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### CONVERSATIONS WITH SELF

#### Is all well?

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How does one handle sudden bursts of depression?

When you first experienced depression, you knew you did not want to be in this state, but had no idea what to do about it. And, I'm not talking about forms of depression that are psychiatric in nature; I am referring to periods of depression that can overtake any of us when we are overcome by the pressures of daily life.

We get depressed because all is not well. Depression is not the first sign that things have gone wrong. We may have experienced weariness, anxiety, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, moments of panic and other warning signals. In one way, it is a tribute to the human spirit that we carry on regardless of these alarm bells. But, left unheeded, they eventually lead us into the overwhelming experience of depression.

Sometimes, the experiences that trigger depression build up over a period of time. We accept each knock to our confidence, each miscommunication with loved ones, each unhappy day in a job we don't want to do but must, and each disappointment because we are caught up in a pattern that has no room for reflection, or because we lack the people who can help us see things more clearly.

To live with unhappiness day after day takes enormous strength. But, perhaps it doesn't have to be that way. Once we slide into depression, helping ourselves without the help of others becomes extremely difficult and, often, impossible.

Start living

When it comes to depression, many of us believe change is not possible. Stopping yourself from worrying may not be easy, but it is vital to break that pattern. When worry assails us, we must ask ourselves whether there is anything we can do about it now, and if not, we must dismiss the thought in no uncertain terms, replacing it with positive thoughts or actions.

There is no easy way to do this. It takes commitment and hard work on the part of the sufferer to re-engage with life at a time when he/she feels utterly powerless and un-empowered. The crucial first step is to seek help in order to reach a point where one can address the problems. For this, meet people who radiate positivity, and participate in activities that help distract you. Also, recognise the positives you have. This helps you re-engage with life.

Recovering from depression isn't simply about understanding the mechanism of depression. If the context that created the depression remains unchanged, no amount of positive action will protect you from further bouts.

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