

DEPRESSED ANONYMOUS
THE ANTIDEPRESSANT TABLET

Website at <http://www.depressedanon.com>

“Spirituality spurs recovery from depression!”

Good!

WASHINGTON, March 2 / U.S. Newswire/ — The following was released by the National Institute for Healthcare Research:

“A recent study in the American Journal of Psychiatry identified this other often overlooked resource patients draw upon to help fend off depression — a deep religious commitment — that significantly reduced recovery times. This study focused on 85 patients hospitalized with serious medical illness who also became depressed. Among their battery of tests, patients took the Hoge Intrinsic Religiousness Scale which measures how deeply a person has internalized their religious values and faith.

Surprisingly, patients recovered from their depression 70 percent faster for every 10-point increase on the Hoge scale, which ranged from 10 to 50. This link held even when taking into account other factors that could speed up recovery including improving physical health...”

THE INTERNET: A RELIABLE SOURCE?

“As many as 60 million adults used the World Wide Web last year to find information about health care, according to a poll by Louis Harris & Assoc. “Health care is an enormous reason why people go online,” said Humphrey Taylor, Chairman of the polling company, which estimates that 90 million (or 44% of the adult population) use the Internet at home, work or at school.

And amazingly, 91 % said the last time they went online, they found what they wanted...” The most common topics being researched were depression (19 % of searches), allergies or sinus (16%), cancer (15%), bipolar disorder (14%) and arthritis or rheumatism (10%).

According to the Harris survey of more than 1,000 people, which was done online in January, the health sites most often visited online were created either by medical societies or by patients’ advocacy or support groups.” Washington Post, 2/16/99, Page Z17.

Inside this Issue:

Depressed Anonymous: A Spiritual program	Page 2
A Vital Spiritual experience	Page 3
Signs of depression	Page 4
Dep-Anon Family Group	Page 5
Waiting for the drugs to kick in!	Page 6
The Power of Depressed Anonymous	Page 9
Retreat at Prairie Woods, Hiawatha, IA	Page 10

Special points of interest:

- *SIGNS OF DEPRESSION.*
- *MENTAL IMAGERY OVERCOMES RESENTMENTS*
- *SHINING A LIGHT ON THE DARK NITE OF THE SOUL.*
- *A VITAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE*
- *HOW TO STOP A HEART ATTACK*
- *YOUR FIRST DEPRESSED ANON MEETING*

DEPRESSED ANONYMOUS : A SPIRITUAL PROGRAM FOR PERSONAL RECOVERY AND SERENITY.

One of many questions that arise in a person's mind as they make that first courageous step into the fellowship of Depressed Anonymous is "How soon and how quick can I be free from the pain and isolation that has imprisoned me for so long?"

This question can only be answered by time and frequent and active participation in the fellowship of the group. It is by reading the text of the *Depressed Anonymous* manual and attempting to put these principles into effect into one's daily life. Also, one can begin to feel some improvement in their lives as they slowly gain a belief, a faith if you will, that they too can get better -- with time, patience and sharing they will begin to accept themselves for who they are and try and change what they don't like in themselves. By the fact that one comes to a meeting is in itself half of the battle in overcoming the depression. It is this interminable isolation that keeps the dis-ease of depression at its height and intensity. It is only when a person can come to a meeting, begin to trust the group and so share some of the pain that has been bottled up for as many years as many can remember.

The program has been built by those who have experienced depression and know about the need to get connected and to be part of others like themselves. This is where the hope begins—when we see and hear others like ourselves sharing their past pain and how sharing how today it is all different because of their willingness, their openness and their honesty about themselves that has forced open the prison door that has till this time kept them imprisoned in their own fears and phobias.

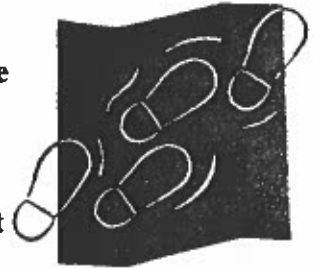
The program is a very simple one—but this doesn't mean that it is easy. All change is painful and if we are to grow we have to change. We have to get resolved some of those old issues that keep popping up in our lives and that want our attention but we cram them back in place and don't want to look at them. The 12 Steps of Depressed Anonymous will help promote your own personal discovery of what it means to force oneself from the despair and self-hatred that normally comes with depression.



