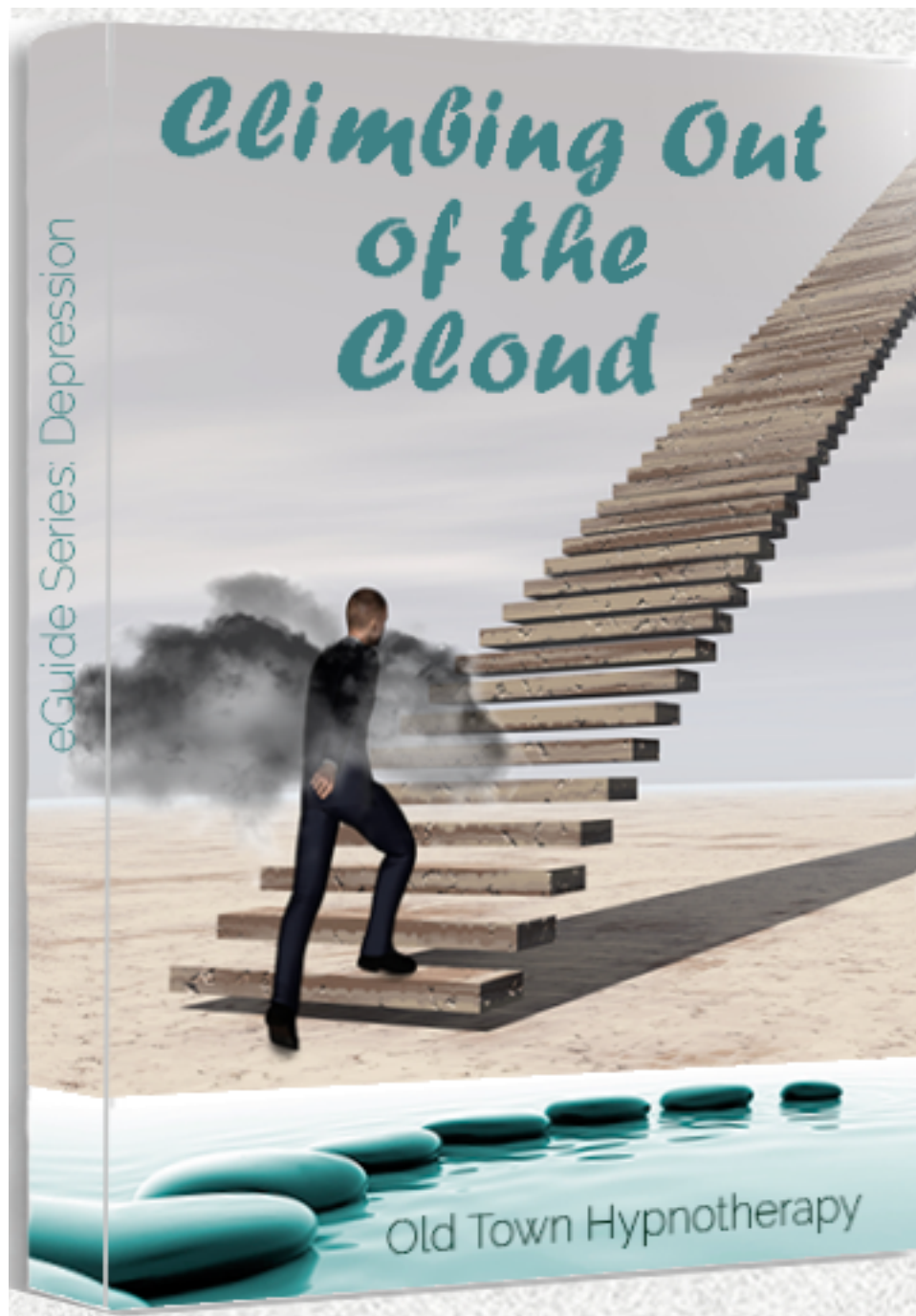


Climbing Out Of The Cloud



Your Step by Step Guide to bringing
yourself out of depression

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About the Author



Emma Triplett HPD, DPH, MNCH(Reg) AfSFH Hypnotherapist, Psychologist & Life Coach

Emma is the founder of Old Town Hypnotherapy Ltd, having opened the first branch in Swindon in 2011 after successfully qualifying in Solution Focused Hypnotherapy at the prestigious Clifton Practice in Bristol.

Emma is no stranger to depression herself. In 2002 after a 15 year career in IT sales she crashed and burned out of the industry. The company doctor informed her she had depression and should be on antidepressants. At that time Emma knew nothing about depression and it wasn't until retraining as a solution focused hypnotherapist that she understood the truth behind the perceived causes and is now determined to demystify

depression, the misunderstanding and stigma around it, in particular the false belief that it is something you have to 'live with' for the rest of your life – it's simply not.

Emma's direct approach empowers people suffering from depression to take control of themselves and their lives and cure themselves of this horrible disease that effects not only them, but their families, friends and the world around them.

Emma has helped literally hundreds of people rid themselves of the life debilitating symptoms of anxiety and depression, opened six branches of Old Town Hypnotherapy in the UK and is now on a mission to empower others to make the internal changes necessary to rid themselves of these toxic diseases and live a happy, empowered and fulfilled life.

Emma is the owner and director of Old Town Hypnotherapy Ltd and also runs her own Life Coaching business, EmmajTriplett.com where she regularly holds Personal Development & Coaching Retreats on the Island of Gozo where she now lives.

Emma J. Triplett

Introduction

Congratulations and good for you – well done!

Have you any idea what a significant step you have just made in purchasing this eGuide?

Do not underestimate the importance of the decision you have just made to get better – I don't.

As a therapist and as someone who has had a brush with depression I know and understand what a big step it is. Until you make that mindset shift from 'I can't' to 'I'm going to' you are stuck in the vicious cycle. However, the moment you let go of old beliefs and take that first step, the step of decision, you have started the journey.

Every day now, you have another decision to make:-

Are you going to take the next step out of depression or are you going to head back into the safety and comfort zone of what you know well – how to be depressed?

Is it going to be easy? – Not always.

I never promised it would always be easy, you would have already done it if it was easy, but this is the easiest and quickest path to happiness, contentment, excitement, joy or whatever personal journey or goal you have in mind.

Can you do it? – Yes, without a doubt.

I say that because you made the decision to take that step, if you can do that, you can do this and I will be there to support and help you. Don't forget you can reach out to me by email any time you might be struggling. You can do it, the only thing that will hold you back is your own belief and self talk that you can't. So I want you to drop that right now and start believing in yourself – I believe in you.

Climbing out of depression is just like any journey:

eGuide: Climbing Out Of The Cloud

Initially, like today, you are full of anticipation and enthusiasm, it's the start of something new and exciting, you've packed your bags and you're off.

However, the middle bit of the journey can get a bit boring and tedious. If it's a long journey inevitably there will be delays along the way, things don't always run smoothly and there will be occasions when you will be fed up and wish you hadn't started and maybe you will think of turning back.

But don't turn back. Instead imagine the excitement of arriving; think of those times when you've gone on holiday - you arrive, exhausted but happy that you have finally got there and you can start the fun.

This is going to be exactly like that. The hardest part will be the middle when you might have a bad day and you're struggling to motivate yourself. If this doesn't happen, then you're not normal, remember that.

The difference between someone who overcomes their depression and someone who gives up and returns to their former unhappy black hole comfort zone is that resolve to dig deeper and find that inner resolve to put one foot in front of the other and keep going.

You will take the journey at your own pace, there is no one telling you how fast or slow you 'should' come out of depression, it all depends on you. So the next mental shift to make is to drop any comparison, preconceived ideas or judgment you might have of what should happen and how quickly. There is no benchmark, there is just you.

It will get easier and easier as you practice, but it is a practice.

For those of us who are no longer depressed, it is something we practice every day, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, but being happy is a daily practice. During the course of this eGuide I will explain why that is and what you have to do.

Are You Ready?

Current Medical Advice for curing depression

I really like the advice from the Royal College of Psychiatrists about depression and, having been there, I completely agree.

[Royal College of Psychiatrists](#)

- Many other people have had depression.
- It may be hard to believe, but you will eventually come out of it.
- Depression can sometimes be helpful – you may come out of it stronger and better able to cope. It can help you to see situations and relationships more clearly.
- You may be able to make important decisions and changes in your life, which you have avoided in the past.

'depression can sometimes be helpful and you may be able to make important decision and changes in your life which you have avoided in the past'

Without a doubt depression changed my life for the better and it may well be the best thing that every happened to me.

You see, I had become trapped in a lifestyle dictated by false belief, I was locked into believing that there was nothing else I could do to maintain my income level and I hated my job and career. When depression struck, it was my brain's way of telling me to stop. It had been telling me for a while, I knew I had to change but quite frankly it was easier to stay in the career and have the money than it was to get out, so I dismissed my intuition that was screaming at me to live differently

Getting out was just too scary – 'what if I couldn't pay the mortgage and lost my house?' was my biggest fear.

In general the biggest fear of all human beings is ambiguity. We find it very difficult to deal with the unknown and of what we can't control. Our imagination fills in the blanks and when we are working from our primitive brain (see page 20) aka anxiety, depression or anger, those blanks are negative, we look at the worst possible scenario.

However, the depression forced me to stop, I shut down mentally and I eventually stopped thinking 'I can't', it swung towards 'I have to' before settling on 'How can I?'

I will tell you exactly what I did during the course of this book, but the point I want to make right now is that if I hadn't been forced into making significant changes in my life by depression, I may well have just kept going around in the same unhappy circles and never found the path to the freedom I now have in my life and learned how to make myself happy.

I am most definitely stronger for having had depression and I now look at life from a different perspective.

My biggest fear when I was under 'The Cloud' was that I would lose my house – it didn't happen, I didn't end up at poverty central, everything turned out fine and I literally am living happily ever after.

