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## **Depression**

Depression is a sensitive and delicate subject. Our current system of treating depression is not yielding great results. Although many pharmaceutical drugs can have an immediate impact, nobody has depression caused by a deficiency of a synthetic, man-made chemical. Drugs block the natural chemical messengers, or neurotransmitters of body, and alter natural function of our system.

Unfortunately, we have created a society today where a psychiatrist can talk to a person, run no tests or check for any nutritional imbalances whatsoever, and prescribe potentially dangerous drugs with various negative side effects. Most antidepressants are actually prescribed by family doctors, not psychiatrists, and are handed out for any reason a doctor deems necessary. Many anti-depressants have suicidal thoughts and depression plainly listed as a side-effect of the medication. There are potentially better ways, the ways of God and nutrition.

Depression is commonly linked to a deficiency in neurotransmitter function. So the question is, how does nutrition, hormones and our thought patterns relate to depression? Throughout history, depression was treated using God and nature; sunshine, water, music, nutrition and fasting were the therapies, not drugs.

## **The food you eat affects how you think, how you feel and how you look**

What if we were to eat the way our body was designed and eat the food originally given to us by our Creator? What if the nutrient void, processed, chemical filled junk food and comfort foods of the Standard American Diet (SAD) is a key component to feelings of depression? The most damaging food, and unfortunately most common comfort food in America today is processed sugar, white flour, processed fats and other junk foods. These poisons rob your body of minerals, shuts down your organs, glands and neurotransmitter function and can you put anyone on a fast track for depression. We need genuine replacement parts to BUILD these chemical messengers. Don't let food be your drug, in a negative way. It should be medicine, in a positive way! The gut/brain connection is crucial for life. The intestinal tract is the first thing formed in the embryo. The vagus nerve hardwires our brain to every organ in the body. These two systems are nourished and fed by our food choices and our thoughts...

**AVOID** – Processed sugar, white flour, white rice and rancid oils. Rancid oils include all of your vegetable oils like corn, soy, canola, safflower oil. They promote inflammation in the body. This of course includes fried foods, trans fats, hydrogenated oils, etc. GRAINS can cause depression if not properly absorbed and digestion. Most of us have heard about the "gluten" problem but it goes beyond that. I will never forget the woman I met on anti-depressants for 20 years on medication, stopped eating grains, and in 3 days was off the medication.

**#1 – Vitamin C!** Camu Camu berries are now the 2<sup>nd</sup> most widely used plant for depression today, mainly for its high vitamin C content. Vitamin C is also found in Amla berries, Acerola Cherries and other fruits. It is important to buy WHOLE FOOD vitamin C and NOT ascorbic acid, which is either cheap and poor quality, or synthetic. Vitamin C is necessary for the conversion of D-phenylalanine into L-Tyrosine.

**#2 – Mucuna Pruriens.** This is an herb that is high in L-Dopa and therefore helps with the production of dopamine in the system. If your issue is from decreased serotonin levels, be careful with mucuna pruriens. It can depress serotonin levels. Try it by starting slowly and working your way. If it doesn't work for you, try another approach.

**#3 – St. John's Wort.** St John's Wort is incredibly powerful in mild to moderate cases of depression, but has not been shown effective for severe depression. It is not to be taken if you are taking anti-depressants for concern from possible interactions. This plant is great for serotonin uptake in the brain and is definitely worth a try. Try Happy Juice by Herb Garden.

**#4 – Ginkgo Biloba.** This plant improves neurotransmitter function in brain and brings oxygen rich blood to the brain. It is possibly the oldest seed plant in the world. Biloba means "two lobed" and we have two lobes to our brain. It helps the human body to adapt to stress, also known as an adaptogenic herb. This tree grows around urban environments, tolerate disease and insects cannot attack them, even poor soil quality.

**#5 – Holy Basil.** Holy Basil has been used for thousands of years to bring people into a prayer/meditative state of mind. It is a natural wound healer and anti-inflammatory as well. It works by stopping the excess production of cortisol from the adrenal glands which antagonizes stress and causes weight gain. It balances the body, reduce stress and anxiety and increases overall feelings of well-being. A wonderful plant to be tried for mild depression.

**#6 – CBD Oil from Hemp.** CBD oil contains cannabidiols, only one of 70 active ingredients found in hemp, that provides healing to the body in many ways. Studies have shown that it relaxes and calms the nervous system, relieving stress, anxiety and depression. It also has the ability to uplift the mood and spirit.

