



Depression

A Powerful Method for Healing Depression

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Kendra had been depressed on and off for the last three years before consulting with me. "I've tried various medications and they help somewhat, but I still feel depressed. I've tried psychotherapy and it also helps a little but not enough for me to feel happiness or peace inside. I hate feeling this way and I just don't know what to do."

The first thing that I did to start Kendra on her Inner Bonding journey was to help her create a personal source of spiritual guidance. I asked her to make up a being who was very loving, wise and powerful - a man, woman or animal to whom she could turn, in her imagination, for help and guidance. Kendra made up an older Indian medicine woman whom she called Elder One.

Next I asked Kendra where in her body she felt the feeling of depression. "In my heart and stomach. My heart and stomach often feel so heavy and sad."

"Kendra, imagine that your feeling self, the part that is presently depressed, is a child within. How old is this child?" She told me she thought the child was around six.

"Now, imagine that you are sitting in a beautiful place in nature with Elder One. Imagine that Elder One is surrounding you with love so that you feel safe. Now imagine that little six-year old depressed Kendra is also with you. Ask her how she feels about you as her inner parent, her inner mom and dad. Ask her how you are treating her that is causing her to feel depressed. Ask her out loud."

"Okay. Little Kendra, how do you feel about me as a parent? How am I treating you that is causing you to feel so depressed?"

"Now go inside and imagine that you are little Kendra and that you are talking to you as the adult, the inner parent. What do you as little Kendra want to say to adult Kendra? How does adult Kendra treat you? What is adult Kendra doing that causes you to feel so bad?"

Little Kendra: "I barely exist for you. You really don't care about how I feel. You never stand up for me with other people. You decide on things without ever asking me how I feel about it - like having dinner

with Kathy tonight. I don't want to have dinner with Kathy. All she does is talk about herself and I just end up feeling drained. But you don't care about how I feel. You don't want to say no or tell Kathy the truth because she might feel hurt or angry - but what about me? You never speak up for me with Harold (her husband) either. I just feel like I don't exist in this marriage, just like with Mom. You treat me just like Mom treated me - like what I want and feel doesn't matter. Other people are always more important to you than me. And you constantly tell me that I'm not doing things right and I have to be perfect. And then you eat junk to not feel me. Of course I'm depressed! How else would you expect me to feel?"

Kendra started to cry at this point, and little Kendra continued. "I'm so mad at you! When are you going to care about me!"

"So," I said, "You are a caretaker with your husband and friends. You take care of them but neglect yourself. You allow them to control you without standing up for yourself. Can you see how this would lead to depression?"

Kendra was quite stunned by this information. She had believed that her depression was caused by outside events, rather than by how she was treating herself. She thought it was due to a chemical imbalance and to her husband's controlling behavior. Her husband was indeed controlling, but it was her response to him and others that was one of the causes of her depression, rather than her husband's or friends' behavior.

Kendra began to see that until she had the courage to take loving care of herself, she would continue to be depressed. Through practicing Inner Bonding, she learned to open to Elder One for guidance about loving behavior toward herself. As she began to take loving action for herself - for her Inner Child - her depression gradually diminished until she was able to get off the medication. Now, when she feels the depression coming up, she knows that there is some way she is not taking care of herself. She speaks with little Kendra to find out what it is, and with Elder One to discover the loving action. When she has the courage to take the loving action, her depression goes away. Kendra has learned that practicing is a powerful method for healing her depression.

Managing Depression

By Dr. Margaret Paul

The medical profession is big on telling us that depression is caused primarily by a chemical imbalance. But what causes the chemical imbalance?

What happens in our bodies is not separate from what happens in our minds. For example, If something bad were happening to you, such as getting mugged, your fight or flight reaction would enable you to fight or flee. The adrenaline and cortisol pouring into your body would be utilized for your survival. However, your body doesn't know the difference between something bad actually happening and thinking about something bad happening. When you think a scary thought, such as "something bad is going to happen to me," your body might go into the fight or flight reaction.

