

23 DRUG-FREE WAYS TO DUMP DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

Dr. Mooney wrote: "every one of these tips has worked for someone. With time and experience, you will know which work best for you. Most of these ideas can help with **DEPRESSION (D)** and **ANXIETY (A)**—though a few are best for one or the other. Of course, when depression, anxiety, or any other emotion gets out of hand and interferes with your functioning, it's time to seek professional help."

1. **GO TO A MEETING.** GET OUT to a support group meeting (i.e., grief group, AA, NA, NAMI—National Assoc. of Mental Illness, church group, etc.)—especially if you don't feel like going. You become what you do. It's an act of faith, and it works. **(D&A)**
2. **GET YOUR FEELINGS OUT.** Call or talk with someone you trust. Talk about your feelings or your problems, specifically and honestly. Sharing the load makes it lighter. Try listening to positive recorded messages (via *podcasts, YouTube, CDs, websites*, etc.).
3. **GET UP AND DO SOMETHING.** The urge to crawl into bed and hibernate is typical during depression. Don't give in to it. Do something positive, preferably with someone you like (i.e., play a game, share a book, ...)
4. **LEARN FROM OTHERS.** Read material and books about your condition. Even if alcoholism is not your problem, AA literature is always positive. Get a lift from other people's experiences by reading biographies and positive testimonies. Read spiritual literature (it doesn't matter what faith) – try the all-time bestseller, the Bible. **(D&A)**
5. **BE WITH OTHERS.** Positive company beats misery. Avoid being alone as much as possible. **(D)**
6. **DO FOR OTHERS.** Stop thinking about yourself and do something for someone else. Write a poem for your sister's birthday; clean your roommate's side of the house as well; talk to someone who looks down; share positive quotes with someone else; mail a joke to a friend, etc.
7. **MAKE A CHECKLIST.** Are you taking care of yourself? Eating meals (not too many, not too few); daily exercise (not too much, not too little); sleeping well (not too little, not too much); reading daily devotions; keeping a nightly journal; etc.
8. **MAKE A GRATITUDE LIST.** Be thankful for what you have rather than wishing for what you could have had. Make a list of people who like you, who love you. Count the miracles that have happened to you. Draw up a balance sheet—a personal audit—comparing what you are now with what you were before starting to practice self-care. You may be surprised that you are in better shape. **(D&A)**
9. **MAKE A WORRY LIST.** Include all the things that are bothering you, then cross off all those that don't have to be attended to today. You can worry about those tomorrow. Next to the remaining worries, note what steps you can take to deal with them. Then start dealing. **(D&A)**
10. **TRY DISTRACTION.** To get away from your problems for a little while, divert yourself with something you enjoy—a crossword puzzle, a jigsaw puzzle, a movie, a good book (serious or escapist, whichever relaxes you best), drawing—or a craft. Or tackle something that needs doing—letter writing, house cleaning, grooming yourself. Some people keep a list of tasks that need doing for just such an occasion and get pleasure out of crossing something off.
11. **TRY INSPIRATION.** Listen to soul-stirring music, look out the window at sunset or sunrise (if possible), take a meditation walk, enroll in Bible Study Classes, read recovery literature or other inspirational literature. **(D&A)**



12. **TRY EXERTION.** Go for a walk or jog; shoot some baskets, play volleyball; or do whatever you consider both fun and exercise (pushups, jumping jacks, dance, etc.). **(D&A)**
13. **TRY RELAXATION.** Use relaxation tips or other activities that helps you unwind, such as sports, TV, reading for pleasure, music, hobbies, a shower, a short nap. **(A)**
14. **TRY MEDITATION.** A little mind control can do wonders. See the meditation attachment for how-to. **(A&D)**
15. **TRY SUPPLICATION.** Prayer, especially the Serenity Prayer (see below) can also work wonders. Try to learn the will of your Higher Power, however you interpret it. **(A&D)**
16. **TRY ILLUMINATION.** Try to get sunlight when you can. Being exposed to bright light for several hours during the day, miraculously brings some out of the blues. **(D)**
17. **TRY MANIPULATION.** "Of your diet", that is. Sugar is sometimes at the root of bouts of depression or anxiety. Cutting it out of your diet may lift your mood considerably. **(D&A)**
18. **TRY INVENTION.** Be creative. Draw a picture, compose a melody, write a poem, write a short story (perhaps drawing on your experiences with your emotional struggles, turning something bad into something useful). Try building something, paint, sew, sculpt, cook, etc. **(A&D)**
19. **TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS.** Be kind to yourself, you deserve it. Share something special with someone else. **(D&A)**
20. **GIVE IN.** For one day, stop fighting your depression and give in to it. Say, **"Okay, today I feel like a frog in a bog—I'm going to go to sleep early. When I wake up tomorrow, I am going to feel much better."** Don't, however, give in tomorrow. **(D)**



21. **GIVE OVER.** Turn whatever it is you can't handle over to your Higher Power. **This is not a cop-out, but a way out.** Take an envelope, or box, or container and label it "God Box" or "Higher Power Box" (if God isn't your Higher Power). When you have a problem, write it out on a piece of paper and put it in the envelope or box or container for handling. **(A&D)**

22. **BUT DON'T GIVE UP.** "Remember that today you may feel down, but tomorrow is a new day. These feelings have always passed before, they will this time too. And remember, your attitude does not have to be dependent on your feelings. It can be up even when you're feeling down". **(D)** – *"Keep-On-Keeping-On"*
23. **CALL FOR HELP.** If you're too depressed to do any of the above, seek services to speak with a mental health therapist and/or clergy of your choice. Note: There are many, great telehealth services online. Also, **call or text 988** – a 24-hour Professional & Confidential FREE Lifeline – to **just talk to someone if you need support for emotional distress, drug or alcohol misuse, or suicide prevention.** You can also phone: 1-800-273-8255

Dr. Al J. Mooney, author of **THE RECOVERY BOOK**, graciously gave Coach OhMeDay permission (2014) to use, and copy, materials from his book to assist her clients with mental health issues.

On page 326 of **THE RECOVERY BOOK** (1st edition), Dr. Mooney notes

"Twenty-three Ways to Dump Depression and Anxiety" (without the use of drugs).

THE SERENITY PRAYER



*Grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.*

Handout designed by *Janis Small Omide*, MS, MAC, CSAC, QMHP-A

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