

Do people diagnosed with depression feel that they're in another reality?



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Hi William Fleming!

You ask:

Do people diagnosed with depression feel that they're in another reality or alone in the current one?

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Yes, in a very real sense many people with depression feel as if they are alone in a separate universe; you don't need a diagnosis to feel depressed.

All people, whether they are depressed or not, have no choice but to live alone in their heads.

Sometimes there is a very strong correlation between how a person's life in their head corresponds with events in their lives, but sometimes the life a person lives in their head is a poor match for their real life.

When what people refer to as reality is a poor match for the life a person lives in their head then the more likely they are to make mistakes or become confused; it's a good idea to make frequent reality checks, particularly if you prefer to live in your head a lot.

You can't get away from living in your head, no one can because it's the life in your head that helps you predict and prepare for events in your real life.

While the life in your head may strongly resemble the lives other people seem to live in their heads, your own models for reality are unique to yourself regardless of how similar they may seem to be to other people's models for reality.

Consequently you really are in your own private reality in your head; hence you are also alone, for the most part.

In close relationships the partners may often experience being in each other's heads. One partner may speak what the other is thinking, or they might both speak the same thoughts aloud together in unison.

However, a depressed person gets in the habit of closing other people off from their thoughts and feelings, they make themselves more alone psychologically and they may make themselves more alone socially as well by avoiding people.

Being alone is not a bad thing, even though feeling lonely can seem painful.

In a sense being alone is the fundamental origin of every person. We learn many of our life lessons alone, and we take responsibilities for our mistakes alone.

Alone-time is needed for deep introspection which is a process most depressed people seem to go through.

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Introspection helps people when they are troubled by events that are beyond their power to change but which they still wish that they could change.

Introspection helps people become better adjusted to events in their lives that they may find difficult to appreciate or accept.

Consequently, depression can be valuable; the isolation that many people experience with depression helps them to make up their own minds without interference, without being told what they should think, feel, or believe by someone who may really be trying to dominate or confuse them.

That's important; isolation is a major benefit of feeling alone with depression.

Depression is not really an illness. It's a natural way to withdraw from life to resolve troubling matters that have you stumped.

Some people take that withdrawal a little too far; they may risk killing themselves which is one reason why it is popular to believe that depression is bad for you.

And of course depression always seems to be attended by a lot of very bad feelings such as pain, stress, and anger.

But depression doesn't cause those bad feelings; depression just helps you to examine your bad feelings so that you can change them to help you feel better.

The bad feelings associated with depression were already there before you became depressed; they may often remain after you are done with your depression, but your attitudes towards those bad feelings are usually changed; depression helps you change those attitudes for the better.

Depression is a tool for personal growth.

Once you learn to use depression to your advantage you might even like it well enough to keep it around a long time; when this happens you are freer to leave your depression and return to it than you were when you first got to know your depression and didn't yet know how to escape from it.

You never really escape from depression, but you can pass through it.

Depression can often be a healing experience.

Many people repress painful memories; they forget them as best they can but repressed memories need to surface to be healed.

Recalling repressed memories makes you feel those bad feelings again.

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The thing is that when you are doing this sort of healing you often can't share what you are doing with other people, you need to be more alone. You need isolation to examine painful memories because they are often about matters you are reluctant to discuss with other people.

Depression is not really an illness so much as it is an opportunity for growth and change.

It can be difficult to change your life when you need to.

Your relationships with other people tend to keep you locked into your lifestyle; the activities or behavior that sometimes need to be changed may seem like a trap that you can't get out of.

Depression makes it easier to neglect those things or learn to change them.

Friends and family may often prefer that you did not change; some of them may even feel threatened by any change you may make with yourself.

Depression isolates you so you can make better choices about what is best for you regardless of what other people may want from you.

When you are returning from depression you are naturally attracted to the people and things in life you still find pleasurable, while you no longer pursue those relationships and activities that were hurting you or you change those relationships and activities to make them more comfortable for you.

So don't be scared by feeling alone in your own universe.

That's a reality most people live with all the time, but which most people repress in their awareness because it makes them uncomfortable.

Reality is crazy, as any sane person will tell you.

Feeling a little crazy at times is therefore natural too.

Reassure the people who are concerned for you that you will be ok, that you just need more space for awhile to get things sorted out.

Most of them will understand and give you the time and space you need for you to grow.

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Enjoy!

love, the grigs...

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ADVISORY:

If you are using psych meds please do not stop taking your meds without a doctor's supervision.

Many people only learn to thrive once they discover which meds work best for them.

If you are someone who does well enough without meds or who has some other good reason not to use meds then please do not encourage other people to stop using their meds; please do not criticize them for seeking help from a doctor in order to try new meds in search of something that will help them.

Meds save lives, even if they can't help everyone.

We caution people using meds to never abruptly stop taking their meds because the side-effects of quitting may be very dangerous.

Yes, we said that right; for many people on psych meds the side-effects of quitting meds can be dangerous.

Abruptly quitting psych meds may make depression much worse; psychotic episodes may even be triggered.

Only withdraw very slowly under medical supervision.

Let people know what you are doing; have them verify your plan with your doctor if they are afraid for you.

We know medications can work but we also know how often people only want to quit their meds.

Please don't argue the merits of one life choice over the other, instead allow others the courtesy to make their own choices just as you do, and just as you would want them to allow you to do.

Please support each other and stop hurting each other over the issues of whether or not to medicate or how to medicate safely.

Anyone self-medicating should educate themselves about their meds of choice and also find more help from people they trust.

FURTHER ADVISORY:

Gharveyn, by any and all aliases, is not a licensed medical practitioner, nor any other sort of professional care-provider. His opinions, however well-formulated they may sometimes appear to be, are not the products of a formal education; Gharveyn holds no degrees of any sort.

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GRIGORY RHO GHARVEYN, BIO:

We identify as a 'multiple personality'. To ourselves we appear to be a collective with many members or associates, some of whom may be avatars of other people we have known, and some of whom are avatars of ourselves at different ages in this incarnation.

Some of our members are avatars of some of our past or future incarnations.

Some of us appear to be machines or cyborgs; many of ourselves appear to come from alternate realities or from different eras of time.

Some of our group's associates appear to be avatars of some of our favorite authors, or the avatars of some of their fictional characters. Some of our associates appear to be mythical beings from ancient Rome, Greece, or Egypt.

It's complicated, but it seems to work well enough for us...

We have no degrees or titles, nor are we an authority of any sort.

We have been partially or acutely disabled by chronic pain for more than 35 years.

We have lived with depression for more than 50 of our 60+ years in this incarnation.

We need physical therapy and exercise but we can scarcely walk or afford transportation.

We wish we could go swimming every day, like we used to do at Ocean Beach in San Francisco.

We currently reside with our girlfriend Tina, roommate Sid, houseguest Jenny, 2 dogs and 2 cats in a small apartment in Gaskill, a small neighborhood in Oakland CA.

We have been almost desperately poor; keeping well fed and keeping the lights on is sometimes a challenge. It's been about 12 years since the last time we were homeless.

To learn more about us or some of our work please visit gharveyn.com

Cheerio!

Keywords:

alienation, loneliness, apathy, depression, suicide, healing, cognit, mental illness, psychology, psychiatry, psych meds, hope, help, hotline, marginaliz, ostraciz, conditioning, shunning, defense mechanism, inner voice, conflicted, repressed memor, self medicating, kill myself, Deepak Choprah, ptsd

Some keywords have been 'short-spelled' to match multiple forms of a word.

For instance: cognit == cognitive, cognition

Theory: searches for either of these longer words will be matched by the short-spelled form.