

Volume 4, Issue 10

# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

A person with dark hair, wearing a grey jacket and jeans, is crouching on a rocky beach. They are looking down at an overturned orange bucket on the ground. The background is a misty, overcast sky and ocean. The person is wearing black and white sneakers with "SALOMO" written on the side.

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Feeling down and discouraged happens to all of us, but the sensation usually passes after a while. However, when these feelings linger and develop into depression, it can start interfering with our daily life.

Recent research shows that depression affects 121 million people worldwide. It can affect a person's ability to work, form relationships, and greatly affect their quality of life. The causes of depression are many and varied, and difficult circumstances often contribute to the condition.

While overcoming depression isn't quick or easy, it's far from impossible. The answers are as varied as its causes, and what works for one person may not work for another, but overcoming depression is within reach. The key is to start with small steps and build from there.

I have included a variety of helpful articles on the subject in this issue of *Motivated*, including some firsthand accounts from people who overcame discouragement and depression.

Feeling better may take some time, but I hope that these articles will encourage you that it is possible to overcome depression, and give some insight into how to take those first steps to happiness.

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

# Think About It

By Vic Johnson, adapted

Most people give very little thought to what occupies their thinking and even fewer people understand that “good thoughts bear good fruit, bad thoughts bad fruit.” Most of us understand the law of sowing and reaping in other aspects of life, but we fail to understand that this same law is just as potent when our thoughts are involved.

A June 1997 story in the *Wall Street Journal* said that Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) reported that as much as 70 percent of all visits to a primary care physician are for a psychosomatic illness—a disorder that involves both mind and body. According to Dr. David Sobel, a primary care physician and author of the highly respected *Mind-Body Health Newsletter*, only 16 percent of people who visit their physician for common maladies like nausea, headache, and stomach upset are diagnosed with a physical, organic cause. That means that a whopping 84% are suffering from an illness that originated in THOUGHT!

And it’s not just our health that our thoughts affect. In *Make Your Life Worthwhile*, Emmet Fox wrote, “The more you think about your grievances or the injustices that you have suffered, the more such trials will you continue to receive; and the more you think of the good fortune you have had, the more good fortune will come to you.”

If you’ve never trained yourself in “positive thinking,” I challenge you to spend a day monitoring and recording your thoughts. Practice this priceless wisdom: “Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can thank God for and be glad about.”

That’s worth thinking about. ◀◀

## Think about Good Things

Author Unknown

Think of the things that make you happy,  
Not the things that make you sad;  
Think of the fine and true in mankind,  
Not its sordid side and bad;  
Think of the blessings that surround you,  
Not the ones that are denied;  
Think of the virtues of your friendships,  
Not the weak and faulty side.

Think of the gains you’ve made in business,  
Not the losses you’ve incurred;  
Think of the good of you that’s spoken,  
Not some cruel, hostile word;

Think of the days of health and pleasure,  
Not the days of woe and pain;  
Think of the days alive with sunshine,  
Not the dismal days of rain.

Think of the hopes that lie before you,  
Not the waste that lies behind;  
Think of the treasures you have gathered,  
Not the ones you’ve failed to find;  
Think of the service you may render,  
Not of serving self alone;  
Think of the happiness of others,  
And in this you’ll find your own!

# 10 Simple Mood-Lifting Tips

By Tabby Biddle, Web Reprint, adapted

**Depression is one of the most common health conditions in the world. It ranges in seriousness from mild, temporary episodes of discouragement to severe, persistent depression. In addition to varied therapies and techniques used by professionals to treat depression, you might also want to try some of the following ideas to lift your mood.**

