

# **Your Highest Potential**

## **Depression – Am I Crazy?**

Let us talk about happiness. Most of us want to be happy, all the time, no matter what is going on around us! It's plain and simple. But, being happy, how do you do that, get there, be that?

Maybe happy is not really what you are looking for. After all, happy is just like any other emotion...it comes and it goes. Perhaps what you seek is the ability to feel joy. Not just alive and surviving, but energized, excited, and living the life of your dreams. Imagine feeling joy beyond your wildest dreams as you live in your body, glad to be you, putting energy into your life's work, and creating stimulating experiences. Joy also means accepting your human emotions, experiencing the ups and downs of life, while learning to breathe and let things pass in their own time.

So how do we gain this feeling of joy? As paradoxical as it may sound, perhaps for some of us the path to joy leads us first through depression.

### **What does depression look like?**

Lately Jane just does not feel like herself. She does not have the energy to do much of anything lately. She lies around a lot, feeling empty and not sure which way to go. Decisions seem overwhelming. She often cries although nothing in specific is wrong. Jane feels shame, wonders what is wrong with her, and thinks she must be crazy. Everyday she asks herself, "why do I feel this way?" and "why can't I make this go away?" She musters up enough energy to make it through the day and creates a happy facade so people will not see the pain she is in. Jane is depressed.

Depression is not the same thing as feeling sad, blue, or down. Most of us have our ups and downs, our good days and bad. Everyday events, and our reactions to them, sometimes interfere with our peace of mind. Some unhappiness, the blues, or an occasional low mood is common when disappointed. This sadness is all part of life.

In contrast, depression affects the entire body, not just the mind. It can lead to an imbalance in the delicate chemistry of your brain and affect your emotions, feelings, thoughts, behaviors, physical functioning, and health. It can also affect the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you see the world. With depression, the misery can be so great, and persist for so many weeks without relief, that a person may begin to think that life is not worth living anymore.

### **Symptoms of Depression**

- Depressed mood for most of the day
- Persistent sad or "empty" feelings
- Loss of appetite or loss of weight
- Eating more than usual and gaining weight
- Trouble sleeping, insomnia, or oversleeping
- Anxiety
- Feeling tired all the time or finding everything is an effort
- Not caring anymore about work, hobbies, friends, or sexual activity
- Difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly, or indecisiveness
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Excessive or inappropriate guilt
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts

Other problems people experience during a clinical depression include:

- Frequently feeling on the verge of tears
- Waking up early in the morning, with difficulty returning to sleep
- Feeling worse in the morning
- Feeling anxious or irritable
- A gloomy view of the future
- Physical pain or headaches
- Cravings for certain foods

### **Accepting Depression**

If you are struggling with depression, you may have tried countless therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, energy healers, self-help books, and programs. You may have practiced the power of positive thinking, studied the law of attraction, practiced meditation, or looked into religion for you answers. Through all these strategies, you have been at war with your depression, doing everything within your power to get rid of it. Pharmaceutical companies try to convince us that depression is an illness caused by an imbalance in brain chemicals. If we simply take medication, we can quickly get back to feeling better again. If only the answer were so simple. Perhaps there is a gift beyond depression that can only unfold if you first accept your experience instead of trying so hard to make it disappear.

### **Depression and Personal Growth**

An easy start to shifting depression is to consider that depression is not dysfunctional, not a mental illness, but deeply meaningful. Consider the idea that depression may be a naturally arising expression on your journey of evolutionary growth. Yes, depression is dark, and a time of misery and suffering. Yet, it also a time when we ask deeply personal questions: Who am I? What does it mean to be human? What makes life worthwhile? Is depression really something that we should avoid, or an illness that we should "cure?" Should our profound questions be pushed down into silence with

medication and drug therapy? The distress you feel is real, the suffering immensely painful, and there is a very real risk of ending your own life. However, what if you are in distress but yet not ill? When you look inside, do you really believe, on a soul level, that your pain is simply due to a chemical imbalance - or might there also be a meaningful spiritual aspect to your journey through depression?

