

10 Best Ever Depression Management Techniques

(Margaret Wehrenberg, 2010, WW Norton & Co, New York)

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This reader friendly book identifies and explores the 10 most effective strategies for dealing with depression. It provides information on brain science, explains how different symptoms come from different parts of the brain, and offers practical take-charge techniques.

Some techniques will be more useful than others depending on individual makeup and symptoms.

Where to start? Three must-read introductory chapters educate the reader about depression. The 10 techniques follow and you could read these in any order that makes sense to you. Remember, some will have more or less relevance, depending on the individual. As well as thought provoking questionnaires and explanatory diagrams, there are 20 pages of resources at the back of the book.

The techniques are:

1. Identify Triggers, Plan New Responses
There is no 'one size fits all' with depression. There are many types and the individual triggers point the way to the new responses that would be helpful.
2. Start Where You Already Are
A factual appraisal of one's current life usually reveals some positive things have been overlooked or underappreciated, such as personal strengths and what is going right.
3. Cool Down Burnout
Once called 'nervous exhaustion', burnout is the system wide depletion caused by chronic stress from the sense of desperation that goes with a compulsion to get everything done.
4. Mobilise Your Energy
The interplay between low energy and not taking action can lead to a downward spiral and immobilisation. Start to turn that around with this smorgasbord of practical tips.
5. End Isolation
Isolation may be a cause or a result of depression, or both. Stop what can be a vicious cycle by mapping your circle of intimacy, scheduling activity, preparing for events, and more.
6. Balance Your Life
Honouring the things in which we believe, whether a sense of the sacred or positive human values, contributes to health and wellbeing. As does time to relax and nourish ourselves.
7. Prevent Destructive Behaviour
A neurobiological difficulty in regulating adverse emotions means they can get very intense very quickly and destructive behaviours can result. Here are a number of practical tips.
8. Broaden Your Perspective
Another set of mental habits are examined. For example, how we interpret an event determines how we feel about it. . . so what might be a better interpretation?
9. Increase Flexibility
Cultivating positive thought patterns builds neural circuitry for more of this, enabling you to get out of the habitual rut and be more flexible in the choices you see and act on.
10. Learn to Live Fully
People can let the past or the future distract them from experiencing the present moment, which is the only time they can actually do or be. Here are exercises for savouring your senses and being grateful, which is a powerfully beneficial positive emotion.