourself. Again, if you have a medical

disability or condition which prevents employment or easily socializing with other people, then this advice would need to be modified for your specific strengths.

Question 151: There are many people willing to lovingly provide me with a home. I have food, clothes, and a university education, but I never feel like I belong. Even when I have a good time with people who are supposed to be close, I feel like I'm just out with friends and I never go home.

Answer 151: For some people, having a sense of belonging takes some time. You mentioned that you have an education and some basic daily needs. I wonder if you may be able to look at your relationship with yourself and what makes you feel happy, safe, and having a sense of accomplishment. If you have those feelings, I wonder how you define trust and who you trust. You say you have a good time with people who are "supposed to be close," so I wonder what keeps them from feeling close. I have also wondering if you have been emotionally hurt in the past, and if so, you may have some protective defenses that you use (maybe on purpose, maybe not) to protect yourself from being hurt again. Remember that this idea comes in degrees where you can be more perfect in certain situations and a little less in others. Being emotionally protected is on a spectrum or continuum, where you can make an infinite amount of adjustments or changes with different people and situations. I also wonder what it is that you want in your "home," and how you define it. Consider giving yourself permission to think about how you would define your perfect home in a world where there were no realistic restrictions (such as money or location). After you have that, consider what parts of that you can have. Perhaps there is a small part that you could make a reality within a week or so. Thank you for reaching out. If this continues to be difficult for you, consider seeing a local mental health professional so you can discuss some more specific details.

Question 152: I am really worried about one of my friends because I think he has major depression. He disagrees with me on that. He is shut off when it comes to talking to people and telling them how he really feels. He told me he feels empty inside and the only emotions he feels are anger and sadness. I suggested to him to get help and talk to his mom about it but he refuses.

Answer 152: First of all, I can tell that you really care about your friend and I think it's great that you are reaching out with your concern. It's hard to determine whether your friend would meet the criteria for an official diagnosis of depression without working with him, however, whether he does or not, therapy may be beneficial for him in working through these difficult feelings and relational challenges. Unfortunately, you can't make your friend get help. He will ultimately need to make that decision for himself, however, you can talk to him about your concerns and your hopes that he will reach out for help.

Question 153: I've become so jaded that I can't control my thoughts. I cannot focus on anything and been having anxiety attacks.

Answer 153: Maybe your thoughts require your attention and the best course would be to pay attention and follow them! If you're in an especially stressful or uncertain time in your life, then the best way through is to understand the tension you feel. It keeps trying to get you to know what's going on deep within you. Anxiety is a sign of stress and weariness. Your thoughts are a chance to simply rest and know what they would like you to know. Then, when that process is finished your anxiety will no longer be necessary and will most likely leave you alone.

Question 154: I've become so jaded that I can't control my thoughts. I cannot focus on anything and been having anxiety attacks.

Answer 154: I imagine that it's pretty disconcerting to feel as though you lost yourself. When you said that you are jaded, I'm not sure whether you mean that you are jaded toward

someone, something, life in general, or some combination thereof. One of the difficult things about anxiety is that anxiety can lead to more anxiety because of being concerned about having another panic attack. Consider remembering that panic attacks usually only last a few minutes and the reason they don't go away right away is because of the way your brain releases chemicals because some part of your brain is reacting as if you are in danger in some way. As far as finding yourself, you may consider looking at what parts of each day you can control as a way to stay centered. You could also focus on something that makes you feel happy and/or comfortable. You may also consider the list of values here to give yourself an idea of what is most important to you, what it is that you are living by now, and what values you would prefer to live by.

<http://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/values-clarification> If this proves to be difficult, consider seeing a local therapist.

Question 155: When I get around a particular person or when I go home, I'm just sad or irritated. The feeling comes and goes all day every day. I don't know what's wrong. I'm not sure if I'm just making up symptoms and problems in my head or if there is something actually wrong.

Answer 155: Feelings are real, it is very unlikely that you are making them up since they are a response to the thoughts in your mind and your daily experiences and interactions. Often we assume that feeling sadness is bad and that we should only feel happiness and joy; but all feelings have a purpose: joy, sadness, anger, frustration, excitement, anxiety, among others. It is not healthy to experience the same feeling for a long time, so we should learn to identify what causes them and how to process them so you can navigate through life experiences with more ease. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor in Texas, currently providing services in West Houston. You may reach me at 787-466-5478 to schedule an appointment.

-----Me he estado sintiendo triste Cuando salgo con una persona en particular o cuando llego a casa, estoy triste o irritado. El sentimiento viene y va todo el día. No sé qué está mal. No estoy seguro si estoy inventando los síntomas y problemas en mi cabeza o si algo realmente está mal. Los sentimientos son muy reales, y es muy poco probable que los estés inventando, por que los sentimientos son una respuesta tanto a los pensamientos que hay en nuestra cabeza, y, a las situaciones que nos ocurren día a día. Muchas veces pensamos que sentirnos triste está mal, y que solo debemos sentirnos alegres, pero todas las emociones tienen un propósito y razón de ser, tanto la alegría, como la tristeza, el coraje, la frustración, la excitación o el desespero, entre otros. No es bueno quedarnos estancados una emoción. Así que es importante aprender a identificar que causa nuestros sentimientos, como procesarlos para poder superar nuestras emociones y movernos de una experiencia a otra con más tranquilidad.

Soy Consejera Profesional Licenciada en Texas y Puerto Rico, veo clientes en el este de Houston y proveo servicios de tele terapia. Para una cita puedes llamar al 787-466-5478.

Question 156: I am a teenager. I have been experiencing major episodes of depression (if that's even what it is) for several years. It's always getting worse. I have been having panic attacks, feeling like I can't control my fears, and I can't even bring myself to care if I live or die anymore. The problem is that I don't know who to ask for help. When I try to talk to my parents, I freeze completely and can't do anything but make a joke because never once in my life have we talked about our feelings.

Answer 156: I understand that talking about our feelings can be awkward and using jokes is a way to relieve that awkwardness, but there is a right or wrong way to talk about your feelings. The important part is to recognize that you need help addressing those feelings and

reaching out, which you are doing already. Having small conversations with your family is helpful, you can explain to them that you have been experiencing emotional discomfort and would like to talk to them about it. Since you been experiencing anxiety, panic attacks, and have thought about dying, It is VERY important that you ask them to help you make an appointment with a mental health professional. Those symptoms indicate that your body is having a hard time managing intense feelings and it will be helpful if you understand why they occur and how to cope with them. You may contact your school counselor or you may schedule an appointment with a local therapist. You may contact the Texas Crisis Hotline 800-989-6884 where you can talk or chat with mental health professionals or schedule a teletherapy session. The National Crisis Hotline is also available for calling and texting 1-800-273-8255. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor in Texas, currently providing services in West Houston. You may reach me at 787-466-5478 to schedule an appointment.

-----¿Cómo hablo de mis sentimientos de depresión y con quién hablo? Soy un adolescente. He estado experimentando episodios de depresión severa (si es lo que creo) por muchos años. Siempre se pone peor. He estado teniendo ataques de pánico, sintiendo que no puedo controlar mis miedos y sintiendo que ya no importa si quiero vivir o morir. El problema es que ya no sé a quién pedirle ayuda. Cuando intento hablar con mis padres, Me congelo y solo puedo hacer bromas porque nunca en mi vida hemos hablado de nuestros sentimientos. Entiendo que hablar de tus emociones puede hacernos sentir inadecuados, y bromear es una manera de manejar ese sentimiento incómodo, pero no hay forma correcta o incorrecta de hablar sobre tus sentimientos. Lo importante es reconocer que necesitas ayuda para manejarlos, y ya tu estas en ese proceso. Tener pequeñas conversaciones con tu familia te ayudara a explicarles los sentimientos que estas experimentando. Es importante que les pidas hacer una cita con un profesional de la salud mental, ya que has estado experimentando síntomas que indican que tu cuerpo ya no puede manejar tus sentimientos y necesita nuevas herramientas. Puedes contactar a tu consejero escolar, o a un proveedor de salud mental cerca de ti o por teléfono. Mientras tanto, puedes llamar a la línea de crisis de Texas 800-989-6884 para hablar con un profesional de salud mental. La línea nacional de crisis también esta disponible en todos los Estados Unidos y proveen servicios en español 1-800-273-8255

Yo soy una Consejera Profesional Licenciada en Texas y Puerto Rico, veo clientes en el este de Houston y proveo servicios de tele terapia. Para una cita puedes llamar al 787-466-5478.

Question 157: I feel lazy and numb. I have no interest in things.

Answer 157: Maybe right now it is time for you to rest before the next wave of new activity comes along. To have "no interest" may mean you are already so saturated with recent situations and their meaning that you are naturally withdrawing in order to regain your energy.

Question 158: I'm currently struggling with diagnosed depression, anxiety, and Misophonia. Also, I am 99% sure I have Borderline Personality Disorder and Avoidant Personality Disorder. I read the DSM-IV, taken college psychology, etc. I know it in my heart I have them. Is self-diagnosing okay with the right research?

Answer 158: Any diagnosis is limited in its usefulness. Knowing the name of some typical ways you may feel, think and behave, doesn't help you or anyone to understand why the person is the way they are and how to change any of these characteristics. Both self-diagnosing and being diagnosed are equally unhelpful to know why you are the way you are and what to do about it. Consider yourself a person who wants to find a better way to be

who you are, and this will get you further with better results than to read a list of descriptions which all are very indicting and negative sounding.

Question 159: I'm currently struggling with diagnosed depression, anxiety, and Misophonia. Also, I am 99% sure I have Borderline Personality Disorder and Avoidant Personality Disorder. I read the DSM-IV, taken college psychology, etc. I know it in my heart I have them. Is self-diagnosing okay with the right research?

Answer 159: Hello, and thank you for your question. Self-diagnosing is something that we all do about one health issue or another. Taking a guess about what may or may not be happening to us is completely normal, however the actual clinical diagnoses of a mental health disorder requires a licensed mental health professional. Here are a few reasons for this: 1. Making a clinical diagnosis often requires other things besides matching up the symptoms of a disorder. To come to a diagnoses for any of the things you mentioned, a counselor would consult the DSM, but they may also use some type of screening tool, assessment or scale. Many disorders have similarities and it requires someone with training to tease out the differences in the symptoms. 2. Our judgement is sometimes off when it comes to assessing ourselves. We really can't be objective. Something as serious as determining a diagnosis really needs to be done by someone who has that objectivity. In addition, once you know your diagnosis, treating it usually requires help from a professional. 3. Sometimes the symptoms of a mental health disorder makes self-diagnoses impossible, in and of itself. For example, someone could be having hallucinations or delusions and not realize it. That would clearly make it impossible for them to diagnose themselves. There are many examples where something like this could happen with different mental health disorders. There are other reasons, but these are three important ones. Now, does this mean that you are wrong about your diagnosis? Maybe not. You may be correct. But, it is important to get this confirmed by a professional mental health clinician. If a disorder is then found, you can begin to talk about treatment. Hope this was helpful. Be well. Robin J. Landwehr, DBH, LPCC, NCC

Question 160: In the past year, two of my best and only close friends moved to different states. Now I have nobody to hang out with. I'm always alone, and I honestly haven't hung out with anyone since they left. I'm super lonely. What should I do to make new friends? Because they moved and I have no friends now, I think I'm falling into a depression or something. I just need help.

Answer 160: Definitely it is sad to lose friends who are a regular part of daily life. How did you meet the two friends who just moved away? Its possible that you could look for similar situations and see if anyone catches your interest to know as a friend. Keeping in mind that friendship is based on trust and common interests, and that these qualities require time to observe and develop, think of what you can do to keep happy while these paths unfold. In addition to being open to meeting new friends, involve yourself in projects from which you'll feel satisfied by your own results.

Question 161: I am the problem. I make my family argue because of me. My mom has even said it. It's constantly like this. I cause problems. I am worthless. I can't stop crying. Sometimes I have to cry myself to sleep. I can't even leave my room because my family can't stand me.

Answer 161: I am so very sorry for how pressured and sad you feel right now. Definitely all family members have an effect on the other ones. From what you write, your family members are not considering the effect their negative comments have on you. Also, keep in mind that each person is responsible for deciding to argue or find a different way to discuss a problem. You are not in control of the other people in your family. More likely they take the easy way

out and blame you for what they don't want to know about themselves. Stay aware that the family's decision to target you doesn't mean that you are doing something wrong. Certainly your existence is not wrong, which is the degree to which the unfairness seems to have spread. What to do about it is read about family systems to see more explanations on how you are being unfairly treated. Also stay in touch with friends bc these are the people who value and respect you.

Question 162: I'm depressed often, and my mind goes a million miles a minute. Every once in a while, things are okay for a few days. After a bit, I start noticing that I am picking at my skin profusely. After roughly a week, the anxiety is back and still picking. Sometimes I find myself causing fights to have change.

Answer 162: One way to know yourself a little better and why the dynamics you describe take place, is to understand the particular dynamics of your life context. Look at your major areas of where you spend your time, whether you are happy with the people with whom you socialize, how you feel toward family members and how they seem to feel toward you. If you examine your relationships and life this way then you may start to notice areas where you have some control or at least a say in how your life is going. If you are socializing among people whom you don't like, have a job you don't like and your family mistreats you and you mistreats them, for example, then anxiety and depression are an understandable natural result. If you make improvements in your life and relationships, even tiny improvements and even the effort and intention to improve, you may find your anxiety and depression dissipating. People usually feel their worst when they feel lack of control in their life. Look for ways you can regain and/or strengthen yours.

Question 163: I'm depressed often, and my mind goes a million miles a minute. Every once in a while, things are okay for a few days. After a bit, I start noticing that I am picking at my skin profusely. After roughly a week, the anxiety is back and still picking. Sometimes I find myself causing fights to have change.

Answer 163: Hello, and thank you for your question. I am very sorry that you are struggling. I have a few thoughts and perhaps some of my colleagues will add something else.

Depression and anxiety can both be chronic conditions, as you have experienced. This means that they may always require treatment in order to have some kind of relief from them. Treatment could mean medication or some kind of counseling. Some people may take medication for the rest of their lives. Some people may go to counseling at times when the depression and anxiety worsens. As you mentioned, sometimes the symptoms improve for a little while, but they can also come back. When they do, it is important to talk to your medical provider if you are getting medication, and/or to go back to your counselor and talk to them about the symptoms that have returned. Skin picking and some other behaviors are not uncommon for people who are experiencing something like anxiety. Many people report that they do this when they feel anxious, and some say it calms them down. It is not really a surprise that you are constantly trying to change things and even starting fights to do so.

These are ways to try to avoid, escape and distract yourself from the feelings of anxiety and depression. That is a very normal thing to do. Nobody likes these feelings, and so distraction is something we naturally try in order to get rid of them. The problem is that things like distraction and escape do not work as a long-term solution. In fact, they usually make things worse for many different reasons. Depression and anxiety can be treated, but it is likely something you will need some help with. I would recommend finding a counselor who has experience with anxiety and depression. Medication can be helpful, but I still recommend counseling. The reason for this is that the medication can help with symptoms, while the

counseling can address the symptoms and provide you with very helpful skills. Be well, Robin J. Landwehr, DBH, LPCC, NCC

Question 164: I'm very depressed. How do I find someone to talk to?

Answer 164: You have already taken the brave first step of making the decision to heal from it and find a professional that will help you do so. There are lots of different options nowadays for therapists, as you can see them online or in an office. My biggest tip for you is to use Psychology Today or Counsel Chat to find a therapist. Enter in your zip code and you will find many different therapists you can talk to. Be sure to find someone that you most resonate with and ask them any questions you may have. Many times, therapists will provide free consultations and this can be a great opportunity to see if you are a good fit.

Question 165: I'm very depressed. How do I find someone to talk to?

Answer 165: The first step, which you've taken, is actually wanting to talk to someone. It's a great sign that you are seeking to reach out for help. And there are therapists everywhere (there are even therapists online, so you don't have to be that close to them or their office.) There are several sites that I refer people to to begin the process of looking for a therapist. I usually have them start with psychologytoday.com. Once there (there is a therapist directory), you can narrow choices down by ages that they work with, insurance they accept, depression as an issue they focus in, etc. You can also narrow down by therapist's modality, but that can get complicated if you aren't too familiar with the various theoretical approaches. It's important that you find someone that you feel understands your situation. That might mean that they identify an issue you are having in their profile, or on their professional website. But, you should try to meet a couple of different therapists if you aren't quite sure. It can be challenging that first session, but your best (note, not "THE best") therapist will help you feel comfortable (or as comfortable as possible, given therapy can be uncomfortable especially at first) and understood from the get-go. I have found that asking friends or family for names and recommendations is also a common way to find a therapist, because it can come from a trusted referral source. But remember that we are all different, so what works for one might not always be a good fit. And again, it could take a couple of first sessions with different therapists to know if someone is a good fit (sometimes, it can take a few sessions.) And if there is no one around that can give a name or two, then searching online is quite common and can yield positive results. And try not to give up! Finding a therapist is not easy, but finding a good one for you is extremely rewarding.

Question 166: I'm very depressed. How do I find someone to talk to?

Answer 166: Hi, Reaching out here is a great start! I recommend looking for somebody in your area that works with people experiencing depression. After you've chosen somebody to try, feel free to call them for a consultation! A lot of counselors and therapists offer free consultations, and remember that your counselor is working for you, so make sure they are a good fit! I hope this has been of some help.

Question 167: I'm very depressed. How do I find someone to talk to?

Answer 167: Hang in there! Feeling depressed sucks but talking with someone can really help - so its awesome that you're already trying to figure out how to find that person. Tons of good suggestions already but to add my two cents - you can find therapists in your area and read a little bit about them to find someone you like the sound of via this website, and also via www.psychologytoday.com; if you have health insurance your insurer might be able to make recommendations as to therapists covered by your plan, or if you happen to be in school, the school itself should be able to connect you with either their own counselor or a center that they recommend nearby. Finding someone can take a few calls or a bit of research so if you need some immediate support, or find yourself having thoughts of hurting

yourself, you can also call the great folks who run the Suicide crisis line
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org> - they are great in moments of crisis.

Question 168: I'm very depressed. How do I find someone to talk to?

Answer 168: Great that you realize talking with a professional counselor about how you feel, would be helpful! If you'd like a very fast response by phone, then google "depression hotline" for where you live. And, if you have a specific topic which upsets you then google around with this topic to see if there are services specific to your interest. If you've got time to invest in looking for the best fit therapist for yourself, then google "therapy" or "therapist". There will be many, many names which come up. I know I sound like I work for google only it is the easiest way to find lots of information. I send you good luck!

Question 169: I'm very depressed. How do I find someone to talk to?

Answer 169: Sorry to hear you are feeling that way. Is there a 24-hour helpline where you are that you can call? Here is a website with some numbers to call:

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/common-hotline-phone-numbers/> You could talk to your family doctor and they could help you find a therapist? You could also use this website to find a therapist. <https://therapists.psychologytoday.com>. I sincerely hope you find someone to talk to.

Question 170: I'm very depressed. How do I find someone to talk to?

Answer 170: If there is no one in your life with whom you feel comfortable, I would recommend identifying someone on this site, psychology today or goodtherapy.org who is in your area, then give that therapist a call to see if you would be a good match.

Question 171: I'm constantly in a bad mood and I have no energy. Is that depression?

Answer 171: Depression has many different signs and symptoms and looks different for every person. Often times people think depression is more about feeling "sad," but depression can, in fact, express itself through irritability (or bad mood as you say) and lack of energy. According to the DSM-V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), depression includes the following symptoms: -Depressed mood-Irritable mood-Decreased interest or pleasure in activities you usually participate in or enjoy-Significant weight change or change in appetite-Change in sleep (insomnia or hypersomnia)-Psychomotor agitation or retardation-Fatigue or loss in energy -Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt-Diminished ability to concentrate or indecisiveness-Thoughts of suicide or plan The great news is that there are many ways to improve depressive symptoms. If you are up for it, perhaps the best place to start is by seeing a physician or a therapist who can help determine how severe the depression is and can suggest methods of addressing the depression that fit your lifestyle, values, and capabilities. Good luck!

