

Don't allow Depression to subdue your Personal Power

You are a unique being, here on earth to experience life. It is up to you what you make of that life. If you find a way to be your true self then that will give you a deep sense of personal power. There are many things you might like to find out about to help you achieve this, so plenty to keep you busy!

If depression is getting in the way, don't despair, there are many things you can do to take back control. It isn't all about medication and counselling, although it is of course always highly recommended to see your doctor and discuss options. Also bear in mind, that some people do have misconceptions about counselling – it is not a huge mystery – it is just a chance to talk with a professionally trained person who is detached from your situation and can therefore help you obtain a different perspective on it and hopefully understand better what you might need to do to help yourself move forwards.

You can also look at your lifestyle to ensure you are getting enough sleep, exercise, and a balanced diet, for starters. It's really important to give ourselves the best chance for recovery by taking care of all aspects of ourselves.

- Shortage of certain minerals can be linked to depression (look for my article about this, or use a kinesiologist to test you for shortages). Basically if you are short of something (which can easily happen for many reasons) then your body and brain may not have the right chemical balance to function properly. So if this is the case, then it can easily be addressed and will help you enormously.
- Lack of daylight hours or sunlight can also be a cause, and these days you can get supplements to help with that, or use special lighting to emulate the sunlight. This can make a huge difference to your brain function. Consider this especially if you are living in more northern latitudes, or if you have moved country. It can take a lot of time to adjust to the seasons and ways of a new country anyway.
- Teenagers do need more sleep than adults, but only a bit more, so it's okay to rest on weekends for example if you are up early during the week, but don't get sucked into sleeping all day as that tends to make things worse. Try to plan things for yourself to do and so set times by which you have to be up. If you have been sleeping too much, then addressing this by setting some limits and routines can help a lot. You tend to feel better about yourself anyway if you are not just lazing around all the time. I know it can be hard to be motivated if you are not working for example, but try to make lists of things you can do, find hobbies, be creative, help others. There is so much interesting stuff in the world, and the internet can help us find out about almost anything, so it seems crazy to allow ourselves to be sucked into games all the time – try to break any addiction to playing day after day, and to any other addictions that might have too much power over you. A life coaching plan can help you approach this - if you want to ask me about this, just email.
- Teenagers also tend to have more difficulty going to sleep if they go to bed too early, so plan your sleeping hours to suit, but bear in mind that you may have to make

allowances for others in the home, so if you need to negotiate things promise to be considerate, and that will help.

- Plan what you eat to suit you too, different types of people need different food types, and also some days we need to eat more than others, so listen to your body's needs. I don't mean eat chocolate and junk food, I mean healthy things obviously. But some people need a lot of protein for example, and some people get most of their vitamins from fruit, whereas for others it may be better to focus on vegetables. A lot of people do not get on well with wheat or dairy products, this does not necessarily mean you have a huge reaction, it may just mean you feel a bit bloated or full of catarrh. We all need a certain amount of carbohydrate, but sometimes we really overdo it. If there are a lot of colds going round, it is good to keep strong to fight them off by eating a bit extra of what seems really good for you, and if you already have a cold, the same applies. I tend to want salty things like anchovies, along with salad such as lettuce, and avocado, and even olives (which I don't normally like).
- Energy management is something we often forget. I used to stay up all night painting when I was first living on my own, and felt great for a bit, but then it caught up with me, and I was not just tired, but down. These days I manage my energy better, says she, now writing this article at 2.30am, but I did get a sleep this-afternoon, honest. (I needed the rest then after working in a hospital most of the day.) Also, sometimes we have to say no to things or even to visitors so that we can conserve our energy for something we have to do later for example.
- Drinking enough water helps to move toxins out of your system. There is no other drink that works as a substitute for water except herbal teas (not infusions), with no sugar added.
- Exercise also helps to get rid of toxins, and of course stress too. You might like to consider some of the more unusual things to find something that really works for you. You might like something that tests particular skills, such as rock climbing, or might want more overall stretching and balance, like Yoga. Martial arts are very holistic. Or perhaps you could help someone elderly or unwell by taking their dog for a walk?
- If you are putting too much stress on your body with drink and smoking or other substances, then perhaps you can find help to reduce that, as they will take their toll. Mineral imbalance can be a factor in addiction too (refer to my first point).
- If you still need help with depression, then yes, a counsellor can help, but be sure to choose one that is not going to dwell on negative stuff for too long. They do need to get a proper understanding of your situation, which includes looking at all the things that might be challenging you, but then they should help you to move forwards positively. If things aren't going the way you think they should, then do say so. Any professional should be willing and able to change their approach if needed. If not, then change your professional. This is your life, it is too important to just let things ride.
- Sometimes a life coach may be more help to look at forward planning to achieve goals. I can send you planning sheets and guidance notes by email if you request them, and let me know what you are aiming to achieve.

