

7 REASONS

WHY 95% OF PEOPLE FAIL TO BEAT DEPRESSION

AND

HOW TO AVOID THEM



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INTRODUCTION

How can you tell if you are depressed? It may seem like a silly question, but **a surprising number of us may fail to spot the signs** that we might be suffering from depression despite escalating figures for depression statistics from over the last ten years suggesting that as many as **one in ten** of us is depressed at any given time.

There are many reasons why we might not realize that we are suffering from depression, and this short book looks at the top seven.

There is a **pervasive stigma** that is attached to depression. If someone has cancer there is no blame attached to their illness, but there has always been a stigma attached to anyone suffering from an emotional health issue.

Depression can't be seen, and often **others can't see or understand** how it affects someone's life. This is the number one concern that people suffering from depression have that prevents them from seeking treatment. Sadly, not getting help only **exacerbates depression** and prevents many people from getting the support they require.

The stigma really kicks in at work. Admitting to co-workers that you're depressed is like that nightmare where you're **standing in front of the whole class and you've forgotten to put on your clothes**. It almost seems easier for us to admit we've got chronic diarrhea than a mental health problem, including it feeling like a more justifiable reason for a long trip to the bathroom during office hours. Yet, depression has been estimated to cause 20% of days lost from work.¹

1 Das-Munshi et al. (2008) cited in McManus S, Bebbington P, Jenkins R, Brugha T. (eds.) (2016) Mental health and wellbeing in England: Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014. Leeds: NHS Digital [Accessed 5 Oct 2016] Available at: <http://content.digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB21748/apms-2014-full-rpt.pdf>

Statistics² show that anxiety mixed with **depression is the most common mental disorder** with roughly a quarter of the population experiencing some kind of mental health problem in the course of a year.

There's a distinct difference between the sexes in how depression is addressed. Women are more likely to be treated for a mental health problem, but men are three times as likely to commit suicide. It's been explained that **women will seek help more quickly than men; men, on the other hand, are more likely to follow through** on a suicide attempt.

But, while friends, family and employers may act as though it's "your fault" or that you "don't have the stamina" to deal with what life throws at you, people who suffer with depression often feel that they have nowhere to go, often blaming themselves. Thus, it becomes an invisible disability **that takes over everything in your life**.

Perceiving a mental health problem as a sign of weakness, and therefore being afraid to admit to it, may **lead us to fail to notice the signs** from the obvious to the subtle. Many of us who have suffered with depression have **kept things a secret** from those closest to us.

Although we intellectually know that suicidal thoughts, feelings of worthlessness, withdrawing from friends and family, and constant fatigue are signs of depression, we may **stay in denial about our problems**, hoping and praying that they go away.

Unlike a physical problem, such as a broken bone, diagnostic testing for depression is complex and there is no definitive 'cut and dry' test like an x-ray. Doctors and other clinicians look for signs, and it **takes some pretty experienced professionals** to confidently diagnose any mental health problem.

2 NICE (2011). Common mental health disorders | Guidance and guidelines | NICE. [online] Available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg123> [Accessed 25 Aug 2015].

Of course, we all manifest symptoms in different ways and because of the complexity, this short book has been written to help you look at **seven behaviors of people who are depressed** that also serve to keep them in a depressed state.

Could you be depressed without realizing it?

7 REASONS WHY 95% OF PEOPLE FAIL TO BEAT DEPRESSION AND HOW TO AVOID THEM.

1. They didn't recognize they had a problem; denying the depression became the new normal.



As depression becomes more prevalent, it's commonly being accepted as "**the new normal**" by large swathes of the population. This throws a blanket of denial over the problem, which stops people from seeking support.

When people deny they are depressed it's not that they deliberately lie to anyone; it's that **they lie to themselves out of necessity** to keep going.

From the outside, denial **may look like an ignorant state** in which to live, but it is a very practical way of keeping a problem at bay. **Denial is a form of survival.** People who are denying their own depression need to be left alone until they are ready to come out of hiding on their own terms.

Many **addictions are created to assist the individual to deny his/her problems.** Although this may seem self-destructive, it must be recognized that the addiction is actually a form of survival. It is about surviving the depression by burying the painful feelings that go with being chronically depressed. For many people, **the pain of addiction is not as great as the pain of depression.**

2. They didn't get help sooner.



The thought that someone might know you need help is worse than not getting the help you need.

Around 60% of people with major depression **never look for appropriate treatment**, and the consequences can be devastating: personal suffering, missed work, broken marriages, health problems, and in the worst cases, death.

The World Health Organization ranks depression as one of the **world's most disabling diseases**. Yet with treatment, people can feel better very, very fast. So what keeps us from seeking help?

Here are some of the most common reasons people avoid seeking help.