Question 172: I'm in my late teens and live with my dad. The only time I go out is for my college classes. Sometimes when I see my friends I want to talk with them, but sometimes I won't want to talk to them for days or even weeks. Sometimes I feel i'm not worth knowing or i'm never going to do anything right.

Are they right, am I depressed?

Answer 172: I wouldn't necessarily say you are clinically depressed based on that first paragraph in your question. Because that could describe more introverted behavior (people who feel more energy from a more internal approach as opposed to those who feel more energy from being among others.) It is more in the second paragraph that I would be inclined to say that further exploration is definitely needed. The diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder is more than just those two symptoms, but there are more mild forms of depression

that can be equally damaging to someone if left untreated. However, one of the trickiest parts of this is that someone who feels they are not worth knowing may also believe they are not worth having a therapist know them, and even less worthy of being helped. Do you feel that might be you? If so, could we acknowledge that as a part of the big picture, and all wrapped up in these feelings about yourself, and realizing that thoughts and feelings aren't always rational (in that you are worth getting the help)? My recommendation just from the information would be that you seek out a supportive, listening ear in the form of a therapist, who can allow you the space to express some of these difficult experiences, and help you name FOR YOURSELF, what your struggle is. To empower you to name it for yourself, as opposed to everyone labeling and/or judging you for it, might be an extremely worthwhile start for you.

Question 173: I'm in my late teens and live with my dad. The only time I go out is for my college classes. Sometimes when I see my friends I want to talk with them, but sometimes I won't want to talk to them for days or even weeks. Sometimes I feel i'm not worth knowing or i'm never going to do anything right.

Are they right, am I depressed?

Answer 173: Hi, Depression can look different for everybody. It sounds to me like what your family is trying to tell you that they are worried about you, and think this behavior might be a result of depression. If what you are experiencing seems fine and normal to you, it may be nothing to worry about. It is very common to have thoughts of doubt about yourself and your abilities, and it may help to open up about those thoughts to people you trust. Developing relationships with friends and families can be a very rewarding experience, but it can take a brave person to reach out!

Question 174: I'm in my late teens and live with my dad. The only time I go out is for my college classes. Sometimes when I see my friends I want to talk with them, but sometimes I won't want to talk to them for days or even weeks. Sometimes I feel i'm not worth knowing or i'm never going to do anything right.

Are they right, am I depressed?

Answer 174: If we were in my office together, I would offer that most likely you are feeling somewhat depressed. It's most important for me to impress that you "don't have to live like this..." Other helpful information: Have you experienced similar symptoms before? Anyone in your family been depressed before? Based on other physiological signs, like quality of sleep, appetite, energy/motivation, I would present you with some treatment options, one of which would be to consult with a medication management provider to assess your symptoms and provide additional information for you to consider.

Question 175: I'm in my late teens and live with my dad. The only time I go out is for my college classes. Sometimes when I see my friends I want to talk with them, but sometimes I won't want to talk to them for days or even weeks. Sometimes I feel i'm not worth knowing or i'm never going to do anything right.

Are they right, am I depressed?

Answer 175: I would not focus on what other people say. Do you feel what you have described impacts your day to day functioning? Try to evaluate how is your self esteem, motivation and self confidence. How about negative thoughts or hopelessness? Any concerns about your grades sliding down? If you answered yes to any questions, may be its time to see a counsellor.

Question 176: I'm in my late teens and live with my dad. The only time I go out is for my college classes. Sometimes when I see my friends I want to talk with them, but sometimes I won't want to talk to them for days or even weeks. Sometimes I feel i'm not worth knowing or i'm never going to do anything right.

Are they right, am I depressed?

Answer 176: Although some people managing depression feel sad or "down", it is a possible to have depression without an obvious sad mood. Many people indicate that they feel numb or flat. People managing depression often have low motivation. They may stay in bed for long periods of time and only get up for absolutely necessary activities. People with depression may also feel inappropriate guilt or shame. If you have been experiencing the symptoms you described for more than two weeks, I recommend that you see a counselor to get a more in-depth evaluation. The symptoms you are experiencing are typical of depression, and with a bit of support, you could regain energy and improved self-esteem. The stigma surrounding mental health can make a diagnosis or a label of depression seem scary. The important thing to remember is that mental health disorders are as important as and as treatable physical health disorders. Hang in there. Healing is possible!

Question 177: I'm in my late teens and live with my dad. The only time I go out is for my college classes. Sometimes when I see my friends I want to talk with them, but sometimes I won't want to talk to them for days or even weeks. Sometimes I feel i'm not worth knowing or i'm never going to do anything right.

Are they right, am I depressed?

Answer 177: Hello. Being a teenager in our society today can cause depression quite easily. We look at the world in which we live, and the doubts we have about being able to make a contribution, or to have value and worth with the people around us, and we begin to internalize those messages of self-worth. If that alone were not enough, you are trying to figure out where you want to go in life, and who you are supposed to be in the world. Teens are faced with pressures of being judged by your peers for how you present yourself; following current fashions; possessing the trendy things; and hanging out with the "in crowd." Here's a "secret" that might help with most of those issues: Not much of those problems I've just described will really matter as they might seem to right now, in the real world. If you are feeling depression because you feel you lack some of those things that are seen as important by others (like your peers), I can assure you that being someone who is kind; compassionate; understanding of another person's suffering; and the effort you make to be the best person you can become in the world, will far outweigh anything you experienced in your teen years. When we are young, we judge everything based on what our peers have, what they say, the way they dress, who's popular, who's not popular, and for the most of it, all of that is external. So the question becomes, are you trying to fix the feelings on the inside (the internal stuff), with the trappings of all the stuff on the outside (the external)? That is to say, do you feel that if you had what your friends have, you would be happy and less depressed? Depression is usually a symptom of something much bigger, it is not typically a problem by itself (just as a person who experiences a high temperature may likely have a cold). So fixing the symptom requires looking at the possible causes. In your post, you mentioned that you live with your dad. Are your parents divorced or separated, or has your mom passed away? Either of these circumstances could certainly cause depression. Finding out when you started feeling depressed, might be able to pinpoint the trigger that caused it, which requires looking at when you last felt really happy. It is also important to keep in mind, that as a teenager, your emotions are often being experienced very randomly, and sometimes without cause. It is part of your emotional development, but as you grow older

can learn how to manage those emotions better and practice doing things that help you feel better (without causing harm to yourself). Have you tried talking to your dad about your feelings, or maybe another relative if you feel safer doing so? Do you have a friend who is your best friend...someone who is there for you no matter what? If not, there is a service you can use that is a national number for teens to talk with teen peer counselors. They are teens like yourself, but they have some insights that might be helpful. Its called Teen Line (<https://teenlineonline.org/>). It helped me when I was in my teens, and has helped lots of other teens as well. You might find a place to get some referrals to other local services in your area. If you want are in Washington state and would like to connect with me directly, you call link to me via my profile page. Or perhaps finding a counselor in your local area might be useful. Most towns and cities have some form of low cost counseling. You might also check with your school for assistance. Don't be afraid of not always knowing how you are supposed to feel. Adults don't always have a handle on it either. Being a teenager carries a lot stress, fear, and uncertainty. But you are not alone, and there is help if you reach out for it. I wish for you the very best, and bright future.

Question 178: I'm in my late teens and live with my dad. The only time I go out is for my college classes. Sometimes when I see my friends I want to talk with them, but sometimes I won't want to talk to them for days or even weeks. Sometimes I feel i'm not worth knowing or i'm never going to do anything right.

Are they right, am I depressed?

Answer 178: The answer to the question of whether or not you're depressed, is less meaningful than what you are doing to feel strong and secure in your life. Otherwise, people shortcut themselves to go deeper in understanding who they are and what they'd like to do with their lives, and accept "depression" as though it is their new name. What you write sounds like classic depression. What to do about this feeling is to get closer to yourself in an accepting way. Assume that what you do in daily living is somehow necessary. Unless you are doing immoral or illegal actions to other people, to accept your own wishes as truth will open you to appreciate why you do what you do. Make believe you're interesting and find out more about who you are, if you have trouble to start with thinking of yourself as worth understanding. The more you appreciate who you are and your unique strengths, vulnerabilities and fears, the more these will dissolve by what seems on their own. In fact they will disappear bc you are believing in yourself and your ways. Good luck!

Question 179: I'm in my late teens and live with my dad. The only time I go out is for my college classes. Sometimes when I see my friends I want to talk with them, but sometimes I won't want to talk to them for days or even weeks. Sometimes I feel i'm not worth knowing or i'm never going to do anything right.

Are they right, am I depressed?

Answer 179: I'm always wary of assigning a term to a feeling, as often that term becomes more important than the feeling itself. From the very little that you have written, it is clear that you are going through something that has made you extremely low, affected your self-esteem and motivation, limits your enjoyment of formerly pleasurable activities and affects your feelings of self-worth. All of these are aspects of being depressed, though you can be depressed and still not have "depression". Counseling is definitely a place where you can go and sort out why you have had such a sudden a drastic change to your mood. Sometimes our mood can be effected by changes in our routine, losses or significant disappointments. Talking with someone will not only help you to better understand why you are feeling this way, but they will also help you to ground yourself and learn strategies and tools to help you to manage your mood and strategize for the future. I do hope that you will

reach out. Feeling alone can be harmful over long periods of time, as it can stop us from seeking out the support we need.

Question 180: She has trouble falling and staying asleep and she's always either extremely hungry or not hungry at all. She also gets angry and feels like crying really easily for no reason. She says she is always "kind of down."

Is this depression? What can I do to help her?

Answer 180: Sounds like signs of someone who is depressed. Since the person in question is your friend, offer your friendship to listen to any situations or feelings she has about herself and the way her life is going. Depressed people are often lonely people and feel as though no one around them cares or notices them. Your willingness to be available to her may lift her spirits. Feeling loved goes a long way to dissolving depressed feelings. Also, if in the beginning when you offer to talk, there is a high chance she'll be defensive and turn down your offer. Try again on another day and then another day. When people feel depressed they usually shut down. So you may need a few or several tries before your friend accepts your offer to show her you care about how she is doing. Also, watch for signs within yourself that your friends' depression is not sinking your emotions. Depressed people are draining to be around because they often see and talk about only the negatives and drawbacks of situations.

Question 181: I'm a teenager and I go through periods of moodiness. I have extreme feelings (but I bury them), and then I feel nothing - just empty and emotionless.

I have trust issues, low self esteem, an extreme fear of abandonment, and I constantly reevaluate my relationships. I also don't know who I am as a person. I'm not happy overall, but I'm not suicidal. Can I just feel happy?

Answer 181: Sometimes the way to feel happy is to address all the questions you just described. Teenage years are the first time any of us starts to feel and recognize our uniqueness. The fact that you recognize your great range of feelings, as uncomfortable as they may sometimes be, is healthy. Also healthy is that you are asking for opinions of therapists who would be familiar with when a range of feelings shows an out of the ordinary problem. One path to take is to reflect on the topics you wrote here and especially to ask yourself your reasons for how the problem started and what it would take for it to resolve. Do you have trust issues because someone broke your trust? You're entitled to a repair of your trust by the other person. Even if the person never offers this to you, to know you deserve to be restored to whole, may help you feel more secure. The same is true with the other topics, abandonment and relationships generally. The more you continue to value your unique understanding, expectations, and standards, the more likely you'll create relationships which do not have these qualities, and you will restore your sense of hope that other people may treat you in a fair and kind way.

Question 182: I had a very troubled up bringing and I'm currently dealing with a lot right now. I know some people may not think so, but to me it's a lot. I feel overwhelmed. Could this be depression?

I used to be in therapy as a child. All throughout elementary, middle, and high school I had counseling 2-3 times a week. I haven't been in counseling lately though.

Answer 182: What matters most is how you feel and what you're doing, with whom you're interacting, whether you feel you've got enough interaction to be happy. Whether or not a clinician would decide to identify you as "depressed" matters much less than how you actually are feeling, if you have some ideas as to what might improve your sense of being, and how to go about reaching your goals. If therapy during your childhood made you feel better and you feel you may be depressed, then trying therapy at this point in your life,

makes sense. The worst that can happen is you find you feel better than you first understood. The best that can happen is you find a caring therapist who helps you find faith in yourself again.

Question 183: I think adult life is making him depressed and we often sleep in on weekends until 1 or 2 pm. We just eat, smoke weed, watch movies, and he'll go on his phone all day. He doesn't seem motivated to do much and he's often angry.

I have no clue how to help him take his mind off the negative, or to distract him into a different light. How do I help him?

Answer 183: How do you help yourself to believe you require more than what he offers to you? What do you get from this relationship which feels satisfying? To answer this question may in the longterm be the best way to help your bf.

Question 184: My mother is combative with me when I say I don't want to talk with her about my depression. She hasn't been supportive of me in the past and she isn't someone that I feel comfortable opening up to. She constantly tries to instigate conversations where she asks me questions that I don't want to or can't answer. I tell her I don't want to talk and she starts arguments with me. How can I get her to understand?

Answer 184: Your situation sounds extremely frustrating. You're doing the right move to state you don't want to discuss your depression with her. I guess you could ask if she would like to know your reason to not speak w her about your depression. If you feel she can handle a reasonable conversation, and you would like to tell her your true reason, then schedule this or bring up the topic at a neutral time, not in the middle of an argument. Having an unsupportive mom is difficult enough to accept. You may feel greater success and peace of mind to meditate on accepting her lack of understanding than to engage in arguing when she starts this.

Question 185: I just feel sad all the time and I don't like anyone in my family. I feel like they're trying to control me and won't let me grow.

Answer 185: Hello, While one can be sad from time to time, feeling sad "all the time" could be a sign of depression. If you feel sad on most days, it is worthwhile speaking to a psychologist to determine whether you suffer clinical depression. Feeling sadness is a normal response to loss, whether you lose a family, friend, job, or something you deem important in your life. However, feeling sadness all the time is a signal that you are not happy about something in your life. If it is related to your family and often relationship with family members could affect our self-esteem and self-worth, then perhaps it is worthwhile exploring what you find unhappy about your relationship with your family. Is it that you do not feel heard, supported or loved? Is it that you feel disrespected, disregarded or feel unimportant? These are just a few examples of common issues that people report that contribute to their depression. To help you to uncover your reasons for your sadness or depression and to cope with them in a healthier and more constructive way, it may be helpful to contact a therapist who could support you with this process. You do not have to deal with it alone. Dr. Virginia Chow, Montreal Psychologist. For more information about depression, please consult my website at www.PsychologyResource.ca

Question 186: I just feel sad all the time and I don't like anyone in my family. I feel like they're trying to control me and won't let me grow.

Answer 186: Understandably the idea of someone who tries to control you, is good reason to feel sad. Your feelings sound like they are very strong and meaningful in your life. Keep in mind that your feelings about others has more to do with one's own self-view than with what the other person is actually doing. Unless the people in your family are actually interrupting and impeding your life in practical ways or by intimidation or other verbal ways to inhibit you,

then there is a great chance your feelings of being controlled by other family members has more to do with your fears to be who you are than with any family members' actions.

Question 187: I can't seem to feel any emotion except anxiety, not even for myself.

Answer 187: Thank you for posting. I'm interested to hear some more information; such as, if you live by yourself or family, if you go to school/employed/unemployed, and what kind of things do you like to do with friends or by yourself. Often times, when we are experiencing a strong emotion that we interpret as negative, we put most of our focus on that negative emotion and struggle to see that we do not always feel that specific emotion. There are typically points in the day (even if it is for only in 1 minute intervals) when we do not feel that negative emotion. When we overgeneralize, we use words like "always" or "never" and when we use those words and it may not be totally true, we feel the negative emotion based on an inaccuracy which is not fair to you. Ask yourself some of these questions: Am I being realistic when I'm overgeneralizing things? Have I ever noticed a short period of time that I wasn't feeling anxious? What do I notice when I am feeling anxious? What am I thinking about? When was the last time I felt empathy? What was different when I was able to feel empathy? Hopefully this helps get you started.

Question 188: I can't seem to feel any emotion except anxiety, not even for myself.

Answer 188: Empathy usually falls on a spectrum, meaning that some people show more than others. Empathy is the ability to look at the world through someone else's eyes or "walk a mile in their shoes." There could be some people in your life for whom empathy is easier to feel and those for whom you have no idea what they are experiencing. Empathy is not usually categorized as an emotion, but as something related to emotions. For example, you could have empathy about someone's anxiety. I'm not sure whether you are also referring to the idea that you don't have sympathy for yourself or others. That's a different concept, but also involves different degrees. When you say you don't have emotion except anxiety, I wonder if you are saying that you have anxiety all the time and it may be covering up other emotions? If you are experiencing a lot of anxiety, try to look at what it connects to and find something that changes your focus for a few minutes. This could be any number of activities, such as watching TV, cooking, reading a book, or many other options. If you are feeling as if you are just going through the motions and not having a lot of emotions about anything, if it's just been a few days, it may just be related to a current stress that will lessen in a few days. If it has been quite a while, consider tracking your mood and looking at when you do notice changes in your emotions. There may be some variations that you are not aware of. If you continue to feel anxious and as if you don't have as many emotions as you would like, consider talking with your primary care physician or a local therapist.

Question 189: I can't seem to feel any emotion except anxiety, not even for myself.

Answer 189: Empathy is the ability

to tap into our own experience to help us connect with others in order to be aware of how they are experiencing life.

It is a skill that we learn with practice and refine as we become mature.

If you are feeling anxious, maybe you are able to understand better others who are going through anxiety. But I wonder

if instead of feeling empathy, you may just want to find ways to reduce your anxiety. A good idea is to be very aware

of your anxiety triggers, and once you identify them explore other ways you

could react. ¿Sera normal que no sienta empatía? Parece que no puedo experimentar ninguna otra emoción que

no sea ansiedad, ni si quiera por mí misma. Empatía es la habilidad de usar tus propias

experiencias para conectarte con otros y estar consciente de la manera que ellos experimentan la vida. Es una destreza interpersonal que aprendemos y refinamos con la práctica y según maduramos como personas. Si te estás sintiendo ansioso, tal vez puedas comprender mejor como otra persona experimenta momentos de ansiedad. Pero me pregunto si en lugar de estar buscando sentir empatía, realmente quisieras reducir tus niveles de ansiedad. Una buena manera es estar consciente que activa la ansiedad, y ya que lo identifiques, explora que otras reacciones pudieras tener.

Question 190: I know I need to deal with my depression. But I don't know how and I don't want to tell anyone. How can I deal with depression without telling anyone?

Answer 190: Love yourself more and treat yourself kindly, with empathy and compassion. Usually when people feel depressed they also feel lonely and isolated. Since at this time you wouldn't want to tell anyone about the way you feel, which includes the possibility that a few of the ones whom you tell would offer you emotional support, give this to yourself. Also consider to make a goal of eventually telling someone whom you are reasonably sure would understand and empathize, about your depression. This will help alleviate the sense of shame, unworthiness and pervasive guilt which often comes along with depression. Sending you good luck!

Question 191: I know I need to deal with my depression. But I don't know how and I don't want to tell anyone. How can I deal with depression without telling anyone?

Answer 191: It can be really tough to tell someone - anyone - that you're feeling depressed. But finding that supportive person that you can share with is a big part of the battle with depression. Depression thrives on being secret, it seems to grow the more we isolate ourselves and hide it away so I'm with Laura Cassidy, when she suggests finding that professional support person so you can start fighting back against your depression. If that feels like too big a step right now, maybe check out a book or two... I'm a big fan of a book called 'Feeling Good' by Dr. David Burns if you want some practical thoughts on tackling depression and on 'Radical Acceptance' by Tara Brach if you prefer something a little more spiritual.

