

Is it right to identify with my diagnosis of depression and say this is who I am?



Hi Lee Tok!

You ask:

Is it right for me to live with the fact that I am diagnosed with anxiety and depression and say this is who I am?

...

Yes and no...

Acceptance is necessary; denial will lead to too many problems, such as failing to seek help when you need it.

However, to identify as a person with depression or anxiety may lock you in.

By identifying you may become vested in those properties; rather than healing them you may reinforce them which may make matters worse.

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Identification can have an upside if it helps you to join with other people who identify the same way.

Together you have mutual support and a stronger society; however it is the nature of social groups to reinforce their identity.

Over time that may cause more harm than good.

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We would say that you should only identify as a person with anxiety and depression conditionally, with the constant provision that you may get better.

We say this as a person who has lived with depression for more than fifty years. We will be 61 before the end of this year.

We are working to cease identifying as a person with depression and anxiety but it has taken us a lifetime to learn why this is important to us now.

It's important to have positive goals.

Identifying as a depressed person can be a positive goal over the short term, but it may become a negative goal for a lifetime.

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At least, that's what we choose to believe now.

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Many people experience anxiety and depression.

Instead of identifying yourself with those characteristics, try identifying those characteristics in other people and then gently offering your sympathy or support.

This helps a lot.

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Enjoy!

love, the grigs...

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PS:

As a person who has struggled with issues of identity and identification for many years we are sorry for this lapse of information regarding having an identity.

One reason you may feel motivated to identify yourself with your anxiety and depression is that it may help give you a focus of sorts for who you believe you are.

Your beliefs about who you are are critical; when these are uncertain both anxiety and depression can result.

The search for identity can last a lifetime; you may infer from our manner of speaking that we have concluded that we have many identities.

Gerry is now providing this insight; the person he has modeled himself upon was trained as a psychologist. It's been awhile since we last were aware of channeling Gerry's advice.

If you are experiencing a crisis of identity then you may feel irritated when other people assume an identity for you that does not feel like a comfortable fit for you.

This leads to a rebellious streak that usually conflicts with parts of yourself that may sometimes be frightened by your own behavior.

One of the best therapies is to read.

Reading is a quiet, independent activity; it's just you and your favorite authors, or maybe someone new.

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Reading connects you with people safely, through your imagination and the imaginations of your authors.

Better yet, reading opens up new ways to perceive the worlds around you giving you better insights into yourself and other people.

Reading is a quick way to help you become a more well-rounded person, someone who becomes more flexible and adaptable.

But don't become too well-rounded... try exercising too.

Exercising can help build a stronger mind-body bond. It's important to nurture your body well to keep it fit.

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We originally received this question in an anonymous context, we are sorry we could not thank you more personally when this question was originally answered on Quora.

Thank you for asking this question Lee Tok.

It always helps us when we answer a deep, important question like this one for someone else.

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Sorry, we didn't mean to promote reading in manner meant to encourage you to read our other work, but we did want to offer you some of our other opinions and suggestions for dealing with depression and healing...

You may like to follow up this answer with any of the following:

Gharvey's Articles...

- [A Healing Spiral for Personal Wellbeing](#)
- [A Healing Spiral for Psychological Wellbeing](#)

our articles are signed with our pen-name, Greg Gourdian...

Gharvey's Quora Answers to...

- [Why do people suffer?](#)
- [How do you deal with never having a sense of belonging?](#)
- [Do people diagnosed with depression feel that they're in another reality or alone in the current one?](#)
- [Why does people in some places think that the depressed people are more deep and philosophical than others?](#)
- [I'm almost 19, and I've been depressed for 6 years. I don't feel like a real person. Is there anything I can do, or should I just call it quits?](#)
- [I'm done with life. I'm not even able to get help from a therapist or a psychiatrist. If in this state I kill myself, will I be considered a coward?](#)

...

cheerio!

(or not, if you prefer)

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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:

Gharvey, 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; Gharvey holds no degrees of any sort.

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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.