

IS DEPRESSION EMOTIONAL, SPIRITUAL OR DUE TO A CHEMICAL IMBALANCE?

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As a psychiatrist, I get asked this question often, and my usual reply is “YES.”

After my client looks more confused than before asking the question, I explain that we see about three thousand clients at Meier Clinics around the USA each week, about half of them for depression-related problems. Eighty percent of them can recover without medicine, but about twenty percent recover much more quickly with medicine, with half or more of that 20% having a genetic predisposition to depression requiring lifelong medication with an antidepressant to keep the serotonin and/or norepinephrine levels up to normal.

In the eighty percent who do not need meds, the chemicals serotonin and norepinephrine are still often somewhat depleted, but not from genes (see my book, BLUE GENES), but from various forms of holding onto anger. Getting angry doesn't hurt anyone if it results in the truth being spoken in love. But holding onto anger in the form of grudges or vengeful motives will continue to deplete serotonin from the brain, keeping that person in a state of depression. Moses commanded the Jewish people in the commandments (see Leviticus 19) that when they get angry at someone for something that person did or said, go ahead and get angry, and go ahead and verbalize that anger, but not in a vengeful way. King Solomon, a thousand years after Moses, wrote in his Proverbs that friends confronting friends sharpens each other's personalities, like iron sharpening iron when you rub them together with friction. The Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 4:26-27, said that we should go ahead and get angry when our boundaries are violated, but to get rid of that anger by bedtime. In Romans 12, Paul added that we should turn all our vengeful motives over to God, who will get vengeance for us if it is deserved.

Violating that simple rule found in both the Old and New Testaments results in a depletion of serotonin in our brains.

Ask yourself these questions to determine if you may be Serotonin deficient:

HAVE YOU FREQUENTLY EXPERIENCED THE FOLLOWING FOR TWO STRAIGHT WEEKS OR LONGER:

1. Sadness?
2. Lack of motivation?
3. Isolation?
4. Emotional pain?
5. Insomnia (usually awakening at about three a.m. and having trouble falling back asleep)?
6. Irritability?
7. False guilt?
8. Wishing God would let you die
9. Thinking of suicide methods off and on
10. Becoming actually delusional, thinking strangers are talking about you, or that you have committed the unpardonable sin or are impossibly unacceptable to God, or that people are videotaping you or bugging your phone, or hearing voices that are not there, etc.

If you experience three or more of these for two weeks or longer, you are probably clinically depressed and quite possibly somewhat deficient in Serotonin. You should consult a professional counselor if death wishes or suicidal ideation exists and it is highly recommend that you also see an MD/Psychiatrist. If any delusional thinking or hallucinations are present, immediate medication by a psychiatrist in a Day Hospital or regular psychiatric unit of a hospital is a must before you act out dangerously on false information your brain perceives to be true due to a chemical imbalance. The medication will bring you back in control of your brain, but until then, your chemicals are controlling you and tricking you into thinking you are in control.

Forgiveness (not condoning the violator, but turning loose of personal demands to get personal vengeance) results in the restoration of serotonin to its normal levels over a period of time—often weeks or even months. Antidepressants restore it to normal within five to ten weeks.

Running to your doctor to take antidepressants without resolving emotional stressors or spiritual problems like bitterness would be a really unfortunate thing, preventing you from growing to a more mature and insightful human being. But inheriting a low serotonin level and not taking medication for it will result in horrible pain and often suicide.

So depression usually does involve a chemical deficiency of some sort, but can usually be restored to normal by good counseling and also good nutrition. The essential amino acids in our foods are what the body uses as building blocks to build serotonin, norepinephrine, dopamine and GABA, the main four chemicals we need for sanity. Vitamin B6 must be ingested daily to transport these essential amino acids across the blood-brain barrier, into the brain. Your brain then makes serotonin and the other brain chemicals out of these. Psychiatric medications work primarily by blocking the “reuptake” sites where these chemicals get sucked out of the brain and are excreted in the urine. Antidepressants are technically called “serotonin reuptake inhibitors” because they inhibit the “sucking out” of serotonin from the brain quite so rapidly. So the serotonin that your body naturally makes from the essential amino acids gets to a high enough level to produce love, joy, peace, patience, meekness, longsuffering, etc.