### **Why Does Depression Occur?**

Depression is a time of big change, a time of choosing if we dare release the beliefs that have kept us alive, surviving, and conformed. Depression is a time of questioning the foundational beliefs we hold. This is not a bad thing. Yet, when we question deeply held beliefs the problem lies in the fact that we temporarily lose safety, meaning, and purpose of life. Leaving something behind and moving into something unknown can cause different reactions for different people. Some people sail more easily through change, but most of us tend to go kicking and screaming. Indeed, when great change is upon us, for many people the experience will turn into a period of great depression.

Depression involves an interim of releasing old ways of believing yet we have not yet embodied new beliefs or new life skills. Depression, and thoughts of suicide, happen when we are in turmoil, caught between the end of an old way of living and a terrifying desire to live in a new way. In this transition, we cannot feel the joy of being alive. Internal anxiety rises and there is nothing we can do to run or hide from the conscious realization that we feel alone. We feel lethargic, powerless, and trapped. It seems as if the pain exceeds our capacity to deal with it.

### **One Step Forward**

If you have feelings of depression, you have those feelings for a reason. Accept that your depression is real, that you feel miserable, and that you are questioning whether you choose to continue living in the same way that you have always lived. Remind yourself that there is no mandate that you must be happy and content. You may eventually discover that your depression was more profoundly necessary than you can yet consciously imagine. Depression deals with a deeper relationship issue with the self, the transformation of your physical body, and a deeper connection to your spirit.

Who Understands Your Depression?

Who has the meaning of your depression? You do. Consider asking yourself not to judge yourself or your depression so harshly. Invite a small bit of curiosity to your experience:

- Is it wrong to be depressed?
- Should you be socially outgoing, interactive, or not a loner?
- Should you get on with life?

- If you are asking yourself, "should I live?" what is your answer?
- What would make your life worth living?

## **Depression Runs Its Course**

Depression signifies a great time of deep transition. If you are depressed, it is natural to want the pain to end. However, consider the idea that perhaps your pain is necessary. You feel the heartache, the loneliness, the despair of your life. For a while, perhaps your pain needs to run its course. It may just be a natural outcome of wanting to evolve and live your life differently, but at the same time being terrified, uncertain, and grieving for what you must let go in order to move forward. At some point during your depression you will arrive at a decision making point. You can decide to release certain beliefs, adopt new ways of believing, and move forward with the new experiences your life will bring. Alternatively, you could decide to remain in your suffering for a long time. A third choice exists and that is to end your life as a way of ending the painful conflict. There is no right choice to make. It is your life and you must choose what feels right for you, not only in your mind and emotions, but also in your heart and soul.

## **Do You Choose Life?**

During your time of depression, you are considering whether you choose to take the next step in your evolution. Do you decide to let go of self-doubt, move beyond the limitations of your former beliefs, and bring new balance to your mind, body, and spirit? Do you consciously choose to be alive in a new way? If so, for what purpose and meaning? When you accept that your depression is a time of change and release, you can begin to see that you are asking yourself to live in a new way. You are making a choice to release formerly held beliefs and discover what lies beyond those beliefs. Offer yourself compassion as you see that your depression has significance and importance.

## **Breathe**

What to do if you are depressed? Breathe. If you can accept that your depression has deep personal meaning, if you can accept the experience in which you find yourself, and if you make the conscious decision to be alive, then the best therapy is to consciously breathe. You don't need any fancy breathing techniques. Just breathe more deeply than you are right now. Breathing helps move the heaviness of depression. Breathe with intention to fill up with life. You already know that depression does not hold much light, not much energy. Breathing will arouse energy. You can't just wait for energy to flow into you. You must decide to choose life, breath, and energy. If you can, get up and go for a walk outside. Get some fresh air and sunshine. Breathe. If you just arouse a little bit of energy, it will help you to generate a bit more energy, and that uplifts you and gets you moving out of the depression.

Depression involves the very real emotional despair of living day to day with real hopelessness. There is no one right way through depression. Your life is very important, including those times when you are in transition or depressed. Use the ideas above to help support yourself as you choose to bring new meaning into your life.

Dr. Annette Colby, RD can help you take the pain out of life, turn difficult emotions into joy, release stress, end emotional eating, and move beyond depression into an extraordinary life! Annette is the author of [Your Highest Potential](#) and has the unique ability to show you how to spark an amazing relationship with your life! Visit [www.LovingMiracles.com](http://www.LovingMiracles.com) to access hundreds of content filled articles and sign up for a Free subscription to *Loving Miracles!* newsletter.