- If you are not sure what you want to do with life yet, or have become confused or diverted, then I have a method that can help you intuitively tap your subconscious to discover your true interests, so contact me by email to ask me to send you my instructions for doing this. I have even helped mothers decide what they want to do when their kids have grown up, as this can sometimes seem like an empty time.
- Or you might benefit from more therapeutic help, such as healing sessions. You can find pretty much anything you need via the internet.
- We all need to find a balance of mind, body, and spirit, to be complete in ourselves, so you may be seeking answers for spiritual questions, to help you make sense of life. (If this is the case, then do take a look at some of my spiritual and nature related articles. They might help open up a whole new perspective.)
- There are many tools like meditation which can really help you find the balance to cope with life. In fact they can be fully integrated with your life.
- Communication can be an issue for anyone, and I have written about that too, from the perspectives of parents, children, young people, adults, friends, partners, and work situations – so I hope that some of this might be of help.
- If your depression or emotions make you feel as if you can't talk to anyone, then often writing can be an alternative, whether it be letters, poems, songs, or anything else. This tends to release the emotions, and you can end up seeing things a bit more clearly than too. You can even write really nasty things and then just throw them away afterwards, but it allows you to vent about how you really feel without hurting others. I tend to only publish positive stuff, but I do also write dark stuff just to work those things through. Everyone has dark times, it's just how we deal with them that matters. I used to have 3 days in a cycle of every few months or so (and still do sometimes, especially in winter) where everything just seemed to be wrong, and nothing seemed to help, but I knew it would only be those 3 days, so I would just keep myself to myself and write rubbish until it worked itself through. This could have been hormonal, as I recognised that I often had 3 day migraine periods on the other months, and just had to accept that I needed to take tablets for those 3 days to enable me to carry on with normal life. Writing also formulates your ideas better so that you can communicate them to others, or so that you can plan what you want to do next. If you feel confused about a situation or your emotions, it really can help a lot to just write everything down, and in time you will tend to formulate an idea of which bits really matter and which don't, and what you could maybe do about the ones that do.
- There may also be other forms of creative output that will help ease your pain, anything from woodwork to pottery to painting to needlework to gardening, to making music..... you name it really. Most people benefit from having a hobby – it tends to bring some balance to things like having to go out to work every day or having to be around to care for someone else, for example.

If your family or colleagues do not seem to respect your views and feelings, then you must ask for that respect, and ask for opportunities to make your input. They are probably not doing it deliberately, nor realising how you feel. Even if you don't know what you want to say yet, that opportunity should be created, and then you will be more

likely to develop ideas to express, particularly as you hear others doing so, or in response to certain topics. It might be nice to start with debates on topics that having nothing to do with your personal situation but that you have an interest in, for example current issues in your locality, or at work. Everyone should be allowed to introduce topics, kind of like making an agenda.

