

Depression as a Factor

In an ideal world, we are ready for anything when we want to be ready. We are ready, willing and able to do the thing – whatever that might be. Even the best of us have times when we're not ready, willing and able. When this happens we often rely on employing tricks to get us through. Sometimes it's by sheer willpower that we through the day – getting the kids ready for school, getting up for work, doing the dishes or laundry, or cooking a meal. However, when you suffer from depression, the willpower weakens, and the fire from passion or anger disappears.

It may not have always been this way, and it likely will not remain so – but it often feels like it will. Depression can be a persistent shadow suppressing your interest and your energy. This feeling can cycle over days or weeks, before it lifts again. However, when it arrives, it is like a thief in the night. Somehow, without you noticing, it has stolen your passions, energy, and the strength of emotion behind all you would hold dear. When it strikes it can be very difficult to remember one key fact:

Your Feelings are real, but they aren't reality...



Lifestyle

For those in the lifestyle, it's important to remember that the mind/body connection is our medium. Be that sensory play, sadomasochism, power exchange, erotic hypnosis, or anything else. The vast majority involves activating the body and mind together depending on the things that flip our switches and turns us on. When struggling with depression, the wiring gets dampened or crossed. This issue can present itself in any variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- Experiences don't feel genuine, but rather forced or phony
- What was a turn-on becomes exhausting or agitating
- Some activities reach overload a lot sooner than expected
- Sudden need to switch off or disconnect from play or socialize
- Dwelling or intrusive thoughts interrupting your interactions

Reality Check

If you or a loved one is struggling with depression, you realize that depression doesn't exist in a vacuum. The effects of depression can effect everything; energy levels, ability to remain engaged or focused, interests & passions, sex drive, etc. This is a factor which impacts ALL aspects of life. Clinical Depression (of which there are many varieties) is not just situational, but is often chronic and pervasive. Anyone suffering from this knows and understands that you can't bully it, negate it, or just "get over it".

Unfortunately, those impacted from the outside rarely understand it. More often than not, those on the outside struggle to "solve the problem" with information or single points of action. As if any one thing, any one magic wand or

silver bullet holds the key. It doesn't. There is no ONE thing that defeats this thief that depletes one's store of energy, will, passion, or caring.

There is no one "easy trick" to managing and living with it. The reality is far more complex and challenging, because you are fighting for your emotional life. That is the essence of it, a fight – and it needs to be viewed in such a light. You cannot quiet, appease, or make peace with it. You can accept it is there, your shadow or specter which comes and goes at a whim, but you cannot embrace it. Depression requires a Fight on All Fronts, every day, every time. It's an exhausting emotional war that few seem to understand or appreciate.

What does this mean? How DO you fight it?? With everything you've got and by any means necessary – as long as it doesn't harm you or those around you.

Suggestions

One of the "keys" to fighting depression I've heard over and over again from friends, colleagues, and my own personal experience, is that you need to do anything & everything possible. Every moment comes down to a choice: will this help you fight depression, or help it win. Every choice is a coin to the scale which tips according to whether you invest in yourself or in the depression. It is a war of both battles and attrition.

Depending on your inclination, be you introvert or extrovert, this means engaging in what recharges you. For extroverts this means being around others, going to events, seeing activity. For introverts this means balancing smaller socializations with quiet time and activities which involve focused attention such as reading or listening to music, artistic activities, etc. (An important note between behavior of extroverts and introverts is that, due to the isolating nature of depression, the natural inclination of the introvert

seek solitude can mean loved ones may not even notice the person is suffering for a while and can become a feeding ground for depressive episodes if unchecked.)

But it does not and cannot stop there. Fighting depression means learning EVERY factor that impacts you, and making the choices to improve your odds. Some of these include:

- Avoiding alcohol or too much sugar ('cause sugar drop is a BITCH)
- Ensuring you are getting critical vitamins and minerals in your diet
- Taking supplements such as B-Complex and CoQ10 to help boost your energy
- Watching your diet, eating lighter so you're not "weighed down and tired" (especially carb and fat rich)
- Getting your exercise in, preferably during daylight hours to elevate your cardio, oxygen, and mood elevating hormones
- Checking with your doctor for underlying physical factors such as anemia, diabetes, hypothyroidism, low testosterone, or Addison's disease
- Using a light on a timer to turn on 30min before the morning alarm, as is common with those who combat seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

Even with all of this being done (which helps significantly) there is also the reality that while many days you come out ahead, other days the depression does. It's not a matter of keeping score, crossing some finishing line, or "winning". It's a part of life, it's the daily experiences and journey – and all the choices that come with it.

Communication & Support

From the outside, a loved one suffering from depression can be seen as withdrawing from you.

While it may feel very personal in that way, it's important to realize that the withdrawal is not *From* you, but rather *Into* themselves. The feeling that it's away from you, as a loved one (be that family, friend, or partner) is actually a message of insecurity or vulnerability



in losing the one struggling with depression. That's how it infects and erodes lives – it touches everyone around it. Our own inoculation to this is being Aware and learning all we can to help the fight.

For those with depression, it means you need to confide in those close to you that this is the struggle. Others are not mind readers, they can't always intuit your feelings, thoughts, and moods. They cannot know what you are experiencing unless you communicate it effectively.

For those that know others with depression, it means being an open listener. If you suspect they are facing the challenges with depression, ask them. Don't guess or assume – state what you have noticed, that you care, and want to hear from them about what they are experiencing or need. This ensures the offer for support, time, or assistance is made without judgment or supposition.

For both, please share or use this post in any way you need to start or further your communication.

Encouragement

So for those that struggle with depression I say this: Fight the good fight! Use every means available to you. Change

the diet, get the exercise, and build new helpful habits. Call on those you trust to help, explore counseling, and find a confidant where you can. Never stop trying, never stop fighting. Because it's YOUR future and that of those who love and share life with you.

For those on the outside, be you friend, family, or lover, I say this: You will likely never understand, but you have a choice to Listen & Trust that those who are suffering from depression are being honest about it. Help them where you can, facilitate changes in schedule, in diet, in habit. Don't pull it apart, critique, or analyze – but rather take it as an act of love and faith that it is real, true, and requires fresh ideas as much as the tenacity and structure to fight it effectively. Be compassionate on the tough days, and grateful on the strong ones. It doesn't mean that every day is a clear victory, but rather that the balance on the whole is going in the right direction.

It's a team effort – and it doesn't matter which part of the team you are on.

Keep on Keeping on...

-Sir Vice

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