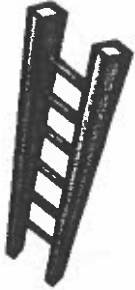
If you are new to our fellowship and this is the first that you are reading about a group whose sole purpose is to help ourselves and others escape the prison of depression — you might be surprised to learn that we neither discuss medicine nor religion at any of our meetings. But really this makes sense as religion is about certain prescriptions and dogma that various religious bodies demand of their adherents—whereas spirituality is about one's concept of a God

of their understanding—not of someone else's understanding of who god is supposed to be for themselves and for everyone else.

The first step in getting past our depression is to first get into the door of a *Depressed Anonymous* meeting—take a seat—keep our ears open and know that we will not be pressured to say a word. Usually they only ask for the first name and leave it at that. Since we want to keep our anonymity we only use our first names at the meetings. There is a phone list for those who would like to keep in touch with fellow members between meetings. At each group meeting a passage is read from our big book or any other book that specifically deals with the spirit of the 12 Steps. After all, we believe that the depression experience is much more than simply a brain disorder or a problem with misbehaving neurotransmitters. **THE EDITOR**




THAT VITAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

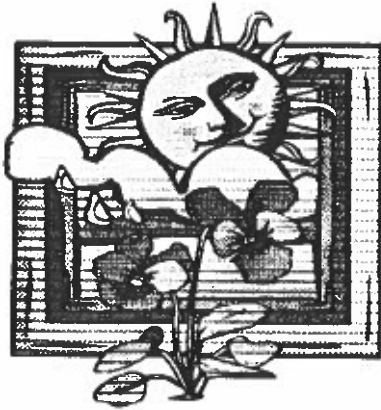


“This work (birth), when it is perfect, will be due solely to God’s action while you have been passive. If you really forsake your own knowledge and will, then surely and gladly God will enter with his knowledge shining clearly. Where God achieves self-consciousness, your own knowledge is of no use, nor has it standing. Do not imagine that your own intelligence may rise to it, so that you may know God. Indeed, when God divinely enlightens you, no natural light is required to bring that about. This (natural light) must in fact be completely extinguished before God will shine in with his light, bringing back with God all that you have forsaken and a thousand times more, together with a new form to contain it all.”

—Meister Eckart (c. 1260-1328)

“If we have ‘worked’ the Twelve Steps on a daily basis, I do believe we now realize the value of surrender and the power that releases in us. Just by making a decision in Step Three *“to turn of God as we understand God”* life and with our selves. Now, we paradoxically isolated family,  *our will and our lives over to the care* is the beginning of reconnection with are conscious how our own isolation friends, loved ones from us. The more our friends tried to help us the more we went deeper into the darkness. Our darkness and their inability to comfort us in turn pushed them deeper into their own feelings of helplessness and isolation. Many times the desire to help the depressed pushes the helper deeper into the isolation of the depressed — mirroring the reality of the depressed person.”

Source: **DEPRESSED ANONYMOUS**, Harmony House Publishers, Louisville, Ky, 1998, Page 186.



SIGNS OF THE DEPRESSION EXPERIENCE.

Wanting to isolate and be alone

Change in appetite

**Shifts in sleeping patterns (too much/not
enough sleep)**

Waking up early in the morning

Fatigability or lack of energy

Agitation or increased activity

**Loss of interest in daily activities and/or
decreased sex drive**

**Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, worth-
lessness, guilt or self-reproach**

Weeping/Not able to cry

Lapses of memory

Hard time making decisions

Fear of losing one's mind

Reluctance to take risks

Difficulty in smiling or laughing

Suicidal thoughts

DEPRESSED ANONYMOUS

"The Twelve Steps are the essential beliefs and at the very core of Depressed Anonymous. The DA recovery program, modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous which originally developed to help men and women deal with their addiction to alcohol, one day at a time. The Twelve Steps have been found to be a potent means of recovery for those who desire to free themselves from their compulsions. The Twelve Steps are basically a program of letting go of our compulsions and handing over our will to the God as we understood God. Essentially our program is a step by step way to change not only our addiction but our way of life. Change happens when we choose to change. The fellowship of the group and our desiring to make changes in our life is what provides our life-giving spiritual experience. Many people get organized religion and spirituality mixed up and DA achieves strength from spirituality without set creed, dogma or doctrine. All the program asks of a person who comes to the meetings is only to have a sincere desire to stop the compulsion of sadding themselves..

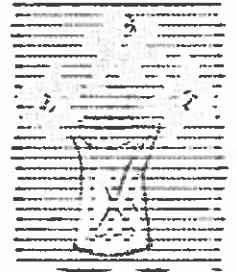
We make no apologies for our faith in a God that can restore one not only to sanity but to serenity and joy as well. "We never apologize for God. Instead, we let God demonstrate, through us, what God can do. We ask God to remove our fear and direct our attention to what God would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear."