- 1. Exercise.** For some people, exercise works as well or even better than antidepressants. Endorphins, otherwise known as the body's natural feel-good chemicals, are released when you exercise. Exercise will also help you build energy. Start with just a few minutes of exercise a day. As time goes on, increase the length of your activity. "Doing 30 minutes or more of exercise a day, for three to five days a week, can significantly improve depression symptoms," says staff at the Mayo Clinic.
- 2. Reduce your sugar intake.** Reducing sugar intake and eating higher quality foods have been reported to increase energy levels and lift depression. According to some research, a diet that includes lots of fruits and vegetables, as well as whole grains and healthy fats and oils, may lower the risk of depression by almost one-third.
- 3. Cut back on caffeine.** Cutting back on soda, coffee, tea, and chocolate can make a big difference in your mood. Anxiety is a common symptom of depression. Too much caffeine can make you nervous, jittery, or anxious—and also make it hard to sleep at night—adding to depression.
- 4. Get some sunshine.** If you feel more depressed during the darker winter months, you may have Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is often treated with light therapy or exposure to artificial sunlight. Ask your doctor if light therapy is right for you. Otherwise, make sure to spend at least 10 minutes in the sun each day to lift your mood.
- 5. Play with a pet.** Playing with a pet can help lift your mood. When you play with your pet, you take your mind off your own problems. According to some studies, caring for a pet can be very therapeutic.
- 6. Be creative.** Doing something creative that gives you pleasure—such as singing, painting, photography, playing an instrument, or writing in a journal—can lift your mood. The goal isn't to create a masterpiece, but to do something that makes you feel good inside.
- 7. Read a book.** Curling up with a good inspirational book can take you into another world and lift your mood.
- 8. Take a spiritual retreat.** Stress and anxiety can increase your depression symptoms and make it harder to recover. Learning to relax your body, mind, and

spirit through prayer and meditation can give you a feeling of peace and calm, and help improve your overall well-being.

**9. Stay connected with people.** Call a friend to go for a walk, join a volunteer group, or take a class about something you've been wanting to learn. Research has shown that people with more social support have better-functioning immune systems. Being involved with and caring for others can also help take you outside of your own problems and lift your mood.

**10. Get adequate sleep.** Too little sleep can have a considerable influence on your mood. To lift your mood, make the quality and quantity of your sleep a priority. Set a regular bedtime and wake-up time. Research suggests that most adults need between seven and nine hours each night.

**These 10 simple mood-lifting tips can help lift your mood, but by themselves, they may not be enough. Depression is a serious illness. If you have any thoughts of harming yourself or others, seek help from your doctor immediately. ‹‹**

## Do Good, Feel Good

### Helping others, the door to recovery

By Dennis Thompson, HealthDay Reporter, adapted excerpts



Doing something nice for someone else often leaves people feeling good about themselves and positive about their place in the world. Does that mean that practicing random acts of kindness has scientifically proven therapeutic value in treating mood disorders like depression?

Yes, according to a growing body of research that has found that “positive activity interventions”—like helping someone with groceries, writing a thank you note, or even counting our blessings—can serve as an effective, low-cost treatment for depression.

“They seem really trivial. They seem like, what’s the big deal, you feel good for 10 minutes,” said Sonja Lyubomirsky, a psychology professor at the University of California, Riverside, who co-authored a recent paper on the topic. “But for a depressed person, they aren’t trivial at all. Depressed individuals need to increase positive emotions in their life, even a minute here and there.”

Such a simple, low-cost path to well-being could have major implications, given that more than 120 million people worldwide suffer from depression.

Positive activity interventions come in a variety of forms, including:

- ✓ Being kind to others
- ✓ Expressing gratitude
- ✓ Thinking optimistically
- ✓ Meditating on the good things in life

“The major aspect is the positive emotion,” Lyubomirsky said. Not only can being positive improve your mood, it can develop into a self-sustaining “upward spiral,” she said. “It snowballs, and you are more likely to experience even more positive emotion.”

Perhaps the best thing about it is that people can pursue these positive actions on their own. “They are simple,” Lyubomirsky said. “They don’t involve going to a doctor. They aren’t a substitute, but they are a great alternative or addition to therapy or medication.”

“You do have to work at it,” Lyubomirsky said. “It takes effort to continually remind yourself to do acts of kindness for others, but it gets easier over time.”

### **What serving others will do for us:**

✓ **It will help us to focus our attention away from our own problems.** Sometimes we get in such a hole that we can’t see anything else, or find the way out. Helping others works to break this cycle, and opens our vision. It gives perspective, and shows that our problems are not insurmountable.