- Depression **affects self-esteem**. Consequently, people often don't feel they deserve help because depression has a terrible ability to warp the mind.
- Depression also **saps the precious energy** it can take to seek help.
- Depression often comes with a **sense of hopelessness**, or a belief that things won't change no matter what you do, which doesn't help when it comes to deciding to get treatment.
- However, not getting treatment can make things even worse. The hopelessness, if left unchecked, can **feed a vicious cycle of shame**, guilt, and inertia that worsen symptoms over time.
- Despite more celebrities and public figures talking about their own struggles with depression, there's still a **societal stigma** against mental illness that continues to persist.
- Depression can make people feel that their symptoms are **their fault**, the consequence of which is one of the most dangerous barriers to treatment.

- They think, **“If I give it time, I’ll snap out of it.”** Although a case of the blues passes with time, clinical depression may linger indefinitely and become more severe which only exacerbates the aforementioned symptoms.

Getting help quickly, whether it’s from a therapist or taking on a self-help program, can **help you to avoid becoming further depressed.** The effect may be immediate because there is an incredible force at work when you share your story with others.

3. Overthinking it.



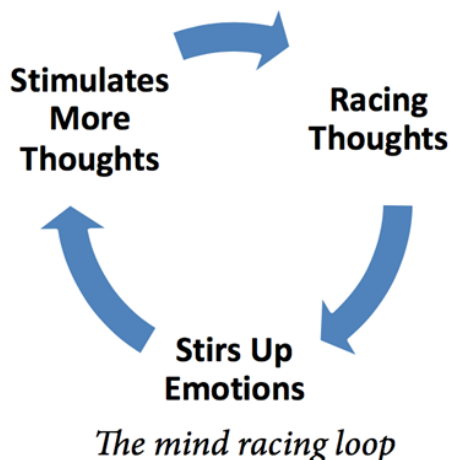
Overthinking is examining and **reexamining negative emotions, thoughts, and memories.**

While standard worrywarts fret about the future, over-thinkers **circle their negative mental wagons** around past occurrences, become preoccupied with them, and may stop moving forward.

Not only does overthinking become a pattern with practice, but also the **thoughts tend to get darker over time**. A mind overwhelmed with these thoughts has a natural tendency towards despair, or panic, or both. It is easy to see how overthinking can lead to or worsen depression and anxiety.

Overthinking is what I like to call 'mind racing'. **Mind racing is a psychic disease** (or dis-ease.) It's seemingly epidemic because everyone does it and it seems unstoppable. But it works in the same way for everyone.

This is mind racing's method of operation:



As the mind races away in the brain, it **fixates on an idea and goes over and over it**: we're no good; nothing good will ever happen to

us; we're worthless and stupid. What then happens, those thoughts stimulate emotions like fear and panic. Those emotions play out, and not in a good way. We go into fight or flight mode which then stirs up more fear and anxiety, and so it goes on.

On its own, **mind racing could cause us to become depressed.** If we did nothing else except learn how to master the mind, this could be the only thing we need to help us to beat depression fast.

Sometimes the answer is very simple, and in this case, it's **mindfulness meditation.** Making mindfulness part of your daily practice will help you to avoid depression.

4. Projecting into a negative future.



Focusing on the future to prevent you from the **awfulness of what's going on** now is common for anyone suffering from depression.

All humans tend to spend a lot of time mentally living in the future, and mostly not in a good way. If we are currently depressed, fearing the future so much that **we can't see anything positive in it will certainly make us feel worse.**

This way of thinking is indeed a great way to make life a lot more miserable and limited than necessary. The key to solving this problem is, of course, to live as much as you can in **the present moment - the only moment in which you ever really live.** This moment right now is all there ever was and [probably] will be.

Mindfulness helps to gather up our attention and escort it into the *here and now*. Bringing ourselves into this literally **brehtaking space** can help clear away the negativity that surrounds us when we're in a full depressive episode.

The idea is that by being in the present moment, we are **better able to experience the reality of our lives**, rather than when we are giving significance to the recreation of both our past and our unknown future. This can help us to alleviate current distress and hopelessness, giving us the breathing space we need to take stock and fulfill our potential as a loving person who is simply depressed.

Being in this space is at the **heart of healing from depression - fast.** It helps us to mop up past regrets and calm the frantic mind that focuses on a desolate future. It helps us to discover that **we are part of something bigger** that we can connect to. It helps us to recover from distress, teaching us how to get a profound perspective on life that stays with us even when we experience its peaks and troughs.

Once we have discovered how easy it is to get into this space through mindfulness and acceptance, we have the tools to **achieve our potential** as warm, excited, happy, whole human beings.

Avoid depression by staying in the present moment. We gain a **better understanding of how our minds**, feelings, and bodies are connected.

This resulting acceptance will help us understand that the answer lies within us and that we have the power to help ourselves move from hurting to healing and on to **a free and fulfilling life**.

5. They live with toxic emotions.



As unbelievable as it might seem, some of us live on a rollercoaster of toxic emotions. These toxic emotions are so powerful that it becomes almost impossible to climb off of the ride, and **we become so addicted that we can't help it**.