Making Yourself Happy

I had a partner not so long ago who, at the start of the relationship, said to me;

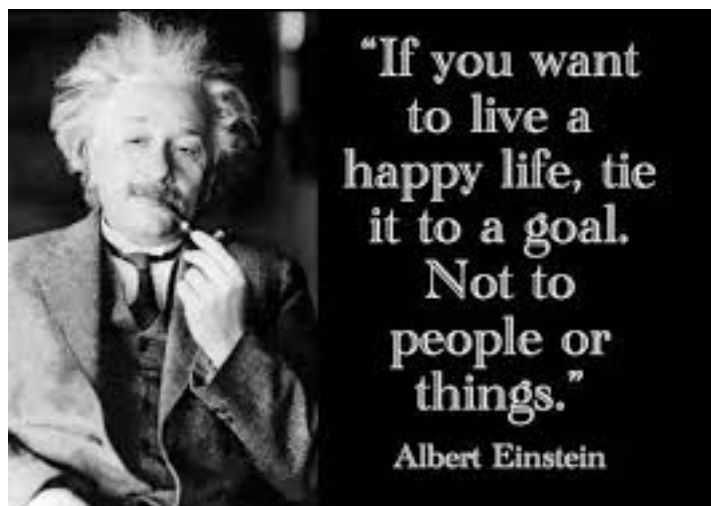
"It's my job to make you happy"

As sweet and well intentioned as that was, in my very unromantic way I replied:

"no it isn't, it's my job to make me happy"

Needless to say it didn't go down too well and was probably very tactless on my part, but it is true.

Don't take my word for it. It's generally accepted that Einstein was a pretty clever guy, right? Well he said...



It does, scientifically, make us happy to be with other people (see page 73) but our happiness is not dependent on someone or something.

As you will read in the following chapters, there is a science to being happy that everyone can achieve and it is up to you to do the right things that create the happiness from within.

Needless to say in life 'shit happens', but it's not events, people or things that cause our moods, it's how we think about them and ultimately how we deal with them.

Making YOU happy is YOUR job and if you have depression right now, all it means is that you haven't learned the right techniques to do that yet.

It's not your fault, this isn't something that you're taught in school. You can learn it subconsciously from parents that are happy because you will grow up mimicking the way they think, talk and behave, but if you were not that lucky and grew up in a household with depression, negativity, criticism, anxiety, stress, and anger, then that's what you will have learnt.

The good news though is that you can learn the skill of happiness quite easily and the more you practice, the more it becomes embedded in your subconscious until you just are happy.

So let's start by understanding what's gone wrong, then we can learn how to put it right.

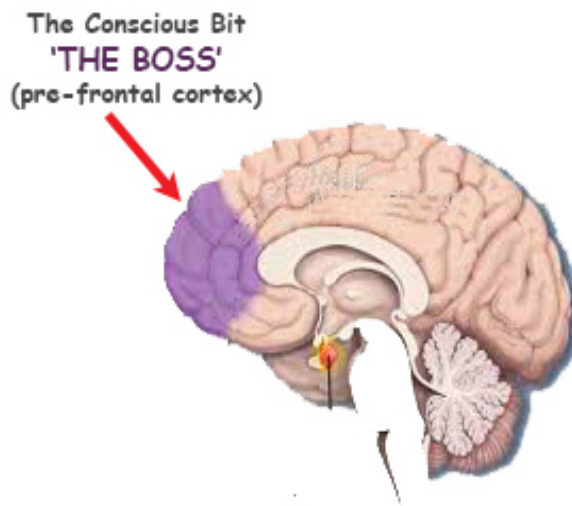
Your Brain

If you read the previous eGuide (recommended so you properly understand depression and how you're going to overcome it) you will have seen this section before.

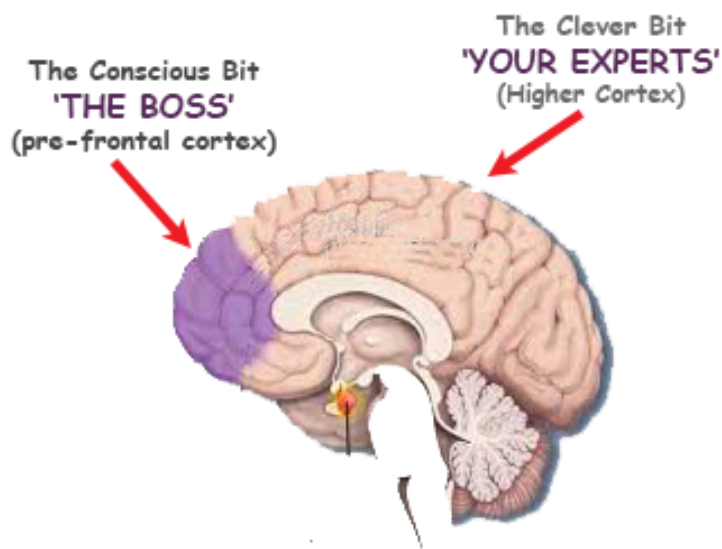
I haven't left it in by mistake, it is intentional. If you were coming to see me in a clinical situation, I would be going through the following workings of the brain every time you visited for 8-12 weeks. Your brain needs to hear/read/see something 11 times before it all sinks in and each time you go through this, another piece of information will 'click' or fall into place. So, please don't skip it, give yourself every resource and opportunity you can to get out from under the cloud, read it again.

So let's have a look at the elements of the brain we need to be concerned with:-

The first bit we need to know about is our Conscious Brain (the left pre-frontal cortex). This is the bit you use to interact with people and with the world generally, you're using that bit at the moment to read and make sense of this. We call this bit 'The Boss' and ultimately it calls the shots and makes the final decisions of who it wants to collaborate with.



At the moment (because you're reading this and actively engaged in something clever) your conscious brain is working with your vast intellectual resource, your intellectual brain (the higher cortex). This bit is split into the left and right cortex, the left is your logical side and the right your artistic side.



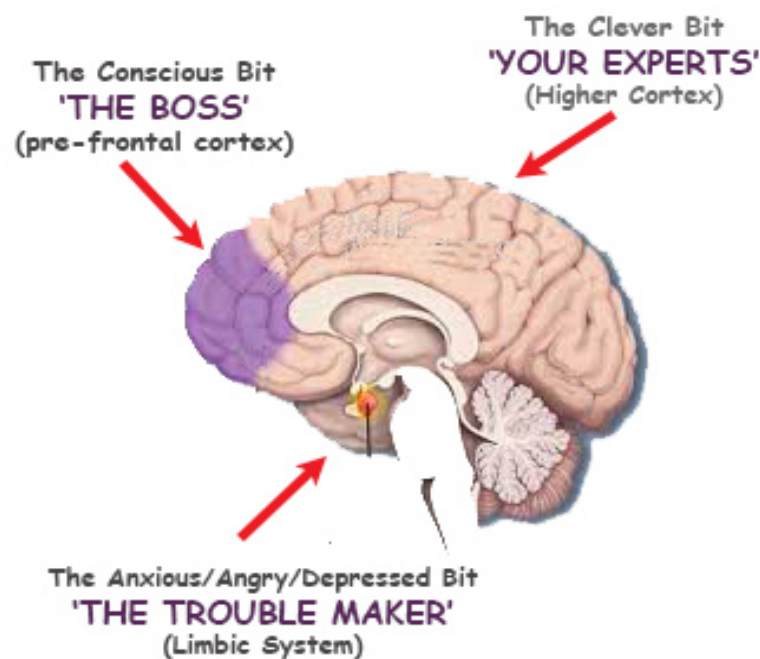
You may have heard people talk about being left or right brained. We actually swap between the two regularly.

When you are working from your intellectual brain, you normally get things right in life; it will always come up with answers based on a proper assessment of a situation and is generally very positive. This bit we don't share with other animals, which is why you don't see dogs driving around in cars or inventing mobile phones with keypads to suit their paws.

So far so good! We've got a conscious thinking bit which works excellently with a clever intellectual, rational, artistic, positive bit. So if we could stay here all the time, life would be pretty hunky dory wouldn't it?

But there's another bit and this is our primitive bit.

This is the original bit (to tell the truth, is the second bit to evolve, before that was the reptilian brain, but we don't need to be concerned with that just now) The primitive part we're talking about here is technically the Limbic brain, our mammalian brain which we do share with animals. The central and influential bit of this is the Amygdala, the bit that we refer to as the flight/fight centre and this works very closely with two other primitive bits, the hippocampus which holds our primitive, and sometimes inappropriate behaviour patterns or habits and then there's the hypothalamus which regulates the chemical responses in our body and mind.



Now we have the boss, the clever bit and the primitive bit. So, how do they interact with each other? Let's put it in perspective:-

Imagine that you go outside the house and there was a sabre tooth tiger in the street, what would happen?

Well, your heart rate would go up, your stomach would start churning, you would get all sweaty and you would be off like a shot.

This is entirely appropriate for sabre tooth tigers and you would be pleased, but the same thing tends to happen in modern life; when your anxiety levels go up - and it can be a gradual process - you lose intellectual control and, to a greater or lesser extent, the primitive brain steps in and takes control.

This primitive brain always works within the parameters of

Anxiety

Depression, and

Anger

Or a combination of all three, we're actually very good at doing all three simultaneously.

Anxiety, depression and anger are all primitive opt out clauses and, if you think about it, it would be appropriate back in those primitive times, it was a dangerous world. If you had been out in the jungle hunting or picking berries or doing whatever you did in jungles back then, there would be danger all around and I doubt you would be far away from your panic button. But if you couldn't go out because there was snow or ice or danger outside your cave, you would probably go back inside the cave, pull a rug over your head and not interact with the world until the situation changed – this is how we behave with depression.

Anger is just a primitive way of increasing our strength so we can fend off wild animals or other wild tribesmen (or women, they're dangerous too!)

So, whenever your primitive brain thinks that there is some sort of crisis, emergency or danger it steps in and reacts in this way.

