

The Healthy Thinking Initiative Newsletter

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Special points of interest:

- Depression can be treated by medication or psychotherapy.
- Cognitive-behavioral therapy reduces the incidence of future depressive episodes.
- If you think you are depressed, consult your doctor or a mental health professional.

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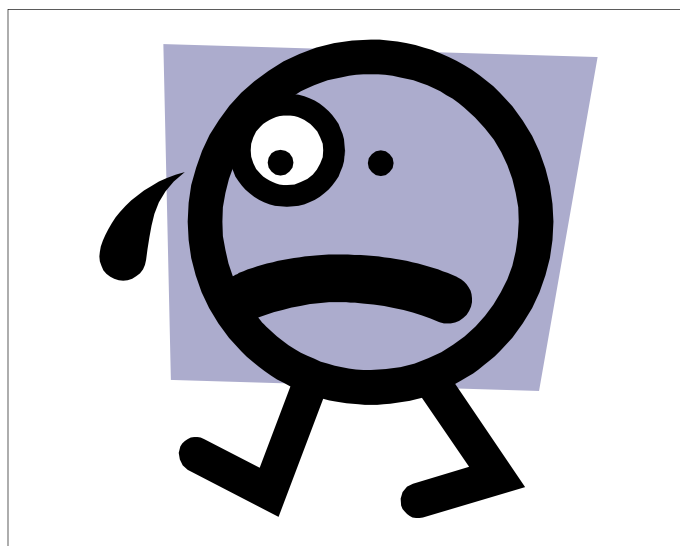
THE TREATMENT OF DEPRESSION

If you watch the TV ads for anti-depressant medications, you would believe that depression is a medical illness that must be treated with medications. But that is not all you need to know.

In addition to medication, depression can be treated with psychotherapy. Cognitive-behavioral therapy has been shown in research to be as effective as medication for the alleviation of symptoms and the return to emotional health. It has also been shown to help individuals who practice the skills that are taught to be more resistant to future depressive episodes.

Many people who are treated for depression find that the combination of medication and cognitive-behavioral therapy gives them the best outcome to alleviate the distress and to remain depression-free in the future.

Depression is a serious emo-



Depression is a serious emotional condition,

tional condition that involves marked sadness for more than two weeks, a loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities, changes in energy levels and in sleep and appetite. It can lead to thoughts of suicide. And untreated, it is often associated with other medical and emotional illnesses.

It can be triggered by a loss or a traumatic event, or it could be more likely to occur if you have close relatives who have been depressed.

If you believe that you are depressed, consult a doctor or a mental health professional for treatment.

WORRYING ABOUT THE WORST

You are worried about your job. But is it really that simple? If we could tune into your actual thoughts, they might go something like this:

"What if I can't get myself to complete this project?
...then my boss will be angry

with me!

...then he will give me a bad review and I will get a lousy raise!

...then I won't be able to pay off my charge cards!

...then my credit will be ruined and I will never afford that new house!"

Anxiety distorts our thinking and causes us to focus on catastrophic outcomes.

There are effective treatments for anxiety. You can learn to break the cycle of worry and catastrophe.

OPTIMISM AND SUCCESS

Optimistic people have been found to be more successful in life than their pessimistic counterparts.



This is true even though pessimists are more realistic

about the chances of success or failure. Pessimists are realists, but optimists regularly beat the odds.

How does this happen?

When optimists have a success, they believe that something they did influenced the outcome. They look to identify what they are doing that has a positive impact so that they can continue to do it.

If it worked in one instance, the optimist reasons, it will probably work again. So the optimist does what works

over and over again.

And if it worked in one situation, then that same behavior might work in other situations. So the optimist extends the successful behavior to many situations rather than limiting it to one event.

By making a success personal, permanent, and pervasive, the optimist brings their success to many endeavors.

HARDLY NOTICED

It is hard to notice what is not there.

One reason that we find it so hard to follow through on our good intentions to work on behavior that will prevent disease or distress in our life is that it is hard to motivate ourselves until there is a painful problem.

This psychological tendency alerts us to dangerous events and motivates us to immediately seek to remedy the problem. But it also makes it difficult to engage in regular habits that are health promoting.

In our modern world, most of the health problems we face are the result of poor habits

over a long period of time.

We can overcome this tendency to react to pain by consciously making decisions to take better care of ourselves.

And it is necessary for the quality of our life to work hard at developing good habits.

AN OPTIMIST'S JOKE

A psychologist decided to study the difference between optimism and pessimism.

He found identical twins with the exception that one was an optimist and one was a pessimist.

Their mother brought them in on their birthday and the psychologist announced to them that he had prepared a special gift for each of them. The

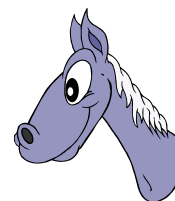
boys were directed to rooms that contained their respective gifts.