Question 192: I know I need to deal with my depression. But I don't know how and I don't want to tell anyone. How can I deal with depression without telling anyone?

Answer 192: Hello, It is completely understandable that you would not want people to know about your depression. I would first like commend you for realizing that you need to help with your depression by reaching out here. That is a great start, and you've taken the very first courageous step. Depression can feel debilitating and overwhelming. Depression is also a very personal thing and no one has know but you and the therapist. The best way to begin learning and dealing is to pick up the phone and call a therapist or email a therapist and schedule a session. The great news is that with professional help you can feel better and you will learn how deal with and manage the depression. There are many ways to help with depression that a therapist can teach you and help guide. You do not have to do this alone. Asking for help and going to therapy is a strength! This can be done in a private and confidential setting. Depression should be treated by a therapist, in a safe, confidential office setting. The therapist can then discuss your depression with you in more detail to figure out the underlying cause, how long you've been feeling this way and identify what brings on these feelings. There is hope and depression can be treated with great success, you CAN feel good again. Depression can be managed appropriately by seeing a licensed therapist.

Often times therapy will offer relief because you would have someone there simply to listen to you, validate your feelings and listen to your story. The therapist will be able to offer professional insight and perspective on the situation and help you think outside the box. The therapist can do many things with you, provide insight and offer many ideas to help you learn new coping skills and ideas of things you enjoy, encouraging you to re engage in hobbies you once enjoyed or even discover new things you may enjoy. There are creative ways to learn to cope too! Your therapist will also be there to support you, without judgement, at your pace, through the entire process. But the first step is finding a therapist and beginning to identify the cause your depression. Healing is possible and getting your happiness back is also possible. Feel free to contact me for additional help or information. Laura Cassity, LMSW, LMHC

Question 193: I'm dealing with an illness that will never go away and I feel like my life will never change for the better. I feel alone and that I have no one. How can I overcome this pain and learn to be happy alone?

Answer 193: Is it possible that even though your illness is chronic, that it goes through phases in which you are more comfortable and that it requires less focus from you than at other times? I think the idea of having a lifelong illness is frustrating and can be depressing to think about. Thoughts are not necessarily the truth of what will actually happen though. Illness makes negative situations look worse so be sure you are concentrating on specific areas of your life and not just assuming they will work out badly because you are ill. One way to be happy alone is to love and appreciate, nurture and be kind to yourself. This frame of mind may generate new answers to find ways of being among other people too.

Question 194: I'm dealing with an illness that will never go away and I feel like my life will never change for the better. I feel alone and that I have no one. How can I overcome this pain and learn to be happy alone?

Answer 194: I'm so sorry you're feeling like things will never get better. Try to remember that whatever illness you are dealing with, you are not the only person to have dealt with it and you are not alone! Out there, just waiting for you, is a group of people that will totally understand what you're going through and will be able to share how they coped. Try searching for a support group for your illness - google and www.psychologytoday.com are both good places to start for those groups.

Question 195: How do I make myself happy without the people who made me happy? Now that they're gone, I feel sad. It's been two months now but I seem to be unable to stay okay and independent.

Answer 195: Hello. So, someone made you happy but is no longer around? I am sure that feels devastating. As a counselor I usually have to ponder this kind of thought because it lends itself to suggesting that happiness comes from the external, rather than the internal side of a person's life. Happiness is formed within ourselves. All the external trappings of happiness are usually quite fleeting, and temporary. Even relationships do not last forever. If we get to a place where we are reliant and dependent on those around us to create happiness in our lives, then we lose the opportunities for us to do it ourselves. We are entirely capable of finding ways to be happy. Sometimes this entails working out issues that are holding us back from reaching a place of peace, or resolution to a specific problem. What I would offer to you, is to find ways in which you can develop happiness for yourself. What do you like about your life as it is right now? What can you do to create change in your life to increase your happiness? These kinds of questions can be valuable to you as you seek out ways to make happiness an internal rather than an external event. Mourning the loss of a social connection (in whatever way that occurred), is part of the grieving process, but it is not

permanent. It is a path to healing and moving forward. From this, you can seek out new sources of happiness. I encourage you to remember that happiness is independent of the external experience you have in the world. Happiness is an expression of the internal feelings, so that will be the source or the font of positive emotion from which you really draw. If you are lacking in happiness, then it becomes important to examine why that is, and what you can do about it to promote self-care. Seeking out a professional counselor can also be a good option as you move through the grief/loss process and examine the reasons happiness is not in greater supply. I wish you happiness for every day of your life. Best wishes.

Question 196: How do I make myself happy without the people who made me happy? Now that they're gone, I feel sad. It's been two months now but I seem to be unable to stay okay and independent.

Answer 196: It sounds like you have been feeling pretty down, since the loss of a relationship, and you're wondering how to be happy by yourself. Intimacy is a very natural human desire and at the same time learning to enjoy ourselves, even when we are alone, can strengthen our ability to lead a satisfying life in and out of relationship. Working with a therapist, you may be able to gain insight into how you show up in your relationships with yourself and others and discover more fulfilling ways to do so.

Question 197: I feel like I am internally screaming all the time. Externally, I am calm, but I have this intense, unidentifiable emotion constantly. I don't feel sad. I don't cry a lot. I feel rather emotionally distant other than the internal screaming. It kind of feels like I'm a caged animal.

Answer 197: It is hard to make a definite diagnosis however I would say that it could be and or a combination of depression, stress, PTSD, etc. More background information would have to be needed. One thing I would say is that you really need to seek guidance from a professional to work through these symptoms. If what you described as a caged animal is released, all the crying, sadness, and controllable emotions will come out. That would not be good when they do. Get help before they do..

Question 198: I feel like I am internally screaming all the time. Externally, I am calm, but I have this intense, unidentifiable emotion constantly. I don't feel sad. I don't cry a lot. I feel rather emotionally distant other than the internal screaming. It kind of feels like I'm a caged animal.

Answer 198: As far as the formal diagnosis of depression goes, it would be hard to determine without more information. It sounds like you are noticing that there is a significant difference between how you are feeling on the inside and how you express yourself outwardly. Part of you is quite distressed and yet it remains invisible to the outside world, almost as if it is trapped inside of your body. Many people who are depressed experience such things as intrusive thoughts, emotional numbness, difficulty expressing themselves, and bodily tension (caged animal?). In working with a competent therapist, you may be able to get more insight into what you are going through, the nature of the disconnect between you inner feelings and outer expression, and eventually gain relief from the distress as well as a greater sense of connection with yourself and personal freedom.

Question 199: I feel like I am internally screaming all the time. Externally, I am calm, but I have this intense, unidentifiable emotion constantly. I don't feel sad. I don't cry a lot. I feel rather emotionally distant other than the internal screaming. It kind of feels like I'm a caged animal.

Answer 199: It sounds like you are trying to find a label to help you to understand why you are feeling the way you are feeling. Sometimes there are no labels for how we feel. Sometimes there is no name for the emotions that we are experiencing. Regardless, you do

not have to continue to feel this way, no matter what you call it. If you are seeking to experience an internal calmness such as your external calmness, you may want to try some mindfulness practices or meditation. However, being able to get at the root cause of what you are feeling may be what you need to help you release this feeling for the long term. I recommend seeking support for this to allow this internal screaming to get some air and begin to breathe.

Question 200: I've never been able to talk with my parents. My parents are in their sixties while I am a teenager. I love both of them but not their personalities. I feel that they do not take me seriously whenever I talk about a serious event in my life. If my dad doesn't believe me, then my mom goes along with my dad and acts like she doesn't believe me either. I'm a pansexual, but I can't trust my own parents.

I've fought depression and won; however, stress and anxiety are killing me. I feel that my friends don't listen to me. I know they have their own problems, which I do my best to help with. But they don't always try to help me with mine, when I really need them. I feel as if my childhood has been taken from me. I feel as if I have no one whom I can trust.

Answer 200: First of all, I am sorry that you have been missing out on your childhood. It may help you to know that many of us feel that we have missed out on our childhoods, as well, and that despite such deprivations, for many of us, our adult lives have been extraordinarily fulfilling due to our opening up to trusted adults. I recommend that you find a trustworthy adult to talk to. This may be a teacher, a coach, a school counselor, a minister, a family member, or a friend's family member. If none of these are available, try out a professional counselor, social worker, psychiatric nurse practitioner, psychologist, or a psychiatrist. It is best to get a referral for such a professional from a peer who has had a positive and safe experience with a particular provider.

Question 201: I've never been able to talk with my parents. My parents are in their sixties while I am a teenager. I love both of them but not their personalities. I feel that they do not take me seriously whenever I talk about a serious event in my life. If my dad doesn't believe me, then my mom goes along with my dad and acts like she doesn't believe me either. I'm a pansexual, but I can't trust my own parents.

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Answer 201: Life sounds extremely frustrating for you right now. As long as you've reached your conclusion that your parents do not take you seriously when you would like to speak with them on a serious topic, and that you feel unable to trust either of them, then work with your own information. Many people don't know how to listen and aren't trustworthy. As painful and aggravating as having parents who fit this description, you're better off to honor what you realize than to continue fighting what is not in your hands to change. Since you write about having a similar problem with friends, then maybe this comes about because you pick friends who are similarly unsatisfying to be with as are your parents. The first step out of this dilemma would be to accept how crummy you feel about the way your parents are toward you. If you're able to live with the sadness and resentment of having parents who don't want to know how to understand you, then you'll start to develop a new and more satisfying definition of what you expect from the behaviors of your friends. Trust yourself that what you feel and see is accurate, then it becomes easier to trust and welcome new people who are formatted differently than either your parents or your friends who sound very similar to your parents' ways.

Question 202: I've never been able to talk with my parents. My parents are in their sixties while I am a teenager. I love both of them but not their personalities. I feel that they do not take me seriously whenever I talk about a serious event in my life. If my dad doesn't believe me, then my mom goes along with my dad and acts like she doesn't believe me either. I'm a pansexual, but I can't trust my own parents.

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Answer 202: I'm sorry you feel so alone and isolated, those feelings in and of themselves can lead to depression, stress and anxiety. So job one is finding someone you can talk to. A good friend or an open parent can be as helpful as a professional counselor, but if you don't have those, then by all means call your local Mental Health Association, suicide prevention, or go see your school counseling department. There are many of us now who do on-line, FaceTime, phone counseling so that is an option to consider in your situation. On the other hand, If you want to script a conversation with your parents (I'm a great believer in scripting) not that you're going to read it to them, but if you write down exactly what you want to say, read it over a few times before you're ready to have the conversation. Why? You'll be much more likely to do it if you're prepared, and you'll have a better chance of saying everything you want to say in a calm but forceful way. The same with your friends--you are probably a great listener and therefore attract people who want to talk--so you need to let these friends know you need something in return. If you practice asking for equal talk time, then perhaps these friends will respond and surprise you, or if you make those demands you'll start attracting people who are looking for equality in friendships. Now back to that script--first decide do you want to talk to both parents at once, or one at a time. Then begin to write down the points you want to make such as: I love you, and I know you love me but I don't feel as though I can trust your love to be unconditional enough to tell you who I really am, and how I really feel. Find your own words to describe your own feelings. If I can help, get in touch. You are right to reach out starting here, there are no prizes for suffering in silence and, as you already know, little joy in going it alone.

Question 203: I've never been able to talk with my parents. My parents are in their sixties while I am a teenager. I love both of them but not their personalities. I feel that they do not take me seriously whenever I talk about a serious event in my life. If my dad doesn't believe me, then my mom goes along with my dad and acts like she doesn't believe me either. I'm a pansexual, but I can't trust my own parents.

I've fought depression and won; however, stress and anxiety are killing me. I feel that my friends don't listen to me. I know they have their own problems, which I do my best to help with. But they don't always try to help me with mine, when I really need them. I feel as if my childhood has been taken from me. I feel as if I have no one whom I can trust.

Answer 203: One of the most difficult challenges we face is not being heard! It is incredibly frustrating and hurtful when others, especially parents, do not listen. While your parents surely love you and want to understand you, it may be difficult for them to fully understand your feelings and experiences. They are quite a bit older and have likely not dealt with some of the struggles that you face. I would suggest communicating your feelings to them about not being heard. Talk to them during a non-emotional moment when the discussion is not already heated. In other words, do not wait until an argument ensues to have an open discussion with them about how you are feeling. Prepare them by asking them what time is good for them to talk. Let them know you have something important to get off your chest. Try

and avoid using exaggerated or extreme language such as "you NEVER listen," "you ALWAYS say..." and stray away from placing blame. Instead of beginning your statements with "you" try using "I" by letting them know how their behavior affects you. Finally, let them know that they are important to you and that having their trust and support would mean a lot to you. Perhaps giving them suggestions as to what you wish for and would like to see change would help them to better understand. I would also suggest that you seek guidance from a therapist, teacher, or school counselor if possible. Most schools have counseling resources on sight in which a trained professional is available to talk with students looking for help. Best of luck to you.

Question 204: I've never been able to talk with my parents. My parents are in their sixties while I am a teenager. I love both of them but not their personalities. I feel that they do not take me seriously whenever I talk about a serious event in my life. If my dad doesn't believe me, then my mom goes along with my dad and acts like she doesn't believe me either. I'm a pansexual, but I can't trust my own parents.

I've fought depression and won; however, stress and anxiety are killing me. I feel that my friends don't listen to me. I know they have their own problems, which I do my best to help with. But they don't always try to help me with mine, when I really need them. I feel as if my childhood has been taken from me. I feel as if I have no one whom I can trust.

Answer 204: First, thank you for sharing such deep personal information. It can be difficult to share such intimate information. To begin, it sounds like your primary concern is your desire to speak to someone who takes your mental health seriously. You've tried talking to your parents and your friends and neither have made that connection in the area you need. I'm sorry to hear that. It's unfortunate. However, I think a couple of things can be done to try to address this. If you want support:

- 1) Parents- Sit down with one of them and tell them with all seriousness that you need to talk about something that is affecting you deeply. Perhaps speaking to both can be too much for one room. If you try to speak to mom or dad by themselves, it may create that intimate atmosphere needed to understand where you are coming from.
- 2) Friends: Like parents it can be difficult to speak to your friends about challenges with your mental health. When you're feeling down and anxious, friends can be great help or not there at all. With friends, it may be one of those things where you also need to create an intimate environment with one friend to speak to about your sadness and anxiety. If anything, speak to the fact you're hurt and help them understand that if they can't understand the depression.

If you don't want support:

Coping Strategies: Identify coping skills and strategy that help you when you're feeling down. Ideas:

- A.) Journaling
- B.) Painting
- C.) Exercise
- D.) Music
- E.) Reading Affirmation
- F.) Listening To Motivation Videos

Question 205: I've never been able to talk with my parents. My parents are in their sixties while I am a teenager. I love both of them but not their personalities. I feel that they do not take me seriously whenever I talk about a serious event in my life. If my dad doesn't believe me, then my mom goes along with my dad and acts like she doesn't believe me either. I'm a pansexual, but I can't trust my own parents.

I've fought depression and won; however, stress and anxiety are killing me. I feel that my friends don't listen to me. I know they have their own problems, which I do my best to help with. But they don't always try to help me with mine, when I really need them. I feel as if my childhood has been taken from me. I feel as if I have no one whom I can trust.

Answer 205: Teenage years are rough for anyone, and this is a time for self-discovery and experimentation. Having older parents can certainly pose challenges. Most kids feel like their parents don't understand them, but yours are older than the average parents of teenagers. They're from a completely different generation than you are. It sounds like they love you, but

may not understand you. The problem here is the generation/age gap, and there's not a whole lot you can do about that. What you can do is accept the situation and perhaps look at it a little differently. It seems like you're looking for affirmation from them, looking for their approval and understanding. It's never a good idea to look to others to define who you are or to get a self-esteem boost. Who you are and how you feel about yourself needs to come from inside, not from outside. One way you can have a better relationship with your parents is to stop looking at all the things you aren't getting from them that you want, and rather look at all the things you are getting from them. Yes, this is a glass half full or half empty point of view, but it works. The negative will overshadow the positive if you let it. Start looking for the good things in your relationship with your parents and your feelings towards them will become more positive. I'm not sure how your friends/peers made you feel like your childhood has been taken from you. That's a curious statement, and requires a deeper conversation to understand where that came from. However, I do understand feeling different and out of place, especially in high school. Find the strength within yourself rather than looking to others in your life to make you feel better or feel like a complete person. It helps to have friends and loved ones, but you can never rely on them to fulfill all of your needs. Set some goals for your future, work towards them. Focus on being the best YOU that you can be, and the right people will enter your life at the right time.

Question 206: I've never been able to talk with my parents. My parents are in their sixties while I am a teenager. I love both of them but not their personalities. I feel that they do not take me seriously whenever I talk about a serious event in my life. If my dad doesn't believe me, then my mom goes along with my dad and acts like she doesn't believe me either. I'm a pansexual, but I can't trust my own parents.

I've fought depression and won; however, stress and anxiety are killing me. I feel that my friends don't listen to me. I know they have their own problems, which I do my best to help with. But they don't always try to help me with mine, when I really need them. I feel as if my childhood has been taken from me. I feel as if I have no one whom I can trust.

Answer 206: Hi there. Being 15 years old can be a very difficult time in your teenage life. I remember when I was 15 and how I often felt my parents weren't listening to me. It's even more difficult when you feel that you do not have a friend that you can confide in. Having depression in the past and being able to get through it shows me that you can get through anything! Depression alone is a very difficult problem to work through. In addition to the communication problem with your parents, it appears that you are also struggling with stress and anxiety. We all have stress and anxiety in our lives. If we didn't, none of us would be living. Anxiety & stress keep us on our toes! Often, I have to remind myself of this as well. However, it is how we manage stress and anxiety, so it will not overcome our lives. Are you familiar with relaxation techniques, such as: deep breathing exercises, meditation or yoga? Relaxation Techniques can help you tremendously in reducing your stress and anxiety. Deep breathing exercises are helpful when you are on the go, such as school, shopping, out with friends or whatever extracurricular activities you engage in. Most people do not take full advantage of their lung capacity. I know, that sounds silly. But, it's true. You would be surprised how much air your lungs can hold. Imagine being in the Doctor's office and taking deep breaths. This is what you want to do when you are feeling overwhelmed and/or stressed. Take a moment to take in at least 10 deep breaths and let them out slowly. You will be surprised how well you feel afterwards. Meditation and Yoga are also healthy forms to working through stress and anxiety. You will need a quiet place for your meditation. You want to be "in the moment" and take in the peace and serenity. All it takes is a quiet place, closing your eyes and thinking of your "happy place." Some people use meditation music as well. If

you have access to this type of music and or the internet for more ways to practice meditation, please go for it! Yoga on the other hand will take a little more work and practice. I would not suggest you learning this on your own, if you have never attempted yoga before. Find an experienced Yoga instructor to teach you the ropes and/or ask your school counselor about the possibility of getting someone to come to the school to teach the students. Lastly, in regards to your parents it is very important to be able to have a relationship where you feel comfortable communicating. I would recommend writing a letter to them, if you are unable to express how you feel in person. A letter is more intimate and requires a little more effort on their end. If they are open on working on this relationship, maybe suggest family counseling to fully work on this issue. I hope this was helpful for you and I wish you the best!

Question 207: I don't know how else to explain it. All I can say is that I feel empty, I feel nothing. How do I stop feeling this way?

Answer 207: A feeling of emptiness can be from a lack of awareness and acknowledgment for the things, the people, the places that you have in your life. The use of affirmation and gratitudes helps to remind ourselves of all of the aspects of our lives.

Question 208: I don't know how else to explain it. All I can say is that I feel empty, I feel nothing. How do I stop feeling this way?