But there's more - when your primitive brain takes control, it behaves in certain ways:-

- 1 It always looks at the worst possible scenario – appropriate for sabre tooth tigers, you're not going to assume it's already eaten down the road before you saw it, of course you're not, you are going to think, its going to attack you.
- 2 It's also very vigilant, it's not going to let you forget there is a sabre tooth tiger outside, it will keep reminding you, so although you can distract yourself with something else, when you stop, it will bring your attention back to your problems.
- 3 But this primitive brain is NOT an intellect, it can't work out what to do about a situation, it can't come up with solutions, all it can do is refer to previous patterns of behaviour. If, whatever you did yesterday, or last time you invoked the same feelings or circumstances, you survived, then you will be compelled to do the same thing again. This is where, as things get more extreme and embedded in the primitive brain, people develop habits, OCD, behavioural disorders, eating disorders, rituals etc or - common in depression - withdraw from the world, retreat into your cave, pull the duvet over your head and push the world and your problems away.
- 4 It is about survival, so it will look at everything in terms of how it applies to you and it will make everything about you. It becomes paranoid about other people

and what they're thinking and it makes assumptions that other people are thinking negatively about you.

- 5 It thinks in terms of all or nothing. It comes from a time of kill or be killed, eat or be eaten. To this brain, there is no grey area in the middle so it will tend to think – this **always** happens to me, I'll **never** get out of this, I can't do any more than I'm doing, why are the lights **always** red when I'm late for work, you **never** say you're sorry. etc None of that is true of course, but this primitive brain looks at the negative and makes it an all or nothing situation.

This is important because while you are locked in your primitive brain, looking at everything in a negative light, suspicious of everything and everyone, your intellect is not able to work out solutions and you become more and more obsessed with the problems.

This part of your brain cares only about keeping you alive, it's not rational, it doesn't care if the behavior is appropriate or even makes any sense to your intellectual brain; if it keeps you alive, then it's done the right thing and it will make you do it again next time.

So, to clarify; when your anxiety levels go up, the primitive reactionary brain takes over and tells you what to do, even if that's withdrawing from the world and staying in bed.

Which begs the question of course, why do your anxiety levels go up?

Negative Thinking

It's not circumstances or events in your life which cause anxiety, if it was every student at university would be having panic attacks and they're not all having panic attacks. Also, we would all react in a similar way to events if that's what is driving anxiety and we don't, so we know it is not events. And you know yourself some days you just deal with problems that come up without thinking, other days you can't face them.

It is your thought patterns surrounding events.

The primitive brain is a negative brain and it will negatively forecast the future, and it could be big things, like 'I'll never get that job' or 'I'll never get married or have children', or 'I'll never get out of the financial predicament', but equally, it can be everyday things – there's no point going to the shop now, I'll get stuck in traffic and miss it, that will never work for me, I never get the opportunities, my partner's going to come home in a bad mood and so on. Someone who is operating from their primitive brain will be negatively thinking about just about everything, often without realising.

People who negatively introspect about themselves, their life or the past have a tendency towards depression, those who negatively forecast the future lean towards anxiety – but we can do both, and frequently do. It's your personality type and influences growing up and around you that will determine whether you go into anxiety, depression or anger or jump around all three.

Take this as an example: - You have been called into a meeting with your boss. But you're stressed, so you start negatively forecasting what the meeting is about and immediately think the worst and make a mental leap to the worst possible scenario. As the meeting gets closer, you go over and over it in your mind, you go over it fifty times and, fifty times, it's going to be a disaster, there's a problem or you're going to get made redundant or whatever other disastrous conclusion you can imagine.

The meeting goes OK, they generally do, but by this time you've been through it 51 times, 50 times of that in your head. And what is really important to understand here is that your brain does not know the difference between imagination and reality. It is YOUR brain, it only knows what information you give it, what you think, what you learn and choose to believe, but also what you imagine.

So, when you negatively forecast the future, imagining something is going to happen or go wrong, your brain doesn't know the difference between that and a sabre tooth tiger, it just interprets the negative forecasting as crisis, emergency or danger and steps in and takes control.

So, the cause of depression is not the events in your life, it is how you think about them

***How we think determines how we feel and
how we feel determines how we behave.***

Negative forecasting = negative feelings = negative action or reaction.

Understanding this concept of the negative thinking primitive brain vs the positive solution thinking intellect is central to taking control and directing your thoughts in a positive way to reverse depression.

It is vital to understand the concept that your brain doesn't know the difference between imagination and reality, it only knows what you tell it and what you choose to believe.

In life there is no fact there is only belief even science changes as new discoveries are made. It's not so long ago that we believed the world was flat.

So, right now, I want you to start opening your mind to questioning your own beliefs.

What is Negative Thinking?

Attitude and awareness.

Your attitude to life will play an important role in your subconscious thought patterns and why you are depressed.

Change your attitude to life and you will change your life.

I want to linger on negative thinking for a moment, as this is fundamental to what has gone wrong, why you are depressed and what needs to change for you to become happy, joyful, motivated and full of energy.

Many people live in denial or ignorance of how they are actually thinking. Most don't give it a thought, it's just them, and some disassociate themselves from their thoughts – 'I've got these horrible thoughts going around in my head all the time'. Before you can begin the process of climbing out of the cloud, you need to become aware of how you are thinking at a subconscious level and how this not only affects your mental health but influences your life as well.

Someone I know, who genuinely believes he is a positive person, has a motto taught to him by his grandfather that he likes to tell other people he lives by and it goes like this:-

"Don't do to other people what you don't want others to do to you"

Seems fair enough, right?

But lets have a closer look at that statement and the quote from the Bible (Luke 6:13) it's been adapted from which is:-

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"

On the surface, both statements appear similar, but the first one is full of negative subconscious language whereas the second is entirely positive – can you see the difference?

This person I know quite well and he does suffer from bouts of depression and anger.

There was a post on Facebook this week from someone in a group I was browsing that said

"I know 97% of people will not even bother to read this, but"

That is a classic example of negative forecasting of the future and a good demonstration of false beliefs – take a closer look:-

'I know 97% of people' - He doesn't 'know' and 97% is an entirely made-up statistic. He believes it though and sadly could have possibly made it come true because, if you're like me, it puts you off reading the rest of the statement.

What do you think would have happened if he had put something positive like

"97% of people who read this are going to"

Quite possibly curiosity will cause you to stop and read a bit more.

Subconscious language patterns influence what happens in your life.

Particular self sabotaging statements to be very aware of include;-

"I can't because"

Believe you 'can't' do something is a poor start, but then justify it with an excuse and you will influence your destiny in that direction because you won't even try, believing before you start that trying is a waste of time.

"I can't do any more"

"I can't continue"

Both similar to the first one. You know that backed into a corner or when something is important enough to you, you can and you will do more; you can and you will continue.. If you have no choice, then you do.

Starting now, switch those statements to begin with

"How can I"

Another typically self sabotaging statement people use frequently is:-

"The problem is..."

This statement is an instant give away that you're operating from your primitive negative brain as described above.. This part of the brain focuses on problems. Focusing on the

problems causes anxiety which activates the flight/fight responses..

Deliberately focusing on finding solutions will engage the intellectual brain and give it a positive instruction of what you need to find answers for.

You need to start giving your intellectual brain something to do. It can't act on something NOT to do, you need to think in terms of positive instruction.

Imagine for a moment that you are the supervisor of staff in your office. Are you going to give instructions of what you DON'T want them to do that day - Jack, you shouldn't follow up on the sales enquiries today, Jane, don't write the report on profit and loss, John, you can't get quotes for the new computer.

If you tell them what they can't do and don't give any instruction of what you do need or require, a purpose or direction – what is going to happen to them and the company do you think?

If I ask you to NOT think of a pink elephant – what has popped into your head?

And if I ask you to NOT think of that pink elephant that is NOT chasing a blue elephant

What are you thinking about now?

In this same way you can't tell yourself not to worry about something, your brain can't do anything with a negative instruction, it needs positive direction of what to do.

Other forms of negative thinking we're not always aware of are:

Criticism

Are you aware you're subconsciously criticising people or things? A friend of mine, who would also swear blind that she's a positive person, narrates the TV in a commentary of criticism. Say, for example, the news comes on, she might start with a comment about the newsreader – 'that colour doesn't suit her' or 'isn't she looking thin' or perhaps 'she's put on weight'. She will continue making comments about every news item and they are always negative. She criticises her neighbours, her family, the packaging on products, the roads, the post office, young people today – well you get the picture. Criticism is always negative and never necessary.

If something needs correcting, there are positive ways of giving feedback without making someone feel bad about it.

However, being critical of others or things reveals the underlying negative thinking.

Negatively introspecting about yourself and your life

Beating yourself up or being critical about yourself not only lowers your self esteem and destroys your confidence, it makes you feel pretty miserable in the process.

What good does it do? Nothing,

When I worked for a brief period in education (this was the first thing I did when I quit my IT career) many people in the college I worked with complained about their job and the college endlessly. If you don't like something change it. If you choose to stay in it, find solutions; complaining about it without doing anything will bring yourself and everyone around you down and is completely pointless. You may not be able to change the job or the company, but you can change your attitude towards them, it is simply a choice. (Yes, I know you are contradicting that in your mind right now ☺)

Negatively introspecting about the past

You can't change the past. Stop it.

Negative Imagination about other people's thoughts

This is massively common. Remember I said that humans can't cope with ambiguity, with not knowing? Well, when we don't know what other people are thinking – ever. So we make it up!

People use their imagination to try and work out what someone else is thinking and if when you are in a negative primitive brain place, you will think the worst and what's more, you will believe it.

You don't know what someone else is thinking, so if this is on your mind, ask them or accept that you don't know. Don't make it up and believe it to be true.

Focusing on the problems in your life.

When you worry about problems you are causing anxiety. As your anxiety levels rise, your primitive brain steps in and compels you to focus on the problems even more. You obsess about them, they go round and round in your head, your imagination takes over and you imagine all the worst possible scenarios and you identify all the things you can't do because Sound familiar? Where is this actually getting you – nowhere except deeper into depression.

Focusing on problems is not going to solve them. Finding solutions will.

OK, so thinking about problems is quite a natural 'go to' when you've got problems and, as I explained two pages ago telling you to NOT think about problems is as good as telling you to NOT think about a pink elephant, but sit tight because we're about to move on to what you CAN do instead.

