

Derby Depression Club NEWSLETTER

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From the Editor

So another year seems to have flown past, as this is the last edition for 2011. Our membership continues to grow, which may result in our having to find some bigger premises for our meetings. Next year is the Olympics in Britain so lets hope our members achieve bronze, silver and gold medals in their efforts to beat depression.

Lots of things to say, so this Newsletter is another bumper 6 page edition. The committee has been working hard, so we are able to tell you in advance what we are doing in our meetings in the forthcoming months. Next year will also see the 10th anniversary of the Club set up by Heather Hutchin and Jan Aphomas. This Autumn has seen a pleasant Indian Summer so who knows what the Winter will throw at us. Lets hope it's nothing too bad as we want too see you all in the New Year. So with that I will just wish you all the best for the future. Ed.

Club Outing — The Battle of Tamworth

On a lovely Autumnal day the Derby Depression Club lay siege to Tamworth Castle. 17 Members fought valiantly against security guards, but failed to plunder the Saxon Treasure. Luckily no one was arrested, and everyone returned home safely. The day was filled with much feasting and pillaging of the local shops, and despite the use of disguises, some



members were still recognised. Pleasant weather added to the joy of the day. To make a real success for the Club's third annual Outing. Perhaps now might also be a good time to think about an outing for next year. If you have any ideas let the committee know.

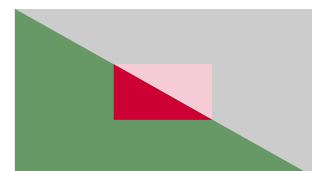
Quiz Mania

It may not be everybody's idea of fun, But strangely everyone seems to enjoy a Quiz. Derby Depression Club is no exception. Monday 5th September saw 5 teams take part in friendly rivalry to compete for the Brain of Derbyshire title. Sadly nerves may have got the better of the Panick Attack team who only scored 21. The Hobgoblins followed with a creditable 27, whilst the Happy Souls achieved 30. Runners up were the Wooden spoons with 31½ (I'm not sure where the ½ came from).

Top of the Class was the Mugs Away team with 33. Unfortunately there were no major prizes to be won but I believe the winning team members were entitled to an extra biscuit with their cup of tea. Perhaps we could encourage some sponsorship for future quizzes

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Our Group's Basic Aims

- Caring
- Sharing
- Supporting
- Helping
- Self-Help
- Understanding
- Non-condemning

Depressed Celebrities

So here is yet another surprise. The tough adventurer seen on the film screen has perhaps been hiding his shy persona by using acting as an alter ego. See what you think?



Harrison Ford. Although credited as "Harrison J. Ford" in *A Time for Killing*, he does not actually have a middle name. The "J" was added to avoid confusion with another Harrison Ford who was an actor at the time.

Born: July 13, 1942, Chicago, Illinois.

Family:

Ford's father, Christopher, was Irish-Catholic and worked in the advertising business. His Russian-Jewish mother, Dorothy, was a homemaker. He has one brother, Terence. While in college he met Mary Marquardt. They married in 1964 and divorced in 1979. They had two sons, Benjamin and Willard. From 1983-2004 he was married to Melissa Mathison, screenwriter of the movie *ET*. They had two children, Malcolm and Georgia. He has been dating actress Calista Flockhart since 2002.

Education:

In 1960, Ford graduated from Maine East High School in Park Ridge, Illinois. He attended Ripon College in Wisconsin, where he was a member of the Sigma Nu Fraternity. Three days from graduation, Ford was expelled after failing a philosophy class in his senior year.

Career:

Ford is best known for his roles as Han Solo in *Star Wars* and as Indiana Jones in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and its sequels. Before he hit it big, however, he was very resourceful in earning a living. He taught himself carpentry using library books and worked as a carpenter. Ford is reported to be the richest actor alive. As of January 2006, the combined domestic box office grosses of his films totalled approximately US \$3.05 billion, with worldwide grossing at approximately US \$5.65 billion.

Depression:

What many of his fans do not realize is that the future Indiana Jones was far from the tough guy as a child. He was shy and often beaten up by his peers. Taking a stance of non-violence he refused to fight back, instead keeping the anger inside himself for years. During college he did not fit in, finding the school too conservative for his tastes. He began exhibiting typical signs of depression, such sleeping long hours, missing classes and struggling to keep up with his studies. He later said of his time at college, "The kindest word to describe my performance was Sloth". Due to his failing a philosophy class during his senior year, he was expelled from school. Notoriously private about his life, Ford has not personally characterized this period of his life as one of depression, but has confessed to being painfully shy until his junior year of college, when he signed up for a drama class and overcame his fears.

