

Depression Bootcamp

*Kick your low mood to the curb by taking care
of your Mind Body and Soul*



Robin Westphal

Wellness Strategist

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My Free Workbook for you.

www.robinwestphal.ca

twitter, instagram, periscope @robin_westphal

facebook: @lovelylifeca

Thank you for taking the time to download this work book. My hope is it will help you sort out how depression may be affecting your mind, body and soul. By the end you can make a plan for how best to use the techniques to improve your mood on your own. If you are suffering never hesitate to contact your doctor or a registered health professional to help you on your journey. Do not suffer on your own. Depression is nothing to be ashamed of. Depression does not mean you are weak or a “loser” or pathetic. (Some of the terms I’ve heard many of my clients use). It means you are strong and you have a problem and it needs support from someone who can help. Each person’s life and situation is unique. As such you should always discuss your concerns with your doctor or health care practitioner.

This book is for information only and does not constitute medical advice, counselling or psychotherapy.

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Thank you!

Be mindful. That means pay attention to your thoughts and refocusing back to the present moment. Most people on average think about 60,000 thoughts per day and are unaware of about 96% of those thoughts. How we think affects how we feel. So if your thoughts are mostly negative your feelings may also be on the negative side. Also we tend to think the same things over and over. How we think affects not just our mental health but our physical health as well <http://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/how-worrying-affects-your-body?page=2>

How: Set an intention to pay more attention to your thinking. When you notice your thinking, notice if your thoughts are in the past or the future? All you need to do is notice the thoughts and if they go to the past or future. Then bring your attention back to the present moment. Once you are in the present moment, breathe deep and half smile, tell yourself a mantra such as “It is what it is” or “let it go”. Do at least 5000 times! It is not a failure. It takes time and focus.

Over the next few days pay attention to your thinking and then come back to these questions and answer them.

What did you notice about thinking? Do you tend to think about the past or do you tend to worry about the future. Jot down the things you notice.

Write a mantra that you can use to ground yourself back into the present moment when you notice your thinking is off track. One of my favourites, is “It is what it is”.

Core beliefs. Your beliefs are the strongly held thoughts you think about yourself. We assume beliefs are true rather than just statements. They are mostly unconscious but drive a lot of our behaviour and how we think about ourselves. Beliefs are statements you say to yourself every day over and over and maybe you are not even aware of it. You believe these statements to be truths. Core beliefs for people who struggle with depression are often things like “I don’t deserve to be happy”, “I’m a terrible person because I am _____ (fill in the blank: gay, poor, fat, a certain race or ethnicity, bad mom, bad dad.).

Our beliefs are often put into us by people (usually in a position of power) who have said negative things to us or harmed us in some way. These statements get stuck inside you and they are very hard to get rid of. Take a few minutes to think about something that was said to you and has stuck with you for years. It’s helpful if it is something related to your feelings of depression. It may be from a teacher or a coach, a sibling, babysitter or even your own parents.

A negative core belief I hold about myself is:

I learned this from:

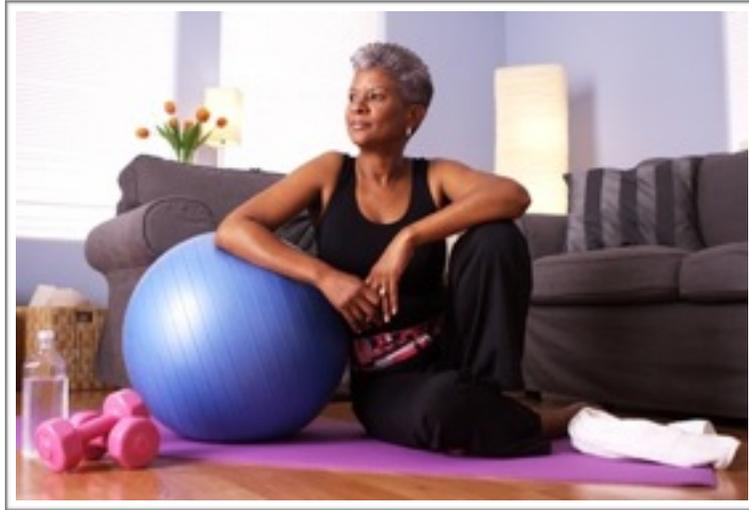
How does this core belief affect me in my day to day life and relationships?