Adrenaline and cortisol, when they are present frequently, take a toll on the body. If you trigger these chemical reactions often, by thinking about something bad happening, you will eventually create a chemical imbalance, resulting in fatigue or depression. The more you think thoughts that cause stress, the more chronic the stress becomes, often resulting in chronic depression.

You can take a drug that may mask the depression, or you can start to become conscious of the thoughts from your wounded self that are causing the depression. If you choose to consistently practice Inner Bonding, you will gradually become more and more aware of the connection between your thoughts and your feelings.

Most depression is caused by physical, emotional and spiritual self-abandonment:

- Judging yourself
- Stressful thoughts about bad things happening
- Ignoring the resulting painful feelings
- Eating sugar and junk food
- Making others responsible for your feelings

If you start to consistently practice Inner Bonding, you will slowly stop thinking and behaving in ways that cause anxiety and depression. You will develop a spiritually connected loving Adult who will think and behave in ways that create inner peace and joy.

Managing a Family Member's Depression

If a family member is depressed, what can you do?

Being able to help a family member depends upon whether or not he or she is available to being helped by you. You cannot take responsibility for how others treat themselves, and you cannot MAKE others want to take responsibility for how they treat themselves. You are powerless over another's intention.

So what can you do?

1. You can be a role model by taking loving care of yourself. If you consistently practice Inner Bonding and move into your peace and joy, your family member might start to wonder what you are doing that is making you so happy.
2. You can be compassionate with your family member, letting them know that you care about them, and that you are available to help them if they want help.
3. If your family member wants your help, you can refer him or her to the free Inner Bonding course, to the Inner Bonding books, and to an Inner Bonding facilitator.

What is not helpful to your family member is for you to join them in their depression, which you might do if you take responsibility for their feelings. You need to make sure that you are NOT blaming yourself, judging yourself, or in any way allowing yourself to believe that you are the cause of another's depression. Depression is caused primarily by how we treat ourselves - physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

If your family member is too depressed to practice Inner Bonding, then he or she might need medication, which can create a window of opportunity to learn to take loving care of themselves. While meds do not solve the problem, they may reduce the depression to the point of being able to learn self-care.

If your family member has no intention of learning to take care of themselves, then you need to accept this and take care of yourself in the face of their intention to continue to abandon themselves.

Anxiety, Depression and Self-Abandonment

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Most people want to believe that their anxiety or depression is being caused by the past, by other people, or by events - but these are not the cause of most current anxiety and depression.

Most current feelings of anxiety and depression - other than anxiety and depression that has physical or chemical causes - are caused by some form of self-abandonment. The anxiety and depression is your inner guidance's way of letting you know that you are abandoning yourself.

There are three levels of self-abandonment.

1. Self-judgment and other lies

The first level of self-abandonment is the self-judgments and other lies we tell ourselves. Do you ever tell yourself any of these lies and judgments?

- I am not lovable.
- I am unworthy and undeserving of love.
- It is my fault that he/she doesn't like me.
- I am inadequate.
- I am a failure. I will never amount to anything.
- I am ugly. I am too tall, too short, too fat, too thin, too dark, too light, and so on.
- I am selfish when I take care of myself.
- I am alone and I will always be alone.
- No one will ever love me.

Telling yourself these lies and judgments is like telling them to a small child. The child would feel very anxious and depressed at hearing these statements from you. Likewise, your inner child feels anxious and depressed when you judge yourself and lie to yourself.

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2. Ignoring the anxiety/depression you are creating with the self judgments

The second level of self-abandonment is ignoring the pain you are causing through your self-judgment. You might further lie to yourself by telling yourself that your anxiety and/or depression is being caused by others, the past, or circumstances, rather than by your own self-judgments and lies.

When you ignore the feelings you are causing, the message to your inner child is that he or she is not important to you. Your feelings don't matter. Now you not only feel the anxiety or depression coming from your lies and self-judgments, but you exacerbate your painful feelings by ignoring the feelings that you are creating.

