

25 STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING DEPRESSION

Tres Adames

During various seasons of my life I have personally dealt with depression. In my darkest times, I depended on others and God to bring me through. I also poured over numerous books on the issue of depression and have included some of the most helpful strategies I've come across that enabled me to emerge from despair. This is not meant to be a complete or exhaustive list, but only a short list of suggestions to help motivate and inspire you to find hope and healing.

1. Feelings are caused by thoughts. Notice what you think about. If your thoughts are negative, you will feel negative.
2. Start journaling—a pad of notebook paper will do. Get your emotions out of your mind and on to paper.
3. Fill your mind with positive thoughts. This doesn't mean you should resort to wishful thinking, but make it a habit to think realistically and redemptively.
4. Read the Bible and meditate on the hope and promises of God.
5. Write inspiring Bible verses and positive affirmations on a stack of index cards. Read them daily.

6. Start challenging distortions in your thinking. A list of common distortions can [be found here](#).
7. Pull out a piece of paper and divide it into three columns. In the first column, write down the specific thoughts that are making you feel bad. In the second column, identify your cognitive distortions (listed in the link in number 6 above). Write down the distortions that correlate to your original thoughts in column one. In the third column, write out a more balanced, positive, and realistic response to your original thoughts based on what you discovered in the second column. Read over your completed list several times.
8. Spend time with positive people. Cynicism is very contagious.
9. Track your depression daily. There are apps [such as this one](#) that help track your mood and let you know if you are improving.
10. When you pray, be very honest with God about how you are feeling. He is not afraid of our raw emotions.
11. Find a community of support.
Whether it is a local church or support group, find a place where you can openly share your life with others in a safe environment. Having others you can open up to will greatly enrich your life. True friends offer support and give perspective when you're stuck in negative thinking.
12. Invite an acquaintance to a cup of coffee and focus on them rather than yourself.
13. Watch a funny movie or television show. Allow yourself to laugh at the lighter, ridiculous side of life.
14. Listen to upbeat music that is inspiring. Make playlist and listen to it everyday.

15. Read books that will help you overcome depression. Some suggestions:
 - [*The Feeling Good Handbook*](#), by David Burns
 - [*Ten Days to Self Esteem*](#), by David Burns
 - [*The Law of Happiness*](#), by Henry Cloud
 - [*Happiness is a Choice*](#), by Paul D. Meier and Frank B. Minirth
16. Get out of the house. If you have trouble getting motivated, make plans with a friend to go do something.
17. Do cardiovascular exercise. Getting your heart rate up will release endorphins.
18. Do one act of kindness a day. Getting the negative focus off yourself goes a long way toward feeling better.
19. Rekindle an old hobby you loved as a kid. Whether it's drawing, singing or whatever, reconnect with the child within and learn how to have fun again.
20. Eat healthier and stay away from sweets and refined carbohydrates.
21. Seek the help of a professional counselor or life coach.
22. Sometimes depression is caused by a chemical imbalance. Don't be afraid to talk to your doctor about antidepressant options. If you don't like the idea of being on drugs, consider taking the natural route. Do some research on natural supplements. St. John's Wort has been called "Nature's Prozac," and has been shown to alleviate mild to moderate depression. Kava is a herb that helps the body relax and has been used by many to alleviate anxiety.
23. Adopt a dog or cat. Contact with animals has been shown to decrease anxiety and depression in medical patients.

24. Ask a few friends to check on you daily. Have them ask you how you are feeling.
25. Investigate your life and see if there is a major cause behind your depression. Maybe it's a job you hate, a relationship that needs mending or one that needs to end. If you could change three things in your life, what would they be? What actions can you take? If you can't change them, how can you adjust your attitude or perspective?

***Finally, more than anything—
Don't give up.***

© 2013 Tres Adames

www.phoenixchristiancounselor.com

This article is not meant to be used, nor should it be used, to diagnose or treat any medical condition. For diagnosis or treatment of any medical problem, consult a physician. The author is not responsible for any specific health need that may require medical supervision and is not liable for any damages or negative consequences from any treatment, action, application or preparation, to any person reading or following the information in this book. References are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute endorsement of any websites or other sources. Readers should be aware that the websites listed in this article may change.