

DEPRESSION – IS IT ALL BAD?

Depression does not result from a single event, but from a combination of biological, psychological, social and lifestyle factors.

The Better Health Chanel

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Depression is an aberrant mental state that is unnecessarily controlling too many lives. But, is it what it is being made out to be? Read on because the content will likely surprise you.

We associate depression with being in a fugue state, now described as *Dissociative fugue*, that is further classified as a *dissociative disorder*, *conversion disorder*, or as *mental, behavioural and somatic symptom disorder*. (How we love to name things.)

Depression is a psychiatric abnormality that is becoming increasingly prevalent, characterised by amnesia involving one's own personal identity, including the memories, personality, and other identifying characteristics of individuality. The state can last days, months or even a lifetime.

What is being missed here is that depression is a defence mechanism that is triggered by the brain when it senses it is being overpowered by excessive stress. According to the Centers for Disease Control in the United States, unresolved stress is the underlying cause of 90% of all sickness, but worse yet, it is a silent killer.

In order to control the effects of prolonged and unresolved stress, the brain puts you into a kind of mild trance, the downside of which puts you slightly out of touch with other things going on in your life. When in this fugue state, many suffers retreat to their beds where sleep suppresses the effects of depression, at least in the short term. While depression is a lifeline offered by the brain, it does nothing to eradicate the underlying cause – that being *unresolved stress*. And how can you deal with that? Read my paper, *Externalising and Dealing With Stress*, a down to earth practical way for you to externalise and eliminate stress, rather than internalising it and storing it in your sub-conscious brain where it builds momentum with the ability to grossly and negatively impact your life.

I studied counselling psychology (Santa Clara University) and applied psychology (The Fielding Institute, Santa Barbara) both in California, in the U.S.A. I hasten to add that I am not a graduate or licenced psychologist, but I do practice my version of it in my clinic because stress can have a huge negative impact on how some patients respond to treatment. Chiropractic (the real deal) has much to do with correcting neurological dysfunction, so the two go hand-in-hand.

The premise behind psychology is in identifying the memories of negative past events that are stored in the patient's sub-conscious mind, and rationalising them with the hope it will take the sting out of the memory. While studying at Santa Clara University it became apparent that I was not a good (rotten, actually) Gestalt interventionist. It is probably the most widely used intervention in which the psychologist challenges the patient with...*And how did you that make you feel?* ...and... *What did you do next?*

I'm more of a meat and potatoes man (literally – hence my book *Going Vegan Is a Big Missed-Steak*). In everything I do I always try to get to the core of the matter. Treat the symptoms and the malady will persist—identify and treat the cause and there will be no symptoms. As an analogy, I tell my patients that if their smoke alarm goes off at 3 a.m. and they turn the alarm off and go back to bed, their house will likely burn down with them in it. The alarm is simply a symptom, so go directly to the cause and put the fire out.

You may be forming the opinion that I'm not really a fan of a lot of what some practitioner of psychology claim it/they can achieve, and you are absolutely correct.

I acknowledge that it does have its place, especially in helping teenagers to understand and overcome the vagaries of approaching adulthood, and the mental cruelty of some of their peers. On the flip side, some psychologists plant thoughts in patient's minds that are simply not true.

For example, a much-publicised case that occurred in Texas involved a young lady with mental problems. The psychologist convinced the young lady that her problems arose from her being sexually molested by her father when she was a child, and that she should go to the police. The father was devastated, but fortunately during the trial the young lady realised the claims she was making had been implanted by the psychologist, and were without substance. The matter was dropped, but not before it all but tore the family apart. And what happened to the psychologist? She was hanged, drawn and quartered in the village square for all to see? No, she wasn't. She walked away Scott-free.

Psychologists deal with patients who are often desperate, and are at their most vulnerable to outside influence. This is a massive responsibility which too often does not get the attention it deserves. If you think I'm being hard on psychologists, best you don't get me started on chiropractors who apparently believe the art of their craft is confined to indiscriminately banging on backs.

With my method of coping with stress, it puts the patient in absolute control by identifying and mitigating the possible effects of the issues before they are internalised, whereby the person becomes subjective, and not objective, resulting in the trauma being stored in the sub-conscious brain.

In my practice I find (as does global research support) that females are more amenable to talking about their problems, and more openly seek help. Men who are affected by mental problems tend to view it as a weakness, and attempt to keep it to themselves. This is apparent in many combat troops who return home suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that results in way too broken marriages, and unnecessary suicides.

I'm not sure about men finding their female side, but I do know that I am more intuitive than most males, as are most females, as a result of which I have a comfortable association with most of those of the fairer sex.

On the upside, I have been honoured by a hug and a kiss on the cheek from a number of delighted female patients who have followed my advice. Perhaps it's a good thing that men are not as forthcoming—but I still get the occasional hug without the peck on the cheek. It's a heterosexual male thing.

If you suffer depression, chances are I can help you to mitigate the thoughts and memories that are troubling you. Give it a try—you have nothing to lose other than the dark cloud that follows you everywhere you go. And let's not forget sex—stress and depression are as effective in initiating coitus interruptus as is ice water.
