



# Dealing with Depression Effectively Today

By Dr. Linda Hancock

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Statistics claim that approximately forty percent of individuals will experience depression at some time in life. The symptoms can be not only debilitating but also confusing for the person as well as for family members. Like diabetes, depression is not cured but must be managed in order for the individual to experience any sense of well-being.

Following are some strategies to help with the management of depression:

1. Focus on the present and future - Things of the past need to be left in the past. There is absolutely nothing that can be accomplished by harbouring hurts and problems that are long gone.
2. Adopt an attitude of forgiveness - When you refuse to forgive yourself or another person, you are the one who suffers and will continue to suffer. You don't need to forget what happened, but you do need to let it go. As my little pre-school granddaughter once told me "That's okay. Everybody makes mistakes".
3. Choose each thought carefully - The good news is that your brain that only hold one thought at a time. There might be several that are competing for your attention, but you actually get to choose which thought you will allow your brain to have at any time. Write down the things that you want to have happen, in the present tense, and repeat them to yourself throughout the day. For example, "I can control my emotions", "I choose to live a healthy life" or "Things are improving every day".
4. Always say what you want instead of what you don't want - Your mind is like a giant computer that does what you ask. If you keep saying things like "I can't sleep", "My relationships are horrible" or "Things will never get better", your brain thinks that it should respond by giving you the things you request.
5. Know what you need to be healthy - Pay attention to the things that help you to stay well. Getting enough rest, ensuring that you have a nutritious diet and being involved in positive activities are important. Each person needs a unique amount of each but only you will be able to put the exact formula together.
6. Develop assertiveness skills - People who are passive often become resentful and angry with themselves and others when their needs aren't met. Assertiveness means that you know what you need and know how to ask for it in a healthy way.
7. Learn how to establish healthy boundaries - It is acceptable and necessary to say "No" at times. Just because someone asks you to do something or tries to convince you that they have a good idea, does not mean that their idea would be wise for you. Listen to your inner voice!
8. Follow your treatment plan - So many clients tell me that they don't want to take medications for their whole life or that they vary the instructions given to them by their physician, psychologist or psychiatrist even before they have given themselves time to notice if there would be improvement over time. Give good advice a chance!

9. Find interesting things to do - If you are bored then you will become boring to others. Always have something to look forward to even if it is only a walk in the park, a trip to the green house or a telephone visit with someone who has a positive attitude.

10. Be your own best friend - Think of how you would treat someone who you love and enjoy being around and then transfer all that affection and care towards yourself. Laugh at your own "quirkiness", find enjoyable hobbies that you can do on your own and give thanks for what you do have. Remember, there is always someone who is worse off than you!

A wonderful life does not just "happen". People who do well are the ones who plan to do well and then follow through on their plans.