Overthinking

Before we do however, I want a quick word about overthinking – stop it!

You will be pleased to learn that, on the whole, it is people with a good cognitive ability (intelligent) that get anxiety and depression because they 'overthink' situations and events. Unfortunately when in depression this is in a negative context which only reinforces and deepens the depression, but

nonetheless if you weren't an intelligent person you probably wouldn't have depression.

The good news is however, that being the intelligent person you are, that clever brain of yours can work equally as hard to get you out of the depression as it did to get you into it in the first place, so let's learn how.

Climbing Out of the Cloud

As I've mentioned several times now, telling you to STOP thinking negatively or stop worrying is a complete waste of time – if you could just do that you would have done it already – right?

Over time, long before depression stepped in, you were practicing thinking in a negative way, so you will be pretty good at it by now and it will be a habit. Just dropping habits, especially something that is subtly coming from the subconscious does not happen overnight.

From this moment forwards you are going to **stop** fighting depression, you will turn your back and walk in completely the opposite direction towards happiness step by step and this is how you're going to do it.

Just as negative thinking is a fundamental part of what cause the depression in the first place, understanding about the physiological effects that negative thinking has on your mind and body is fundamental to turning around and climbing out of it.

Chemical Balance

Human are 80% water, or probably more accurately, liquid because we are in actual fact a melting pot of chemical, neurotransmitters and hormones travelling around our body through our veins in our blood and other liquids. So it stands to reason that messages travel from one part of our body to another via chemical messengers – neurotransmitters.

We are in control of that chemical balance. Every decision we make of what we consume, every thought we have and every action we do, or not do, will have an influence on this chemical mix and on determining whether we are operating on our intellectual or primitive brain.

Your emotions, feelings, motivation, energy, confidence, courage, immune system and health, in fact, every part of your life is intrinsically linked to your chemical balance and it is up to you to keep that balance at its optimum.

Your brain is the control centre for your whole body, the way you think has a hugely important influence on these chemical and affects your body right down to a cellular level.

There is a field of science called psychoneuroimmunology that explores the relationship between how we think, the neurotransmitters we produce and the effect on our immune system. Science has also recently discovered epigenetic switches in our DNA or silent genes which can be triggered or

not, depending on the individual. This means that we can have DNA with the genes for diseases such as cancer, but we don't necessarily trigger them and if you do have those genes it is not been predetermined that you will get cancer. There is a focus on research into what triggers certain genes, but if you consider the discoveries within psychoneuroimmunology about how thinking influences cells, it is even more in your interest to practice positive thinking and invest in a healthy balance of neurotransmitters.

There are many neurotransmitters and hormones, but for the purpose of understanding depression we are going to focus on just three of the most important – Serotonin, Dopamine and Adrenaline

Serotonin

Serotonin is THE most important neurotransmitter and one of the fastest for carrying messages between brain cells and around our body and the best things about serotonin are that it makes us feel good, it motivates us, it makes us braver, it helps us cope with physical fear, it helps us cope with pain and boosts our immune system. It's our 'happy' neurotransmitter.

Going back to those ancient primitive times again serotonin was a reward for survival, for getting things right, for hunting, gathering and carrying out certain evolutionary processes – you can imagine now exactly how happy those cavemen were when they discovered fire and could sit round a camp fire and

eGuide: Climbing Out Of The Cloud

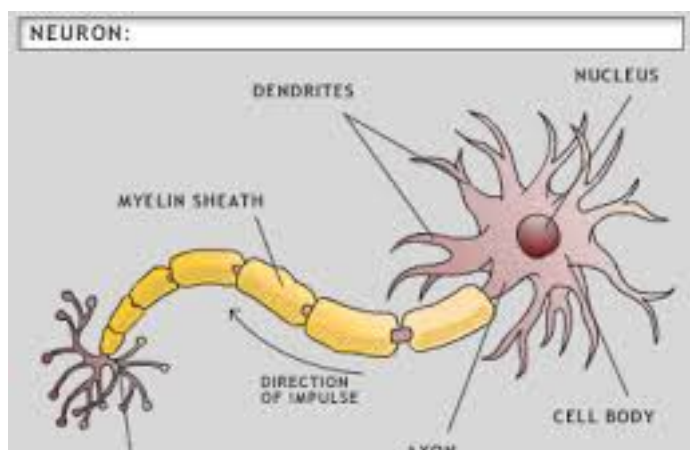
not only keep warm mid December, but could feel safe because predators were afraid of it, I bet they felt good.

So although we don't have to go out hunting any more, we do have to create serotonin by understanding the behaviour of our early ancestors and adapting it for our modern lifestyles.



Serotonin is the chemical we need to be at our best moving through life easily and feeling happy with an abundance of energy, but what does it actually do?

Serotonin carries messages between the nerve cells in our bodies and brains and, in particular, the nerve cells in our brain or neurons



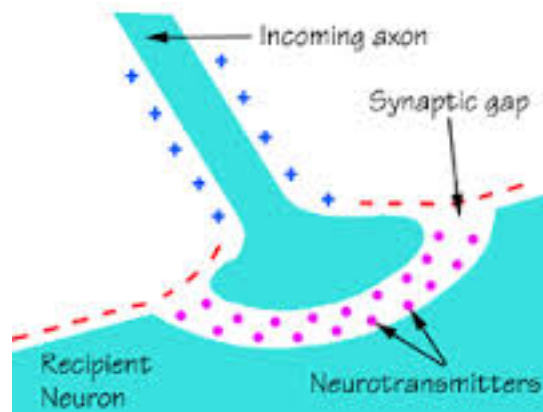
The average human adult brain has 100 billion neurons in the

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brain, but they don't actually connect.

Each neuron has a 'tail' called the axon and dendrites that branch

out and act as the connectors. Axons and dendrites connect to each other and together they form neural networks



You can't learn a skill or understand concepts, language or anything with one brain cell, you may think you know people who have just the one, but in reality we need millions, all acting as one big network to do most of the stuff we need to. But even the axons and dendrites don't physically connect, there is a small gap called the synaptic gap and something needs to bridge that gap.

Serotonin is the substance that bridges the gap carrying the message from one neuron to the next – a neurotransmitter.

The more serotonin you have, the quicker and more efficient your neural networks function. When you have sufficient levels of serotonin, your mind is more efficient, more focused, more able to concentrate and problem-solve and you feel good.

Serotonin is the gold standard in neurotransmitters and we need to learn how to produce it if we want to cope easily with life.

Dopamine

Dopamine is another one of the more important neurotransmitters; science is still learning about dopamine, but it is accepted that dopamine plays a major role in rewarding us for doing something good and provides the motivation to do it again, so it is closely linked to habit forming.

You can understand the role of dopamine in both survival and evolution, if as a caveman you had to go outside to hunt, but you didn't 'feel' like it or it was raining perhaps, the thought of a tasty dinosaur steak might motivate you to go out into the rain and hunt the dinosaur - or at least the thought of dying of starvation if you didn't might be an appropriate motivator. Then having caught said dinosaur, how good would you feel sitting around the cave fire with the family for dinosaur steak dinner? You have survived again and that feels good – dopamine.

Adrenaline

Adrenaline is a hormone produced in the adrenal glands which is activated by the amygdala, the influential part of your brain in the flight/fight response.

When the amygdala is activated, the adrenal gland is quickly alerted and releases adrenaline into the blood stream causing a number of physiological changes:-

1. The heart rate goes up to pump blood and oxygen around the body quicker, sending more oxygen to the major muscle groups you're going to need if you're

fighting or running away including your brain which needs to stay sharp and focused.

2. Breathing quickens to oxygenate the blood which is being pumped around the body faster.
3. Blood initially rushes to the surface of your skin (hence blushing). If you're going to get cut in a fight your blood needs to coagulate quickly and form a barrier against infection with the white blood cells.
4. Energy is redirected from systems or organs that are not necessary in the course of flight or fight – one of these is your digestive system. You do not need to be eating a sandwich or digesting a meal while you are fighting or fleeing from a sabre tooth tiger.

You may have noticed that when you are worrying about something, perhaps you have to go on stage or go into a situation you are anxious about, you are more likely to have nausea than hunger.

The stomach is closely involved in the autonomic nervous system (automatic reactions) and you can feel adrenaline in your stomach when you are nervous, we call it butterflies.

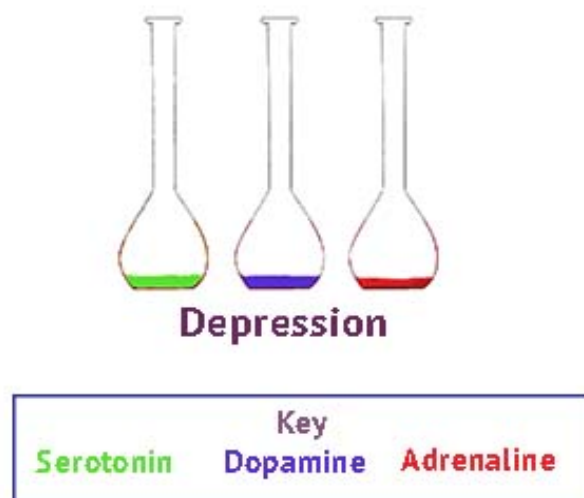
Adrenaline is the fastest neurotransmitter or hormone – it is responsible for your flight or fight, it literally keeps you alive by reacting before your conscious brain is even aware of potential dangers. It is faster than serotonin and will take precedence and suppress the serotonin levels. You could be sitting there

right now as happy as Larry (whoever he is), but if there was a large crash or roar outside from the saber tooth tiger, you would forget all about being happy, your flight/fight mechanism would kick in, adrenaline would flood your bloodstream and your primitive brain would step forwards to deal with the situation.

In primitive times this interaction of hormones and neurotransmitters kept us alive and evolving, but the environment and circumstances of our modern life have changed resulting in the balance of these chemicals not being as naturally maintained as it would have been in primitive times.

If we have not formed habits growing up that simulate the behaviour of our primitive ancestors our chemical balance can become disrupted leading to anxiety, depression and anger.

