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Faith and Depression

By Dave Turo-Shields, ACSW, LCSW

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Don't worry, I'm not going to get in the pulpit but I will challenge you to take an objective look at what faith may be able to do for your depression. In doing so, we'll be looking at many people who use faith in different ways.

Did you know that someone who practices healing touch, such as Reiki, which is simply prayer by channeling God's love and healing energy, can help a hospital patient's wound heal up to 5 times faster?

Were you aware that the great majority of happily married couples, couples married 50 years and longer report in public polls a long and strong faith background? Measure that up against today's divorce rates!

Did you know that devout Christians have fewer health problems and live an average of 7 years longer than non-believers?

Most helping professionals, including psychotherapists, never touch this area of faith in recovery from depression.

Why? Well, I could talk long and hard about this single issue, but I want to keep the focus on your recovery, so I'll just tease this out a little bit. We currently live in an ultra-independent society (United States). Most things only have value if they can stand on their own.

Yes, this particularly applies to us Americans. But, we've also separated church and state, medicine and spirituality, healing and faith, and on and on. I say enough of this immature, black-and-white approach to life. It's hurting us to live this way and it's time to reclaim interdependence and begin living holistically again.

Christians are disrespected and often under attack. Most never talk about their Christian beliefs in public for fear of reprisal. Others are too embarrassed to admit that they question the existence of God or are extremely disappointed in God for one reason or another. Of course, then there are Christian hypocrites who greatly embarrass Christians of good integrity and give Christianity a bad rap. Being fair though, I've met many wonderful Christians, but I've never met a non-hypocrite. We're all human after all. ;-)

What is the status of your belief in God or a Higher Power? Remember, you're only answering to yourself as you read this so p-l-e-a-s-e be honest with yourself. Who or what is God to you? What kind of a God or Higher Power do you believe in? Are you in need of a God-belief makeover?

Have you ever wondered if God would help little ol' you and your depression? Have you tried this angle? Have you given God the opportunity to BE WITH you as you struggle? Or have you already put your own judgment above God's and sunk yourself into the quicksand of self-disgust and despair?

You see, I know. In my deepest depression days I judged myself unworthy of God's healing embrace. I didn't deserve

it. I felt humiliated to even consider it. There may even be evil in chronic depression, insofar as it loved the awful things I thought of myself — it kept me from a relationship with God, it kept me from healing and it kept depression growing stronger and stronger.

I'm not preaching God or a Higher Power as the ONE and ONLY answer. That would be joining those I've criticized above. Of course there are Christians who become depressed, and some depressed Christians already pray ardently to God for relief from their suffering. I am simply hoping to get your attention for a moment.

Belief in something bigger than you is one powerful resource that you can tap into this very moment. When added to the many other available depression support resources I have offered and will continue to write about...

Wow, you'll become unstoppable in your recovery.

Here are five suggestions for you to begin your new journey.

1. The 3rd Step Prayer from page 63 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, one of the best kept secrets around.

"I offer myself to you, to build with me and to do with me as you will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better serve you. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would have of your power, your love and your way of life. May I do your will always. Amen."

2. This is thanks to my good friend Jill: *Visual Prayer Cards* – a wonderfully creative way in which to connect and develop an ongoing relationship with God. You can find more information here: www.comfortqueen.com/cgi-local/print.cgi?results.html?291

3. And thanks to my good friend Nancy for this next resource — the *Encouragement Bible* was developed by Dave & Jan Dravecky and Joni Eareckson. Find more about how to order it here:
www.outreachofhope.org/index.cfm/PageID/187/index.html

4. Sit and imagine the most peaceful scene you can in the

theatre of your mind. Now imagine God joining you in this scene and the two of you spending some time together, perhaps just holding you in His arms for 5 minutes per day. Do this on a regular basis and watch the results.

5. Begin a Prayer Journal. Here's a sample outline for your entries. Begin with 5 gratitudes. Then list one item having to do with your depression recovery and request God's help in this area. End with a "Caught Ya!" section, where you document any time you caught God in action during your day, whether in your life or in life around you. Look for the "God shot!" It can be simple or profound. For example, you realized you were daydreaming while driving, but only noticed this after you "safely" and unconsciously ran through a red light at a busy intersection and no one got hurt.

May God's love surround you like a cleansing white light.

Dave Turo-Shields, ACSW, LCSW is an author, university faculty member, success coach and veteran psychotherapist whose passion is guiding others to their own success in life. For weekly doses of the webs HOTTEST success tips, sign up for Dave's powerful "Feeling Great!" ezine at <http://www.Overcoming-Depression.com>

Depression And How To Avoid It

By Malcolm Moorhouse

Depression can affect the working ability, family and social life of a person. This is why we should never try to ignore or hide depression. It is important to be aware of the symptoms, the causes and what possibilities we have to try and prevent it in our lives.

Each of us has had a depressing sad moment at some point in our lives. Depression is a normal human reaction associated with bereavement, pressures of life or maybe the break up of a relationship. Sometimes the feeling of sadness passes but sometimes it doesn't, if it becomes more persistent it can lead to depression. Diseases of the nervous system are very serious and that is why it is important not to ignore depression and to get proper help when we realize there is a problem.

Listed below are some symptoms of depression:

* Feeling sad * Loss of energy * Loosing hope in life * Not finding pleasure doing the things you used to love * Can't concentrate * Always crying * Sleeping a lot * Can't sleep * Loss of appetite

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What causes depression? This is a complicated question because there isn't a single cause for depression. This is a complex disease that can appear as a result of multiple causes. Depression can also be transmitted among people that are close to each other, by influence.

There is proof that people suffering from depression suffer brain changes. There is also evidence that illustrates how depression can also be genetic. Children can be affected by parents who suffer from. Also it seems that parents whose children suffer from chronic depression are more likely to be affected themselves by this illness.

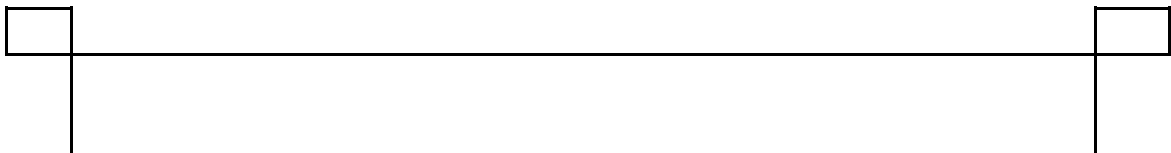
To prevent depression we have to know ourselves very well. Treatable depression can be hard to prevent once we are already down in the dumps. The best method to avoid another crisis after a chronic depression is to keep our eyes open for its symptoms and its causes. If we feel we are losing control then getting professional help would be the right direction to take.

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