

Coming Out of Depression and Back into Life

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1. Talk it out. When you isolate and avoid people, you may feel temporary relief, but your depression will last longer and get deeper. Find someone in your life to talk with for encouragement, support and new perspective. You'll also stop feeling so lonely.
2. Walk it out. Run or get moving in other forms of exercise. Exercise releases endorphins in your brain that can improve mood in similar ways as anti-depressants. Your mood will not only improve, but you will also get out of the house and into the world again.
3. Eat a balanced diet. You may have less appetite when depressed, but your body and brain still need nourishment. You may eat less for now, but make sure to still eat a balance of fruits, vegetables and other healthy items, including water. For those who overeat when depressed, go back to Point #1—talk it out instead of eat it out. Food is no substitute for love. And added weight can lead to even more depression.
4. Focus on the good in your life. Gratitude is the key to happiness in life. It is also an antidote to depression. While depression focuses on things lost or missing in your life, gratitude focuses on the good things you do have. List ten things that you are grateful for in life right now. Remind yourself every day of three good things. If you pray, thank God for these three things...or ten or twenty things.
5. Focus on the goals in your life. From making a phone call tonight or plans for a vacation or a college degree, our goals move us forward in life. Goals motivate us to do things to reach them. Goals put us in motion again. List five goals for the next week, next year, and next ten.
6. Grieve your losses in life. Everyone has lost something in their life. Loved ones die, a job is lost, parents divorce, cancer is diagnosed—the list is endless. Still, life goes on and the world keeps turning. After grieving your loss and pain, consider how to adjust and go forward. The eventual end of grief is to let it go. Until that happens, at least make it your goal to adjust someday. The depth of today's grief will get less as time goes on and life becomes better.
7. Keep hope alive. Whether you believe in the Bible or not, consider the wisdom of this verse; "Hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not have, we wait for it patiently." (Romans 8) We can hope and look forward in life or lose hope and look backward. Keep hoping and keep living again. Depression is meant to be temporary, like a rest stop on an interstate. Doing these seven points will get you back on the road to enjoying life again.