If you find you need to look further afield to find someone to talk to, then do so, perhaps a grandparent, a friend's father, someone you hardly know but seem to 'click' with, or a special interest group. Don't expect those closest to you to necessarily have the skills to be everything for you. We all have certain strengths and weaknesses, no one can do *everything* well. Parents do not receive training to be parents although it is the most important thing in the world! They just have to try to make the best of it according to instinct, and what they can find out. Often they would be only too glad to help do things differently if only they knew how, so asking to talk to try to gain mutual understanding could be a huge relief to them. Ask everyone to plan to set aside time to both speak and listen. It could help to make some notes about what you want to say, to help with clarity, and prompt memory. We all need to take responsibility for our communication, as well as for our actions. Perhaps as we learn more, we might even be able to help someone else, or help the human race by finding ways of doing things a bit better in future.

You might think you are different from others, and indeed you are, but only to a certain extent (as we are all unique, and yet we all belong to the human race). You might be surprised to find that a lot of other people might think more like you than you imagined. It is quite normal for a young person starting out in an adult world to feel a bit out of place – there is so much to learn about and deal with for a start. Indeed anyone can suddenly find themselves struggling in this way. We might have been caught up in things and not thinking much about the meaning of stuff, and then suddenly start to question. There is so much noise and bustle, and emphasis put on artificial and/or superficial things. A lot of things don't seem to make sense, including people's behaviour. You might think that we have got ourselves in an awful mess, but then again, if you take a look at history you can see that we have done it before and then sorted things out again somehow. There are lots of good things too, so we can try to focus on these while we try to figure out the rest. We need variation and contrast in the world otherwise we would not be able to appreciate the good stuff as everything would just be the same – boring.

Always cut yourself some slack. If you are impatient with others around you then chances are that you are impatient with yourself too. Stop expecting so much from everyone, including yourself – we are just humans trying to bumble along, some being lucky enough to have more in their favour perhaps, but everyone has something to bring to the table, so do try not to judge.

I know it is easier said than done when you are depressed, but try to find ways to focus on the positive. Turn your thoughts away from criticising others and things around you by simply thinking about better things. You can use affirmations in many ways.

- First thing in the morning and/or last thing at night, you could just remind yourself of a couple of things to be grateful for – such as good weather, loving husband, helpful teenagers, wonderful children, our good health, our job, our good looks, our specialist skills,, etc etc.
- Anytime at all you could use affirmations to boost your own self esteem – just say them calmly to yourself several times, for several days in a row, until you start to feel they are true. Here are a few ideas, breathe deeply and try to FEEL them to be true.
 ”I am loved” (this could mean by family, partner, friends, God, or the universe, etc)
 ”I love” (this could be anything such as the above, or such as hugs, food, books, music, walks, swimming, flowers, trees, cats, sunshine, rain, whatever you can think of. Try writing down a list, and add to it every day. Draw too if you feel so inclined.
 ”I am lucky enough to be able to” (list your skills here, and also everyday things such as cook, drive, read and write, etc... anything that lets you go about your life in both normal and special or unique ways.). These are also nice to do while you are walking along, and you can add things you see around you – perhaps the bird singing in the hedge, the blossom, the sun.
- And here are some more:
 I release past fears and resentments / I am open to receive. / Life is a miraculous gift! / I am here to learn, grow, and have fun. / I am responsible for creating my own happiness. / I deserve to take good care of myself. / I nurture my body and feed my soul. / I make the time to be still, and listen to the truth. / Talking it out – heals / I express myself clearly and positively. / I forgive others and myself, and let pain go. / I am becoming more and more of who I can be. / I am ready to move forwards.
- Affirmations must be in the present tense to be effective – not some vague distant future thing
- There are also a lot of inspiring quotations out there – I have an inspiration page on my website, which I regularly add to. I also include some in my books.

Do remember that is normal for people to feel down at least some of the time, just some people hide it better or deal with it differently perhaps. I tend to think it is people who think more deeply about life who struggle a bit more with it, perhaps because a night’s partying doesn’t switch it off – it is not really the answer because it all seems a bit shallow to you.

