

# Treat myself to something special

When we are feeling depressed, it's hard to feel like we deserve a break or something good. Sometimes we feel like we shouldn't spend time or money on ourselves. But being good to ourselves is powerful Personal Medicine that can help us heal.

Feeling Depressed 01

## To treat myself, I:

- ☐ Get a mani/pedi/massage
- ☐ Spend time in nature
- ☐ Take a walk in my favorite place
- ☐ Get out of the house and order my favorite meal/drink
- ☐ Binge watch a favorite TV show
- ☐ Play a video game
- ☐ Get a new hair style
- ☐ My idea:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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# Talk with friends, family or peers

Isolation can make our feelings of depression worse. If we contact friends/peers it breaks the isolation and helps us feel connected and cared about. We don't always have to talk about how we are feeling. Sometimes talking or texting with friends about a variety of subjects (*e.g. sports, hobbies, TV shows*) can feel really good.

Feeling Depressed 02

## My contacts:

Name:

Phone #:

Name:

Phone #:

Name:

Phone #:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 02

## My contacts:

Name:

Phone #:

Name:

Phone #:

Name:

Phone #:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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# Exercise, exercise, exercise

Research has found exercise is a powerful antidepressant. Even moderate exercise such as walking for 30 minutes 3 times a week can help us feel less depressed. Remember, mopping the floor, vacuuming or washing a car counts as exercise, too. We don't need to be an elite athlete. Just get moving to relieve depression.

Feeling Depressed 03

When I feel depressed, I:

- ☐ Walk, run or bike
- ☐ Do yard work
- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Lift weights
- ☐ Clean my house
- ☐ My idea:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

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- ☐ My idea:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

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# Listen to my feelings

Feeling depressed can be a signal pointing to something in our lives that needs attention. For instance, we might have a conflict with our partner. Feeling depressed could be a signal that it's time to find a solution to the conflict. Are feelings of depression signaling us to pay attention to something important in our life?

Feeling Depressed 04

When do I feel depressed?

Is there a pattern to when I feel depressed?

Feeling depressed may be signaling me to pay attention to:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 04

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Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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# Structure my time so I can get important tasks done

When we feel depressed, we often experience low energy and find it hard to do the things we need to do. It can help to prioritize the most important tasks and leave the rest for a later time. Using a daily calendar and prioritizing tasks each day can help us fulfill our responsibilities and work through our low energy.

Feeling Depressed 05

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
My "must do" task today			
Other tasks I might do today			
	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
My "must do" task today			
Other tasks I might do today			

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 05

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My "must do" task today			
Other tasks I might do today			
	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
My "must do" task today			
Other tasks I might do today			

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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# Watch, listen or read to laugh or cry

Depressed feelings sometimes dominate our emotional landscape. Finding a way to “feel” other emotions can be a release. Watching, reading or listening to something funny or sad can help us reconnect with our other feelings.

Feeling Depressed 06

## When I’m feeling depressed, I:

- ☐ Watch a funny movie or TV show
- ☐ Watch a sad movie or TV show
- ☐ Scroll through funny videos on social
- ☐ Listen to a comedy podcast
- ☐ Read a funny story
- ☐ Read a sad story
- ☐ My idea:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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- ☐ Read a sad story
- ☐ My idea:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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## Get out and about

When we feel depressed, we sometimes isolate or disconnect from other people. Doing things that help get us out of the house and into the company of others can help improve our mood.

Feeling Depressed 07

When feeling depressed, I get out and about by:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 07

When feeling depressed, I get out and about by:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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# Get natural sunlight each day

Sunlight can help when we are feeling depressed. We can get daily exposure to sunlight by going outside or using a light box. The healing rays of sunlight are an antidepressant.

Feeling Depressed 08

When I spend time in natural sunlight, I feel:

When I don't spend time in natural sunlight, I feel:

I ensure I spend time in natural sunlight by:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 08

When I spend time in natural sunlight, I feel:

When I don't spend time in natural sunlight, I feel:

I ensure I spend time in natural sunlight by:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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## Laugh out loud

You've heard it said that *"laughter is the best medicine"*. It turns out, science supports that idea. There are many health benefits to laughter, including stress reduction, improved mood and reduction in physical pain. Even forced laughter can lead to authentic laughter and have beneficial effects.

Feeling Depressed 09

### Each day I:

- ☐ Force myself to laugh alone or with a friend
- ☐ Watch a funny video
- ☐ Get tickled
- ☐ My idea:

### Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 09

### Each day I:

- ☐ Force myself to laugh alone or with a friend
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- ☐ Get tickled
- ☐ My idea:

### Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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## Practice gratitude

Feeling depressed can act like a filter. It makes it harder to see the good things, and easier to focus on the things we don't have. Practicing gratitude for the simple things can help adjust the filter so we can let the good stuff in. Some people call the practice of gratitude "*counting our blessings*".