Source: Depressed Anonymous, Page 187.

DEP-ANON: SUPPORT GROUP FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE DEPRESSED

The family and friends of persons depressed now have their own support group — much like family and friends of those suffering from other problems. We all know that a family member with a serious problem affects the entire family or system and throws it out of balance.

The idea of having a special group just for family members is to help each other understand the nature of depression and learn how in the meantime to take care of their own needs. The group helps the focus stay on their own issues and not that of the depressed.



THE DEP-ANON MANUAL.

“Family members and friends of the depressed often feel they have nowhere to turn for help. They may find themselves reading books on depression and other resources, but still feel lost as to what to do. This is where Dep-Anon can offer assistance. It is a fellowship of persons who come together to share their stories, and offer support to one another in the process. Their issues may be different from those suffering with depression, but are just as valid. By joining a fellowship such as Dep-Anon, the families and friends of the depressed are displaying a willingness to work their own program of recovery. In doing this, they are moving towards positive life changes, which promote the spiritual principles Dep-Anon is based upon. We simply can't experience the healing we desire by being isolated, and trying to do it alone. We need the fellowship of others, who are on similar paths, and are seeking to implement the spiritual principles of Dep-Anon into their lives. This kind of fellowship is valuable beyond measure.

A group such as Dep-Anon would have been very helpful in my own last depressive episode. There wasn't a group like this at the time. My husband felt lost and helpless in trying to care for me. He could have benefited from coming together with others like himself, who he could share with, and receive support in the process. Instead, he began to isolate as he felt increasingly overwhelmed, and became depressed as a result. This is the danger for family members of the depressed, when they don't have resources for help and encouragement like Dep-Anon. It is a wonderful resource that can make a tremendous difference in the lives of persons connected to the depressed. Please spread the word that help is available through Dep-Anon Family Group. It can make a difference.

Denise List, M. ED., writing in the FOREWORD to the DEP-ANON FAMILY GROUP MANUAL, 1999, Louisville, KY, 40217



“FOR THE DEPRESSED PERSON THE
CERTAINTY OF MISERY
IS PREFERABLE TO THE
MISERY OF UNCERTAINTY.”

WAITING FOR THE DRUGS TO KICK IN!



One of the realities of one's life —especially if one has been depressed for a time —is that language creates reality. This is a tenet of our recovery program. How often as children have some of us have been told that “we'll never be like our brother or our sister” all the time preparing us for a lived out prophecy from some early childhood significant other.

Since language can and does create our reality —especially if the language is that of someone who is an adult and many years our senior. It is this language that helps construct the meaning that we give to life and life's events and circumstances —both pleasant and unpleasant. How often have we heard that we are patients or that “we are under the care of the doctor.” Get the feel of the language here —one, we are a patient, and secondly, we are under the care of and/or we are waiting for the drug to “kick in.” I don't know about you, but the language just described can promote a self-understanding of someone who not only is powerless but is waiting for something to fall out of the sky and make things better. Don't get me wrong, medication, doctors, therapists all may be very important as part and parcel of healing —but, let's get this straight — we are responsible for our own health! I can't afford to sit and wait for something, someone to make me feel better — this is true especially for that painful reality that we call depression. I want to live in the solution, where I know there is hope the more I become proactive in my own recovery and start doing things for myself. I now believe that once I start making choices for my own health today the more I will speed up my recovery and release from the prison of depression.

Since language can create our reality and since humans are always constructing meaning for their lives it is essential that persons depressed be given the message from health-care professionals that they can do something now to start feeling different. In other words, people need to believe that there is hope for them. They can begin to believe that by starting a personal exercise program, watching what they put in their minds and mouths — in time things will start to come around. But if I am given a message that my problem is a chemical imbalance or that my problem is genetic—then that leaves me with little hope for now or the future. The only solution might appear to be no solution or at least a reliance on a chemical solution at best. And if the problem is essentially a chemical imbalance then I'll just have to wait til they find the right chemicals to stabilize those misbehaving chemicals in my brain.

For some reason, I don't believe that we can just blame the brain —in fact, I don't think it ever does any good to blame anybody or anything for the way we feel. Oh, sure, we can blame others and possibly that makes us feel a little better—but in the long run —it's me, myself and I who has to take responsibility for me.