Answer 208: Your question is very broad because feeling empty can develop for many different reasons. You're certainly not alone in feeling this way! Try to follow the logic of your feelings by asking yourself questions about the empty feeling. Doing this may open up a discovery about the reason for the emptiness feeling. When do you feel empty, are there certain situations it happens more often than another, what helps the feeling go away, what or who is helpful in relieving the empty feeling. Sometimes people need a little help to get started in understanding how to recognize their feelings. Consider a therapist, any disciplined practice which encourages self-knowledge, such as some yoga practices, and a creative discipline like photography or music. As long as you concentrate on increasing your self-understanding, eventually you'll find the answer to your question!

Question 209: People who are parental figures in my life have, in the past, hurt me, and some continue to do so. It makes me feel like I'm not good enough for my husband or the life he provides me. I have had jobs, but I am going through a lot of my past garbage and trying to figure out when it all went wrong. Any time I bring these things up, I am expected to be over the issue. These are people that you can't just cut out, but I have never received apologies for so much of my pain. I don't know what to do any more. I don't know who I am anymore.

Answer 209: It sounds like you have been thinking about how past hurts have influenced you, and when you try to talk about these hurts with people in your life, you are feeling invalidated. It also sounds like current conflicts are continuing to leave you feeling hurt and devalued. In working with a therapist, you may be able to get some clarity about your past, who you are, and what kinds of boundaries you want in your relationships, so that you can lead a life that is more satisfying to you.

Question 210: People who are parental figures in my life have, in the past, hurt me, and some continue to do so. It makes me feel like I'm not good enough for my husband or the life he provides me. I have had jobs, but I am going through a lot of my past garbage and trying to figure out when it all went wrong. Any time I bring these things up, I am expected to be over the issue. These are people that you can't just cut out, but I have never received apologies for so much of my pain. I don't know what to do any more. I don't know who I am anymore.

Answer 210: Hello. Adults who come from abusive home histories (physical, emotional, or even psychological), may take a long time to heal from that abuse. We carry our past with us everywhere we go, and it is up to us to find resolutions to past hurts. This is often easier said than done, but it is possible. From the perspective of those with whom you have shared your concerns, it might be assumed that based on where you are in life and who you are now, that you have already worked through any issues from your younger years. Some of our deepest scars in life are indeed invisible and suppressed. We have to get to the place where we can take care of the inner child that is still hurting, by recognizing that those who hurt us - however they did, might have had their own challenges which prevented them from functioning and behaving in ways we might have deeply needed. Those who have directly hurt you, may not be capable of acknowledging and understanding how you were affected by their actions - even in the worst of cases. They themselves may be doing what they can, either out of shame or heartbreak for their own actions, to work on forgetting how they behaved toward you all those years before. How are they behaving toward you now? Can you find it in your heart to forgive those who have hurt you? Forgiveness is the gift we give ourselves, and isn't dependent on an apology from an offender. By forgiving (even in the absence of any apology), we are releasing the weight of the burden we are carrying that reflects the offense we feel was committed against us. Sometimes therapy can be helpful in this process. Talking with someone who can be non-judgmental and reflects an empathetic position toward you might be what you need right now. Seeking out a therapist to help you work through these negatives feelings and thoughts is much easier, than trying to go it alone. I would encourage you to reach out and find someone who resonates with you on that journey, so that you can begin a path toward healing. Warm regards, Shawn Berthel, M.S., LMHC

Question 211: I am going through a very hard time and I'm so depressed. My parents are getting a divorce and a lot of bad things are happening. I want to lull myself.

Answer 211: It sounds like a tough time and it's normal to feel down when your family is going through a divorce or other hardship. There's a difference between feelings like sadness, discouragement, grief, loneliness and depression, though. Sadness is sadness and sometimes we have to go through a grieving or other process, that is a normal reaction to events in our lives. Depression, on the other hand, is more about being stuck. Lulling yourself with self-care sounds like a healthy response and a way to give yourself support. So as to the uncomfortable but healthy part of your feelings, do the best you can to put names to it and share with a trusted other person. You will find comfort. The part of your situation that's depression -- feeling stuck, not able to get out of bad, concentrate, changes in sleeping and eating, loss of enjoyment in living, poor hygiene, feelings of hopelessness, that's different. First step, identify your own symptoms of depression. If you have any thoughts of hurting yourself, tell someone. If you're not sure, you can try 800-lifenet or other support line to get feedback. First aid for depression includes: daily care and feeding, good sleeping and eating, lots of exercise--even when you don't feel like it-- healthy socializing, and focusing on talking to yourself in a positive way. If you aren't able to move yourself out of your depression, work with a professional to make short-term goals and get some support. You may also talk to your doctor or psychiatrist about trying an anti-depressant to give you a little lift while you go through a rough patch. Best wishes, Karen

Question 212: I am going through a very hard time and I'm so depressed. My parents are getting a divorce and a lot of bad things are happening. I want to lull myself.

Answer 212: Consider yourself quite normal for feeling overwhelmed and depressed about your parents divorce. This is the most natural way to feel at this time. Depending on how old

you are, and whether you live under their roof, are dependent on their support, and are either part of the decision or not, of with whom and where you will live, start considering these points. How did you find out about the upcoming divorce? Are either of your parents reluctant to answer your questions or is it clear that neither of them want to talk about anything with you? Whatever your fears and questions about your own future, these are all real. It is necessary for you to know about your basic future. If you are living on your own and the main problem is your inner adjustment that your family structure is completely changing, then probably a good therapist would be a great help to you now, to clarify these tensions. Sending lots of good wishes for an easy resolution to your new path!

Question 213: My depression has been reoccurring for a long time. It all started when I was being bullied in high school. In ninth grade, my principal told me I needed to stay home for a couple days to protect myself while she spoke to my classmates. I needed professional help for my stress because I was having crying spells from the stress of going to school and confronting my classmates. After that, I was fine for a couple of years. I entered my first year of college in a really tough program with high demands of expected work. I believe my depression re-booted from there with the stress. I began to cut myself because a friend of mine at the time told me how she used to do the same and it used to feel good for her. Obviously, that wasn't the right choice. I regret ever doing that, seeing as even though I'm not self-harming anymore, I always look back at that time whenever I feel very stressed. I have a big problem with handling problems in life. Whenever a problem arises, I get stressed and I feel hopeless, as if it's not going to get better. I get way too stressed from my problems, which leads to overreacting a lot (especially when talking to others), which then leads to depression. I have a hard time coping with stress because I know that if I could handle it easily then I wouldn't be sad all the time, and I would say and do the right thing instead of overreacting to my loved ones.

Answer 213: I couldn't help but notice that you did not specify your age, so I am unable to set the total chronological order and length that you have suffered in this way, but I want to start by commending you on seeking out additional coping techniques on your own.

Unfortunately, it sounds like you were offered some that were more dangerous than helpful, but be proud that you were able to curb those before they caused too much harm. From what you have written, stress has always been a difficult thing for you to manage. Often, when I am working with those who offer the same concern, there is a degree of people pleasing that comes with that stress. When we are trying to make others happy, especially when we are unable to distinguish the proper "rules for success", it can make even the simplest of tasks overwhelming. Stress management is just that, management; of our own anxieties about the needs of others, about our skills and the ability to complete a task and having multiple requests at any given time. Each of these aspects requires a separate sets of "tools" to manage them accordingly. For example, assertiveness communication training could aid in communicating with your colleagues to manage their expectations of your deadlines and abilities, but it will not assist you with managing your own anxieties. Try to separate the different areas of the problem, in order to help yourself to find a solution and work on them in their own time. Perhaps keeping a journal will help you to better understand why you are so easily overwhelmed by stress and help you track some of your less-helpful responses to stress. For example, does a certain person's style of communication always make you feel undervalued and therefore push you to finish their requests first? Is there a certain time of the day where you start to fall off in productivity? Is that the time of the day where you also tend to pile up your requirements? Try to ask yourself some of these harder questions and see where they lead you.

Question 214: I've been depressed for quite a while. I've been trying to work through it, and my boyfriend has been my rock. He is honestly the only person I trust enough to talk to about anything, but he decided to break up with me because of my depression. I cannot afford to see a therapist or anything, so he saw no hope in staying with me. My insurance has a \$5000 deductible, so I'm screwed. I've had everything from suicidal thoughts to trying to quit my job. I have no one. My family doesn't care about me; they kicked me out when I turned 18 a few years ago. I had friends, but they have all moved on with their lives and have no time for me. My ex-boyfriend is trying to help but is making things worse because every time I see or hear him, I break down into tears. I found out that I will never be promoted now because of my depression.

Answer 214: It sounds like you have been struggling with this for quite some time, using many of the same coping techniques that feel tried and true to no avail. Often, we fall back on coping techniques that would be helpful in other problems (stress, social anxieties, etc.) for our depression, but the truth is that depression requires its own little tool kit. Depression is all-encompassing, and, based on what you've written, the symptoms are already affecting work and your personal life in myriad ways. The best route forward would be to seek out counselling, admittedly, but if your insurance deductible is too high, that can be very expensive. I would recommend contacting your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if offered by your employer. If not, you can look into community centres for counselling options, check if your doctor will give you a referral or your local religious organization. If, however, you are motivated to get your depression under control, there are some great workbooks out there that you can use on your own or with your therapist (as long as your therapist is trained in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, or CBT), such as "Mind Over Mood".

Question 215: After he got home from the hospital he was angry, then for a time wonderful. Now he is depressed and hopeless again.

Answer 215: Hello, and thank you for your question. This is a very serious time. I don't mean to frighten you, but you are right to be concerned. The time right after people leave the hospital after receiving psychiatric services is a time of high risk for suicide. It is very important, after hospitalization, to get follow-up care with a professional as soon as possible. If your husband has an established therapist, this is the time to call. It is also a good time to alert your support system of friends, family, clergy or others to let them know he is still struggling. This is good support for him AND you. It is important to think about means and opportunity to make another attempt. Means really do matter. So, if you have a firearm in the home, it is really important to remove it. You can't remove all things that a person may hurt themselves with, but some things are more lethal than others. Firearms are very lethal. I am not sure what means he used last time, but try to reduce the opportunity for him to access it again. This is where your support system can help out. People can take turns hanging out with him until you are sure the crisis is over. If you believe that an attempt is going to occur, talk to your husband about going back to the hospital. If he refuses, you will want to find out what your options are to have him go even if he doesn't want to. I know the thought of that really hurts, but it can save his life. Calling 9-1-1 is always a good option if you are not sure. Usually a suicide crisis, meaning they want to harm themselves right now, lasts a few minutes, hours or days. Sometimes when you get them through the crisis stage, they no longer want to commit suicide. But, as you are indicating, that feeling of wanting to commit suicide can come back again. So, it is always good to have a plan. If you want more information, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. They will always answer: 1-800-273-8255. They can help you create a specific safety plan. I do hope things work out alright. Be well. Robin J. Landwehr, DBH, LPCC, NCC

Question 216: After he got home from the hospital he was angry, then for a time wonderful. Now he is depressed and hopeless again.

Answer 216: This is actually more common than we often realize, and actually understandable, as he has gone through a trauma, an unresolved existential crisis. He was taken care of by others and now is again left alone with his own internal, and rather horrific inner struggle. In my work with CCT, or Contextual Conceptual Therapy, (see www.suicidetherapy.com) I have learned how trapped suicidal people are in their own isolation, also called a "mysterious isolation," a form of self protection which cuts them off from their Self, or spirit. And unless they address this message from their soul, accompany a guide on a journey to discover their own missing information, that is to recognize how their own uncomfortable emotional pain has resulted in a coping strategy which has effectively cut themselves off from their own beauty, their Self, and their ability to receive love from themselves and others. Their attempt to kill themselves is a cry from their soul or spirit that they cannot live the life they are living any longer. They take this literally and try to end their life, when in fact what their soul or spirit is saying is they need to begin to live the life they came here to live.

Question 217: After he got home from the hospital he was angry, then for a time wonderful. Now he is depressed and hopeless again.

Answer 217: I'm thankful to read your husband found care and that his suicide attempt wasn't successful. While he was hospitalized, and prior to his release, your husband would've been provided in writing a self-care action plan. This typically includes things like committing to a contract 'not to harm' and what to do if he felt overwhelmed by his anger, depression, and hopelessness (e.g. call 911, call therapist, go to nearest hospital emergency department). Additionally, his protocol would've provided instructions for his taking medication(s) as directed, having a follow-up appointment(s) with his psychiatrist/psychologist/clinical social worker, and participating in some form of small group support. If your husband's struggling as you describe, and you are feeling overwhelmed or frightened for his (your) safety, I'd encourage you to seek immediate assistance.

Question 218: After he got home from the hospital he was angry, then for a time wonderful. Now he is depressed and hopeless again.

Answer 218: This must be so difficult for both of you. Watching someone you love suffer so profoundly can bring up lots of difficult feelings. Without knowing what you are already doing, I have a few thoughts to share with you. First and foremost, know that you cannot fix this for him, and get support for yourself. As much as you are able, make space in your relationship for him to talk about what he is experiencing. He might not want to talk, and that is ok. If he wants to talk, try to listen without judgement and without trying to talk him out of his feelings. Focus on validating his feelings and just sitting with him in his pain. Let him know how you feel...that you love him, that you care, that you are concerned, that this is scary for you too, that you are here. I hope that this is helpful. On my website (www.sarahmcintyrepc.com), I've written a series of blog posts about coping with distress. The techniques I've written about there may be supportive for you and your husband. Sending warm wishes your way. -Sarah

Question 219: After he got home from the hospital he was angry, then for a time wonderful. Now he is depressed and hopeless again.

Answer 219: I appreciate that you are concerned about your husband's emotions and want to support him as best you can right now. I imagine that you must be going through your own difficult time too. You've had a complicated shock and trauma in your life and in your marriage; it's normal for both of your emotions to move from hope to despair to fear, anger,

gratitude... there is no wrong way to feel and there is no particular pattern your emotions or his will follow. Try not to assume what he is feeling but ask him instead. "How are you doing today?" is something that can be asked over and over again and your love and compassion for him will come through. If he has a hard time talking, you can share your observations. "I notice you're more withdrawn. This worries me." Certainly it will help you if you know what he's thinking and feeling because he hid his intentions to hurt himself. It's normal that you want to know. If there is depression and hopelessness, this likely was part of what led to his initial despair. There is help out there. Depression is treatable, and seeking that treatment is important right now at this vulnerable time. This is the kind of complex situation that can be assisted by a therapist who is qualified to help you both understand and manage your emotions. Whether your husband seeks help or not, I hope that you do.

Question 220: After he got home from the hospital he was angry, then for a time wonderful. Now he is depressed and hopeless again.

Answer 220: A failed suicide attempt is commonly thought of as a "cry for help," however it can also be a serious attempt to find a permanent solution to depression, hopelessness or other feelings a person feels are unbearable. It's wonderful that you want to support your husband, but if your husband is feeling depressed and hopeless, you can best help him by getting him to a mental health professional. Feelings of hopelessness and depression, and previous attempts at suicide are all risk factors for future suicide attempts. With a mental health professional, or in the emergency room of a hospital, your husband should be evaluated for suicidal thoughts, intent and plan, and if he is a danger to himself he should probably be hospitalized again until he is stable. Without knowing the particulars, your husband may suffer from Major Depressive Disorder or some other illness on the depressive spectrum. In that case medication could help him immensely, at which point you can offer your support and encouragement him to practice gentle self-care. And do not forget to practice it for yourself. Remember: a suicide attempt not only affects the person, but it is an immense stressor for his or her loved ones as well. As they say, "put your oxygen mask on first." Then you will be better able to provide your husband with calm and loving care and attention. Kayla Schwartz, LMSW[(#)]

Question 221: After he got home from the hospital he was angry, then for a time wonderful. Now he is depressed and hopeless again.

Answer 221: The fact that you're reaching out for help here is really helpful. The first thing I would suggest is that you consider seeing a local mental health professional yourself to be able to talk about the details, how this is affecting you, and how you can hold onto you are while also being supportive to you husband. From the way that you describe this, I wonder what has changed since coming home from the hospital. Perhaps you can have a conversation with your husband this and mention that you are asking him questions to learn more about his experience and you can discuss how you notice that things were going much better when he came home from the hospital, and now things are not as good. Perhaps he can tell you about what is different so that you may know him would be most helpful to him. I also hope that you husband is still continuing with his own treatment. There may also be a local peer support telephone number for the county that you live in that they be able to help you determine whether your husband needs more immediate treatment if he is feeling hopeless again. There are national crisis telephone numbers listed below as well.

Question 222: After he got home from the hospital he was angry, then for a time wonderful. Now he is depressed and hopeless again.

Answer 222: Since as husband and wife your lives are closely joined, how your husband feels greatly influences the way you feel. Give yourself some time to concentrate on how

you've been affected by your husband's suicide attempt. Even if you decide against immediately telling him how you're feeling, knowing this about yourself will guide how and the topics you bring up with him. Is your husband talking easily with you? Do you have some ideas as to what is creating his feeling of hopelessness? The ideal approach would be if the two of you are able to discuss what bothers him and what bothers you. Depending on how far away you each are from such a position, you may benefit from speaking with a licensed professional therapist who can guide you and or you and your husband on opening up for discussion what feels stressful enough to merit taking one's own life.

Question 223: After he got home from the hospital he was angry, then for a time wonderful. Now he is depressed and hopeless again.

Answer 223: It seems like you are very receptive of your husband's emotions and want to support him through this time. But it is also important of being aware of your emotions. How are you feeling after the suicide attempt? It is common to experience negative feelings while you try to make sense of the incident. Feelings like anger, shame, guilt and fear are frequent; while, wanting to avoid, minimize and become distant from the person are parts of the defense mechanism to attempt a quick resolution. Once you understand and overcome those feelings you may be in a better position to help your husband; who may be experiencing some negative feelings as well. First, it is important to have a safety plan in place, which includes removing harming objects from the home, knowing who to call if there's a new attempt (either 9-1-1, or nearby treatment center), have a professional expert who monitors you and your husband's progress, either a Counselor or mental health provider could help you manage negative feelings and identify ways to handle triggering situations. Once the safety plan is in place, make him feel supported and not judged, saying open ended statements, like: "I am glad that you are here, please let me know what I can do to help you through this process". Making small changes toward a healthier living may help as well. Exercising, eating healthier and practicing new leisure activities may be good ways to start. Also, explore your spirituality and your husbands, looking for ways to encourage each other by joining a support group or finding people who share your spiritual beliefs. If you have more questions or concerns I offer teletherapy in the State of Texas, and traditional Counseling in Puerto Rico, call 787-466-5478. ¿Cómo puedo ayudar a mi esposo después de un intento de suicidio? Después de que él llegó a casa del hospital estaba enojado, luego por un tiempo maravilloso. Ahora está deprimido y sin ánimos. Parece que estas muy atenta a los sentimientos de tu esposo, y que lo deseas ayudar durante este momento de su vida. Pero también es importante estar consciente de tus propias emociones. ¿Cómo te has sentido luego de este intento de suicidio? Es común que experimentes emociones negativas mientras los recientes sucesos hacen sentido. Sentimientos como coraje, vergüenza, culpa y miedo son comunes, y el querer evitar, minimizar o distanciarte son mecanismos de defensa igualmente comunes. Ya que comprendas y superes estos sentimientos, estarás en una mejor posición para ofrecerle ayuda, recuerda que tu esposo también debe de estar experimentando sentimientos negativos. Es muy importante tener un plan de seguridad, esto incluye remover todos los objetos que pueden ser dañinos o facilitar un futuro atentado, saber a quién llamar en caso de una emergencia (9-1-1 o una clínica de emergencias cercana), tener un experto que monitoree tu progreso y el de tu esposo, puede ser un Consejero u otro experto de salud mental que te ayude a manejar los sentimientos negativos y situaciones retantes. Ya que el plan de seguridad sea activado, crea un ambiente donde tu esposo se sienta apoyado y no juzgado. Utiliza frases abiertas para comunicarte, dile que estas feliz de que este contigo, y quieres saber cómo puedes ayudarlo durante esta etapa. También haz cambios pequeños para mejorar su calidad de

vida como pareja. Hacer ejercicios, comer más saludable y compartir actividades puede ser un buen comienzo. Explorar tu espiritualidad y la de tu esposo también puede ser de ayuda, y encontrar personas o grupos que compartan esos mismos intereses puede ser una manera de mantenerse motivados. Si tienes más preguntas o preocupaciones sobre el tema, ofrezco teleterapia en Texas y Consejería Tradicional en Puerto Rico, llama al 787-466-5478 para más información.