✓ **In helping to heal other’s wounds, ours will heal much quicker.** The love and compassion we show to others in our time of pain will come back to us in healing and joy.

✓ **Helping others will once again reveal our true self worth.** It will show us that we do have value and that we can make a difference.

✓ **The appreciation we will feel from those we help will bring joy and fulfillment to our hearts.** Our hearts long for fulfillment and only by serving can we best find it.

✓ **We will find that we aren’t the only one with problems.** We know this intellectually, but seeing it first hand is healing.

✓ **The feeling we get from easing someone else’s pain and stress,** sometimes called “helper’s high,” can give us a mood boost. ◀◀



# Kathy's Story:

## The Power of Positive Thinking

Web Reprint, adapted

On the face of it, I have a wonderful life; I am a full-time mother with a fantastic husband and three beautiful children. We live in a lovely house and I teach flute lessons part-time to children in local schools. But mental illness can affect anyone, regardless of circumstances, as I was to find out.

To explain what depression is like is so difficult unless you've experienced it yourself. For me, everything felt just too hard. I was unable to make even a simple decision like what to have for dinner or even whether to leave the house. Life became impossible, to the extent that making a cup of tea and stringing a sentence together properly were achievements.

Depression is a funny thing. It is not something that happens to other people, to people who are not "all together." It can happen to any of us and the feeling of isolation and mental paralysis is debilitating. There is no feeling on earth like it and I wouldn't wish it on anyone.

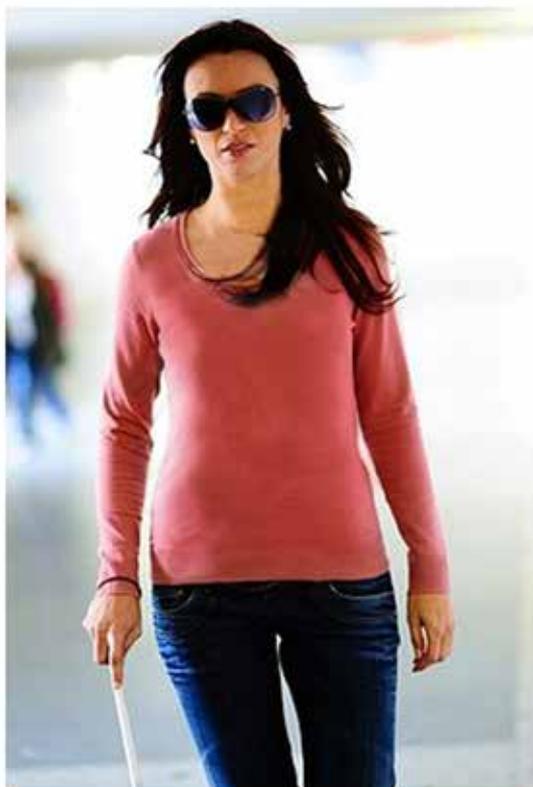
At first, I tried medication, and I participated in therapy sessions. While that did help a little, I still found that I was struggling with bouts of deep depression.

Then I was referred to a course that taught me how to be aware of my thoughts and feelings, without judging them as good or bad. Life started to change after that. Being more mindful of my thoughts seemed to fill the holes that drugs and therapy couldn't. I first heard the phrase "falling awake" in those weekly classes and, for me, that made perfect sense. I went to the class tired, stressed, and discouraged and I came out alert, awake and hopeful.

Being more mindful is not a magic wand that frees you from the dark depths of your mind. Neither is it simply a list of techniques that you learn that make everything better. It's actually a way of training the mind to be aware of your thoughts and feelings; to focus on the here and now, instead of being stuck in the endless cycle of negative thinking.

Being more mindful of what you are thinking puts the whole situation in a different light, like stepping back and seeing everything from a different perspective. You find that problems and situations that previously seemed impossible suddenly become more manageable. ❧❧





# The Blind Bus Passenger

Author Unknown

The passengers on the bus watched sympathetically as the attractive young woman with the white cane made her way carefully up the steps. She paid the driver and, using her hands to feel the location of the seats, walked down the aisle and found the seat he'd told her was empty. Then she settled in, placed her briefcase on her lap and rested her cane against her leg.