When you have depression, your chemical balance typically looks like this



You are not producing enough neurotransmitters so you find it difficult to feel joy, think clearly, focus or concentrate when you don't have enough serotonin bridging the synaptic gaps. You will find it hard to get motivated to do anything, even the simplest of jobs, not because you're lazy, it's because your dopamine levels are not high enough to motivate you into action to get the reward of completing the task. You will find it incredibly frustrating and probably beat yourself up about it, but still seem unable to do it, however much it upsets you.

If the body cannot get enough serotonin and dopamine, it will go to substitute sources. Sugar is a serotonin substitute, so anything sweet or simple carbohydrates and starchy foods are an available substitute, but it isn't real serotonin, so the craving for it begins again shortly after you've eaten without getting motivated.

Serotonin is also known to be the off switch for appetite, so if someone doesn't have sufficient levels of serotonin, they will get food cravings and hunger and the signal to stop eating when full becomes distorted.

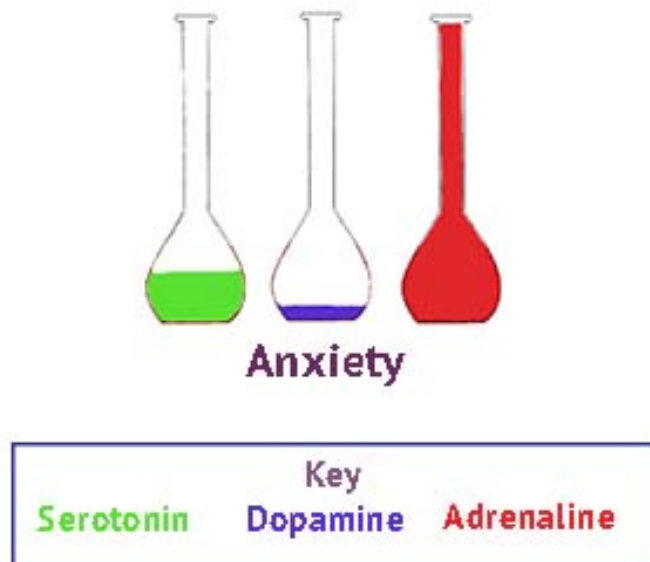
Anxiety

Although it isn't the subject of this eGuide, it's worth touching on briefly because anxiety and depression often co-exist.

Negative forecasting of the future, worrying and 'what if-ing', creates too much adrenaline. You can have some serotonin, but it will be suppressed by the faster adrenaline in your bloodstream.

The reward motivation system becomes controlled by the adrenaline, the reward being survival instead of progress.

Your brain doesn't know the difference between imagination and reality so when you imagine negative future outcomes your brain will interpret it as real perceived danger and an appropriate chemical reaction takes place.



Chemical Consumption

I am not a dietician and my job here is to advise you on what you can do to help yourself out of depression, but I am going to touch on healthy eating for a moment because what you choose to consume contributes to your chemical composition.

Your blood has the job of carrying nutrients, oxygen and antibodies around your body and it also removes things that shouldn't be there.

You need to be aware that whatever you are putting into your body in the way of consuming food, alcohol, nicotine and drugs will have an effect on your body, not least your moods – good and bad.

Sugars for example, and simple carbohydrates (bread, chips, pizza base, crisps, cakes, biscuits, pasta etc) that convert quickly in to sugar will give you an instant but momentary spike in blood sugar levels.

Your body can be quite lazy at producing serotonin if you've got out of the habit, so if it can't get the real deal, it will go for the quickest substitute it can persuade you to consume; sugars, alcohol, nicotine and drugs can all be serotonin substitutes.

It is very common for depression and weight gain to be present at the same time.

A symptom of depression is low motivation, so making an effort with food doesn't come easily or naturally. Reaching for fast foods or pre-prepared easy microwave or oven meals starts to become a habit.

But what often gets ignored are all the extra chemicals the food industry adds to the food to make it taste better, look better and last longer in the packaging.

All these extra chemical are toxins. No, they're not going to kill you on their own in an instant, but your body doesn't know what to do with them, so it will either store them in fat cells or it just has to work extra hard at getting rid of them. Your body and blood although amazing can only do so much, so if it's spending all its time using energy and resources in eliminating toxins that you are doing to best to poison your body with, then is it any wonder you're feel crap and have no energy?

You don't necessarily have to go out and buy organic everything, but do reduce the consumption of fast foods, ready-made sauces and meals and simple carbohydrates such as bread, pasta and sugar, and start introducing clean healthy foods.

Alcohol is a depressant – if you've got depression, don't drink it for now.

Nicotine is a stimulant

Drugs all alter your chemical balance

You are a perfectly functioning, efficient machine that still operates under the extreme adverse conditions you put it under, is it any wonder it starts to break down when you don't look after it properly.

There are plenty of super healthy fast foods – eggs, they're fast food; it is quicker (and cheaper) to make an omelet than it is to order a takeaway. It's easier (and cheaper) to put a baked potato in the oven than a pizza (you've got to cut off packaging with a pizza). It just takes giving it some thought and changing habits.

It may take some research and re-education about what is healthy. It's a more positive and proactive pastime than watching TV.

The main point I'm making is that if you consume chemicals that are not naturally part of our diet and we're not designed to eat, they will affect your mood.

We take our bodies for granted; we consume poisonous chemicals on a daily basis that individually don't do any harm. But they're not on an individual basis any more, we consume greater and greater quantities of toxins every day that are having a detrimental affect, not only our body but our mind and emotions.

If you are determined to beat depression, this is an easy thing to adjust. You choose to consume them, you can choose not to as well.

Caught in the Downpour

To summarise what you've learnt so far that is keeping you trapped in depression before we focus on rebalancing the neurotransmitters.

Your negative thought patterns are creating adrenaline that is suppressing any serotonin or dopamine you might have. But because of the prolonged periods of withdrawal from activities and behaviours that create serotonin and dopamine, those levels have deplete to critical, making it difficult to do the very things you need to do to create them again.

It's a vicious cycle isn't it?

But what you can understand from the above is that there are three things we're now going to focus on in order to rebalance these hormones and neurotransmitters and they are:-

1. Burning off adrenalin
2. Creating more serotonin and dopamine
3. Being aware of the unhealthy chemicals you're consuming.

Now it's time to start redressing the balance and get yourself back to the normal you.

How to Rebalance Your Chemicals

It's important to recognise that you are in control of your chemical balance and you can manipulate the levels yourself by your thoughts and behaviours. You're already doing it, just in the wrong way.

As you become more tuned into taking control of your thoughts and feelings, you will start to become more naturally aware of how your feelings relate to your neurotransmitter levels. Your body will want to keep them topped up, but quite often we ignore the signals because we don't understand what they mean.

This is something we learn more about in 'Living on Cloud 9', the third eGuide in the series on depression.

Serotonin gives very clear messages, when you know what to listen or look out for and then, of course, it is up to you to do something about it.

We often get things in the wrong order or misinterpret what our body is telling us. There is a huge difference between mentally exhausted due to lack of serotonin and physically exhausted, but they can feel the same.

Feeling down, in a low mood or miserable and 'can't be bothered' are very clear signals that serotonin levels are low and you need to do something to top them up.

Physical exhaustion usually means you need to rest and replenish fuel supplies – food. Mental exhaustion is helped through increasing serotonin and dopamine levels or sleeping if you have been sleep deprived - doing nothing or sitting in front of the TV doesn't help at all.

It is worth noting at this stage that once you have your neurotransmitters balanced, which can take no time at all, you do need to keep them balanced, which takes constant practice. Just as you need to eat regularly because your food converts into energy that is used up before you have to refuel or eat again, neurotransmitters get used up in the same way. You create them, you use them and you need to replenish.

Getting to know yourself better and what works best for you is an interesting exercise of self-discovery.

Everyone needs a healthy balance of neurotransmitters. Your personality type and what you enjoy doing will guide you in the most effective solutions. (Eating and watching TV need to be tweaked – you can eat health food and watch TV programmes for personal growth and development, but forget eating pizza whilst watching the latest Netflix series back to back)

You can perhaps remember times when you felt at your best and reflect on what was happening in your life at that time for clues to what works for you.

Creating the right mix of neurotransmitters falls into three broad categories:-

Positive Activity

Doing stuff! Positive activity covers a broad range and includes physical activity. To someone in the depths of depression positive activity might be something as simple as getting out of bed before three o'clock in the afternoon and getting dressed. What is considered to be positive activity will differ from one person to another. The qualifying criteria of positive activity is something which you feel pleased for having done; something which gives you a sense of achievement. So positive activity might mean passing an exam, learning something new, cleaning the house, doing the washing-up, taking part in your favourite hobby or achieving something you've been meaning to do, whatever it is, as long as you get a sense of achievement out of it you're creating serotonin.

The bigger the achievement you feel the more serotonin you create so although to some people it may seem very basic-getting out of bed, having a shower and getting dressed - to someone who has severe depression, that can be a huge achievement.

Physical exercise within the positive activity category is something which benefits everybody, and the powerful effect exercise has on the mind cannot be underestimated. It is a mistake to assume that exercise is about the effects on the body, although still good this is just a side-effect. The primary benefits are happening in your mind and in the creation of serotonin, dopamine and other positive hormones and chemicals such as endorphins one of the more commonly

known hormones that make you feel good. Endorphins are also painkillers; your natural opioids so also help you cope with pain.

Our primitive ancestors were built for an active lifestyle.

Everything was labour intensive - hunting, gathering food, preparing a meal, building a shelter; every part of their daily lives included physical activity. So our blueprint is designed for physical activity which may have been the long-distance hunt, the nomadic moving around, or short bursts of energy with strength and muscle exercise - there's no doubt that, back then our lives were considerably more physical than they are today.

Unfortunately however, as we have developed our big brains we have spent much time, energy and money inventing technologies that substitute the physical activity we were naturally designed for. Every effort now goes into convenience..

To work these days many people get into their car that is parked outside the door, they drive to work, they park outside the work place, walk inside and sit down in front of the desk and stay there all day until they do the same journey in reverse.

