

1. **NewsHealth And Wellness** Getting out of depression is about self-acceptance, not about what anyone says

## Getting out of depression is about self-acceptance, not about what anyone says

How can we lose weight consistently if we do not truly accept our current weight? If we stay in the reality of our weight, accept it deeply, then we are truly motivated to change it, not in fleeting moments, but in conscious, consistent efforts, says mental health therapist Rachna K

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To experience self-esteem, we must practise self-acceptance (Source: Pixabay)

Self-acceptance, in psychotherapist Nathaniel Branden's words, is choosing to value myself, to treat myself with respect, to stand up for my right to exist. Without self-acceptance, self-esteem is impossible.

To experience self-esteem, we must practise self-acceptance.

Self-acceptance is the birthright of every human being. It is the voice of life force. To be self-accepting is to be on my own side, to be for myself. In our deepest moments of despair and feeling suicidal, self-acceptance gives us the ability to ask for help. If we are enduring years of abuse, self-acceptance gives us the courage to say "No!" It is our willingness to experience ourselves, rather than deny our facts to this moment.

Exercise in self-acceptance (Nathaniel Branden): We stand in front of a full-length mirror and look at our face and body for two minutes, breathing deeply. Notice our feelings as we do. The idea is NOT to look at our clothes, make-up, accessories, but look only upon ourselves. Notice if this is difficult or uncomfortable.

(It's actually best to do this exercise without wearing anything.)

Typically, it's easier to look for a longer period of time at some parts of ourselves while it's difficult to view other parts. Which parts are displeasing?

The eyes may carry a pain that we may not want to confront. Perhaps the face carries a fear that's difficult to face. Perhaps we have a double chin that reminds us of our excessive weight. The impulse is to escape, to reject or deny or disown these aspects of ourselves. But if we stay in this exercise, and spend some more time with our image of ourselves, allow ourselves to defy that impulse of rejection, denial or disownment, then we allow ourselves to accept that which we are trying to reject.

And as we continue to look at ourselves, stay focussed, breathe deeply and say to ourselves, "Whatever my defects, imperfections or flaws, I accept myself unreservedly and completely." Repeat these words for about two minutes without rushing the process. Allow yourself to fully experience the meaning of these words.

Accepting doesn't mean "liking." We may not like our fat or wrinkles or scars. But we can accept them, experience them without denying or avoiding them. They are what they are. Surrendering to the reality of what is, one will notice that one can relax, feel comfortable with oneself, feel real, and feel, 'Right now, that's me. And I accept the way I am.'

If we can commit to doing this for two minutes every morning, and every night, for two weeks, we can see a self-acceptance in ourselves that raises our self-esteem. Physically accepting ourselves is a fundamental acceptance of who we are.

Once we accept who we are, then the ability to change ourselves has a greater, clearer possibility. How can we lose weight consistently if we do not truly accept our current weight? If we stay in the reality of our weight, accept it deeply, then we are truly motivated to change it, not in fleeting moments, but in conscious, consistent efforts. We may choose to write down what that pain in our eyes means to us, what that fear in our face is about. This will help provide clarity of what we need to accept about ourselves.

Getting out of depression is not paying attention to how others view who we are. It is fostering an ability to accept ourselves regardless of what anyone says. When we form strong mental patterns of our own acceptance, others cannot get us into depression.

(The author is a New York-based mental health therapist practising Rapid Transformational Therapy and a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, US)

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