Question 224: I always feel like I'm doing something wrong. Everything I do is crappy. I want to cry all the time. I can't eat or sleep.

Answer 224: You are describing some of the most common symptoms of depression: low self esteem, difficulty sleeping, changes in appetite, sad mood, feelings of hopeless and feelings of worthlessness. A full assessment/evaluation with a mental health professional is warranted to understand if indeed you meet criteria for a Major Depressive Disorder i.e., are depressed. One thing I often tell patients is that "Do you think you are depressed?" People often answer yes or no, but many individuals respond with a question: How would I know? To that I often explain that if I stopped watching movies or better, stopped enjoying watching movies that would be a clear indication for me that I am depressed. It would be a sign that I have lost pleasure or interest in the activity that I typically enjoy most. I'll ask you to think of one activity which you really really enjoy. It could be anything from reading, to being with friends, to skiing to watching tv. I would like to now ask you if you have stopped enjoying that activity or can't find the motivation to engage in it? This is another symptom of depression: loss in pleasurable activities. The good news is that there are many effective, available treatment if you are indeed in a depression or simply, you want to modify/decrease your depressive symptoms i.e., you want to stop feeling so tired and so worthless. Treatment includes one or more of the following: psychotherapy, medication, exercise. Any one or combination of both of these can help to improve your mood. The even better news is that feeling that you are doing something wrong can diminish with appropriate treatment over time. I hope you find this information helpful. The most important next step is to get evaluated by a mental health professional typically a psychologist or psychiatrist, and for both you and the professional to better understand your symptoms and your mood in the context of what is going on in your life.

Question 225: I no longer carry expressions on my face, and my emotions are decreasing the more I have fights with my fiancée.

Answer 225: Sometimes repressing anger can lead to depression and block all kinds of other emotions too. I would wonder about your experience with anger and if you've ever been discouraged from expressing anger. I would also wonder if you feel like you have space to express yourself in your relationship or if you feel like you really aren't being heard. It's hard to feel cared for and connected to someone else when you don't feel accepted by them.

Question 226: I no longer carry expressions on my face, and my emotions are decreasing the more I have fights with my fiancée.

Answer 226: Sometimes when we fight a lot with our partner, it becomes more uncomfortable to share emotions because it feels like it will lead to another fight or disagreement. You could try having a conversation when you're not fighting and starting it out by saying that you would like to discuss something important to you and see if your fiancée is open to that. Something else is that you could have an agreement that if one of you is having a really strong emotions in a difficult conversation and would like to break from the conversation, you could agree (ahead of time) that you'll say that you would like a "timeout" and will come back to discuss the issue in a certain amount of time (usually about an hour)

and then try to resume the discussion. The reason this can work is it can give you a chance to calm down and then still go back to the discussion rather than not talking about it again. This only works if both of you agree to that before something starts, though.

Question 227: I'm depressed. I have been for years. I hide it from everyone because I'm scared of the reactions I'll get. Last time I tried telling my parents, it was a huge argument about me being too young to be depressed (I'm a legal adult), calling me ungrateful, and telling me that if I can't handle things now, it's only going to get worse in the future (which is turning out to be true). It's exhausting pretending to be okay, and I don't know how much longer I can try. I'm just really tired, and sadly, I can't afford the help I need on my own.

Answer 227: Hi Georgia, There's a really good lesson here. People tell us things, and we tend to think that's the truth...but it's not! I'll do some translating for you..."You're so ungrateful" means "I need you to be successful and happy in order for me to feel I'm a good parent". "You're too young to be depressed" means "I don't want to deal with your mental health issues right now. I'll pretend it's not happening so I don't have to face my fear and shame". "It's only going to get worse" just means "I don't know how to support you beyond scaring you into wanting to at least fake happiness for my sake". Your parents are being unsupportive, not because you're not suffering, but because this is all they're capable of right now. They are not where you will find the support you need, so keep looking for it in other places. It's out there. It might be an aunt or a friend, or a friend's aunt. It might be a therapist or a bus driver or your family doctor. Keep looking for someone who will hear you. I hope you don't ever give up. :)

Question 228: I'm depressed. I have been for years. I hide it from everyone because I'm scared of the reactions I'll get. Last time I tried telling my parents, it was a huge argument about me being too young to be depressed (I'm a legal adult), calling me ungrateful, and telling me that if I can't handle things now, it's only going to get worse in the future (which is turning out to be true). It's exhausting pretending to be okay, and I don't know how much longer I can try. I'm just really tired, and sadly, I can't afford the help I need on my own.

Answer 228: Don't think that you can't afford the help you need on your own. There are several counselors that see people on a sliding scale that can be as low as \$5 (based on your income). Find a center that is non-profit, they have great counselors as well. It sounds like you know what you are experiencing and know that you need someone to talk to, someone that is willing to listen. Your parents may not understand what you are feeling right now and that is not totally abnormal. I would encourage you to seek help immediately so you can live the best life you can...which is not being depressed.

Question 229: I have terrible anxiety and depression. I've tried various therapists and pills, but nothing's helped.

Answer 229: Is it possible you simply didn't mix well with the particular therapists with whom you've worked? If this is possible, interview a therapist before starting therapy. Then you will be choosing a therapist who feels compatible with your way of seeing yourself and your life. Also, therapy isn't for everyone. Read about the different healing modalities and see if one of these speaks to your interest in feeling better. What matters most is finding among all the legitimate healing methods, what you believe will be effective.

Question 230: I have terrible anxiety and depression. I've tried various therapists and pills, but nothing's helped.

Answer 230: I'm sorry that you have tried several different things and not had much relief. I will say that there are several different types of medications that may help and each therapist is different, so it is quite possible that a different combination of things you've already tried may be helpful. I would encourage you to continue trying different therapists. I would say to

give each one at least six sessions before you decide that the approach that they are using is not working for you. Also, most places have a certain sort of structured initial session that must be done, but after that, the decisions are largely up to what you and the clinician feel is helping. If something is or is not working, communicate this with your therapist. This is a big deal. Most therapists I know actually welcome this feedback. There is a fair amount of research into the idea that the therapeutic alliance (the relationship that you have in the context of working through the reasons that brought you into therapy) is very important. Also, sometimes anxiety and depression can make it difficult to go to therapy on a regular basis. If that is something with which you are struggling, I would encourage you to talk about that as well. In addition to a solid relationship with a therapist who you connect with, you may consider trying something like yoga or meditation. Mindfulness is sometimes helpful as well. Here's a link to questions for finding suitable therapists:

<http://www.pharmatherapist.com/12-tips-for-finding-a-suitable-therapist>

Question 231: I'm in my early 20s. I've worked since two months after I turned 18. I have "plans." I could become an electrician, or I could operate heavy machinery. I have goals, but I do nothing to try to meet them because I don't feel I can. I just want a better life for my fiancée and the kids than I did.

Answer 231: For starters, commend yourself for being committed to working. You have no idea what is going to happen in the next second, so focusing on thinking you will never have a good career or amount to anything financially is creating a fictitious story. Remind yourself of that every time the thought pops up. The false belief that nothing good will happen is sucking out energy you can use on pursuing your career dreams. Next, do you know what you need to do to become an electrician or heavy machinery operator? If not, find out. Then, set up a realistic schedule for yourself to accomplish the steps. As you accomplish each step, see your progress. Notice that you are moving closer to your goal. Every day remind yourself why you are pursuing this career. In fact, write it down and tape it on your bathroom mirror. When you start to feel discouraged, remember your goal and remind yourself that you have no idea if you'll make it or not but you are going to give it everything you have to find out. Anything worth pursuing is going to take a lot of persistence and hard work. Stay with it! You and your family are worth it!

Question 232: He said he would try and he never did. It's been nine months, and this is making me worse. Today, he said I have to respect whatever decision he makes. Is that true? Am I supposed to respect the decision to leave because he can't handle what I'm going through and leaves me here crying and worried every night? He's constantly changing his mind on if he wants to work it out.

Answer 232: Wow that is tough. There is nothing worse than fearing abandonment when you are already struggling with depression. It sounds like you are still wanting to work through whatever challenges you and your husband are having but your husband may not be on the same page. I would encourage you and your husband to seek professional support if you haven't already. While depression can put real strains on a relationship, relationship problems can lead to or contribute to depression and there may be some real benefits to both of you in doing some couple therapy. With that being said - if your husband is not willing to do therapy or is clear that he wants the relationship to end, then I can't see what choice you have but to "respect his decision" as you mentioned. This doesn't mean that you have to feel okay with the decision - as I'm sure you wouldn't - but ultimately loving one another and staying in committed relationships is a choice that we each have to make. If he is wanting to leave - this could make things a lot tougher for you. I would encourage you to seek professional support for yourself and reach out to lots of friends and family. You do not need

to face depression alone - nor should you have to. We all need support at tough times like these.

Question 233: He said he would try and he never did. It's been nine months, and this is making me worse. Today, he said I have to respect whatever decision he makes. Is that true? Am I supposed to respect the decision to leave because he can't handle what I'm going through and leaves me here crying and worried every night? He's constantly changing his mind on if he wants to work it out.

Answer 233: I'm sorry for the hurt you're feeling from your husband's decision. Keep in mind that if one partner does not want to be in a relationship and remains in it, then both people will be unhappy, dissatisfied and feel stressed. Imagine being in a relationship that you'd rather leave. All the negative feelings and resentment of being with someone whom you'd rather be without, would not leave very much energy to satisfy your partner. I'm glad you realize that you feel depressed. Depression is a mood that can change once you understand what is causing it. Depression is an area that very often therapists help their patients understand, and emotionally support and encourage them during the course this takes. For now, concentrate on decreasing the tension in your life. Your husband's indecision may very well be adding to your stress. Only he can make up his own mind. As hard as this may be, all you really can do is take care of how you feel so that you will feel better. From what you write, your husband is too unsure to offer you the love and care you'd like from him. Learning to love oneself is always worthwhile. At this stage in your marriage, now sounds like an ideal opportunity for you to teach yourself self-love.

Question 234: He said he would try and he never did. It's been nine months, and this is making me worse. Today, he said I have to respect whatever decision he makes. Is that true? Am I supposed to respect the decision to leave because he can't handle what I'm going through and leaves me here crying and worried every night? He's constantly changing his mind on if he wants to work it out.

Answer 234: The fact that you mention that he is "constantly changing his mind on if he wants to work it out," suggests that Discernment Counseling might be a really good fit for you both. Discernment counseling is a protocol for partners where one or both aren't certain they want to remain in the relationship. It's a brief (1-5 sessions) and intentionally focused on helping partners talk through (primarily individually) their reasons for and against staying in the relationship - as well as confront their own contributions that lead to the relationship crisis. It's aimed at helping the couple reach a clear understanding of which path they are going to take, not asking anyone to change just yet, so it can be a lot less intimidating and more to the point than couples therapy. You can look to find a local therapist providing this service here. That said, I agree with other respondents that if he is deciding to leave, seeking out support for yourself would be incredibly helpful. You may need to accept his decision, but you can certainly feel whatever emotions you have. You are allowed to feel exactly how you feel, and it's likely you'll be sad, or angry or hurt or disappointed or scared, or any combination of any/all of those. Having someone there who can validate those emotions and help you to process the grief that naturally comes with the end of a relationship can be a huge help in finding a place of healing and regaining a sense of self, a sense of hope.

Question 235: He said he would try and he never did. It's been nine months, and this is making me worse. Today, he said I have to respect whatever decision he makes. Is that true? Am I supposed to respect the decision to leave because he can't handle what I'm going through and leaves me here crying and worried every night? He's constantly changing his mind on if he wants to work it out.

Answer 235: Although the marriage vows say in sickness and health, each person has the right to choose to stay or to leave, depending on their ability to cope and handle marriage challenges. I know it's hard not to focus on him and his choice, but the more you put the focus of attention on him the less support you will receive. Focus on increasing self-care activities and building a support system around you. A therapist can help you to work with depression symptoms, build up your self-esteem, and develop coping skills. Also, invite him to a therapy session so he can clarify any questions and concerns regarding your diagnosis. If you would like to engage in therapy, I am licensed in Texas and Puerto Rico, you can contact me at 787-466-5478. Mi esposo quiere divorciarse después que fui diagnosticada con depresión severa. Él dijo que intentaría y nunca lo hizo. Has pasado nueve meses, y esto me está haciendo sentir peor. Hoy, él dijo que yo debo respetar la decisión que él tome. ¿Es eso cierto? ¿Se supone que respete la decisión de irse porque él no puede manejar lo que yo estoy pasando y me deja llorando y preocupada cada noche? Él cambia de opinión todo el tiempo. A pesar de que los votos matrimoniales dicen en la salud y la enfermedad, cada persona tiene el derecho de decidir si se queda o se va, dependiendo de su habilidad de lidiar con los retos del matrimonio. Entiendo que es difícil evitar enfocarte en él y sus decisiones, pero mientras más enfocas tu atención en él, más vas a resentir la falta de apoyo. Enfócate en aumentar el cuidado personal y en desarrollar tu sistema de apoyo. Un terapeuta te puede ayudar a trabajar con los síntomas de depresión, mejorar tu autoestima y desarrollar mecanismos de defensa. También puedes invitar a tu esposo a terapia para hablar sobre tu diagnóstico y que aclare dudas sobre los síntomas y expectativas. Si te gustaría recibir terapia, soy Consejera Profesional Licenciada en Texas y en Puerto Rico, llama al 787-466-5478.

Question 236: He said he would try and he never did. It's been nine months, and this is making me worse. Today, he said I have to respect whatever decision he makes. Is that true? Am I supposed to respect the decision to leave because he can't handle what I'm going through and leaves me here crying and worried every night? He's constantly changing his mind on if he wants to work it out.

Answer 236: When you are at your lowest, you have an opportunity to learn not just about the people around you and who you can depend on, but also, so much about yourself and why you have come to the place that you have. Take this time to do some introspection and learn yourself. It will give you the power to recover from whatever it is that has broken you. We'd love to talk with you. Please contact us sometime.

Question 237: He said he would try and he never did. It's been nine months, and this is making me worse. Today, he said I have to respect whatever decision he makes. Is that true? Am I supposed to respect the decision to leave because he can't handle what I'm going through and leaves me here crying and worried every night? He's constantly changing his mind on if he wants to work it out.

Answer 237: If your husband is changing his mind about whether or not he wants to stay in the relationship, I wonder if you both might benefit from seeing a therapist who specializes in couples. In my training working with couples, partners come into counseling with one of three goals in mind: strengthening the relationship, getting a divorce, or making a decision. The decision could be whether or not stay together or it could be any number of other things, such as what state to live in. When you ask whether you have to respect whatever decision he makes, respecting his decision does not mean that you have to agree with what he decides. While you do not have the power to change his decision, he also does not have the power to change yours or how you feel about it. Having said that, if he is changing his mind a lot, chances are that the only decision he has made is that he needs to make a decision.

Weighing the options of an important decision (any type of important decision) can be anxiety-producing its own right. The fact that you said you were diagnosed with severe depression leads me to believe that you are already seeing a therapist. Perhaps he or she can assist you in navigating through this. I'm wondering how you feel when you are around your husband. I'm not sure whether you are saying that having him there is a source of comfort for you or that it leads you to feel more sad. Maybe it is a little bit of both.

Question 238: I'm in my late 50s. I never loved or have been loved. I need deeper help than is offered in my small town, but I cannot leave this town because of agoraphobia. I find myself losing hope more and more. My brain barely works anymore, and my memory so small, I forget in a moment. I serve no purpose. I'm incapable of work or anything of value, and I never have been. I'm a complete waste of time and resources, and yet I keep trying. Why? Why does God insist that I continue to exist? I'm not suicidal, just tired.

Answer 238: The fact that you're reaching out says that there is something in you that wants this to be different, and that drive might be something worth tapping into. "Why do I keep trying?" is a question that might give you some insight into what it is in you that keeps you going. A lot of therapists/counselors are now offering video therapy. As long as you're in the same state as a therapist offering this service, you could connect with someone helpful from the comfort of your home, even being in your small town. I'd recommend looking into this option, because you're asking a lot of really deep questions and might benefit from having those conversations with someone who can help you find your own answers.

Question 239: I'm in my late 50s. I never loved or have been loved. I need deeper help than is offered in my small town, but I cannot leave this town because of agoraphobia. I find myself losing hope more and more. My brain barely works anymore, and my memory so small, I forget in a moment. I serve no purpose. I'm incapable of work or anything of value, and I never have been. I'm a complete waste of time and resources, and yet I keep trying. Why? Why does God insist that I continue to exist? I'm not suicidal, just tired.

Answer 239: Hi Oak Harbor, My heart goes out to you. Sometimes when I'm working with a client who experiences depression or anxiety, I ask them for a glimpse into their worst moments in their minds. "What are the worst thoughts that run through your head?". Often they struggle, perhaps out of shame; maybe they don't want me to know their worst thoughts. But I can help them better if I do know, because then we have a place to work from. You are feeling hopeless and worthless, and your thoughts support these intense emotions. I don't know you, but I strongly believe that you have someone in your life who, if they heard your thoughts, would say "That's not true. I know where her value is." I believe that there are people who would see your value clearly, even if in small things. Can you imagine those voices? You mentioned God, so let's invite God into the conversation. What might God say to you? What evidence might God...who sees all...have of your worth? What hint might God give you about your purpose? You suffer from severe anxiety, and the agoraphobia works together with fear; they're a tag team. Fear tells you perhaps that people will reject you (or something equally bad), and then agoraphobia steps in and traps you and uses as evidence the fact that no one seems to be reaching out to you to convince you that you have no worth. Do you see their plan? Make her scared... keep her here alone...convince her it's hopeless. They both try to convince you that they are your only friends, except they're lying to you. They only want power over you. You forget your worth. You forget that we all have worth. No one is a waste. I believe all God's creatures have worth, and that we're here to use our gifts to improve the world, and to remind each other of our value. There are people out there needing your support as much as you need theirs. Can you find them? My guess is you've been alone and isolated for a very long time and it's

impossible for you to see your worth in this situation. We need mirrors to see our worth and other people are our mirrors. We see our value in their eyes. Do you remember the first time you questioned your worth? What was happening that you blamed yourself for? Can you speak to that child and tell her (or him) that whatever's happening isn't her fault? It's that child who cannot see her own worth, probably because someone treated her as though she had none. That's only a story though; not the truth. Can you find another thread of a story? Who might tell a story of your worth? Oak Harbor, I believe that there is help closer than you think. Fear wants you to believe it's hopeless. You reached out here...can you reach out again? Start with just one person, and that will lead you to somewhere. We don't know where that somewhere is but could it be better than sitting alone? You've stopped living. You can choose any moment to start. I wish you peace and hope. :)

Question 240: Both of my parents committed suicide together, and I was the one who found them. I suffer from overwhelming depression, which is having an extreme effect on me and my husband's sex lives. He does not understand at all and is always making me feel so uncomfortable about sex.