3. Turning to addictions - approval, sex, substances, processes

Now you feel intense anxiety, depression, anger, hurt and so on, and you further abandon yourself by turning to various addictions, to numb out the pain and avoid responsibility for it.

Since you are doing anything but loving yourself, and your inner child always needs love - or at least some way of filling up the inner emptiness and aloneness - your wounded self now turns to old learned addictive ways of avoiding pain. You might pull on someone to give you attention or approval. You might try to get someone to have sex with you, or masturbate to Internet porn. You might turn to substances: food, sugar, nicotine, caffeine, drugs or alcohol. Or to processes such as TV, work, or gambling.

Turning to any of these addictions pacifies the pain for the moment - which is how they become addictions - but because they are all ways of abandoning oneself, they only lead to more pain in the long run.

Now you are not only in pain from the self-judgments, and then ignoring your feelings, but now you are in deeper pain from making others responsible for your feelings, or numbing them out with substances and processes.

You are stuck in the vicious cycle of self-abandonment that feeds upon itself. You will not permanently get out of this cycle until you stop abandoning yourself and instead move into the intent to learn about loving yourself, and devote yourself to your Inner Bonding practice.

Food and Depression

By Dr. Margaret Paul

In our current society, there are many factors that can cause or contribute to depression, as well as to anxiety. Certainly money and work problems, relationship and family issues, as well as illness and loss of loved ones are major contributors to depression. Also, how we feel about ourselves and treat ourselves contribute greatly to how we feel overall. Even in the worst of times, if we are treating ourselves with compassion instead of self-judgment, we may be able to manage big challenges without depression. In addition, being able to turn to an inner source of spiritual guidance and comfort is vital to weathering the hard times.

Food is another major factor that greatly affects how we feel. Most people don't really notice that what they put into their bodies affects how they feel. They might know that if they "sugar out" they may crash emotionally, or if they drink too much they will feel hung over, but they are often unaware of how other foods may be creating depression.

In the many years that I've been a counselor, I have frequently encountered individuals whose depression completely cleared up by tuning in to how food was affecting them.

For example, Marnie discovered that dairy, wheat and sugar kept her up at night. She would wake up at around 3:00 in the morning with intense anxiety, and would be tired and depressed the next day. By experimenting and cutting out different foods, she discovered that she slept fine when she stopped eating dairy, wheat and sugar. All her nighttime anxiety vanished and she was no longer tired and depressed during the day.

Joel discovered that his sleeplessness and resulting depression was a direct result of caffeine from coffee, tea, chocolate and soft drinks. He had not realized how much caffeine he was actually consuming until I suggested that he cut out all caffeine and see what happened to his sleep. After a week of headaches from caffeine withdrawal, he was sleeping soundly for the first time in years and no longer felt depressed.

Adrienne discovered that her feelings of anxiety and depression, which had been with her most of her life, disappeared after she started

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eating only organic foods. Her system was so sensitive to the pesticides and food additives in non-organic food that she could not eat them without feeling anxious and depressed.

Over and over again my clients who have chosen to tune in to how food was affecting them have discovered how much their feelings were being affected by food. Many have learned that even a little sugar brings them down. Sugar consumes so many vital nutrients as the body attempts to process it that it can actually be considered a poison. How many people really take "Sugar Blues" seriously?

Two hundred years ago, when people naturally ate non-processed and organically grown food, they were getting all the nutrients they needed. Now, most fruits, vegetables and grains are being grown on devitalized soil and then are over-processed on top of it. Cows and sheep that were once grass-fed are being fed pesticide-sprayed grains and given hormones to fatten them up. As a result, much of our food not only contains few nutrients, but has many toxins as well. Without the vitamins, minerals, and many other factors that natural, organic and grass-fed food contains, many people suffer deficiencies that can cause anxiety and depression, as well as many other illnesses.

Food is certainly a major factor in the rise of anxiety, depression and illness. Only you can do something about this by learning how you are being affected by the foods you eat. Bringing a devoted Inner Bonding practice into your life will help you access the desire and the inner discipline necessary to consistently eat well.