

3 Tips to Help Put You in a Great Mood

Shorter daytime sunlight is associated with reduced energy and mood decline in some people. For centuries, many people have experienced the “winter depression” associated with shorter days and weather patterns not conducive to outdoor activities. In 1984, scientists named this type of depression Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Negative thought patterns contribute to bad moods and feelings of depression. There are many categories of toxic thinking patterns, including:

All-or-nothing thinking—thinking everything is black or white with no shades of gray.

Negative mental filter—filtering out any bit of information that is positive, and only hearing the negative.

Disqualifying the positive—explaining away words of affirmation or praise with false thoughts such as “I don’t deserve this” or “They just feel sorry for me.”

Magnification of minimization—exaggerating events to catastrophic importance or minimizing successes.

“Should” statements—holding to a rigid set of internal rules about what should, must or can’t be done.

Labeling and mislabeling—using terms like “stupid,” “idiot” or “loser” for self and others.

Imagine your habitual, toxic thinking patterns creating a bridge in your mind day after day that leads to sadness, depression and eventually disease. You can choose to, instead, build a bridge to happiness, love and life.

Here are three great ways to boost your mood:

1. Get Some Sunshine on Your Face

SAD is more prevalent in women, and symptoms include weight gain and increased appetite for carbohydrates. Even if you do not have full-scale SAD, you will likely find that daily exposure to sunlight will boost your mood.

2. Build a Mental Bridge

Become aware of your thoughts, and when you notice a toxic thinking pattern, decide not to “travel over that bridge.” Take the other bridge, and eventually you can train your mind to break the habit of toxic thinking and routinely produce positive thoughts.

3. Minimize Internet Usage

More studies are linking too much time on the Internet with poor mood and depression. A new term, “Facebook depression,” refers to the possibility that Internet addicts lack satisfying amounts of real human interaction and companionship. Social networking sites can also promote unrealistic views of the world.

A new study analyzed Internet usage among college students and found that students who show signs of depression tend to use the Internet differently than those who show no symptoms of depression. Depressed students tended to use file-sharing services and send email and chat online more than the other students. Depressed students also tend to play more games and watch more videos online than other students.

The Internet and television can be fun and wonderful sources of information, but practice moderation with both. Do not let time spent in front of the TV or on the Internet take the place of real human interaction.

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