Answer 240: Hello, and thank you for your question. First, I want to tell you how sorry I am for the experience you had with your parents. That is a grief and trauma that is certainly hard to imagine. Trauma and grief can affect us in many ways, and certainly deeply personal things like our sex lives. It may be difficult for others to make the connection, but it is there. So, for example, if stress and trauma make you feel like you are not interested in sex, a partner may take it as a personal rejection rather than response to stress, trauma or grief. If your husband will agree to it, couple's counseling may be your best bet. A counselor can help you with your communication and may be able to provide some education to your husband about trauma and how it can have an impact on intimacy. If he doesn't agree to go, it may be worth it to go on your own. You still have a lot you are dealing with yourself. And sometimes our personal therapy can influence others, so it may be a good idea. It is important to remember that even though you are married you have the right to make decisions about your body, and that includes when you want to have sex with it. I hope this is helpful, and some of my colleagues may have ideas, also. Be well. Robin J. Landwehr, DBH, LPC, NCC

Question 241: I have bipolar disorder, paranoid personality disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder. I last self-harmed a week ago. When I am stressed, overwhelmed, hurt, or angry, the urge to self-harm is all I can think of. I am trying to seek help.

Answer 241: Seeking professional help does not mean that you will necessarily be admitted into an inpatient setting - though to be honest, that can become an option if you feel unsafe or if you are unable to plan for safety. However, many clients who struggle with self-harm can find help in outpatient settings - particularly those which offer a treatment called Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). Looking for a DBT professional or group therapy setting may be particularly helpful, but a skilled professional can help you to figure out how to identify other options even when you are experiencing overwhelming emotions. Without knowing your location, I also recommend searching to find your local helpline or suicide prevention hotline. The volunteers on the other end of the line can be very helpful even if your intention is not suicide and they are likely also to be able to connect you with resources in your area. Calling into the helpline may also be a first step alternative to self-harming when you're feeling overwhelmed.

Question 242: I stress over everything. If I don't have enough "quality time" with my boyfriend, I start to feel resentment towards him. He has three children, and they are great

kids, but I find we don't have much time together. I break down easily and find myself depressed.

Answer 242: Everyone has some level of anxiety - it's what helps us respond to stressors in our lives and clues us into the fact that we need to respond to something going on. However, if you're feeling overwhelmed by racing thoughts, feeling like you spend a lot of energy worrying about something specific or even pretty much anything at all, and you're starting to find that it's getting in your way when it comes to living your life the way you want, then I'd suggest seeing a counselor or therapist for an assessment for anxiety. Your other concerns, though, seem pretty "normal" for someone who is in a relationship with a partner who has children. As a married stepmother, I've been there, and as a therapist, I can tell you that the boundaries and communication skills you have in your relationships need to be healthy for you to feel healthy. Finding some support from a group of others whose partners have children might be really helpful - being able to hear from others that you aren't alone in feeling like this can really lighten the load, and they might have some good ideas for handling certain situations. Another option is to find a counselor or therapist who has experience working with step/blended family dynamics - because even if you're not officially married, those dynamics come into play whenever there are kids from another relationship involved. You may even consider couples counseling so that both of you can learn to talk about your relationship needs and concerns in a way that will encourage connection and strengthen your sense of partnership.

Question 243: I have been falling into a deep depression where I can no function during the day and night. The only time I am at peace is when I'm asleep. If I am with friends, family, at work, and mainly alone, I cannot think straight. I no longer feel like myself.

Answer 243: I don't know how long ago your breakup was, but I would suggest that you reach out to friends or family that you trust and perhaps a local mental health clinician. I'm not sure what you mean when you say that you are not able to function during the day and night. If you are having trouble sleeping for more than a few nights, consider talking with your primary care physician. Not sleeping can really make changes in your emotions seem much larger. Can you find anything in your life that is the same as it was before the breakup? This may be a starting point for you. I wonder if you could think of and moment or two each day when you feel emotionally at peace while you are awake. Also consider looking at things that you can control, such as when you choose to wear, eat, and who you talk to about your deepest feelings. You mentioned that you have friends and family. I wonder if any of them are supportive to you. Please reach out and talk to someone about the details. I get the sense that you feel that you are alone in this, and having someone there to help you sort out what you're feeling sounds like it would be a gift to yourself.

Question 244: I have been falling into a deep depression where I can no function during the day and night. The only time I am at peace is when I'm asleep. If I am with friends, family, at work, and mainly alone, I cannot think straight. I no longer feel like myself.

Answer 244: It is common to go through a stage of adjustment after a breakup, which may include depression symptoms. I recommend practicing self-care: stressing on balancing your life with healthy eating, exercise, resting and looking at your spiritual life. These steps should assist you in giving your body and mind some balance. Practice cognitive reframing, this is training your brain to refocus, and stay on task. Meditation is a great tool to clear your mind during the day as well; there are multiple apps that help. If the problem persists a therapist could assist you in learning to focus and process those thoughts and feelings that cloud your mind. ¿Cómo puedo manejar la depresión después de una separación? He estado cayendo en una depresión profunda que no me permite funcionar durante el día. El único

memento en el que estoy en calma es cuando duermo. Si estoy con mis amigos, familia, en el trabajo o a solas, no puedo pensar claramente. Ya no me siento como yo. Es común pasar por un estado de ajuste después de una separación, y este ajuste puede incluir síntomas de depresión. Recomiendo que practiques auto compasión: esforzarte en balancear tu vida comiendo saludable, ejercitándote, descansando y analizando tu vida espiritual. Estos pasos te ayudarán a balancear tu mente y cuerpo. También puedes practicar reenfocar tus pensamientos para mantener tu mente clara. La meditación es una buena manera de practicar el enfoque mental, y existen muchas aplicaciones que te pueden ayudar. Si el problema persiste tu consejero te puede ayudar a aprender técnicas de enfoque a procesar pensamientos o sentimientos que te estén afectando.

Question 245: I am pretty sure I have depression and anxiety. I also have voices in my head. I have problems sleeping too. I've already been diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder. I have self-harmed in the last and used to be suicidal. How do I tell them this and ask for therapy?

Answer 245: If you have already been diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder, can you go back to the people who diagnosed you with those things? It may be that your parents would be open to you talking with someone because it sounds like you have done this in the past. I don't know whether you have a specific reason that you are thinking they may have some hesitation, but if you are comfortable saying that you would really like to talk to someone because you are feeling sad or anxious (or whichever of your concerns you feel comfortable revealing to them), that may be a way to start the process. As for how you tell them about the fact that you have harmed yourself in the past and used to be suicidal, a therapist may be able to work together with you to discuss the best way to tell them about that. I'm not sure if you have told anyone about what you have been experiencing, but if you have some support there, perhaps they would be able to give you feedback about ways to talk with your parents as well. You mentioned that sometimes you hear voices. This can happen for a variety of reasons, but if the voices that you hear are giving you directions and you feel as though you might follow them, that would be a time to ask for immediate help, before you follow through with what they are telling you, perhaps by calling 800-273-8255. They may be able to connect you with local resources and they can definitely talk with you in the moment that you call.

Question 246: I am pretty sure I have depression and anxiety. I also have voices in my head. I have problems sleeping too. I've already been diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder. I have self-harmed in the last and used to be suicidal. How do I tell them this and ask for therapy?

Answer 246: Family support is very helpful when having these symptoms. I suggest looking for therapist within reach (school, through your insurance or the community, calling 2-1-1). Once you schedule a session, you can inform them and invite them to come in. I have found through sceptic parents, that once they give it a chance they open up to the process of learning and healing. I also understand that parents may become overly concerned and overprotective when hearing about your symptoms, and that's why is important to discuss them with a therapist, normalize them, understand why you experience them, and learn how they could help you. ¿Cómo les digo a mis padres que yo pienso que tengo problemas mentales? Estoy seguro que tengo depresión ansiedad. También escucho voces en mi cabeza. Tengo problemas para dormir también. Y he sido diagnosticado con déficit de atención y desorden obsesivo compulsivo. Me he auto flagelado y solía tener ideas suicidas. Como les dejo saber y les pido ayuda. El apoyo de la familia es muy útil cuando se experimentan los síntomas que mencionas. Te sugiero que busques un consejero (en la

escuela, a través de tu plan médico, o en la comunidad, llamando al 2-1-1). Ya que tengas tu cita, invita a tus padres. He observado que aunque algunos padres son escépticos al principio, pero una vez le dan una oportunidad se abren al proceso de terapia y sus beneficios. También he observado que algunos padres se vuelven sobreprotectores cuando aprenden de los síntomas que sufren sus hijos, así que sería otro beneficio que aprendieran que pueden hacer para ayudarte y apoyarte.

Question 247: I am pretty sure I have depression and anxiety. I also have voices in my head. I have problems sleeping too. I've already been diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder. I have self-harmed in the last and used to be suicidal. How do I tell them this and ask for therapy?

Answer 247: What stops you now from telling your parents the way you are feeling? Do you imagine asking them for therapy would be a surprise for them? If they're paying attention to you at all, then I imagine they'd feel relief to know you're aware of having some feelings within yourself of a problem. If you believe they'd have a negative reaction to you asking for help, this may very well be part of why you are having problems in the first place. What reaction did your parents have when you were diagnosed with the other conditions? I'd separate their willingness to help you from your sense of needing help. If they do not want to help with finding a therapist for you, then start by looking for services available for people in your age group whose parents also do not wish to be involved in their child's emotional and psychological health.

Question 248: I'm depressed and recently went through a break up. It's like every guy I like only wants me for sex. I think I'm ugly, and sometimes I just want to die. I have a son, and I got really big when I was pregnant. I have stretch marks on my stomach.

Answer 248: If you are currently feeling as if you want to die, please call 800-273-8255 and talk to someone. One way to work on not always thinking so negatively about yourself is to surround yourself with people who are more positive toward you. Do you have friends or family who are supportive? Can you find one part of you that you do not think is ugly? If your stretch marks are still bothering you, talk with a pharmacist or your primary care physician. Sometimes there are creams or lotions you can use to decrease stretch marks and they should be able to guide you in the right direction. You mentioned mostly physical things here. I wonder if you can find one small thing each day that is going right and build from there. Perhaps your son makes you smile?

Question 249: I'm not the same anymore, I don't know how to get back to who I am. I'm sad and confused and angry and tired. I don't sleep well.

Answer 249: Being tired can really affect almost everyone's ability to work through things that make them sad, confused, or angry, among other emotions. If you're having difficulty sleeping, try to get into a habit of going to bed and waking up close to the same time every day. Also consider only using the bed for sleeping so your brain knows that it's time to sleep when you are in bed. If you are not sleeping while you are in bed, consider getting up and reading a book or doing something to make you tired before going back to bed. Hopefully you'll be able to establish a pattern. Sometimes sadness and other emotions make sleeping very difficult as well. Try keeping track of your moods to see what is leading up to the changes. If you're still struggling, consider talking with a therapist about the specifics and/or maybe talking with your primary care physician. There are natural sleep remedies that he or she may recommend for you.

Question 250: Over the years, I have slowly lost everything: my jobs, my cars, my freedom, and my money. I am a stay-at-home mom who doesn't make any money, doesn't have a car, never goes out, and cleans all day long everyday.

Answer 250: There are an infinite number of possibilities here. You included a lot of things that you don't have. Is there anyway that you can have some freedom for a few hours a week, at least? A lot of times stay at home moms have groups when they meet at different public places where their children can play together and they can talk together. I don't know how old your child or children is/are, but perhaps going back to work is something that can happen in the future. I wonder if you may consider who you have in your life who can support you. I don't know whether you have a spouse or parents or siblings who could help out with some different things. I wonder if you could consider where you would like to go if you had two or three hours that you could do whatever you wanted? If you can sort out some possible answers to that, maybe you can work together with friends or family to make it happen. Also, again depending on the age of your children, some parents can do things while the children are sleeping, even if you are in the same room. For example, if your children are sleeping for about two hours, maybe 30 minutes of that could be reserved for you and the rest could be for cleaning or other things you need to do.

Question 251: I don't have time to live or take care of myself at times. It's causing depression, stress, and anxiety. I don't know what to do.

Answer 251: I'm not sure whether you are referring to having a lot of activities after school or that homework is overwhelming. Can you set aside a couple hours a week for yourself as a place to start?

Question 252: Two years ago, I was separated from the military into my contract for medical issues. It has emotionally destroyed me. I now basically hate myself. It's embarrassing to be separated from the one place who takes anyone. My family has been in the armed forces, and it has always been my dream. I can't do this alone anymore, and now my family is even worried.

Answer 252: It sounds like being separated from the armed forces is a major loss for you. It takes some time to work through the emotions related to this and it often takes longer if you are trying to work through it without a lot of support. Is there a task that you were doing during your military service that can in some way transfer into civilian life? I don't know what else your life involves, whether you have close friends or a romantic partner, a career, activities that you like to do, and many other things. You may be able to use some of the things that you still have today as a way to start moving forward in a different direction. Your military service will always be a part of you. Thank you for your service.

Question 253: I feel depressed even though I act like a happy with my family. I act like I'm happy so my son doesn't see me sad. I act like my life is a happy life, but I feel sad and depressed. I sometimes think of killing myself and that my family deserve someone better than me. I just cry and write in my book all these feelings.

Answer 253: It sounds like you have several different things happening at the same time. I would encourage you to call and speak to a local therapist. If you are having thoughts of killing yourself in this moment, please call 800-273-8255 and talk to someone. While I follow that you would like your son to be unaware of what you are going through, that doesn't mean that you can't discuss your feelings with someone else. Who is it that you trust or could speak with about this? A therapist could be one person, but perhaps there is someone else in your life as well. One thing that may help is to find a bead or rock that is smooth and you can hold onto it while thinking of a specific memory where you were happy. This could be from as long ago as necessary as long as it is specific and you can place yourself back in that time when you are thinking about it. If you think about this time while holding onto the bead, the bead may remind you of a time when you felt happy. You could do the same thing for a time when you felt comfortable and safe. Have you recognized any patterns for what is

leading you to be sad? Can you think of anything that makes you feel good, even if it only works for a few minutes?

Question 254: I think I may suffer from depression, and it is affecting my life and sleep. I am on my parent's insurance, and they won't let me see a therapist because they don't believe in it.

Answer 254: The answer here really depends upon your age and something called the "age of consent" in the state where you live. In Pennsylvania, anyone over the age of 14 can provide consent for their own treatment. As for billing purposes, try talking to some local agencies. If you are under 18, you may be able to have Medicaid out of medical necessity so that you can have treatment. If you are over 18, there may be some discounted rates at some agencies because of the situation you're in. Maybe your primary care physician will be able to refer you to some local agencies. If you are in school, you may be able to talk with a guidance counselor or someone at the school. This would not require using your insurance.

Question 255: When I'm sad and alone, I want to cut myself.

Answer 255: Try doing something physical. If you haven't exercised before, it is a good idea to get your doctor's approval first, but this can be helpful. The more you can find out about when you want to cut, the easier it will be to figure out what else you can do. If you are feeling sad or angry or nervous, look at what is leading up to those feelings and talk to someone about that. You said you are alone. I would see if you can find someone that you can trust to talk with about what you are going through. This could be a parent, a friend, someone at school, a coworker, or any number of other people.

Question 256: I stopped for a while, but I've started doing it again. It's like an addiction. The more I try to stop, the more I want to do it. I've tried doing some of the stuff they say to do like draw, but it doesn't work.

Answer 256: I've heard people say that they cut themselves as a way to feel relief from different emotions. You're also right that when you try to focus on just not cutting, it becomes more difficult because it's what you are focused on. While that is still something to work on, it may also be helpful to find something else you can do instead. You said drawing doesn't work for you. Sometimes more physical activities, such as doing a few jumping jacks, can be helpful. If you don't exercise, it might be something to talk with your doctor about first. The more you can learn about what makes you want to cut, the easier it will be to find out what you could do to change that. Try talking to somebody about what you are feeling in addition to the urge to cut.

Question 257: I have friends, family, I live in a good home, I go to a nice high school, and I get pretty good grades, but I don't know why I'm so unhappy. These friends are my best friends and they're all amazing people, and yet I'm sad all the time and feel alone.

Answer 257: I wonder if you have moments where you feel happy? You say you have amazing friends. I wonder if you get along with them and feel as though you can be yourself around them. Sometimes we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to do really well at everything all the time and this can be overwhelming sometimes. Where do you have support? I hope you can tell someone that you are feeling sad so that you can talk about your feelings. Sleeping can make a big difference as far as feeling sad as well. If you're not sleeping well at night, that could be a big part of feeling sad a lot. Perhaps you could try to find a person or two who makes you feel totally safe and comfortable and try to talk with them.

Question 258: I used to be the funny guy of the group—the class clown, if you will. I used to laugh uncontrollably all the time and be able to be social without it feeling awkward. Now I can't laugh at all, and I'm dead inside.

Answer 258: If you look back to when you feel as though you were the "funny guy," I wonder what is different now? It may be that responsibilities have changed or any number of other things. I don't know whether you're also saying that you feel sad or if you're saying that you feel as though you don't have any big changes in your feelings. A lot of us tend to be really busy, and sometimes we over schedule ourselves to the point that we don't have time to have positive time for ourselves. Sometimes even if we are spending time with friends, we're thinking about work and all of the other things we need to do. I wonder if it feels awkward when you're with friends that you trust in an environment that you are used to. Maybe if that is more comfortable for you, it can be a stepping stone to focusing on how you feel better in those moments. It sounds as if you may have had an experience (or more than one) where you felt misunderstood or criticized and now reacting to people feels awkward. If so, try going back to people you trust. Who do you have support from?

Question 259: I'm starting to think that I might have depression. The thing is though, I'm not exactly sad. I can joke with my friends and stuff, but I've stopped caring about my work, and I've been starting to think that life is pointless. I really have no clue if I need help, or if I'm just tired or something.

Answer 259: It is possible that you have depression, but you could also be experiencing some other changes that mean that you have feelings of being sad without actually being depressed. Your statement makes it sound like you've stopped caring about your work, but you're still going to work and doing your work. It almost sounds like you are dissatisfied with your work. Do you like what you do? When you said that life is pointless, what makes it that way? What is keeping you going? Is there something you can do each day that you can find meaning in? You mentioned that you are not sure if you need help or are just tired. It sounds like you could certainly benefit from talking with someone about more specifics. I'm curious about how long you have felt this way and if you are aware of anything that is contributing to it.

Question 260: In the last ten months, I've been kicked out, moved around three times, worked many jobs, stopped school to make money, had dad and mom get sick, was cheated on while pregnant, lost my baby, had relationship issues, and was betrayed. I can't get a job. I have no friends. I feel lonely and isolated. I've been dealing with all this by myself.

Answer 260: One thing that may help is to focus on small things that you do have control over. If you can hold onto that sense of having control over what you wear or what you choose to eat or where you go during the day, this may help you be able to look at what is currently most important for you and consider different choices. For example, you say you can't get a job, but I wonder if you could work with and local agencies to help you find a job, like Career Link. You say you have no friends currently. Are there any previous friends that you can get back in contact with? You mentioned that you have no friends. Is there anyone in your life that you can talk with, even if it's not someone that you consider a closest friend?

Question 261: I've been feeling worthless, unaccomplished, and so frustrated. I want to break things, hit myself, run away, kick, scream, and cry. I just want to be happy and outgoing again. I want to be able to take care of my daughter and live comfortably.

Answer 261: Philadelphia, there is help out there. For your daughter's sake, start somewhere. Feelings are only that; your worst fears about who you are are only based on a few moments that haven't gone well. Depression is so treatable, but you have to seek treatment from a professional. Here's a quick exercise for you to do that can show you how therapy might work... fear is telling you the worst possible story of your life, right? So... if there was an opposite story...the very best story that someone could tell about you and your life...what would that be? Who would be telling it? Someone who loves you? Someone who

was around you when you were that outgoing person? Someone who's been watching your life from the start? God? Write that best story. I dare you to give it as much credibility as the worst one. Therapy is often about helping people reject their "worst stories". I invite you to start exploring with a qualified therapist whatever barriers stand between you and your best life. I hope you reach out soon. :)

Question 262: I keep feeling paralyzed and unsure during interviews. Previous jobs have fired me for lack of performance, and five employers have rejected me after extensive personality tests and interviews. I'm afraid of continuing because my depression is getting worse. I'm already humiliated working for temp agencies and doubt my self-worth as a provider for my family.