What is an opposite belief that I can say to counteract the negative belief? If we use the example of “I don’t deserve to be happy” as the core negative belief than an opposite belief might be “I deserve a life full of happiness”. Write out your new belief:

Take this belief and write it out on about 10 pieces of paper. Make them as creative as possible. Put them in a place in your home or phone or office where you will see them regularly. Every time you see the written belief, it is a reminder to breathe deep, get grounded, half smile and say it. Over and over and over! Practice this at least for 21 days.

The way you change core beliefs is letting go of the negative ones and replacing them with the opposite and positive one you would like to have. The key is you have to practice feeling that belief and really integrating it into your mind, body and soul.

Taking Care of the Body



Depression affects the body in many ways. People feel achy, they may have low energy or no motivation to do anything. They may feel fatigued and have to sleep all the time or else agitation and an inability to rest or sleep at all. Appetite can change, sex drive can change. You may feel sad all the time or even angry and irritable and the smallest things can you set you off. You feel like your brain is in a fog and it is hard to concentrate or think.

There are many things you can do for the body to help alleviate depression. These are my top tips.

Get exercise. Move your body every single day. It doesn't have to be too intense, especially if you haven't exercised in a long time. Walk around the block or walk up and down your stairs for even 5 minutes. Do some push ups or sit ups or jumping jacks. One of my favourite apps is the Seven Minute Workout. Everyone has 7 minutes to fit in some exercise. As well, Pinterest is fantastic for at home and simple workouts.

You don't have to be crazy about it. Just move your body. Exercise has been found to be more effective than anti-depressants in several studies. There is science behind it (Selginson 2010) and <http://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/exercise-and-depression-report-excerpt>. I am not a doctor or fitness expert. I always recommend you speak to a doctor about your mood or any exercise program you start.

This is the hard part. I want you to make time every morning and do a work out or go for a walk. Book it in your schedule, set your alarm on your phone and do it. No excuses. Try it for a 3 week period.

Eat Healthy 80% of the time. What you eat absolutely affects how you feel. Lets take an opportunity to explore your diet. How would you describe it? Do you eat enough or too much? Do you eat fruits and vegetables? Do you barely eat in the day but then eat too much at night? What foods do you crave? Do you drink too much alcohol, coffee, pop or energy drinks? Do you have food allergies or sensitivities that affect how you feel? Write down your thoughts about the foods you eat and how they may affect your mood.

Do not hesitate to get some support around your diet from your family doctor or a dietician. In Canada we can access dieticians through our doctor's office or else through this website <http://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Find-A-Dietitian/Find-a-Dietitian.aspx>

Small changes in diet can make a big difference in your mood and how you feel. Pay attention to times in the day when your mood dips. Can you make a correlation with anything you are eating or drinking? Do you eat more when you are sad or depressed or need soothing? Pay attention to how your mood affects your food choices and cravings.

Making simple changes are very helpful. Add in more fruit and vegetables. Try to eat a veggie with your breakfast. Replace a coffee or pop with 2 glasses of water or an herbal tea. Limit sugar and processed food and eat more whole foods. Limit the amount of alcohol that you drink and the number of times in a week when you drink. Explore the chemicals and ingredients in the food you regularly eat. If you have questions about this speak with your family doctor, a dietician or a naturopathic doctor. If you eat when you are upset, try holding off eating for about 10 minutes and instead find a healthy way to feel your feelings and soothe yourself.

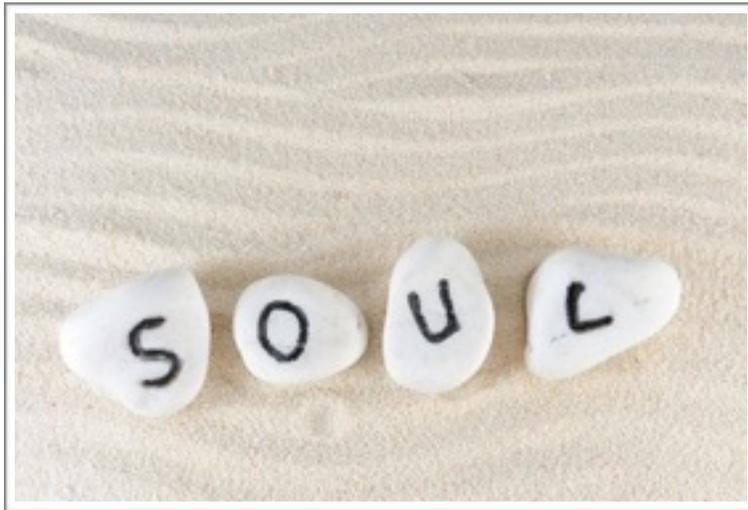
What small changes can you make to your diet?