Feeling Depressed 10

I am grateful for:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 10

I am grateful for:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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# Achieve, Connect and Enjoy

“ACE” stands for Achieve, Connect and Enjoy. When feeling depressed we can feel like a failure. We isolate from others and it’s difficult to find pleasure. We can begin to feel better by setting one achievable goal (A), one social interaction (C) and one enjoyable activity (E) each day.



## Day 1:

My achievable goal:

My social interaction:

My enjoyable activity:

## Day 2:

My achievable goal:

My social interaction:

My enjoyable activity:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another



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## Day 1:

My achievable goal:

My social interaction:

My enjoyable activity:

## Day 2:

My achievable goal:

My social interaction:

My enjoyable activity:

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

# Read my letter to myself

*"This too shall pass"* reminds us that even the worst storm of depressed feelings will pass. It can help to write a letter to ourselves so we don't forget that. If a new storm arrives, we can read our letter again and remind ourselves "*this too shall pass*".

Feeling Depressed 12

My letter to myself:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 12

My letter to myself:

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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# Reconnect with the world around me

When we feel depressed, we feel disconnected as if we are adrift on a vast sea with no compass. But if we take a moment and become very still, we can reconnect with familiar sounds, tastes, and/or textures that give us our bearings and help us get grounded.

Feeling Depressed 13

To get reconnected with the world around me, I name out loud:

1. Something I **see**
2. Something I **hear**
3. Something I **touch**
4. Something I **smell**
5. Something I **taste**

Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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# Engage in activities that nourish me

Some activities are nourishing. They energize, motivate and lift our mood. Other activities drain our energy, exhaust us and worsen our mood. It's important to increase nourishing activities and decrease draining activities in order to combat feeling depressed.

Feeling Depressed 14

My draining activities:

My nourishing activities:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 14

My draining activities:

My nourishing activities:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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# Name the oppression contributing to my depression

There are many kinds of oppression that can have a negative affect on our mental and physical health. Examples of oppression include racism, homophobia, poverty and sexism. Naming the oppression we experience, how it affects us and joining with others to fight it can help.

Feeling Depressed 15

The oppression I experience:

How it affects me:

**Organizations or groups I can join:** (name and contact info):

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 15

The oppression I experience:

How it affects me:

**Organizations or groups I can join:** (name and contact info):

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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## Prepare for my triggers

Sometimes feeling depressed is triggered by specific situations. Knowing our triggers means we can anticipate when we might get triggered and prepare to take care of ourselves.

Feeling Depressed 16



**My triggers:** *(example: holidays, anniversaries, birthdays, loss days)*

**My plan:**

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

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Sometimes feeling depressed is triggered by specific situations. Knowing our triggers means we can anticipate when we might get triggered and prepare to take care of ourselves.

Feeling Depressed 16



**My triggers:** *(example: holidays, anniversaries, birthdays, loss days)*

**My plan:**

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

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# Replace my depressed thought with a positive thought

*"I'm no good."; "I never do anything right."; "I'm a total a loser."* Negative thinking can fuel feeling depressed and make it worse. Replacing our depressed thought with a positive one can help.

Feeling Depressed 17

**My depressed thought:** *(example: "I never do anything right")*

**My positive replacement thought:** *(example: "It's ok for me to make a mistake.")*

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 17

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**My positive replacement thought:** *(example: "It's ok for me to make a mistake.")*

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☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe):*

☐ No – I will try another

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# Track my food-mood connection

Food can affect our mood. Refined carbohydrates and some sugar substitutes (*e.g. aspartame*) can cause rapid ups and downs in our blood sugar. A blood sugar crash can feel a lot like depression. Tracking the food we eat and how it affects our mood can help.

Feeling Depressed 18



	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
What did I eat/ drink?			
How's my mood?			
	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
What did I eat/ drink?			
How's my mood?			

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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Feeling Depressed 18



	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
What did I eat/ drink?			
How's my mood?			
	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
What did I eat/ drink?			
How's my mood?			

## Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

☐ Yes – it helps me (*describe*):

☐ No – I will try another

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# Reach out for help

Sometimes feelings of depression can get so deep, we think about wanting to die. But suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. In most areas, there is free, confidential, 24-hour help.

In the US:

**The National Suicide  
Prevention Hotline**  
988 (call or text)

**Crisis Text Line**  
Text: HOME to 741741

Feeling Depressed 19

When I need to reach out, I call/text:

**Does this Personal Medicine work for me?**

☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

☐ No – I will try another

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☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:

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### Is my Personal Medicine powerful?

- Is it a specific activity, not a feeling/state-of-being? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it something I do now, not a future goal? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it something I do, not something I take? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Does it say how it helps me? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Feeling Depressed Blank



### Is my Personal Medicine powerful?

- Is it a specific activity, not a feeling/state-of-being? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it something I do now, not a future goal? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it something I do, not something I take? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Does it say how it helps me? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Feeling Depressed Blank



### My plan:

### Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

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### My plan:

### Does this Personal Medicine work for me?

- ☐ Yes – it helps me *(describe)*:
- ☐ No – I will try another

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