Answer 262: It sounds like you are feeling pretty overwhelmed and stuck between wanting to improve your work situation and worrying that you won't be able to. It is possible that the paralysis, uncertainty, and self-doubt that you describe are contributing to your difficulty in getting and maintaining a satisfying job as employers generally like to see that a potential employee is confident and can think on his or her feet. With a competent therapist, you may be able to get more understanding of the roots of these feelings and learn how to move forward in your search for a better work life in a way that leaves you feeling confident and capable.

Question 263: I feel like I am not at a good state of mind. I'm very unsettled in my soul. I'm not happy with myself or the decisions I make, which makes me not happy with anyone else. I feel like a failure most of my days. I don't feel like I'm good at anything anymore. I feel like less of a person.

Answer 263: It seems like you may be experiencing depression symptoms, they could be the triggered by unexpected life changes, or building up throughout time. The important part is that you have identified them and wanting to change them. The first step is to establish a self-care routine that will help you to feel centered and motivated: go for walks, or make any physical activity that you enjoy (be kind to yourself, anything helps at this point), eat balanced, add whole grains and fibers to your diet, make a point to rest at night and avoid naps, practice a hobby that you love, or look for a new one that you are curious about. You mentioned that you feel unsettled in your soul: explore your spirituality, meditate about what makes your soul at peace, and find ways to practice that or surround yourself by those activities. If you find it difficult to begin, talk to your therapist to identify roadblocks and ways to find motivation. Suicidal and homicidal thoughts are common but serious depression symptoms, discuss them with your therapist, contact your doctor or psychiatrist, and call 9-1-1 if its and emergency. Once you feel stable, you can focus on exploring the source of the problem and see if you need to make changes or learn coping skills that will help you manage it. It will also be a good time to explore your spirituality and your purpose in life, that may help you to feel better with yourself and then happier around others. ¿Cómo puedo volver a ser la persona que realmente soy? Siento que mi mente no está bien. My espíritu está intranquilo. No me siento feliz con las decisiones que tomo, lo cual me hace infeliz con los demás. Me siento como un fracaso la mayoría del tiempo. Siento que ya no soy bueno para nada. Siento que soy menos que los demás. Al parecer estas experimentando síntomas de depresión, la cual puede ser causada por cambios recientes en tu vida o estarse acumulando a través del tiempo. Lo importante en este momento es que tú reconoces los síntomas y estas buscando cambiar la situación. El primer paso sería trabajar en restablecer una rutina de cuidado personal que te ayude a sentirte emocionalmente estable y motivado: Sal a caminar o hacer alguna actividad física (ten compasión contigo mismo, cualquier cosa funciona para comenzar), comienza a comer balanceado, especialmente

granos y fibras integrales, , procura descansar en las noches y evita las siestas, y practica algún tipo de actividad que hayas disfrutado en el pasado o que te de curiosidad.

Mencionaste que tu espíritu esta intranquilo, explora tu espiritualidad, y que te ayudaría a encontrar la paz, busca la manera de hacer esa práctica una rutina. Si te cuesta mucho trabajo iniciar estas actividades, será bueno buscar a un consejero para que te ayude a identificar formas de estar motivado o obstáculos que te estén deteniendo. Es común tener pensamientos que atentan en contra de tu vida o la de otros, discútelos con tu terapeuta, con tu medico primario o psiquiatra, y llama al 9-1-1 si es una emergencia. Ya que consigas estabilidad, puedes comenzar a trabajar o explorar la causa del problema y ver si hay cambios mayores que debes hacer o destrezas que debes aprender para manejar el mismo. También es un buen momento para explorar tu espiritualidad mas profundamente y tu propósito en la vida, cuando encontramos un propósito y como ejercerlo, tendemos a ser más felices con nosotros mismos y con los demás.

Question 264: I am not sure if I am depressed. I don't know how to bring it up to my parents, and that makes me miserable.

Answer 264: You are not alone, many people fear opening up to family members about the topic of depression or mental illness. There are many different reason why some may fear telling their parents. The most common thoughts I hear in my office are: " My parents won't understand me", I may cause more problems to the family", "I am worried that something bad may happen if I tell them". If possible express your current concerns and worries to your parents. You can start the conversation with your parents by saying "I have not been feeling like myself lately, and I may want to see a counselor". I think you are doing the right thing by going on this website and asking for help. Just a helpful tip: positive self-talk can be beneficial before having difficult conversations with others. For example, tell yourself something positive before talking to your parents such as "I feel confident in myself, and I am doing this to overcome my fear of talking to my parents" can help to decrease the anxiety you are feeling leading up to the conversation. I would recommend if you are feeling depressed or down it would be beneficial to seek counseling to understand your current thoughts and behaviors. Best of luck and hope you decide to start counseling.

Question 265: I am not sure if I am depressed. I don't know how to bring it up to my parents, and that makes me miserable.

Answer 265: Depending on your relationship with your parents, inviting them to have a conversation might be a good first step. If they consent then you can have the opportunity to discuss your concerns with them. Inviting someone to a conversation and getting their agreement is a great first step. I would then make sure your location of the discussion is conducive to the conversation and once all that is considered it might be beneficial that you make a list of your concerns prior to the meeting. this can help keep you on point.

Question 266: I am not sure if I am depressed. I don't know how to bring it up to my parents, and that makes me miserable.

Answer 266: I am so sorry you are struggling! I do think it's a good idea to share your feelings with your parents and perhaps get some help connecting with a counselor or therapist if you feel that might help. There are lots of ways to tell them, depending on your relationship. Maybe saying "I wanted to tell you guys something.. sometimes I worry that I might be depressed." Or, some folks will write a letter, or even send a text. The most important thing is that you tell someone you trust so you don't feel so miserable. I hope this helps. Best of luck.

Question 267: I have absolutely nothing to do with my life but lay in bed on my phone or hangout with my one friend. I don't have a job, my family doesn't include me in anything, and

I don't have many friends. I have nothing to do besides go on my phone. I miss talking to people in person instead of online. I don't even talk to my family in person even from the other room.

Answer 267: It sounds like you are feeling pretty stuck, lonely, and hopeless; like you have a desire to be more connected to people and to find purpose in life, but are not sure what to do. I am glad to hear that you have at least one friend and I think it is great that you are reaching out for more connection. If you can, working with a therapist who is competent in treating depression may be a huge benefit to you and help you to regain a sense of meaning, motivation, and connection. Additionally, anything you can do to give yourself a little break from the feeling of pointlessness and any ruminating thoughts you may be having may be of help. I know it may sound pointless in the moment, and you may feel a great deal of inertia in doing so, but you may find that if you force yourself to do something small that is pleasurable, like taking a walk for example, there's a good chance you will be glad that you did so after the fact. Thank you for reaching out.

Question 268: My motivation has gone away. It's hard to get out of bed. I really don't know what to do anymore. I'm miserable. My anxiety and depression have taken over my life.

Answer 268: Anxiety and Depression are challenging experiences to live with and to manage on a daily basis. I would say that both are challenges to overcome but solutions to living healthy and well exist. Step 1: Talk about it. With friends, family, partners, counselors, and other trusted people in your life. Step 2: Create a plan with a counselor to learn new skills that help you recognize and manage your symptoms. Step 3: Don't give up. Working on yourself can be difficult and hard at the beginning. Stick with it and you will be able to find exercises, tools, and resources that help you live well.

Question 269: My motivation has gone away. It's hard to get out of bed. I really don't know what to do anymore. I'm miserable. My anxiety and depression have taken over my life.

Answer 269: It is challenging to maintain motivation at all times, anxiety and depression can set in which can make interacting with others a struggle, it can lead us to do things that make us not feel good and we become isolated. This ends up feeding into a cycle that maintains the anxiety/depression loop and can be really challenging to step out of it. You are in a place of awareness and this is the first step in making changes that can help you feel better. It is really one step at a time, a concrete plan, with self-compassion to build the solid ground you need to come out of this. <http://www.empoweryou2.com>

Question 270: My motivation has gone away. It's hard to get out of bed. I really don't know what to do anymore. I'm miserable. My anxiety and depression have taken over my life.

Answer 270: One of the first steps is to manage anxiety and depression symptoms are to establish a good self-care routine. Start with the most basic things: Eating balanced meals, sleeping at from 6-8 hours and exercise at least 30 minutes a day. These will help you to regulate the chemical imbalance that affects your mood, plus exercising gives you time to vent and be distracted from your thoughts. Once basic self-care is established, I suggest that is a good time to start exploring the source of these feelings, and address them through therapy. If you have difficulty initiating self-care routine talk to your therapist about what motivates you and pushes you to do things, you might find the key during the process. You could also contact your physician or a psychiatrist to discuss medication options if it's too challenging to begin basic self-care. ¿Cómo puedo manejar mi ansiedad y depresión para sentirme normal otra vez? Mi motivación se ha ido. Es difícil salir de la cama. No sé qué hacer. Soy Miserable. Mi ansiedad y depresión han tomado el control de mi vida. Uno de los primeros pasos para manejar la ansiedad y la depresión es establecer una buena rutina de cuidado personal. Comienza con las cosas más básicas: Comer comidas balanceadas,

dormir de 6-8 horas en la noche, y ejercitarte por lo menos 30 minutos al día. Esto te ayudara a regular el desbalance químico que afecta tu estado de ánimo, además de que te da tiempo para desahogarte y distraerte. Ya que la rutina de cuidado eta establecida, es un buen momento para comenzar a explorar la fuente de tus sentimientos negativos, y explóralos a través de terapia. Si se dificulta comenzar a crear una rutina puedes consultar con tu terapeuta para identificar motivaciones que te impulsen a comenzar. También puedes contactar a tu medico primario o psiquiatra para discutir medicamentos que te pueden ayudar a manejar estos síntomas e iniciar cuidado básico.

Question 271: I sleep a lot. Music changes my mood. I cry every Wednesday. My mind is like a maze that even I get lost in. I don't usually feel my true emotions, but instead, I get fake mirrored ones.

Answer 271: What happens in your life on Wednesdays that you feel like crying? Crying is natural. Crying on Wednesdays may also be natural if some type of regular event or situation comes up for you then that you don't like, feel oppressed by and have no way of avoiding. Maybe you would qualify for a diagnosis for depression. This matters less than what you will do with a diagnosis. Very often people feel some type of relief from hearing a professional tell them what they "have". Don't let yourself get talked into taking pills because now you "have something". Pills change your mood. Only you can change your life. The diagnosis matters so the therapist gets paid from insurance. It is a good sign that you know whether you feel true emotions or fake ones. This is a clear sign of knowing about yourself. Your mind feeling like a "maze" is a little too vague to know if you mean there are too many thoughts at once so that you have difficulty knowing which ones to examine first, or if "maze" means you don't know what your thoughts are and feel lost for this reason. Depression which is addressed by a person can become quite liberating because you will remove what bothers you so much in your life that it weighs you down and depresses you.

Question 272: I have twin toddlers. I experienced a death of loved one prior to giving birth. I had a horrible break up with the father. People told him he was using me for money. My ex-boyfriend had extreme meltdowns every day for three years. I'm always alone with no friends.

Answer 272: First, let me say that you are a survivor and a warrior. Managing 1 child by yourself is difficult, but twins is a whole different ballgame. Anxiety can affect us at any time anywhere. This is the challenge, especially when we have so many things to manage each day. There are several methods and practices that help manage and even reduce symptoms of anxiety. It will depend on what works best for you. Talk with friends, a counselor, or a loved one who can offer you support and feedback as you navigate this process of learning what works for you. When all else fails; make sure you are in a safe place, pause for a deep, cleansing breath in, a long exhale out, and ask yourself, "What do I want in this moment?" Now you can begin again.

Question 273: I live a normal life. I have tons of friends and family, but I feel lonely.

Answer 273: This may be happening because you and the others are not connected to each other on a level which reaches your emotions. Loneliness may show the absence of feeling a variety of emotions when you are among others. How many friends you have doesn't affect whether you and someone else feel emotionally engaged with one another. Consider if you feel like concentrating your friendship on more intensively sharing your feelings with a few of your friends. This may lead to fewer friends who are also more meaningful to you and your feeling a decrease of loneliness.

Question 274: I started having anxiety three months ago. I'm new to having anxiety, and it's making me depressed.

Answer 274: One of the first steps is to manage anxiety and depression symptoms are to establish a good self-care routine. Start with the most basic things: Eating balanced meals, sleeping at from 6-8 hours and exercise at least 30 minutes a day. These will help you to regulate the chemical imbalance that affects your mood, plus exercising gives you time to vent and be distracted from your thoughts. Once basic self-care is established, I suggest that is a good time to start exploring the source of these feelings, and address them through therapy. If you have difficulty initiating self-care routine talk to your therapist about what motivates you and pushes you to do things, you might find the key during the process. You could also contact your physician or a psychiatrist to discuss medication options if it's too challenging to begin basic self-care. ¿Cómo puedo controlar mi ansiedad? Uno de los primeros pasos para manejar la ansiedad y la depresión es establecer una buena rutina de cuidado personal. Comienza con las cosas más básicas: Comer comidas balanceadas, dormir de 6-8 horas en la noche, y ejercitarte por lo menos 30 minutos al día. Esto te ayudara a regular el desbalance químico que afecta tu estado de ánimo, además de que te da tiempo para desahogarte y distraerte. Ya que la rutina de cuidado esta establecida, es un buen momento para comenzar a explorar la fuente de tus sentimientos negativos, y explóralos a través de terapia. Si se dificulta comenzar a crear una rutina puedes consultar con tu terapeuta para identificar motivaciones que te impulsen a comenzar. También puedes contactar a tu medico primario o psiquiatra para discutir medicamentos que te pueden ayudar a manejar estos síntomas e iniciar cuidado básico.

Question 275: I started having anxiety three months ago. I'm new to having anxiety, and it's making me depressed.

Answer 275: I agree with Cory. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) does seem to help a lot of people who struggle with anxiety. It's not the only type of therapy that can help, but it seems to help people in a way that is more natural and realistic. As Cory mentioned, anxiety is something that is part of life, so therapies that indicate we can get rid of it are questionable. Our natural inclination when we have anxiety is to STOP any and all things that may cause it or provoke it. We do this because we think it will help, but it actually doesn't. Anxiety usually has us rehashing the past or rehearsing the future while ignoring the present. ACT helps folks who have those kinds of tendencies. Be well..Robin J. Landwehr, DBH, LPC, NCC

Question 276: I started having anxiety three months ago. I'm new to having anxiety, and it's making me depressed.

Answer 276: As a past sufferer of anxiety myself, I have learned that it is a natural part of life, it is a natural part of us, the longer we try to run from it the more it entangles us in its clutches, if we deny certain parts of ourselves we will become depressed or even oppressed, the only way to deal with anxiety is to embrace it and accept it, and in fighting the fight without fighting we will eventually win, I would encourage you to look into Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, your answer I think lies in that area of research. Hope this helps,C

Question 277: I have no friends, no hobbies, and no interest in anything. I get annoyed with everything and everyone. I am always tired, i can sleep 8 hrs or 12 hrs and im still tired. I don't know what to do. Is this normal?

Answer 277: Hello, and thank you for your question. It certainly sounds like you don't like how things are going. Here are a few thoughts and ideas:1. If you haven't seen a primary care provider in a while, you may want to. There are health conditions that can affect your mood and energy levels, even at your age. It doesn't hurt to get checked out. If they find the

cause, they may be able to treat it and improve the symptoms. In addition, most primary care providers are trained to be able to manage medication for patients who have mild, moderate, and sometimes severe depression. So, don't be surprised if your primary care doctor offers to put you on an anti-depressant if they diagnose you with depression. Medication is not the only way to treat depression, but sometimes it is necessary depending on different factors.² You may want to consider counseling, since it is another effective way to treat depression. A counselor will help you explore the factors that may be leading to depressive symptoms in the first place. This could include thoughts, behaviors, beliefs, life experiences, and other things. 3. Finally, to answer your question about whether these feelings are "normal." These symptoms could be the sign of an underlying general health or mental health condition. It is important to remember that even if these symptoms are "abnormal" it doesn't mean that YOU are. Millions of people struggle with depression. So remember, the symptoms are the problem, not YOU. Hope this helps. Be well. Robin J. Landwehr, DBH, LPC, NCC

Question 278: I have a lot on my mind, but all I want to do is stay locked in my room and not socialize with anyone. Why do I feel so alone?

Answer 278: It has been said that depression is often the result of a blocked goal. Often people struggle with both anxiety and depression but have difficulty determining which is the most important issue. For some, depression is the result of frequently blocked goals and when their predominant issues are evaluated, they discover that they are anxious (worried) about a lot of areas in their life but seem to find no relief. When there is no relief and there have been numerous attempts (either in their mind or in practical application) to resolve the anxiety, depression is often the result. In this type of case, depression is not the main or underlying issue. The anxiety is the underlying issue. Having "a lot on my mind" sounds like anxiety. Unresolved anxiety can lead to feelings of depression which are often associated with "emptiness." In the question above, I would want to evaluate all of the issues surrounding having "a lot on my mind" and determine where these might be coming from. Has there been ongoing rejection from peers? From family? If so, why does this seem to be happening? Isolation is often a protective measure that one implements to avoid further pain. Where does that need to protect originate? Are there unmet needs from childhood? Are there traumatic life events that have created a need to self-protect as a defense mechanism? We can feel "alone" even when in a crowd of people or at a party. This has nothing, in this case, to do with being around people. It has more to do with how we view ourselves. If there is a prevailing message or script that has been internalized that says, "You are worth nothing" or "You don't deserve the company of others" then being around people will not alleviate the problem but only exacerbate it. I would want to evaluate how one feels about themselves and what negative messages one has received and has repeated to oneself over time. The Developmental Needs Meeting Strategy is a therapy aimed at addressing unmet childhood needs. If there is specific trauma that is associated with socializing with people, then EMDR can be very helpful in desensitizing and reprocessing the trauma. Looking at whether this individual's issue with emptiness is straight depression or whether it is depression as a result of unresolved anxiety is key to determining a treatment strategy.

Question 279: I have a lot on my mind, but all I want to do is stay locked in my room and not socialize with anyone. Why do I feel so alone?

Answer 279: There are many possible issues to consider as depression social anxieties, even medical illness. For some, even grief creates a sense of isolation, pains from relationship break up. Also, obsessive thinking can be debilitating. Seeking at least one trusted friend or family member can be a start towards increased personal support. Some

persons may simply feel connected by spending time with someone as this, even if not talking directly on issues, just being around another is positive. Obviously there is more to explore on this question, given minimal information from two sentences.

Question 280: I have a lot on my mind, but all I want to do is stay locked in my room and not socialize with anyone. Why do I feel so alone?

Answer 280: There is a difference in someone agreeing to try something and agreeing to continue to do it. Have you ever been willing to try something and then decided you did not like it? A type of food? A sport? A new restaurant? A type of dance? So this does not mean that things have changed between you. It does mean that the two of you may need to spend some time to find out what you both like. Instead of looking at it as a rejection, look at it as a challenge, an adventure that the two of you can go on as explorers together. Some couples have even found it helpful to each write down ten things they would like the other person to try and then each person can pick three things from the other person's list to add into their life together when they chose to over the next few weeks.

Question 281: I feel angry, anxious, and depressed. The PTSD I suffer is from a past relationship.

Answer 281: If the symptoms are to the extent that they are affecting your ability to function, you may want to consider seeking treatment. PTSD, anxiety, and depression all typically respond well to treatment if provided by a trained clinician. Common types of treatment for PTSD that you may want to look into include Cognitive Processing Therapy or EMDR. The nice things about Cognitive Processing Therapy is that it is time limited and only lasts 17 sessions typically.

Question 282: I've had posttraumatic stress disorder for years without my parents ever finding out. I want to overcome it, but it's so vivid, it's like it's happening again. I'm scared and paranoid. I have depression, which I have been struggling with since a young age.