**#7 – Cashews.** Cashews are shown in studies to work as well as anti-depressants. The reason is from their high levels of tryptophan, an important amino acid for mood and sleep. 3.5 ounces of RAW cashews, not roasted provides 470mg of tryptophan. Pumpkin seeds and sesame seeds (tahini also) are very high sources as well. Chamomile flowers are the highest herbal source of tryptophan, so drink your chamomile tea!

**#8 – Chocolate!** I am talking about 100% raw cacao. It contains over 300 know mood boosting nutrients, including the bliss chemical anandamide and serotonin. Best mood dessert ever is easy. Blend raw cacao, raw coconut oil and honey!

**#9 – Fermented Foods.** 80-90% of serotonin is in your gut. Your gut is nicknamed your 2<sup>nd</sup> brain. Healthy living flora and bacteria are critical for proper function of mood, hormones and your immune system. Making fermented veggies is actually quite easy. Antibiotics create depression and this has been proven in mice studies. They even have been calling probiotics, the "new Prozac."

**#10 - B-vitamins.** Foods like nutritional yeast, bee pollen, royal jelly or a good b-vitamin complex can be very helpful. B-vitamins are crucial for nerve function and neurotransmitter production.

**#11 – Raw, living foods.** Avoid processed fats, sugars, anything white and rancid vegetable oils. Raw, living foods provide life!

**#12 - Consider fasting.** Consider NO food or a juice fast for a while. Try fruits and veggies only for a while. You will feel better!

**#13 - Love your liver.** Throughout history, depression (or often termed melancholy) was treated through nutrition, fasting and cleaning the liver. Doing a liver cleanse can be a huge step to someone overcoming depression. Cleansing in general is VERY important for emotional health as well as physical health.

## **Depression = Disconnect!**

From my experience, most people dealing with depression are disconnected. Of course, many people have traumatic events occur in their lives and deal with short-term intense bouts of depression. I am talking more about long-term chronic depression. Disconnecting is a defense mechanism. We don't want depression to become our identity. This disconnect can be from many different areas of life. Here are the areas where people experience disconnect:

### ***God, nature, exercise, food and people***

So get connected! Here is how.

1. Discover God. Why is this important? Don't let depression become your identity, or who you are. You have a much higher purpose in life, every single one of us! People are looking for the "right pill," the "right person," or the "right circumstances," to overcome their depression. We need to look up! The world will disappoint us. Material possessions disappoint us, people disappoint us and many circumstances in our lives disappoint us. God lets you know that you were created, you are loved and you are here for a purpose on this earth. Jesus Christ has restored the hearts of millions of people lost in depression and He can do the same for you. God wants to be discovered and restore you!

PURPOSE is crucial for finding joy in life. God has purpose for each of us. Are we talking to Him about our purpose in life? What is our identity related to God?

Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

### **Disconnect from God causes the following.**

- No hope in God, no purpose in life, no relationship with God, feelings of separation from God
- Spirit of depression from sin, rebellion, disobedience and turning from God. Thinking you're not good enough for God, but He wants you to turn back to Him.
- Being unthankful instead of thankful
- Focusing on yourself and not others
- Carrying your own burdens instead of giving them to Jesus
- Unforgiveness

2. Connect with PEOPLE. We need fellowship. We need community. We need loving friends and family members. We need support. Find a way to serve and help other people. This is why people give to charity and volunteer their time.

### ***The enemy wants to seclude us and destroy us!***

3. Connect with nature. God is found in nature. There is a reason we feel amazing when we are surrounded by nature. Romans 1:20 says “For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Even getting a dog or cat can connect us this way, or plants around the house. This is where getting sunshine comes in as well! Don't wear sunscreen or sunglasses. This blocks light, or I like to say blocks God, from entering your body. Sunshine in your eyes is crucial for hormone production. Watch sunrises and sunsets!
4. Connect with food. Don't let food be your crutch, your life-line, your comfort and your enemy. Food is meant to nourish and sustain the body, not torment us. Who is in control of your body? You or food? If you eat quality, raw, living, healthy foods you will be more in control of who you really are as a person, and who God designed you to be.
5. Connect with exercise. The human body was created to MOVE. We used to move as a part of daily life and there are incredible benefits to moving. So get going. Make it simple, like walking in nature. Treadmills and gyms are boring, but if that works for you, go for it! Group exercise is a great tool for depression. This stimulates endorphins, serotonin, dopamine, nor-epinephrine and more hormones to make you feel better.
6. Connect with DOING life. Make a list of what you enjoy and go do those things. If you stay inside, you'll watch tv, eat and get depressed.
7. Connect with your creative side. Many people must express themselves in order to feel free. If you have a talent, express it! Even if it has been 20 years, never fear being who God designed you to be! Let the artist, dancer, painter or writer FLOW with life...