Why Vitamins are the new Antidepressants

Multivitamins supplements could be as effective as antidepressant medication in managing anxiety disorders researchers have claimed . The study carried out in the University of Canterbury in New Zealand in to links between Nutrition and anxiety was interrupted by the catastrophic magnitude 7.0 earthquake that hit the southern coast of the country a year ago. The patients all diagnosed previously with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder of which anxiety is a key symptom had their levels of worry ,depression and stress recorded before the trial took place. They were tested again 14 days after the quake. Both the control group (not taking a supplement) and those taking the vitamin supplement suffered similar levels of injury and loss as a result of the natural disaster.



The results showed that anxiety levels in those who had taken the supplement dropped by 76% 2 weeks after the quake, while those who had not taken anything found their anxiety levels improved by only 13%. Last year 39 million prescriptions for antidepressants were handed out to British patients for anxiety and depression. Yet micronutrients, vitamins, minerals and amino acids are increasingly being linked to mental health. Several studies have found that the symptoms of patients with depression, anxiety, stress, and hyperactivity problems improved with either a good diet or after taking supplements,

especially those containing vitamin b found naturally in beef, liver, oats, nuts and avocados. The multivitamin supplement tested in the New Zealand study, contained 16 minerals, as well as 14 vitamins including B vitamins. It is thought vitamin B helps control anxiety because it plays a part in manufacturing Dopamine a chemical produced in the brain that is responsible for mood. Dr Julia Rucklidge who led the study said “more research needs to be carried out to specify how each nutrient plays its role, but the study suggests that those who suffering with anxiety or other mental illnesses may need more nutrients than healthy people”

HOW TO CURE STRESS.....TALK TO YOUR BEST FRIEND

If you’re ever feeling under pressure, it might be an idea to talk to your best friend. Being in their presence can reduce our stress levels according to a study of children.

One of the interesting things about these findings is that it is not just any friend, it’s the best friend said Ryan Adams, the study’s lead author and an assistant professor of paediatrics at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Centre.

A hundred Children aged 10-12 were asked to fill out a diary five times a day for four school days, and rate how they felt about what they had experienced in the past 20 minutes. They were also asked whether they had been alone or with parents, siblings a best friend a boy or girl friend strangers, teachers or another person. They had saliva samples taken to measure for the stress level cortisol. Researchers found that the presence of a best friend more than anyone else buffered the physical effects of a negative experience, so the child produced less cortisol. When no friend was around, the cortisol levels shot up. According to Dr Adams the study suggests that the intimacy between best friends is what is protecting them from the stress of upsetting events and experiences. Dr Karen Majors an educational psychologist with the Barking and Dagenham community educational psychology service said “a child’s close friends can be problematic and lead them astray, but they can also be incredibly positive and supportive”

Friendships serve really important purposes socially, emotionally and cognitively as well as offering a playmate and companion. For example previous research shows if you transfer school with friends you know it bodes well for making new friends. Although the study only looked at children, experts say its findings are likely to apply to adults too.

I wonder if a dog could be a substitute for a best friend ???

Committee member hits the headlines

Co chair Elaine Hickin hit the headlines in the Derby Evening Telegraph when she featured as Titania in the Steps for the Future production of a Midsummer Nights Dream. The group was set up 3 years ago as a performing arts group for people with physical and learning difficulties . This was their first fund raising event, so well done to Elaine and her fellow actors.

Self Help Books could Ruin your life !!!!!

They promise everything—sell in their millions but could ruin your life or that is the warning and opinion of Professor Timothy D Wilson.

Browse the shelves of your local bookshop and you will see hundreds of books that promise to improve you life in any number of ways. Books about the ways to daily joy and lasting fulfilment, how to achieve career success, five simple steps to personal healing and how to stop worrying and improve personal relationships. Small wonder that in the economic downturn, these books sell fast. Whilst UK book sales are down, Self help books for the same period increased 25%.

The fact that there so many self help books on the shelves may be a sign that some of them may not be particularly effective. If one of them really did unlock the secret to everlasting happiness would it not crowd out all the others. There is also the 18 month rule which says that the person most likely to buy a self help book is the person who bought one 18 months earlier. One of the side effects is that with such overblown claims, it can lead to blaming yourself when you don't achieve what you had hoped for.

Professor Wilson says that very little of the advice offered in self help books has been tested scientifically despite the fact that there are ways to do so.

There are many good scientific studies on how to become happier, but self help authors are either unaware or chose not to discuss it. Instead they offer mantras

and remedies designed to make people feel good, but don't actually treat what ails them.. What is the harm if they know what they are getting. Well a better analogy is that getting a self help book is like buying a lottery ticket. For a small investment we hope to get a large return. One book called Whatever you dream of is yours by TV Producer Rhonda Byrne suggests that if you have an accident or did not get that promotion, you were obviously thinking negative thoughts. This is where serious self blame and criticism can take over, leading to a depressed state. Professor Timothy Wilson suggests there are 4 scientifically proven techniques to make you happier.