When they get home they sit in front of the TV for the entertainment. We have many labour saving devices in our homes - we have dishwashers, washing machines and vacuum cleaners, microwaves, our bread is already made for us, as is butter and cheese - even as recently as 200 years ago, before the Industrial Revolution all these things would have been done by hand. However, time and progress have marched on resulting in the elimination from our lives of the very activities

which kept us functioning at our most mentally and physically healthy.

The paradox of our intellect inventing all these labour saving devices is in the extra time we have to spend at our jobs working harder and neglecting the activities which keep us mentally healthy, so we can afford to buy the labour saving devices that are taking the place of mentally healthy activities.

We don't have to look too far for examples of where our modernised western lives are affecting our mental-health. If you have ever travelled to a developing country or spent any time in one, the thing that probably struck you the most about the people is how happy they are. To our western minds this doesn't make sense they have hard lives they live on the breadline with a shortage of food, they don't have access to TV, technology, washing machines, dishwashers or computers, but they are happy – why? It is obviously not a materialistic precedence that determines happiness so what is it?

When you observe how they live, their lifestyle is far more aligned to that of our primitive ancestors than ours in the modern developed world. The majority of people live in rural areas as subsistence farmers. Their lives include hard physical labour, they don't have modern conveniences, they grow their own grain and grind it by hand to make flour for their bread. They don't jump in their car and pop down the supermarket hundred yards down the road. If they want to go anywhere they walk, clothes washing is done by hand; this is all physical activity.

Most importantly, when they have achieved these things, because it has involved physical work, they feel good. Growing crops successfully and turning that into food is rewarding and it creates serotonin.

Have you ever experienced catching your own fish or growing your own vegetables, cooking it and eating them –isn't that the best meal in the world? You know this sense of achievement.

Now of course we don't have to go out hunting and catch our own dinner and it would be idiotic to dispose of all our technology and I'm not suggesting you dig up your lawn to plant some wheat. But being aware that you are designed for physical activity and that your chemical balance that affects your moods and motivation is so tightly intertwined with physical activity will help you to learn how you can simulate and substitute essential physical activities into your modern lives to reap the rewards of serotonin that you need.

There is also another beneficial function of exercise and that is to burn off adrenaline.

When you worry, or negatively forecast the future, the negativity is converted into anxiety. As anxiety levels rise, the amygdala is activated. This sends a message to the adrenal gland to release adrenaline into the bloodstream, enhancing the mind and body in preparation for the fight or flight. In short bursts when you're running away from hungry sabre tooth tigers this is very helpful indeed but your body cannot cope

with a constant stream of adrenaline and it's exhausting. So you need to learn how to disperse it .

If your body and mind have been prepared for flight or fight then the best thing you can do is just that, run or fight. Of course I'm not suggesting you start a brawl in your street and you don't have to run a marathon when you get home every evening from work, but simulating the physical activity will burn off that adrenaline, energise you and calm the mind and the body.

Positive Interaction

Being with other people is essential for our mental-health and fundamental in survival of the human race.

Our modern lifestyles and technology have made it too easy for us to isolate ourselves and although it can be very therapeutic to get some space, privacy and time out from other people, modern society has enabled this to the extreme, which is having a negative impact on mental health.

Human beings are essentially pack animals, our strength and survival depends on working as part of a tribe. We don't have many natural defences, we're not poisonous, we don't taste nasty, we don't have spiky things all over our body and we can't run very fast so we need the physical and intellectual strength of the pack to survive and evolve. In primitive times, Isolating yourself from your tribe would have meant certain death, so primitive man and woman received rewards for learning how to communicate well within their tribe. Everyone would have had a

role clearly defined within the tribe, they would know their place and where they fitted in. Those rewards for communicating and cooperating with others successfully were feel-good neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine and as we already know these neurotransmitters are essential for a mental health.

You already know how this works. Have you had the experience of saying 'yes' to an invite out with friends but as the evening draws nearer all you really want to do is flop in front of the TV with a glass of wine (same as you did the night before). However, you can't think of a good enough excuse to get out of the engagement so you muster some energy and go anyway. You arrive thinking you'll stay an hour or so then make an excuse to leave. However, after an hour you have completely forgotten about your plans to go, you've found your second wind and you're thoroughly enjoying yourself. It doesn't take long to raise neurotransmitter levels sufficiently to feel the rewards from positive interaction.

When people live in social groups, families, communities, and tribes, if individuals fall on hard times become ill or need support, everyone pitches in to help and everyone is very aware of the other people within their community and their need. This is particularly important for mental health; people living in close-knit communities and families have that constant support whether they like it or not and if somebody is struggling mentally, if they are worrying or feeling miserable, someone is

always on hand to step in before it becomes a problem.

In our modern societies where it is so easy to isolate ourselves, these problems can rapidly decline beyond the control of the individual without being detected by anyone else.

If our life circumstances or choices have found you isolated from others, you don't have to suddenly seek out a commune to join, but it is important to understand the physiological need for other people in our lives, to have a role and understand where we fit in.

Technological advances have made it even more possible to live our lives in isolation, We can live completely alone from a practical perspective and we don't even have to go out and get our food, we can order it online and have it delivered to the door. So it is easy to not do the things we need to do. If your life has become isolated you need to reconnect with people in person and make an effort to put yourself in social situations.

Positive Thinking

I would like you to be mindful of three things about thinking

- a. You are thinking all the time
- b.** Your brain is the control centre for your whole body
- c.** You are listening to you.

I delved into the side effects of negative thinking in depth and the importance of awareness of how we are thinking earlier in this eGuide, so lets now have a look at positive thinking and the benefits of practicing thinking in a positive way.

I'm sure that you will agree that decisions and actions are first made in your mind. You think, next you decide to do something and then you do it, or not as the case may be.

Many actions happen from the subconscious brain, driving is a good example of this. When you first learn to drive it's very complex you have to think 'mirror, signal, gear, clutch, brake, accelerator and you have to do it all at once and you might have thought to yourself 'how am I ever going to get all this?' But now you don't even think about it when you get in the car - it happens automatically.

Breathing, your body temperature, your heart rate, your blood sending white blood cells to the area of infection and digestion, are all controlled by your brain at a subconscious level involving the autonomic nervous system.

Of course it is necessary for some things to happen automatically without you consciously thinking about it, we would all go insane if we had to think about pumping blood around our body and breathing and, quite honestly, many of the functions our bodies perform are far too complicated for our simple conscious brain.

But you can accept that the brain is the control centre for your whole body. You are the driver and you are in charge.

How you use your imagination plays an important role in operating your control centre and how you use it will affect your physical and emotional reactions.

You can experiment with it right now bringing to mind an image of yourself doing something fun and exciting that you really enjoy and makes you happy. Take yourself back to a place or a time that was happy for you, a holiday perhaps, childhood memories, a night out with friends, the birth of a child (just examples, pick your own that means something to you).

Imagine how you feel, make it as real as you can, close your eyes and fill in as many details as you can with your imagination.

Now how do you feel?

Perhaps you have a smile on your face.

Imagining something good will create serotonin, the same as doing it. Your brain doesn't know the difference between imagination and reality so when you imagine something positive for you serotonin is created.

Now imagine something you really like to eat, something that makes your mouth water, cheese sandwiches do it for me.

Is your mouth watering?

That's a physical reaction just from using your imagination and it happens almost instantly – yes?

You can understand how powerful your thoughts are on your mind and body so everything you think – EVERYTHING you

think will have either a negative or positive impact on your physical and physiological systems.

I don't want you to do this right now, but when you think about something that did upset you or would upset you if it happened, it brings on powerful emotions.

You can sit here now and practice thinking about something happy, something mouthwatering and something upsetting and you can observe the effect it has on you physically and emotionally.

How powerful is that?

Lets bring it back to reality.....

**you are doing this imagination thinking every minute
you are awake and what you are thinking about when
you are awake is replaying when you are in REM
sleep.**

If you are thinking in a negative way all the time, which is the common thinking habit every depressed person has, can you see how this affects you emotionally and physically?

Do you understand that this is the baseline of what needs to change?

The good news is that you can change; it's your brain, it's just going to take a practice, until you have a new habit.

Why Practice

Practicing something is how you programme your mind. You don't have a keyboard or mouse to input information, so how you think and what you do is your input.

Over time what you do and think forms neural networks in your brain and become embedded in your subconscious. When this happens what you have been practicing becomes automatic - you don't have to consciously think about it, you just do it.

You will understand this concept very well if you drive a car. Initially it's a complex and confusing set of instructions that you have to remember and also get them in the right order and the timing spot on. Your first few lessons were probably frustrating and you might have even thought 'how am I ever going to get this?' but you practice, you take lessons and practice some more. Then you become proficient enough to pass your test and have a big boost of confidence. It's not long before you are driving so regularly that you don't give driving a thought, you just get in the car and drive. It has become embedded in your subconscious.

Riding a bicycle is the same and I'm sure you've heard the saying 'you never forget how to ride a bike'.

There are literally thousands of actions we perform daily that, at one time, we had to learn and practice but now we just do, subconsciously.

Think of how you think as a practice that you have been doing since a baby. If you have practiced thinking negatively you will have formed those neural networks in your brain and will do it subconsciously.

However, you can change it and start practicing thinking in a positive beneficial way the moment you choose to.

I think this is one analogy that explains it very well:

Imagine you need to cross a field every day from your front door to your car. You come out of your front door and go through the gate into the field and you follow the path across the field. You've been doing this for years and there is a well worn path that you don't even think about taking, you just follow it because it's the path you always follow. It's not a particularly easy path, you often hurt yourself tripping over obstacles, but it's the path that you automatically use anyway.

One day, perhaps after a particularly bad fall, you look up and you see the path for what it is and you realise that it isn't the best or easiest route across the field. The problem is that it's the only clear path available at the moment. If you want to take a different route you have to make a new path. But you are so fed up with following a path that you get hurt using, you make up your mind to find a different way.

