

## **Permanent Change**

### Making the Changes and Getting Support

If you want to *actually* cure your depression, some major changes have to take place. You don't want to put a band-aid on your problem but attack the root issues themselves so you don't have to painfully relapse into depression over and over again.

Every month of recovery adds up and the imprint of depression gets weaker and weaker. Don't let the high relapse rate of depression scare you, when you make the changes outlined in this course it will stop the dreaded cycle of depression for good.

Lifestyle change can be hard, everyone wants to “stop smoking” and “start working out.” The good thing about depression is the pain can be so intense that finding relief is incredibly motivating.

### **Social Support**

Depression makes it harder for someone to take initiative. Changing habits doesn't happen just by receiving new information alone. You *need* to learn how to get support to make this a permanent change. Remember, depression makes you want to withdraw from the huge reduction in serotonin.

- It is critical that you learn how to ask for help. For the longest time I felt like “I didn't deserve help” or that people would “think I was weak.” Nothing could be further from the truth. What I *did* do, was changed how I *asked* for help.
- **Be Direct:** Don't text your friend “I am so worthless” or “Why does everyone hate me.” People don't know how to help you if you don't tell them. Some people don't understand the seriousness of depression, you have to tell them.
  - Instead of telling someone “I am worthless” tell them “Hey I am depressed and having a hard time. Can you call me up in a few days to see if I'm doing alright?” You'll be surprised at how well people will respond if you are direct and honest.
  - Instead of telling someone “I hate myself” you can say “I am feeling really low. I need to just get out and be around friends. Want to go to the park to play basketball for an hour?”
- **Let People Know:** It is alright to let people know you are depressed and working on recovering. Not only that, but by letting them know, they won't feel offended when you haven't responded to their texts because they'll know you are depressed. Let them know you might start withdrawing and to have them help you.
- **Don't Get Too Negative With People:** It's ok to express how you are feeling, but people don't know how to respond when they are trying to help you and you respond “You don't really understand.” Instead of saying things like “I should just go kill myself” try saying instead, “Hey I am feeling really low. Do you want to go eat dinner? I could use some support.”
  - Aim to go do certain activities that will get you out of your depression instead of sitting in at home with your friends ruminating on how worthless you feel.

### **Get leverage on yourself if you need to be 100% committed.**

- You want to make sure you do something *no matter what*? Tell a trusted friend who you know will keep you accountable, and have him or her call you at the end of the week and ask if you did what you said you would. If you don't do it, you have to pay a certain amount of cash.
  - EX: If I don't exercise for 30 minutes 3 times this week, I will give you \$100.

### **Find Professional Help**

- If you find a therapist or support group that you really connect with, it could be life-changing.
- Don't worry about trying out a bunch of therapists or support groups. It is important that you find people that you completely trust, are knowledgeable about depression, and are in healthy

places that can boost you up.

- Seriously, get help. People love helping other people. Go get a therapist already!

### **A Word About Toxic Relationships**

- A good rule to have is that if any relationship constantly stresses you out, it might be time to closely look at that relationship. It would be hard to stay happy and healthy if you are surrounded by people that don't like you and/or are even abusive.
- Sometimes people don't know they are actually being insensitive. Try bringing up the issue to see if they will make the change.
  - I had a friend that would subtly put me down at parties. I called him one day and confronted him about it. He had no idea that he was doing that and apologized. Problem went away and we are still friends.
- If you can't improve the relationship and you know it is unhealthy, sometimes you have to cut people off and start hanging out with positive people that support you.