Toxic emotions are kept in the drug store buried deep within our inner world. Open the door and you'll find bottles of fear, shame, excitement, stress, self-hate, lust, and worry. The more we thrive on

these emotions, the harder it is to live without them. **They give us the feeling of being alive.**

We like this feeling for two reasons. The first and main reason is that **it keeps us away from our inner turmoil** and depression, which comes back if we dare to sit still. The second reason is that it kick-starts the fight or flight response which encourages the body to flood us with the stress hormone cortisol.

Our inner moral compass is **skewed towards excitement**, and if there's no current drama or chaos, then we create some to get a "fix". Often we don't even realize that we're doing it, and yet we say "I don't know why drama always follows me around!"

However, it can have a huge detrimental affect on our emotional stability as, over time, we normalize a state of constantly being upset. On a physical level, **too much cortisol leads to burn out**. Science has proven the link between excess stress hormone production and a weakened immune system.

We veer towards living on toxic emotions if we've been raised in a chaotic or dysfunctional family. It's probably all that we know, and so **we therefore think that it's normal**. Also, because there are so many of us, it's not difficult to hook up with similarly like-minded people.

How do you learn to avoid toxic emotions? Mindfulness is a great way to **steer your attention away from drama** and chaos. Practiced regularly, it enables your focus to come into the present moment, even when you're not meditating, which will calm the psyche. Once the mind is calm, **more positive emotions will be released** like dopamine and serotonin which are perfect antidotes to the more harsh and toxic emotions.

6. Being a victim, perpetrator or martyr.



When we are depressed we can't be bothered with our own potential. We can't pick our heads up enough to see that we have true value in the world. We can't be giving of ourselves in close relationships because we become absent in the company of those we love.

We care less about how we look, or we otherwise overdo it when it comes to our appearance to act as a mask how we feel inside to the world. **We stumble through the day** trying to find some meaning for the feelings that ravage us. We lose our motivation to pursue our true vocation, and in doing so, compromise our soul.

Do you feel like a victim, blown about by **the rough winds of life**? Is it impossible to grasp onto anything that's solid in order to pull yourself out of the storm? Either you may see nothing but unfairness, or you **stoop to self-loathing and believe that you deserve nothing better**. You may lose your sense of reason and become unable to objectively assess what is fact and what is fiction.

Depression causes us to interact with others in a “neurotic” way. In many cases, we will choose to play the Victim, Perpetrator, or Martyr/Rescuer. These roles are tied so closely together that we find that we switch from one to the other in a matter of moments. Sometimes we feel we have no power over this – **it just happens and we can’t understand why**. These roles are explained as follows:

As victims we feel as though we have no power and no choices. We are at the mercy of others and we cannot make our own decisions. We discount ourselves and prefer that others see us as having no influence. We feel ignored, we feel hopeless, and we feel helpless. We also feel tremendous shame for having these feelings.

As perpetrators we feel angry about being the victim and we believe that others have made us like this, and so we turn on them. We are enraged at the way others treat us, and, consequently, we don’t want anyone near us. We make sure that no one gets in our way. We behave abusively by turning our self-abuse onto others. We can see that we frighten others, and even though we are remorseful, it doesn’t stop us.

As martyrs/rescuers we look at the “victim” and feel it is our duty to rescue them - whether they want it or not! We do things for others or rescue them because we want something back, but we don’t tell them what it is. Underneath our “good deeds” we are waiting to get noticed and get our rewards. Let’s face it, what would they do without us? It is our job to keep others together. If it weren’t for us they wouldn’t survive. When we don’t receive our reward, we then turn back into the victim and feel helpless, hopeless, and futile once more.

Bring your awareness into you behavior and thoughts. This will enable you to question your motives.

7. Depending on other people to provide them with happiness.



A friend told me she was depressed and that it was made worse when **people she relied on didn't follow through** with arrangements they had committed to with her. She felt extremely dependent on others for her happiness.

"I'm trying to figure out why I set myself up in this way and maybe some others can relate. I have found that I hang all hopes for happiness on the actions of a select few (actually, just one person), and so when they don't

*follow through or things don't work out I am devastated! And I am not talking about life changing disappointments here, more like unreturned phone calls or emails! I let these things ruin my whole day!! It is ridiculous, and I know it, but it continues to happen. **Already struggling to stay out of the hole of depression, this just makes things worse!** This person is so important to me and makes me so happy most of the time. I know the issue is with me and I am afraid of pushing them away with my craziness!"*

If we're raised having to "take care" of the adults around us, we carry this behavior into adulthood and develop what is known as '**dependent personality disorder.**'

Dependent personality disorder is described as a **pervasive and excessive need to be taken care of** that leads to a submissive and clinging behavior as well as fears of separation. It manifests itself as a feeling of terror and fear that the other person will abandon them.

Ways to overcome this fear include therapy, finding group support and working a program in order to find the roots of the dependency and begin to replace what was missing in childhood.

Stay tuned as I will be releasing new courses and programs to help people overcome depression. Connect with me on:

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