

Living with Soul



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Releasing Sadness, Finding Joy

Times of Sadness, Grief and Depression

There is a season for every emotion, and sometimes life's experiences will prompt us to feel grief, sadness or loneliness. But when these feelings remain for a long time, they can become depression. This is a signal that these emotions, initially valid, are now affecting your health and the ability to experience happiness. The body needs joy and will get sick without it. It's time to make some positive changes.

The first thing to consider is letting go of whatever increases your stress or unhappiness. Consider the following:

1. Reduce the time you spend watching or listening to the news. Most of the broadcast news is pretty depressing. You can decide what you watch or listen to, so choose what is uplifting.
2. Avoid focusing on your problems. Try to shift your thinking, and imagine a brighter future.
3. Keep away from people who are immersed in their own unhappy state. While support groups can be helpful, there may be a time to step out of them and concentrate on a healthy, happy life.
4. Stop or reduce your consumption of alcohol or drugs. They may lift your spirits initially, but often they leave you feeling worse. Discipline yourself to practice moderation.

You may already be aware of other sources of stress and anxiety. Awareness is the first step in making productive changes, so learn to avoid what troubles you.

Steps to Happiness

There are also some constructive steps you can take to lessen depression and put you back on the happiness track. The following suggestions have been shown to help a lot of people. Try at least a few:

1. Get more physical exercise. Find an activity you enjoy and do it regularly.
2. Spend time in nature, especially near trees.
3. Learn to breathe deeply, perhaps in a yoga class. The yoga breath is relaxing.
4. Get creative. Paint, write, do something that inspires you.
5. Socialize! Get out there and be with others.
6. Journal. Write what you feel. Stream of consciousness writing can help to release the source of sadness.
7. Be compassionate. Assisting others helps you forget your problems.
8. Laugh! Watch funny movies, read funny books, tell jokes. Laughter heals!
9. Indulge yourself. Get a massage or a pedicure. Take that trip you always wanted. Buy yourself a treat.
10. PRACTICE GRATITUDE! Spend several minutes in gratitude morning and evening. This has been proven many times to lift people up.

Each of these ten items is very simple. If you practice even a few, it is highly probable that you will begin to feel better soon. The more you do, the better you will feel.

We all deserve joy in our lives. I bless you as you claim yours.

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