So the next day, you go up to the gate in the field and you look for a new route and you discover a much easier way across the field, it takes you through beautiful clearings with flowers and birds and you feel truly happy when you're walking along this

path. You don't have to look down at the hazards, you can look up at all the beauty around you instead.

The next day, you take the new path again and it gets easier, you remember the route you found the day before. This time you're a little more confident in your new path, it's not unknown now so you're not afraid of where it might take you, so you enjoy the journey. You resolve to keep following this new path.

A few days later you have something on your mind as you go out of your house and you forget the new path, instead you automatically return to the habit of your old path without thinking. But you soon become aware that you're off down the wrong path, so you stop and cross over to the new path again

This happens a few more times, but the more you practice and the more frequently you consciously take the new path the more natural it becomes.

As you practice walking on the new path something else happens, you start to wear away the grass on your new route making an actual path and the grass gets an opportunity to grow over the old path so that path fades away.

It's not to long before you go out of your house in the morning and you take the new happy path automatically because it's the path you just take every day, you don't think about it, you just do it because that's what you do. There is now an established path there and the old path has completely grown over and faded away.

This is exactly what is happening in your brain when you practice new positive habits, you are creating new positive neural pathways and the old negative ones are fading away because you don't have any need for them any more.

Initially it might be a frustrating process of constantly correcting yourself because your brain has been trained to do something different and can slip back to the old default habits. But, if you want to lift yourself out of depression and you want to change your default enough, you can and you will do it.

It is just like practicing any new skill - you have to do it regularly and consistently - practice!

How do you think the top sports people in the world became that good at it – practice.

Do you think they found it easy every day – I doubt it.

Do you think they made mistakes and got it wrong at times – probably.

Did they give up – No.

Learning to be aware of how are you thinking and turning it into true positive thinking is a skill that will empower you to do anything you set your mind to.

There's another great secret and benefit to positive thinking and that is whatever you set your mind to focus on is the direction in which you go.

In 'Living on Cloud 9' I let you in on the secrets of how the mind works and the science behind the Law of Attraction. You will learn to manipulate your world into anything you want it to be.

But that's a step away, lets master the basics first and set the foundations so you can build a solid future.

Before we move on to practical exercises, there is one more diagram I want you to understand.

Step by Step

Remember what I said about serotonin? When you have depression, your serotonin levels are very low and you need to build them up. Serotonin is going to help you form those new positive neural networks in your mind.

You do this by practicing

Positive Activity

Positive Thinking

Positive Interaction

But you're going to do this one step at a time.

Serotonin helps you cope with anything, it motivates you (gives you energy), it makes you braver, it helps you cope with physical fear, it boosts your immune system and helps you cope with pain.

When you are starting with very low levels however, the smallest of things can feel overwhelming, getting motivated is a struggle and your default is negative, thinking and believing you can't do it. You can, but your own subconscious negative belief is sabotaging your conscious desire to do it.

You can overcome this and I'm going to show you how. This bit is very important.

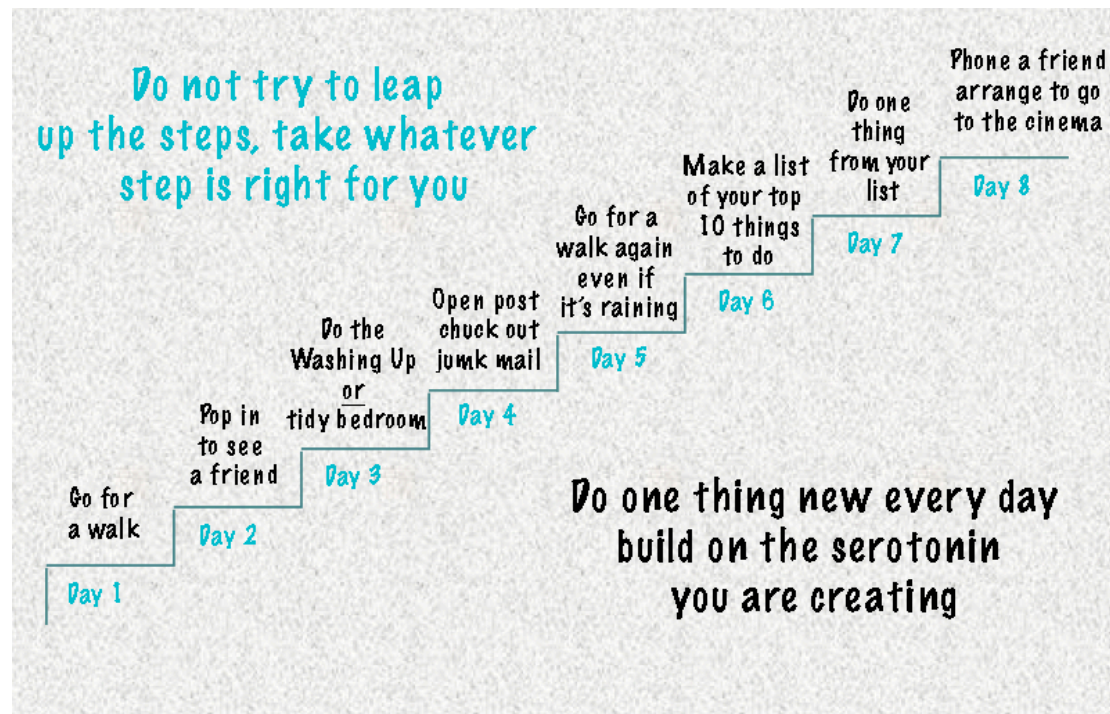
You're going to start practicing a combination of all three of the positive things you need to do, but you're going to start in a very small way with the one that comes easiest to you.

You will set yourself **small** goals that you're going to achieve, It doesn't matter how small they are or what they are as long as they are achievable to you. The mistake people make is to decide they're going to get up at six o'clock in the morning and go to the gym for the first time in five years. – this is too big and when you don't do it, you will beat yourself up, feel even worse and keep yourself locked in depression. You cannot leap out of depression, you have to climb out slowly, one step at a time – this book is not called 'leaping out of the cloud'.

You need to create and build up serotonin, that's what's going to motivate you to do the bigger things, eventually, but start at a level that is right for you. Then when you achieve that small goal you set – BE PLEASED WITH YOURSELF.

Give yourself a big pat on the back and smile from ear to ear!

No one is there to judge you; this is about you being pleased for yourself **without scolding yourself for not doing more** and getting that serotonin reward. This is YOUR journey, not someone else's, there is no benchmark of what you should achieve. You set the benchmark and when you hit it you reward yourself.



The details are not a guide of what you should do, they are just examples. The important things to notice are

1. Do small things
2. Do something extra every day you haven't been doing
3. Take one step at a time and keep stepping.
4. It might be day six or week six before you're even up to making a list of things you need to do, but as long as you're moving forwards a little bit every day you are going in the right direction
5. Building serotonin takes time to start with, but you will notice that, if you do something every day, the things you do will become bigger things and you will do them without thinking and without that internal battle.
6. At some point you need to get disciplined and override that primitive brain that will come up with all the arguments NOT to do what you have set your intention to do.

Leave the big decision and big actions until later, just put them down and forget them for now. The purpose of building up your serotonin levels, apart from motivation, energy and coping with day to day life, is to strengthen the connections in your intellectual brain. It is your intellect that will work out the answers you're looking for and come up with solutions to your problems, the best thing you can do is get out of it's way.

Your job is to create serotonin so your intellect can start functioning at its best. When you're ready it WILL tell you what you need to do about the big things, trust it.

Think of it like a car engine, if you don't have oil in the engine, the engine will dry up and can't function. You need to put the oil back in so it runs smoothly again. (luckily you don't overheat and blow up without serotonin, you get depressed, have no energy or motivation and life gets difficult)

How to Practice Positive Thinking

Exercise 1 – You ARE capable

Write everything down that you can and you DO do on a daily basis. Track your day writing all the things you do.

I had an email from a lady recently who said to me "you don't understand how hard it is, I can't do any more than look after my two boys"

I pointed out to her that looking after two young children (especially boys with bags of energy) is a big deal; she IS doing that. Think of everything that goes into looking after two children on your own – in my opinion that's massive. She was just focusing on what she believed she could not do and that was causing the anxiety that kept her in her primitive brain.

If you are working – well give yourself a pat on the back; despite having depression, you are still going to work.

If you are looking after your sick mother – give yourself a pat on the back; despite having depression, you are caring for someone else.

Switch your focus from what you can't do or not doing to what you are doing and give yourself credit.

Make that list now.

Exercise 2 – Reprioritise Your Life

You do what you have to do.

Going back to the lady who could not do any more than look after her 2 boys.

Her boys were clearly a priority in her life; if one of her boys was sick or needed something for school – I think she would be able to rise to that challenge.

When I had depression, I walked my dog for an hour in the morning and the evening every day come wind, rain or shine and in the dark – because it was a priority for me, it was something I believed I HAD to do, I had no choice (my dog wouldn't let me get away with not going). The consequences of not doing that was nothing but an annoying dog really, but to me it was a top priority that couldn't be missed, so I did it even though I couldn't be bothered to wash my hair.

So look at what you can and are doing –

1. make a list of the priorities in your life

Where do you get the energy from to do that?

Why are you motivated to do those things – because you have to?

eGuide: Climbing Out Of The Cloud

You have a choice in everything you do, it is you who is putting the priority and importance value on that activity and you can redefine your priorities over other things.

The two most common excuses I hear are:-

1. I don't have time
2. I can't afford it

Both of these things are about priorities and nothing else. You will find the time to do the things you HAVE to and you will find the money to pay for the things you HAVE to. Who is deciding the 'HAVE to'? You are.

You don't have to reveal this to anyone else, but it is vital that you are honest with yourself.

How much time do you spend in front of the TV? Could you get up 30 minutes earlier? If you HAD to, where would you find extra time?

How much do you spend on convenience food, bottles of wine or beer, going out, things you don't really need?

Now give yourself a number from 0 to 10 for how important curing yourself from depression is?

The truth and mean it.