It had been a year since Susan, thirty-four, became blind. Due to a medical misdiagnosis, she had been rendered

sightless, and she was suddenly thrown into a world of darkness, anger, frustration, and self-pity.

Once a fiercely independent woman, Susan now felt condemned by this terrible twist of fate to become a powerless, helpless burden on everyone around her. "How could this have happened to me?" she would plead, her heart knotted with anger. But no matter how much she cried or ranted or prayed, she knew the painful truth—her sight was never going to return. A cloud of depression hung over Susan's once optimistic spirit. Just getting through each day was an exercise in frustration and exhaustion. In her desperate need, she clung to her husband Mark.

Mark was an Air Force officer and he loved Susan with all of his heart. When she first lost her sight, he watched her sink into despair and was determined to help his wife gain the strength and confidence she needed to become independent again, yet he knew this was the most difficult battle he would ever face.

Finally, Susan felt ready to return to her job, but how would she get there? She used to take the bus, but was now too frightened to get around the city by herself. Mark volunteered to drive her to work each day, even though they worked at opposite ends of the city. At first, this comforted Susan and fulfilled Mark's need to protect his sightless wife who was so insecure about performing the slightest task. Soon, however, Mark realized that this arrangement wasn't working. It was hectic and costly.

Susan is going to have to start taking the bus again, he admitted to himself.

But just the thought of mentioning it to her made him cringe. She was still so fragile, so angry. How would she react?

Just as Mark predicted, Susan was horrified at the idea of taking the bus again. “I’m blind!” she responded bitterly. “How am I supposed to know where I’m going? I feel like you’re abandoning me.”

Mark’s heart broke to hear these words, but he knew what had to be done. He promised Susan that each morning and evening he would ride the bus with her, for as long as it took, until she got the hang of it. And that is exactly what happened. For two solid weeks, Mark accompanied Susan to and from work each day. He taught her how to rely on her other senses, specifically her hearing, to determine where she was and how to adapt to her new environment. He helped her befriend the bus drivers who could watch out for her, and save her a seat. He made her laugh, even on those not-so-good days when she would trip exiting the bus, or drop her briefcase.

Although this routine was even more costly and exhausting than the previous one, Mark knew it was only a matter of time before Susan would be able to ride the bus on her own. He believed in her, in the Susan he used to know before she’d lost her sight, who wasn’t afraid of any challenge and who would never, ever quit.

Finally, Susan decided that she was ready to try the trip on her own. Monday morning arrived, and before she left, she threw her arms around Mark. Her eyes filled with tears of gratitude for his loyalty, his patience, his love. She said

good-bye, and for the first time, they went their separate ways.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Each day on her own went perfectly, and Susan had never felt better. She was doing it! She was going to work all by herself!

On Friday morning, Susan took the bus to work as usual. As she was paying for her fare to exit the bus, the driver said, “Boy, I sure envy you.”

Susan wasn’t sure if the driver was speaking to her or not. After all, who on earth would ever envy a blind woman who had struggled just to find the courage to live for the past year? Curious, she asked the driver, “Why do you say that you envy me?”

The driver responded, “It must feel so good to be taken care of and protected like you are.”

Susan had no idea what the driver was talking about, and asked again, “What do you mean?”

The driver answered, “You know, every morning for the past week, a fine-looking gentleman in uniform has been standing across the corner watching you when you get off the bus. He makes sure you cross the street safely and he watches you until you enter your office building. Then he blows you a kiss, gives you a little salute and walks away. You are one lucky lady.”

Tears of happiness poured down Susan’s cheeks, for although she couldn’t physically see him, she had always felt Mark’s presence. He had given her a gift more powerful than sight, a gift she didn’t need to see to believe—the gift of love that can bring light where there had been darkness. ❧



# Understanding Depression

Web Reprint, [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org), excerpts

**D**epression isn't just bad moods and occasional melancholy. It's not just feeling down or sad, either. These feelings are normal in kids, especially during the teen years. Even when major disappointments and setbacks make people feel sad and angry, the negative feelings usually lessen with time.