Answer 282: I understand that at times it's difficult to share with our parents what we have been through, due to fear of judgment or punishment; but I have noticed that keeping our experiences secret, intensifies them. And Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can haunt us for a long time if we do not learn to process the memories that cause those symptoms. If you have been victim of a traumatic event that you are not prepared to share with your parents, it's important that you seek help with a counselor, therapist or psychologist. Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a great technique to cope with physical symptoms, you could also use Narrative therapy, Creative Therapy or Journaling as a way to express memories and process them with your therapist. A psychiatrist can also prescribe medication to manage the symptoms, but is very important that you address the trauma so you can heal and go back to live your life. Many organizations like the United Way (2-1-1 in many states) offer resources and referrals to put you in touch with mental health providers, you could also talk to your school counselor, doctor or church to find referral that could help.

Tip: You don't have to tell your story to each person you ask for help, you can just start by asking for a counselor referral.

¿Cómo puedo superar el Desorden de Estrés Post Traumático sin que mis padres se enteren? Comprendo que muchas veces puede ser difícil compartir nuestras experiencias con nuestros padres, muchas veces por miedo a que nos juzguen o castiguen; pero he observado cómo mantener un secreto, lo vuelve más fuerte y difícil de manejar. El Desorden de Estrés Post Traumático puede ser una condición que nos persigue por mucho tiempo si no aprendemos a procesar las memorias que causan esos síntomas. Si has sido víctima de un trauma que tal vez no estás listo(a) para compartir con tus padres, es importante que busques la ayuda de algún consejero profesional, terapeuta o psicólogo. La Terapia Cognitiva Conductual enfocada en el Trauma, es una

técnica que te ayudara a manejar muchos de los síntomas, también puedes utilizar diarios o Terapia Narrativa o creativa, para expresar memorias y procesarlas luego en terapia. Un Psiquiatra también te puede proveer medicamentos que ayudan a manejar los síntomas del Estrés Post Traumático, pero es importante que atiendas el problema inicial para poder sanar por completo y volver a tomar las riendas de tu vida. Muchas organizaciones como los Fondos Unidos (2-1-1 en muchos estados) tiene recursos que proveen referidos a consejeros o profesionales de la salud mental. También puedes preguntarle a tu consejero escolar, doctor o en la iglesia.

Sugerencia: No tienes que contarle a todos tu problema, solo pide que te recomienden a un consejero o terapeuta.

Question 283: I've had posttraumatic stress disorder for years without my parents ever finding out. I want to overcome it, but it's so vivid, it's like it's happening again. I'm scared and paranoid. I have depression, which I have been struggling with since a young age.

Answer 283: What is the reason you wouldn't want your parents to know you are trying to find your way through PTSD?Would they believe that you've been traumatized?And, do you feel that your parents had a hand in creating your trauma?There is no need to tell your parents you have PTSD unless you feel that doing so will help you. Maybe you intuitively realize that they don't want to understand or know about this.How did you come to the conclusion that you have PTSD?If you are working with a therapist, and a minor, then the laws of your State dictate what information your parents can ask your therapist about you.If you are a grown person and working with a therapist, you have complete legally protected privacy of what you talk about with your therapist.In any case, a good starting point is to know exactly your own reason for wishing to keep your psychological situation hidden from your parents.

Question 284: I've had posttraumatic stress disorder for years without my parents ever finding out. I want to overcome it, but it's so vivid, it's like it's happening again. I'm scared and paranoid. I have depression, which I have been struggling with since a young age.

Answer 284: Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a very complex issue. It is the root cause of many other issues including depression, anxiety and anger to name a few.

Re-experiencing the event is a telltale symptom of PTSD. One of the best things you can do for yourself is to find someone who specializes in this area to help you work through the symptoms associated with this disorder as well as directly addressing the event/events that initially caused the symptoms. There are various treatment methods available to helping professionals that are successful in treating this disorder. In the meantime there is a book called "The Body Keeps the Score", it is informative and may be helpful for you on your journey. It is my hope that you are not dealing with this alone. Best wishes!

Question 285: I've had posttraumatic stress disorder for years without my parents ever finding out. I want to overcome it, but it's so vivid, it's like it's happening again. I'm scared and paranoid. I have depression, which I have been struggling with since a young age.

Answer 285: Unfortunately, ptsd is not something that can be cured. Ptsd can be managed through therapy. Mindfulness can assist in redirecting thoughts and gaining further control over paranoia. Therapy is confidential and there are different ways you can obtain treatment. Mental health professional have availability to provide therapy online, on the phone or in person.

Question 286: My dad passed away when I was a teenager. I never got any help, and five years later, I feel like I can't handle it anymore.

Answer 286: It's never too late to get help with grief. Get help as soon as possible before you are feeling the same way 5 years from now. You will always miss your Dad but getting help with coping with his loss will make life easier to live.

Question 287: I am a single mother. As a child, I was molested by my mother's boyfriend. I never knew my father. I started having children at 18 right after high school. After having children, I completely lost myself and gave all of my focus on my children. Now my children are getting older, but I still don't know myself. I've had several attempts at relationships, and they all fail. I stopped caring about a lot after my children's father left me. I fell into a spiral and got depressed.

Answer 287: What your experience is normal for most women. We usually forget about self and totally focus on our children putting our personal wants and needs aside. So to answer your question of how do you get to know yourself I usually do a 6 session course with my client by having them answer questions such as the following in the first session: What do I love? (other than your children) What are my own needs and desires? What 3 things have I accomplished in my life that I'm most proud of? What are 5 strengths or qualities I have? What is one event that had a major impact on my life? How have that event affected my life today? For their homework assignment after the 1st session, they are asked to write a letter to self tell self what they love, cherish, appreciate and even admire about themselves. Most women feel awkward at first, but I remind them that the truth is that only to the extent that you are able to love and value yourself, you are to love and support others.

Question 288: I always see the worst end of things. My boyfriend and I aren't talking, and I swear he's leaving me. I keep failing my road test, and I see my future crumble. I have no desire for friends. I pushed my best friend away after Christmas, and I have no desire to fix it or make new friends. My aunt died, and I cry all the time, even if I burn my lunch.

Answer 288: I really love that you're taking responsibility for your pessimism here. There's a modern parable about two young brothers. One child is in a room full of every toy you could imagine, and he's miserable; the other is in a room full of horse manure, and he's flinging it around with joy. So then someone comes and asks the first boy why he's so miserable, because he has so much. He says that he's missing the one toy that he really wants. Then the brother is asked why he's so happy in a room full of manure, and he says "With all this sh-t, there's gotta be a pony in here somewhere!" Happiness is a state of mind, and I hear you saying that you used to be happy, so maybe this means you believe it's possible. That's a wonderful start. Research on depression shows us that it is very linked to pessimism. You say "I always see the worst end of things". That's pessimism. Life is like an elephant. If all you see is roughness, backup and walk around; the view will change. The key to optimism is to build your ability to see the bad things in life as 1. temporary (this will pass. I know how to fix friendships), 2. Specific (not involving the whole of your life), and 3. not your fault (tons of people fail road tests). On the flip side, it helps if we can see good things as 1. more permanent, 2. bleeding into other areas of our lives, and 3. something YOU created. Not taking credit for good things and blaming yourself for the bad ones is typical especially of women. The feelings you are having are temporary; you're in a slump and it's a good time to sit down and look at how you can make the picture look different. I think you know how; but you lack energy right now. If tackling this on your own isn't enough, a therapist can help you take that step back to look at the big picture and help you rebuild your natural resilience and capacity for joy. I wish you the best.

Question 289: I was anxious to go to middle school. I was afraid of what people might say about me, so when school started, I wasn't acting like myself. I was quiet, which I'm usually

not. I didn't talk to anybody and didn't have any friends. Then a few years later, my grandma died. I really became depressed and stop going to school for a little. I hated myself and still do. I just need help. I need someone to care for me. I need someone to show that they care.

Answer 289: I agree; you need more care and support. No one deserves to feel alone, or like they hate themselves. We're all wonderful, imperfect, complicated people and we're at our best when we're all helping each other. I'm glad you wrote this question, because a lot of people have this feeling sometimes. I can tell that you're smart, because you seem to sense that the two things you wrote about are connected...you "not being yourself", and then how you felt when your grandma died. When Grandma died, you needed and deserved extra love and support, but the people around you didn't seem to give it to you, maybe. My hunch is that they wanted to, but that they didn't know how much you needed it, or what you needed exactly. The older you get, the more you will have to take charge of letting people know what you need. Maybe this is one of the suckier parts of being mature, but that's how it works. When you started middle school, it sounds like you changed; you got more quiet, right? That must have felt weird, to not be acting like yourself. It sounds like fear tricked you into thinking people wouldn't like you. Fear can be silly. So then, fear got you to not show yourself, and when we don't show ourselves, people can't see who we are; they don't know us as well and then they don't know what we need and they can't care for us as well either. Fear of not being liked isolated you from the people who love you. It does that to a lot of us. So, where you're at right now is because of what fear did to you, and also because when Grandma died you were already isolated so people couldn't see your pain and know that you needed support. There's a simple solution, but you'd have to be brave enough to look fear in the face and say "Get off my back!". "You're not helping me by telling me lies." Can you be brave enough to go back to your old, louder, self? If you talk to the people closest to you...tell them what you think and how you feel, then they'll be able to give you the care that you want and deserve. I wish you well as you try this!

Question 290: I was in a situation with a guy. He's my brother's friend and kind of like a brother to me. He invited me over to hang out, and then came on to me. I was instantly terrified to say no, and I gave in. I don't know what's wrong with me. I can't figure out why I'm afraid to say no. This is giving me a lot of guilt and depression.

Answer 290: Hi Tennessee, There is nothing wrong with you. There are many good reasons why you didn't say no. You didn't say no because you were caught off guard and unprepared; there is no place in life that teaches girls or boys how to manage it when someone crashes a sexual boundary. You also live in a culture where girls are encouraged to be cooperative and not upset people, and to put the needs of other people first. You instinctively want people to like you, and people can be very coercive sexually. You said it yourself; you "gave in". He wore you down. There's nothing wrong with you. It wasn't your job to say no. Women aren't the gatekeepers of male sexual urges. It was his job to get your consent first. He pressured you into it. A good therapist would help you to dig deep and uncover all these barriers to saying no and more. If you said no, what might happen then? What might that mean about you? What are you avoiding feeling? Unloved, unwanted, cold? What would you have to believe in order to be confident enough to say no? That you didn't have to do anything you don't want to do? That you're special, or that sexuality is special? Would you need a better understanding of what sexual assault is? I love that you want to do some work here to strengthen your sexual boundaries, and I urge a widespread conversation about what consent is. Men and women of all ages could use more of this training.

Question 291: People have been calling me names, and I have had enough of it. I cannot stand it anymore I'm done. I have told someone this, and that is why I am writing this. The thoughts are awful.

Answer 291: It sounds like you are feeling pretty overwhelmed with intrusive thoughts and are feeling very criticized by others as well. I think it is great that you are reaching out and I can tell that you want this to change. Working with a competent therapist may be a good option for getting some more clarity about what is going on, developing ways to cope, and eventually getting relief from these overwhelming experiences.

Question 292: My life is completely normal, yet I feel empty inside. I feel as if I already know why I'm alive: to reproduce and die.

Answer 292: Are there any times or moments in which you feel other than "empty"? Start with knowing the context of when you feel something other than empty. If there is no recent example, then in your mind, go back in time to think of when you felt something other than empty. Recall what you liked about this time, whether you were by yourself or with others, what type of activity you were involved at the time of non-emptiness. How did you come to your conclusion that your life purpose is to reproduce and die? If this is what your parents, siblings and extended family believe, it is possible that you have a broader view of yourself and haven't yet uncovered a way of defining your own philosophy of living. Give yourself the time to browse around online, or in person social meet ups, on your interests. It is possible you will discover entire new areas of life and ways of considering life, that are brand new to you and which connect to your true self. This is one way of respecting your individuality, which of itself, may decrease your sense of emptiness.

Question 293: I'm almost never happy. Half of the time, I don't feel anything. I find it easy to make myself feel nothing. I know I push people away because it's easier. I just want answers. I'm sick of feeling this way. It's ruining my relationships with people.

Answer 293: Maybe you have depression. The name of your condition matters much less than the descriptions you wrote of how you feel. Since you've observed how you sometimes interact with people and realize you aren't happy with the result, you've a very solid starting point for reflecting on your deeper wishes in relating to others. Start with asking reasons of yourself about the puzzling aspects of how you're engaging with others. Theorizing as to "why" you feel that pushing people away is "easier", and easier than what? Googling the keywords of how you feel, may open a starting point for ideas on knowing yourself and what you wish for.

Question 294: I'm almost never happy. Half of the time, I don't feel anything. I find it easy to make myself feel nothing. I know I push people away because it's easier. I just want answers. I'm sick of feeling this way. It's ruining my relationships with people.

Answer 294: Hi Loyal, This is a common question. I suggest that you not diagnose yourself (only a physician can do that), but the symptoms you mention are certainly common signs of depression; rarely happy, emotional numbness, hopelessness, isolation. Depression is very common. Research suggests that one in three people may experience it in their lifetime and at any one point, ten percent of adults may be experiencing it. Most therapists are very good at spotting the signs and treating accordingly, although only a physician can prescribe medication. The great news is that depression is treatable. Some people experiencing depression may benefit from medication (often to lift the heaviness of the illness enough so that one can focus on psychotherapy), and therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy and behavioural activation therapy have demonstrated a clear ability to reduce symptoms of depression. Even if medication helps, seeing a therapist to look at the roots of your depression and to build coping skills is very important. A qualified therapist will help you look

at the barriers to happiness in your specific case and suggest a course of treatment. You are not alone, and you don't have to suffer. Keep asking questions and you will find your answers!

Question 295: My husband and I are in a terrible place. Part of me wants to fix it, but then I'm caught up with not knowing how and not being able to communicate my feelings to him because he always feels I'm blaming him. Sometimes I am because the feelings of distrust are so strong. I feel they must be coming from something he's doing, but sometimes I know I'm being irrational. Still, that doesn't stop the anxiety. The other half of the time, I just want to walk away, but I feel like that will only be a temporary fix.

Answer 295: You may be pressuring yourself to be the one person who fixes the relationship. This is impossible because the relationship belongs to both of you. Has he told you whether he feels about himself that how he interacts with you, is contributing to problems in the couple? Is he willing to understand what you're asking of him, without shutting down with whatever he is feeling when he feels blamed? Your feelings of distrust are the natural outcome of not being properly heard and understood. He's not willing to listen to you, so of course you're frustrated and this frustration comes out in all sorts of uneasy feelings. Willingness to hear each other in a non-defensive way, sometimes requires a couples therapist's assistance. Ask your husband if he's willing to understand, not judge you. Be willing yourself to do the same. If after trying and getting nowhere, you'll know when to stop trying on your own as a couple and to find a specifically trained couples therapists. Warning, not all therapists are trained to do couples therapy. Ask the therapist if they've had specialized training in couples therapy. Otherwise, having a referee type therapy session of, "what do you think", "what do you think?", isn't going to do anything except frustrate both of you further. Good luck!

Question 296: They don't go away, and I feel like I'm going crazy. Does that ever stop? Can it be a symptom of medication?

Answer 296: Since you realize that hearing voices in your head is not usual for you, then definitely there is a problematic situation happening within your awareness of who you are. If you recently started taking a new drug or increased dosage of one you already were taking, and the voices started shortly after, then yes, it is possible medication created your problem. Start by telling whoever gave you the prescription, about the problem you're having. "Crazy" has some flexibility as to whether someone is this way or not. Certainly a very positive sign that you're not crazy, is that you're self-aware of a problem within yourself. And, you're responsible toward yourself and making effort to address this problem. Crazy people usually don't do responsible behaviors.

Question 297: They don't go away, and I feel like I'm going crazy. Does that ever stop? Can it be a symptom of medication?

Answer 297: This can certainly be a side effect of some medications. If the voices are so powerful that you can not sleep or they are constantly present, you shouldn't wait any time, but go and see your doctor straight away.

Question 298: A girl and I were madly in love. We dated for over a year and were even talking about marriage and future plans together. She moved away for school, and we attempted a long distance relationship. We eventually broke up. It's been a year now, and I still haven't lost my feelings for her. I still love her the same way I did. I've suffered from depression ever since the breakup and have been unable to connect with anyone else. It's damaging me and my life.

Answer 298: Hi Boise, I'm sorry that you've lost this love. The fact that you were planning marriage and a future tells me that you meant something very special to each other at that

time. It's different now...you're not together anymore, but you can't accept this, right? Good for you for identifying that this situation is damaging your life. You've been grieving for longer than you were together. Oh, but really you've not been grieving...you're stuck still loving her instead of moving forward. Unrequited love is a recipe for eternal heartache. Let's look at some possible blocks to moving forward. It could be that there's something unfinished for you. Maybe you felt hurt and you didn't have the chance to say so, or you felt you hurt her and you didn't have the chance to make it right. Maybe there's a burning question you need to ask or something else you need to say. Maybe you want to tell her you've never stopped loving her, and see if she feels the same way. If this is the case, you have two choices, right? You can reach out and say what you need to say, or you can stop ruminating on that question and let it go. If you reach out, there's no guarantee it will go well or that she'll even respond. Maybe write her a letter and don't send it (or send it...it might be worth the risk). Use the next paragraph to help you decide. Do you know how she feels? How did it end? Did she end it? Was it ended just because of the distance, or are there more differences between you that didn't work? Sometimes people are so in love that they can't clearly see that the other person isn't in love with them anymore. Use the information you have about what she wants for her life...can you honour what she says she needs? If she's asked for distance, you would do well to honour that. A key to moving forward: look at your thoughts and where they're getting stuck. Write it down. What bad thing can happen if you let it go? Or "If I move forward, that will mean..." Keep going...what would be the worst part of that? This kind of exploring can help you identify your stuck place. It is possible that you've turned this ending into some kind of negative meaning about you or your future. As in "If this person doesn't love me, then I'm unlovable", or "No one will ever love me as much as she did". So your need to cling to her in your heart is your way of rejecting that negative message about yourself or the future. Can you find another way to reject that message? Try saying these things to yourself: I know she loved me. There is evidence of that. I was a good partner. There is evidence of that. It's part of life to fall in love and then have to move forward...I can do this and learn from it. Many people like me...that's how I know I'm lovable. It's normal to feel sad. I'm grieving a lost love. I want to move forward and not stare in the rearview mirror. I know more love awaits me if I can get fear out of the way. If this person loved me, others can too, (but not if I'm clinging to some old memory) These are the kinds of things a therapist would explore with you. I wish you well!

Question 299: I've got so much anger. I don't know how to control myself. My girlfriend screams at me all the time, and sometime I don't know how to deal with life. I'm very depressed and angry. I feel lost.

Answer 299: Hi Campbell River, You say you have anger but you don't mention how it shows. Or maybe it doesn't. Are you aggressive with your girlfriend? Since you mention depression, I wonder if you're bottling it all up somewhere instead of letting it show at all. If this is the case, I admire your ability to not lash out at someone who's hurting you. However, if they are totally unexpressed, anger turn inward and shift into depression. When she yells at you, what do you do? Is this the moment that you feel the most angry? I wouldn't be surprised; anger is a normal response to someone yelling at you. Something about anger...it's often there to cover up our more vulnerable emotions. Under the anger I wonder if you feel worthless, powerless, scared, unloved. Part of the trick to reducing anger is identifying those other emotions and expressing them. You say you don't know how to deal with life, and I think maybe you mean you don't know how to deal with emotions. Lots of people don't! This is confusing for most of us. What am I feeling? Why is it so strong? I'm afraid to express it for fear of hurting someone (or falling apart, or feeling alone...). How do I

know what to express and what to be quiet about? These are all great questions to ask yourself, and a qualified therapist can help you sort it all out and support you in your growth. I wish you well!