Please don’t feel bad about yourself because of it, as obviously that would make it worse – just try to recognise the patterns and find the best ways for your unique self to deal with it. Try to look for things you can learn from difficult situations or emotions instead of trying to dismiss them. Allow yourself time to work things through instead of expecting to be unrealistically ‘normal’ all the time – just ensure that you put a limit on how long you dwell on stuff – you must move beyond it at some point – and if you let yourself work it through fully instead of trying to ignore it, then you are more likely to do this. Observe yourself and notice the patterns – then use your self-management skills – for example you might say, okay so this weekend I am going to just set time aside of myself to work this situation over, and I’ll be okay by Sunday dinner time and go out for a really

nice meal (as a reward). If you need an extra day, then take Monday off work, but be sure to return Tuesday, don't allow this to drift. This is how you take back control, and earn your own self-respect, which is much more important than other people's respect. However, you do also earn other people's respect when you take control – step back when you need to, instead of trying to be sociable – even ask people to give you a bit of space instead of coming round – knowing that you will be better company later on when you are ready - and be open, explain to them why instead of letting them feel rejected. Your true friends will understand, and will also feel good if you promise to call on them if you really need to, otherwise that you will see them when you are done. This honesty lets them see that you are managing the situation logically, and it also sets an example to give other people the permission to use these skills.

I should say here that it is really important to write things down as you work them through, rather than just trying to work them out inside your head – because your mind will tend to just get woolly and run out of steam, whereas writing it down develops clarity, mostly because there is more of a sequence to it. There are other ways you could do it of course, such as speaking out loud and making recordings, and listening back, then recording again. I can't say I've tried this, but I can imagine I might find myself laughing at myself after a bit – I must try it! What I have tried though, is to pretend I am actually having a conversation with someone, where I am both people, so I change places and speak for each one – an amazing exercise, as not only do you work through the situation, but you also get to understand the other point of view a bit, if you don't just make a parody of it – but even that would be fun.

Don't try to speak directly with other people involved in the situation, or actually send them a letter or email, until you have taken the heat out of your emotions and reached some clarity about your feelings. This way you can vent without walking out of or losing your job, or damaging your relationship (whether partner, colleague, friend, or family). Obviously, if by the end of it you have boiled it down to a few crucial bits that need addressing, then you can deal with it appropriately because the exaggerated emotional response has gone and you can be clear about what you need to do or say. You should thus be able to respectfully approach others and explain your viewpoint and ask for what you need. If you feel a need to apologise for anything, then that is fine, but don't be defensive about it or dismiss the problem that way because it will only arise again, try to be clear about your viewpoint and what steps you think need taking to remedy the situation. As long as you are prepared to listen to other people's viewpoints as well, then you should expect people to consider yours. It is the only way that solutions can ever be found that work for all parties. If there are negative things that need to be said, then you could always soften these by also pointing out any positives – for example, “I really appreciate that this is a great project, but do I think that we should take a different approach to how we..... because I feel” or “I am really grateful that you want to always do the cooking, but I would really like to sometimes have a turn. To be honest, we do have some differences in taste, and it's only fair that I get to choose what we eat and prepare it the way I want to sometimes. Also on the days I cook, perhaps you could

do the dishes, instead of it always being my job – I don't mind doing chores, but I like a bit of variation where possible, and I would enjoy the creativity of cooking.”

You cannot progress with life if you don't deal with the bits that really matter. If in the clear light of day you decide you need to make some big changes, then it will also restore your power to start making your plans gradually. Even if it is something like moving out to your own place, or a total change of career, let the power of knowing that you need to do it guide you so that you feel excited by new possibilities rather than daunted by the process of getting there. If you lose steam anywhere along the way, remind yourself that you are breaking free of a situation that you could have let yourself remain trapped in if you hadn't had the strength and insight to realise it, and the courage to do something about it.

Okay so maybe there are a few ideas here that might help you start to feel more comfortable with yourself and the world around you, and I can always help you find more if you would like to contact me. If we can find our rightful place in the world then we are likely to be able to banish depression and take back our personal power. Please do not be afraid to seek it out.

As Shakespeare wrote **"To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."**

Good luck!

Julia Woodman – Life Coach, Counsellor, Stress Consultant, and Writer



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