I caution you then, be careful the way you talk to yourself. At the mutual aid meetings of Depressed Anonymous, the whole point of our coming together is to believe that you and I together can begin to see ourselves in a new light. In fact, we learn a new language at our meetings. We learn to take responsibility for ourselves, We find people in the group who speak our language of hope and courage. You never hear “snap out of it” at our meetings. The message that a newcomer gets at our 12 step meetings are assurances that things will get better the more you come to meetings; expect to get better; start using the tools that have successfully led others out of the prison of depression. So, all in all, we need to get busy as soon as the doctor prescribes the medication, or we start therapy or both. Next, we need to find a depression mutual aid group like Depressed Anonymous which is a NOW program to help support you as you gradually begin to walk out of depression. No need to wait — wait out the weeks before the drugs begin to take effect, hopefully, and we start feeling better. We don't have to wait for the drugs to “kick in” before we get busy and start working on ourselves. We can start today. We can join a group of people committed to change and recovery. We can start today as together we work the steps of our program of recovery. It speaks the language of hope!

10 Characteristics of a well functioning group



1. Attraction to individual members of the group.
2. Feelings of getting help by helping.
3. Risk-taking by group members.
4. Demystification of the members experience and consensual validation.
5. Strong leadership with a willingness to share on the part of the leader, along with rotation of leadership roles.
6. A focus on goals and resolution of discrepancies in individual and group goals.
7. Active participation by group members.
8. Demand by the group for self-responsibility of members.
9. Elaboration of a substitute culture in which identity changes can occur.
10. Expansion of alternative perceptions through continuous intervention.



MENTAL IMAGERY PROCESS FOR OVERCOMING RESENTMENT

1. Sit in a comfortable chair, feet flat on the floor, eyes closed.
2. Create a clear picture in your mind of the person toward who you feel resentment.
3. Picture good things happening to that person. See him or her receive love attention or money, whatever you believe that person would see as a good thing.
4. Be aware of your own reactions. If you have difficulty seeing good things happening to the person, it is a natural reaction. It will become easier with practice.
5. Think about the role you may have played in the stressful scene that caused the angry reaction to you in the first place and how you might reinterpret the event and the other person's behavior. Imagine how the situation might look from the other person's point of view.
6. Be aware of how much more relaxed, less resentful you feel. Tell yourself you will carry this new understanding with you.
7. You are now ready to open your eyes and resume your usual activities.

—The imagery process usually takes less than five minutes to complete. Use it whenever you become aware of resuming an unpleasant, painful, or angering episode from the past. There may be months when it is unnecessary for you to use it at all, and there may be days when you use it a half dozen times.

Source: Simonton, Carl O., MD. GETTING WELL AGAIN. New York, Bantam Books, 1984, pp. , 178-179.

THE NEW WAY TO STOP A HEART ATTACK: It takes more than diet and exercise to prevent a heart attack. Here's what you need to know. By Jeff Meade. *Prevention Magazine* / February 1999, pages 107-113.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following are some of the seven ways the author outlines as maintaining a healthy heart.

- 1 **MAKE FRIENDS.** He states that "(I)f you don't have family andn friends living near you, you can join a support group. Depressed Anonymous is an international 12 step organization that can help you deal with the blues.
- 2 **GET A PET**
- 3 **MEDITATE**
- 4 **PUT A LITTLE LOVE IN YOUR LIFE**
- 5 **SAY YOUR PRAYERS**
- 6 **GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR NATURAL RHYTHMS**
- 7 **THE FASTEST WAY TO YOUR HEART IS THROUGH YOUR MIND**



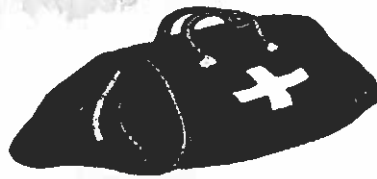
"... who will make the first move?"

"We are surprised because we don't see that beneath the surface of the present there is always the human material for change: the suppressed indignation, the common sense, the need for community, the love of children, the patience to wait for the right moment to act in concert with others. These are the elements that spring to the surface when a movement appears in history.



People are practical. They want change but feel powerless, alone, do not want to be the blade of grass that sticks up above the others and is cut down. They wait for a sign from someone else who will make the first move, or the second. And at certain times in history, there are intrepid people who take the risk that if they make that first move others will follow quickly enough to prevent their being cut down. And if we understand this, we might make that first move."

Source: **You can't be neutral on a moving train. A Personal History of our times.** Howard Zinn, Beacon Press, Boston, Page 10.



