

THE (dis)COMFORT OF DEPRESSION

Your worst enemy can not harm you as much as your own unguarded thoughts.

~ The Buddha ~

The fundamental characteristic of life is 'change' and yet most people reject change. When change happens and our illusions of reality collapses, we often get depressed. Fortunately, as soon as we realize that illusions are just that >> 'illusions', it dissolves and the ego loses power.

Every body experiences life differently, depending on things like environmental stimuli, age, our state of consciousness and our social conditioning. We live in a consumer society, constantly allowing material goods to make us feel better; filling illusionary holes in our existence. Our reality has been constructed (conditioned) by harsh external input such as magazines and television.

We could be more grateful just to be alive and focus on what is really valuable: compassion, love, our health. Often times our hearts swell when we see a sunset, a moment of natural beauty; this is because it draws us back to who we really are, internally we experience a sense of connection and sacred alignment. We know this, and yet, according to a Harvard Study in 2007, almost 10% of the population in America experience major depressive disorder over the course of one year.

Your mind is your instrument, learn to be its master, not its slave.

~ Nemez Sasson ~

Depression is created in our minds. The Buddha said: ~ "All things are preceded by the mind, led by the mind, created by the mind." ~ When we get carried away with ourselves and our lives, our ego, being strong and overpowering, takes charge.

Depression often occurs because of life altering experiences, such as death, divorce, or terminal illness. At this point we may feel overwhelmed with sadness, emptiness, hopelessness and loneliness. We have low moods, lack self confidence & self esteem, we loose our appetite, and loose interest in life. Exactly what the ego feeds on: negative energy.

Depression generally hits those who are unhappy with who and where they are in life, which happens

when we gravitate toward what magazines and tv tells us is best for us. We have become a culture that grasps at sensory gratification, and have confined our selves to a material world. We have lost our connection to the inner landscape; our spiritual self.

We need to realize that the struggles and mishaps we endure on this plane of existence are the lessons our souls have chosen to learn in order to advance spiritually. We get bogged down by what happens to us, by what we don't have and think we need. But we really do have all we need. The Universe always provides us with that. It is a matter of trusting this statement.

We are all part of nature, like trees and plants, but because we have a brain, we have the capability to question our existence, and be unhappy about our life. We look for external gratification and find our selves more and more depressed, even as we reach and surpass goals we set for ourselves. Goals like 'I want to be rich enough to afford a BMW'.

Things are not what they appear to be; nor are they otherwise.

~ Surangama Sutra~

When we say that we are depressed, we may only 'think' we are depressed, which in turn causes a chemical imbalance in our system. Research shows that less than 10% of all clinical depression is thought to have chemical basis; by far the majority of depression are 'learned' phenomena. Low serotonin levels are a **result**, not a cause of depression.

Depression is actually a state of high arousal, with a high concentration of cortisol/ noradrenaline (a substance released naturally by nerve cells). Having a lot to do with the way society and life styles have changed.

Forget about your life situation and pay attention to your life.

~ Eckhart Tolle ~

The link between what happens to a person and how they feel as a result, depends on how they relate to it, how reality is interpreted. There are many ways of dealing with adversity; a lot has to do with our thinking style.

Consider this:

All emotions come from thought. Learning to catch negative, depressive thoughts, and challenging them can have dramatic results. Changing behavior, perceptions, and thought processes are vitally important to overcoming depression.

One of the first things we need to do to eliminate depression is to **understand** that we are capable of changing our mind (and mood). This takes courage and intelligence.

Our limited 'ego state' can be eliminated by awareness. This is not easy, but self awareness can (and most likely will) lead to freedom from depressive thinking.

Awaken the subconscious mind; our actions and behaviors follow our subconscious instructions. Commit yourself to yourself, and put in the effort of positive thinking. This can be jump started by affirmations. It takes discipline.

What's really good for us lies right beneath the surface. According to divine law this deeper good is right for all concerned. We live in a competitive world, which leads to separation and sharpens the illusions we have about our lives. If we stop trying to appease 'ego', and crawl inside ourselves, we find a vast landscape of mostly uncharted territory. When we tread carefully, with open hearts and open minds, we may find peace.

Our task, then, is to expand our awareness, as well as our perception and our power to create. With commitment and self awareness we can penetrate the illusion. We can venture forth, step by step, overcoming resistance to transcend. We will find out that there is another life beyond the 'ego state'. This is where spiritual strength comes into play, which will lead you away from depression. Every step will lead you to new vistas that are real; a newly gained reality opens to a life wider and fuller. Resulting in more understanding of the beautiful deep meaning of life.

It takes a tremendous amount of investment. We all possess discipline, courage, humility and the ability to commit. We have to avail ourselves to these potentials. We have to be open and accept the challenge, and remind ourselves that we (and our minds) are constantly changing. It is the nature of nature.

Plant the seed of meditation, and reap the fruit of peace of mind.

A Buddhist viewpoint on depression is that of self centeredness; indulging the ego. A road away from this might be by helping others, such as the elderly or the infirm. Another way is to still the mind through meditation. Here we are the 'glass full of troubled water, that, when left unstirred, becomes clear'.

Silence is the doorway into the deepest experience of being. When we meditate emphasizing compassion and loving kindness, it may lead us to forgive and have compassion not only for others, but for ourselves as well. Remember: happiness is a state of mind.

Assuage the winds of your thoughts and there will be no waves on the ocean of your mind. Harness the power of your mind, and create a life that is worth living. Your answers are inside your heart.