Vitamins. There is some good evidence to suggest vitamins such as vitamin D, B's and Essential Fatty Acids such a fish and flax oils are very effective for both the body and the mind. I love hearing and reading about nutritional psychiatry and I'm hopeful this area of psychiatry will continue to expand. You can read more about it here <http://www.medicaldaily.com/can-mental-illness-be-cured-diet-nutritional-psychiatry-steps-limelight-337414>

You should always do your research before taking vitamins mindlessly. Consult an expert before you take any vitamin and also do your homework. Research and read up on what you think is best for you. You want good quality vitamins from a good quality vitamin store that have knowledgable staff. **Remember never take a fish oil if you are allergic to fish!**

If you live in Canada or a northern or rainy climate you may be deficient for vitamin D. Low levels of vitamin D in the body is why many people suffer from seasonal depression. As soon as the darker days come, your mood may become lower. Low vitamin D levels can cause depression and a bunch of other illnesses such a cancers and alzheimers and muscular sclerosis (Dunkan 2014) (Archer 2013) (Davenport 2015). It is very easy for your doctor to order your vitamin D levels when you do blood work.

Taking Care of the Soul



What is the Soul to you? How would you describe it? I think of it as the most sacred part of yourself. It is who you truly are at your core. It is the part of yourself that is separate from your body.

Depression can be soul destroying and demolish any good feelings inside yourself. You may feel worthless or even hateful towards yourself. You have to make it a priority to shake those thoughts and remind yourself you **DESERVE** to be happy and have a good life.

Depression doesn't mean your soul is faulty in some way. Don't beat yourself up for having depression. It is not your fault. You learn to do the best you can do every day without guilt, shame or beating yourself up. You can't be perfect. Do the best you can do and somedays that means you go slower than others.

These are some of my best tips to help support your soul through depression.

Let Go: Letting go is one of those techniques that is challenging to teach and is imperative to learn especially if you need to forgive yourself or others and move forward in your life. Many of my clients have a hard time understanding this concept. What does it even mean to you when someone says “you have to let it go”. It sounds so simple but it is the most difficult thing.

When I say let go, I'm referring to pain or suffering you have experienced. I'm referring to the deep negative core beliefs that you hold as true. I'm not saying to forget or even forgive at this point. I'm suggesting that you stop focusing your energy on the pain and suffering.

Letting something go should never be about stuffing something painful away or righting a wrong. Letting go is about radically accepting that a situation has occurred, feeling the emotions that it stirs up and understanding the purpose of those emotions. Once you understand the purpose of your feeling, it becomes easier to let go of the pain and move forward with what you want to do (Linehan, 1993)

I have broken down "Letting Go" like this.

- Notice something that you are ruminating a lot about and having a problem with letting go (eg: somebody said a mean thing about you and it hurt your feelings and now you can't stop thinking about it. It makes you feel angry and hurt).
- Notice when you are thinking or ruminating about the thing that is bothering you. Just notice the thought, maybe the feelings, maybe the way your body feels. Acknowledge the feelings. (I feel hurt about that comment).
- Breathe deep and bring your awareness to the present moment. Tell yourself in your mind, or out loud "let it go".
- Put a half smile on your face and say something opposite and positive (I did the best I could, I am a good person) at the same time attend to whatever it is you are doing in that moment.
- Keep repeating this process each time you notice your mind worrying or ruminating. With about 5000 repetitions it will take hold!

Depression as a teacher: I have found that depression often has a purpose. It is trying to teach you something or give you information about your life. Sometimes depression is telling us that something in our life has to change.

If there is something happening in your life and you are feeling depressed about it, your depression is trying to communicate with you that the problem needs to be dealt with. In this way, depression is a teacher. Depression is trying to tell you that there is a problem in your life that needs to be explored or dealt with.

For example, if you realize that some of your low mood may be caused by realizing that you are not happy in your marriage then taking steps to deal with that issue may be necessary to help your low mood. If you are realizing that you drink too much, then your depression may be telling you that you need to get some support with stopping or cut down on your alcohol consumption.

Allow yourself to know the truth about your situation and do your best to not judge it harshly or beat yourself up. It takes courage to acknowledge that you have a problem and get help with it.

If you are aware that there is a problem, what are some solutions or things you can do to start dealing with the problem above that is contributing to your depression (list at least 3):

Putting It All Together



Make a Plan:

How will I support my mind?

How will I support my body?

How will I support my soul?

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