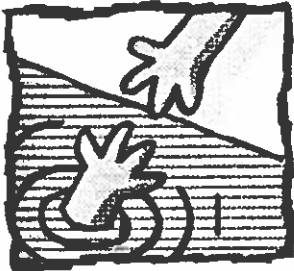
STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH ANXIETY AND PANIC

1. Remember that although your feelings and symptoms are very frightening, they are not dangerous or harmful.
2. Understand that what you are experiencing is just an exaggeration of your normal bodily reaction to stress.
3. Do not fight your feelings or try to wish them away. The more you are willing to face them, the less intense they will become.
4. Do not add to your panic by thinking about what "might" happen. If you find yourself asking "What if?" Tell yourself, "So what!"
5. Stay in the present. Notice what is really happening to you as opposed to what you think might happen.
6. Label your fear level from zero to ten and watch it go up and down. Notice that it does not stay at a very high level for more than a few seconds.
7. When you find yourself thinking about the fear, change your "what if" thinking. Focus on and carry out a simple and manageable task such as counting backwards from 100 by 3's or snapping a rubber band on your wrist.
8. Notice that when you stop adding frightening thoughts to your fear, it begins to fade.
9. When the fear comes, expect and accept it. Wait and give it time to pass without running away from it.
10. Be proud of yourself for your progress thus far, and think about how good you will feel when you succeed this time.

Reprinted courtesy of the National Mental Health Association. *Understanding Panic Disorder.*

THE POWER OF DEPRESSED ANONYMOUS

— By Ray



“What is the power of Depressed Anonymous? Well, first let me say that when I started attending D. A. meetings I went for a couple of months and then stopped. I stopped going because my depression was so bad I didn't want to leave my apartment. I didn't want to be around or talk to anyone. I just didn't want to do anything except crawl in a hole somewhere and isolate myself from everything. Then after about six weeks of isolation I called the residential treatment facility where I had been a client to see if I had received any mail there and one of the members of the D. A. group where I attend answered the phone. I spent a few minutes talking to her and there was something in her voice that told me that for some reason it was important for me to be at the meeting. I attended the next D. A. meeting. After the meeting was over, I suddenly realized the importance and power of Depressed Anonymous.

So what is the power of Depressed Anonymous? For me, it's just like attending the first meeting. I was a little scared and apprehensive at first, but then I found the Depressed Anonymous meeting was a place to go where there were other depressed people just like me. They could relate to and understand what I was going through. They didn't judge me or think of me as crazy. I was accepted.

Another power of Depressed the group and what each person seen our fellowship get stronger many friendships that I can depend standing. I have watched some of coming back, grow and improve. smile when there was none before. powers and energizes me.

“The miracle of the group empowers and energizes me.”

Anonymous is the miracle of brings to the group. I have and grow. I have developed on for support and under- the newcomers that have kept Even something as simple as a The miracle of the group em-

The most important power of hope. Hope that we will not be locked in the prison of depression forever and that there is a way out for each of us. A hope that our Higher Power will work the miracle through us and that we will find our own happiness. I have hope that our hearts and minds will know love and peace like we have never known or felt before. The power of Depressed Anonymous works for me. I hope and pray that it works for you. Keep coming back!”

Depressed Anonymous is

Source: DEPRESSED ANONYMOUS, Harmony House Publishers, 1998, Pages 154-155.



**ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY!
DEPRESSED ANONYMOUS**

Harmony House Publishers, 1998.

200 pages + 30 personal stories of victory over depression!

Depressed Anonymous is the book that helped launch a mutual-aid group for hundreds of people around the globe. The book, with its step by step approach to overcoming depression, is a tried and true method of working one's way out of the prison of depression.

Price \$14.00 + \$2.50 Shipping and handling.

Write today for a listing of available literature:

Depressed Anonymous, Box 17471, Louisville, Ky, 40217.

**WEEKEND RETREAT AT PRAIRIE WOODS; FRANCISCAN SPIRITUQUALITY CENTER
120 E. Boyson Road, Hiawatha, IA 52233 (Outside Cedar Rapids, IA)**

SHINING A LIGHT ON THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

Discover ways to brighten one's path on the daily journey

May 15th -16th, 1999

Directed by Dr. Hugh Smith, Ms, DMIN.

Director of Depression Self-help Services, Inc.

Write to Hugh Smith for a brochure outlining the time, topics and cost of this weekend retreat for persons depressed. No reservations can be received after April 25th.

Dr. Hugh Smith

Depressed Anonymous

Box 17471 Louisville, Ky 40217



(502) 459.6700



SUBSCRIBE TODAY TO THE ANTIDEPRESSANT TABLET

Quarterly publication \$8.00 for four Issues

CLIP AND MAIL TODAY!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT _____

TOWN _____ ZIP _____

Make payable to: Depressed Anonymous, Box 17471, Louisville, Ky 40217.