The psychologist went to talk to the pessimist.

There he was, sitting in a room full of the best and most expensive toys. He was crying. "Look at all these beautiful toys. By tomorrow, half of

them will be broken! I just can't bear the thought of losing them all!"

Then he went to find the optimist.



He was in the middle of a room full of horse manure. He was digging in the mess with glee. "With all this horse manure," he reasoned, "there must be a pony in here somewhere!"

*According to the
National Institutes of
Mental Health,
depression costs an
estimated \$23 billion in
lost work days every
year.*

DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK

I listen to people all the time, and I don't believe a lot of what they say.

But when I listen to my own thoughts, it is much harder for me to be skeptical.

Why is that?

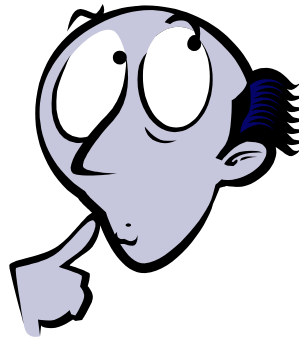
Someone (who probably did not have enough to do) once figured out that we have approximately 16 billion thoughts every day!

It would seem logical that some of them would be in

error.

We have a tendency to believe those thoughts that are the ones that are most emotional for us, although our feelings clearly change the way we think.

When I am happy, I see the future as full of possibilities. But when I am sad or stressed, it seems like the troubles will never stop. Both are generated from strong emotions. And I believe both views about the future, when those thoughts arise.



But they can't both be true.

How crazy is that?

Don't believe everything you think.

EMPLOYEE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Companies with higher revenue growth are better at motivating employees and provide more opportunities for growth and development. Employee engagement at these high-performing organizations are more than 20% higher than those of their counterparts. (Hewitt Associates, 2004)

Almost 4 out of 5 employees (79%) believe their employers should encourage employees to adopt healthy lifestyles. (Towers Perrin, 2004)

FAST SKILLS

Sometimes an intense and emotional situation arises unexpectedly. You know that you need to quickly get your emotions under control so that you will be able avoid a potentially catastrophic negative reaction.

Here is a "fast skill" that will help you to quickly



calm down enough to be able to act rationally: In your mind, from where ever you are standing, describe what you can see.

"I see a desk with a computer on it. There

are several reports that are in process of being completed. There are two chairs sitting on either side of the desk, for visitors to use when they are in the office. There is some art on the wall..."

This brief exercise will quiet the immediate emotion and give you a few seconds of calm so that you can think before you speak.

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Get **M.O.R.E.** out of life....

Meditation

Optimism

Resilience

Experience the difference

Take advantage of our *comprehensive program* for the prevention of anxiety and depression in the workplace. It includes:

- ◆ **Health Risk Assessments** for the identification of anxiety and depression related problems in your organization
- ◆ **Training in three key skills of *mindfulness, optimism and resilience*** conducted by our experienced professional staff
- ◆ **Ongoing *psychological wellness coaching***, and
- ◆ **Supportive *written materials*** to insure that the skills we teach can be used in the day to day world of work.

◆

Your benefits?

- ◆ **Measurable Results—**
 - ◇ Reduced absenteeism!
 - ◇ Lower health care costs!
 - ◇ An average of **\$3.50 savings per dollar spent!**

We are committed to bringing you the highest quality program that is available.

Call today to arrange a free consultation.

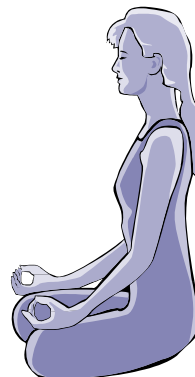
MINDFULNESS AND THE BRAIN

Mindfulness training has been shown in research to improve the functioning of the brain.

In research studies being conducted by Richard Davidson, Ph.D., at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, experienced meditators have submitted to scans of their brains while they are meditating.

These studies demonstrate that the area of the brain that appears to be associated with negative or painful emotions, such as sadness, anger, and fear is smaller for those who have maintained a rigorous practice of meditation.

The part of the brain that is associated with happiness, gratitude, and joy is measurably larger.



Dr. Davidson studied monks who had meditated for a mini-

mum of 10,000 documented hours.

He has recently begun studies on individuals who are new to meditation and is able to notice that even after eight weeks of daily practice, there are already demonstrated benefits.

A group of employees for a company in Fitchburg, WI, who volunteered to learn to meditate, showed a significantly improved response to the flu vaccine after receiving a course in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction.

Other studies have demonstrated that mindfulness is helpful to prevent relapse after depressive episodes.