Exercise 3 – Energize Yourself

Do something right now – I don't care how silly you feel

Go into a room on your own – get some privacy.

Put an upbeat piece of music on the you like

And DANCE to it.

Jump around, force a smile on your face and dance until it has finished, feeling positive about it.

Then after you've finished – how do you feel?

How did you just get the energy to dance?

Right in that moment you made it a priority and you did it, without thinking, you just did.

Draw on this knowledge to do other small things.

For the next 11 days – do a dance a day

Exercise 4 – Daily Routine

This is something I do every day now, it keeps me grounded and grateful for what I do have in life.

Start practicing this every day and form a new habit, when you look back in three months time, you will be amazed at how far you've come if you keep up the positive practices and keep taking those steps.

Get a plain lined paper book or pad of paper – you're going to write these things in it every day.

1. What am I most grateful for in my life today?

Write five things, it can be having good friends, a roof over your head, a family that loves you, it can be materialistic things, it can be inner resources you have, things you've learnt – it's up to you, if you can think of more than five, then write them down, but do this every day.

2. Today my dominant feeling is....

You're going to decide how you want to feel – and make it a positive thing! Whatever you like, motivated, inspired, calm, grateful, happy, creative, organised.

How you think determines how you feel and how you feel will determine how you behave, so think and

decide how you're going to feel, don't examine your feelings, decide you're fed up and go with it for the day – it is your decision.

3. My intention today is

This is where you set yourself a small goal or something you want to do, achieve, start, finish or just something positive you're going to be for the day.

For example,

My intention today is to be easy-going around the children.

My intention today is to cook a healthy dinner for the family.

My intention by the end of the day is to have started ...

My intention today is to go out of the house and have a coffee in town.

4. Throw it to the universe

This is something that is on your mind that you can't do anything about right now - throw it to the universe to deal with. Move responsibility for worrying about or dealing with something you can't change right now from you to the universe.

Universe, please come up with a solution for my job situation

Universe, please look after my sister's health

Universe, please give me ideas for how I can come up with the funds to ...

5. **Wild Hair Intention**

Your wild hair intention is something big and crazy. It's your dream, what you want to have or have happen in the future, it can be anything you want it to be, just make it big and outrageous and something that would make you ultimately happy if you had it or achieved it.

With all the points above, make sure you give your subconscious **positive** instruction. Your mind can't act on what you don't want, it can only act on what you do want. So, for example, don't write , My intention today is to NOT sit in front of the TV all day. Your brain doesn't know what to do with that. Turn the statement into something positive like 'My intention today is to go into town and have a coffee' or 'my intention today is to go for a 30 minute walk'.

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Exercise 5 – Mind Distraction Technique

You are thinking too much – fact

When your mind is idle or not actively occupied in something positive, it defaults to ruminating on problems and worries which are all negative.

Remember those negative neural pathways you've formed. Well, when you're not actively doing something you have to concentrate on, until you've allowed those networks to fade away, which will happen over time, you will subconsciously fall back into old thinking habits.

An easy way of keeping yourself out of that trap is to have something else to focus on.

I [understand](#) that motivation is difficult initially so you need to find something that doesn't take much effort and my top suggestion for this is:-

Audio books

Anytime you are doing something manual that you don't have to think about – driving, cleaning, ironing, cooking, lying in bed at night before going to sleep or anything else you do that involves physical rather than mental action, listen to an audio book.

This is not the same as listening to the radio or music which you can do subconsciously. You have to follow a story, you need to

use your conscious mind to do that and while it is, it cannot think about the negatives at the same time. The longer you're out of the negative primitive brain, the quicker the negative connections will drop and fade away.

I taught myself to like ironing would you believe with audio books! I hated ironing with a passion, but found myself in a role where I had to do it. The mere thought of having to do the ironing made me stroppy, but I had discovered audio books a while ago and the whole exercise turned around into something I enjoyed doing because I had an excuse to listen to a really good book. Reading is something I hardly every do, unless it's research, but I do enjoy a good book. Audio books catch the attention of your conscious mind and your imagination.

Many clients have given me feedback about the positive effect they have also experienced listening to audio books.

If you like a good book, then great, get a novel, but also hugely beneficial are self help books, positive psychology, positive affirmation type books, they will all help to retrain your brain.

Exercise 6 – Self Development

The most valuable investment you can make is in yourself.

If you have problems or issues to overcome that seem so big you will never be able to. The way to overcome them is to grow yourself to be bigger than the problem.

Invest in yourself and in your continual self-improvement. Your brain will love it. You have billions of brain cells; they need to be filled with stuff.

Right now you're filling them with negative self-harming, self-sabotaging stuff made up in your imagination. Stop that and fill them with positive information that is going to grow you, make you bigger and better than your problems and take you to a new level of wisdom.

You can find your own sources of interest and you might even want to learn a new skill, but if you want some pointers, the people I follow regularly and read/listen to are;-

Tony Robbins
Zig Ziglar
Stephen Covey
Jim Rohn
Prof Stephen Peters
John C Maxwell

[Click here to get my recommended reading list](#) - some of these you can also get as audiobooks.

Summary

Change your attitude towards yourself and depression.

I can, I will

In the words of Yoda,

“There is only ‘Do’ or ‘Not Do’, there is no ‘Try’”

Everyone who has depression, without exception, has a negative attitude and thinks in a negative way. This is what needs to change as a priority because how you think influences your moods, motivation, energy, coping ability and immune system.

It is YOUR brain, so you can do anything you want to do. Retraining your brain is easy, it just takes a bit of self awareness, vigilance and a lot of practice.

Rebalancing your body's chemical composition is fundamental; do this and you WILL change your moods, you WILL create energy and motivation, you WILL feel better. But it's up to you, only you can do it.

The 10 steps to rebalancing your body, mind and emotions are:-

1. Decide without any ambiguity that you ARE going to do this

2. Commit your resolve to a positive affirmation that you can and you will beat depression
3. Become aware of your thought patterns and practice thinking more positively
4. Start doing small things and congratulate yourself for it, stop beating yourself up for the things you can't do
5. Put the big problems down, leave them to the universe to deal with, you will not solve a thing by focusing on the problems.
6. Focus on yourself first as a priority, start looking after yourself and do the things you enjoy doing. This is not selfish; it is selfless because when you are better you will have the resources and energy to give to those around you happily and willingly.
7. Make a small step towards your future every day, even if you take a tiny step, keep going and don't stop, however hard it might seem. Developing the self-discipline to do this even when you don't want to will bring the biggest rewards.
8. Plan a positive future for yourself, leave the past in the past where it belongs.
9. Eating healthily, you are what you eat. Put crap in and you will feel crap. Put good raw energy in and you will feel energetic.
10. Invest in yourself, you are the most valuable asset in your life, what you know, how you think and what you do will shape your life. Practice self-development.

Final Word

I want to leave you with part of an interview I did recently with a guy who reached out to me through Twitter about 18 months ago.

Richard isn't a client, he's not an expert, he's just an ordinary guy with an extraordinary resolve and determination to make his life better.

Richard has brought himself out of depression – he did it himself and I was so inspired by his journey that I asked him if he would do an interview for the Hypno Blog.

Richard, what advice would you give to someone wanting to start their journey out of depression?

"I never relied on anyone, I had influences, to borrow a phrase from the Chimp paradox, Emma is a remote part of my troop or for Star Wars fans, my Yoda, but if I don't listen it's a choice, as it is everyone's.

TAKING OWNERSHIP IS THE BIGGEST STEP.

Getting in touch with my old self was a good step too. Stop being a passenger in your own life, take control, if you cannot surround yourself with positive people, then choose positive people on Facebook or Twitter.

Small changes now become big changes in a year's time. Have some "you" time, for me it's time with my dog on the lead in the woods or it used to be fishing."

Is there anything you would like to add that you think might help?

I've taken several steps, on your advice I started my own blog that I write almost daily

I started running again, giving almost any fitness a go, including yoga, Pilates and general bodyweight training.

*I can't stress enough the influence that Emma and the book *The Chimp Paradox* have had, but I did it myself. Like the fool in the Tarot cards or like in *Star Wars*, 'I chose my own journey'. Who I wanted in my troop which has seen one of my worst influences cut away and not get annoyed when someone didn't want me in their troop.*

I realised I was free-falling into depression, but to use another vehicle to explain it, I now see myself as the Captain of my ship, Emma (as much as she denies it) is my Navigator and the book my Tactical officer, but I choose what I listen too, what I act upon and what I don't and I know it's MY responsibility if it works or doesn't.

The one thing Dad would not have wanted, was to hold me back, which for nearly three years he was, I had to let go, I'm not saying I didn't love him, but I hadn't realised what a huge influence he was. He would say what had to be said, but then always had my back.

My break up hurt but I hadn't realised the damage until I met Lou, and she nearly left because I didn't communicate, just boxed everything up which I also now realise wasn't a good thing, either for me or our relationship.

Also thinking about it now, I realise that, as Emma has taught me, taking ownership of a problem is a huge step, if you turn

around and say "well you told me to....." you can't take the problem on, because you don't own it.

If you look at the problem and say to yourself "what, if any part of this, could I change?" you take ownership of it, if you can't change it, then accept, move on and plan how you'll avoid a problem like that, in the future. It maybe a person, it maybe your reaction, it could even be what you're drinking, but you can't do anything until you TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE PROBLEM.

Get in touch with your old self and remember how you used to be. Try doing something you used to enjoy. Sport helps a lot, by burning off adrenaline. Choose your influences, it may not be easy in reality, but it is on Twitter and other social media

I play 'turn the negatives' I enjoy that a lot. A leopard can't change its spots, but it can change the way it sees them!

And when someone is giving you a critique they aren't being personal, tell your chimp, "they're not being rude, let me (your human) deal with this, if I feel they're being rude I (the intellect) will deal with it, if you (my chimp) get involved, everyone will get hurt!" When you deal with your chimp it's important to tell it the TRUTH, don't try strong arm tactics as the Chimp is ten times stronger than you, it has to be to defend you." (The Chimp Paradox by Dr Stephen Peters)

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Further reading