**But when a depressive state, or mood, lingers for a long time—weeks, months, or even longer—and limits a person's ability to function normally, it can be diagnosed as depression.**

## Recognizing depression

If you think your child has symptoms of depression, it's important to take action. Talk with your child and your doctor, or others who know your child well. Many parents dismiss their concerns, thinking they'll go away, or avoid acting because they may feel guilty or prefer to solve family problems privately.

For a long time, it was commonly believed that children did not get depressed and that teenagers all went through a period of "storm and stress," so many kids and teens went untreated for depression. Now more is known about childhood depression, and experts say it's important to get kids help as soon as a problem is noticed.

Parents often feel responsible for things going on with their kids, but parents don't cause depression. However, it is true that parental separation, illness, death, or other separation can cause short-term problems for kids, and sometimes can trigger a problem with longer-term depression. This means that if your family is going through something stressful it's usually helpful to turn to a counselor, therapist, or other expert for support.

It's also important to remind your child that you're there for support. Say this over and over again—kids with depression need to hear it a lot because sometimes they feel unworthy of love and attention.

Remember, kids who are depressed may see the world very negatively because their experiences are shaped by their depression. They might act like they don't want help or might not even know what they are really experiencing.

## Getting help for your child

Your first consultation should be with your child's pediatrician, who probably will perform a complete examination to rule out physical illness.

If depression is suspected, the doctor may refer you to a specialist who can diagnose and is qualified to treat depression. These health professionals can help, but it is important that your child feels comfortable with the person. If it's not a good fit, find another.

Your child's teacher, guidance counselor, or school psychologist also might be able to help. These professionals have your child's welfare at heart and all information shared with them during therapy is kept confidential.

## What can I do to help?

Most parents think that it's their job to ensure the happiness of their kids. When your child's depressed, you may feel guilty because you can't cheer him or her up. You also may think that your child is suffering because of something you did or didn't do. This is not necessarily true. If you're struggling with guilt, frustration, or anger, consider counseling for yourself. In the end, this can only help both you and your child.

## Other ways to help:

- ✓ Encourage healthy eating, as this may help improve mood and outlook.
- ✓ Make sure your child stays active. Physical activity has been shown to help alleviate the symptoms of depression. Incorporate physical activities, such as bike rides or walks, into your family's routine.
- ✓ Offer your love and support and remind your child that you're there and want to hear what he or she has to say, even if it isn't pleasant. Although these things may be difficult for your child to believe, it's important for you to say them.
- ✓ Accept the situation and never tell your child to "snap out of it." Remind yourself that it isn't laziness causing your child's inability to get out of bed, complete chores, or do homework. He or she simply doesn't have the desire or the energy. However, you can still praise and reward your child for making extra effort.
- ✓ Watch for warning signs, and make sure any prescribed treatment is followed, whether it's medication, therapy, or both. Call your doctor immediately if you see signs that your child may be thinking about self-harm or talks about it with you or anyone else.

**Depression can be frightening and frustrating for your child, you, and your entire family. With professional advice and your help, your child can start to feel better and go on to enjoy the teen and adult years. ‹‹**

# How to be happy anyway

Man is fond of counting his troubles, but he does not count his joys. If he counted them up as he ought to, he would see that every lot has enough happiness provided for it.—Fyodor Dostoevsky

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.—Albert Schweitzer

Realize that true happiness lies within you. Waste no time and effort searching for peace and contentment and joy in the world outside. Remember that there is no happiness in having or in getting, but only in giving. Reach out. Share. Smile. Hug. Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself.—Og Mandino

When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.  
—Helen Keller

Even if happiness forgets you a little bit, never completely forget about it.  
—Jacques Prévert

If you conduct yourself as though you expect to be successful and happy, you will seldom be disappointed.—Brian Tracy

Happy people roll with the punches. They know from experience that everything changes. Today's good fortune may vanish tomorrow, today's crises may turn out to be tomorrow's good fortune.—Unknown