THE PENNBAKER EXERCISE. —Commit to writing about you problem for at least 15 minutes a day for 3 or 4 consecutive days, preferably at the end of the day without any interruptions. Writing your thoughts and feelings down can really help you analyse, and change you feelings and approach to it.

THE STEP BACK AND ASK WHY APPROACH—This help people get over events from their past that they find particularly upsetting or depressing. Close your eyes and go back to the time of the experience and see the scene in you mind. Now take a few steps back. Move away from the situation to point where you can watch the event unfold from a distance, and see yourself in the event. Repeat the event so you become more detached from the situation. As you continue to watch the distant self, try to understand the feelings of the distant you and look at the underlying causes and reasons.

MAINTAIN A SENSE OF PURPOSE— When things we do seem futile, we should remind ourselves of our most important goals in life and find ways of making progress towards them. Caring for our families is one of the most important goals for many of us and for many of us there are ways we can do it better. Others find meaning and purpose in religion professions, communities and hobbies. Whatever it is that gives you a sense of purpose, we should make time to pursue it. People often forget to follow it when choosing careers or deciding how to spend their leisure time.

THE DO GOOD BE GOOD PRINCIPLE— Some may become pessimistic about losing a job or relationship breakup. But by engaging in volunteer work, we can keep connected to other people, and regain a sense of being valued.

FACT FILE

The first self-help book was published in 1858 and called “Self Help with Illustrations of Character and Conduct”



More Contentious Ideas

Following on from the previous article that Self help books might actually be harmful, Derby Depression Club spent an evening discussing two similar controversial newspaper articles. Half the members opted for “Cheer up depression could be good for you “ by Pat Hagan, while the other half opted for “Why anti-depressants are simply a confidence trick” by Professor Irving Kirsch

Millions of Britons use ‘Happy Pills’ but a leading psychologist claims that taking sugar pills would work just as well. The Placebo effect is known to be a factor the treatment of some conditions as Asthma, Pain and Angina so why not Depression. Using the Freedom of Information act, Professor Kirsch forced the US Food and Drug Administration to release all of the trials the drug companies had run to get the most popular antidepressants approved. More than half the trials showed there was no difference between the drugs and the placebos, but most of these negative trials had been published. When giving his findings to a top psychiatric clinic the author was almost driven out by angry psychiatrists saying this was outrageous, and how could you say that our best drugs don’t work. For from knocking the placebo effect Prof Kirsch advocated its use in conjunction with talking therapies which reduce the chances of relapsing. The problem is doctors are not allowed to lie to their patients about medication. The best way for the placebo to work is for the patient to have a good relationship with their doctor. All in all a very thought provoking article.

The second group looked at the article by Pat Hagan who set up the website www.depressioncanbefun.com. She believes that a depressive episode can leave you tougher, more resilient and more creative. Dr Paul Keedwell of Cardiff University says Nobody would choose to have depression, but as it is such a common condition, so why has it not been bred out through evolution. Perhaps we need some mechanism to put the brakes on every now and then to reassess our aims goals and strategies. Recent research in the Netherlands seems to confirm this. Professor Peter Kinderman of the British Psychological Society says mild to moderate depression should not be regarded as a medical complaint, but a normal reaction to life's ups and downs . Pat Hagan outlines her experience of depression but still feels that she has benefited from it. Amongst other things it made her realise that there were reasons for how she felt and that she could ask for help, and there was no shame in what happened to her. Dr Eva Cyhlarova head of Mental Health Foundation cautioned against deliberately allowing depressive symptoms to worsen in the hope of it doing some good.

The jury in the “depression can be good for you” case were unanimous in their verdict concluding that it was not good for you, but the jury in the “antidepressants are a confidence trick” case are still out. If nothing else the articles provided stimulating and thought provoking conversation, and encouraging healthy interaction between members.

In our forthcoming meetings

Monday 31st October—— Claire Haynes, Patient and Public Involvement Manager Derbyshire County Primary Care Trust

Presentation on proposed changes in psychology therapies in Derbyshire.

Monday 14th November —— Kirsten, Kingsway Mental Health Research Unit

Compassionate mindfulness studies

Monday 28th November —— In house Craft evening. Beware scissor alert First aiders will be on standby. An ideal opportunity to make those festive snowflakes

Monday 12th December —— Fuddle

Monday 19th December —— - Go Round/Coping with Christmas.

20 ways to help beat depression

1. Try not to spend too much time with people who are miserable or pessimistic. Spend as much time as you can with people who are cheerful and optimistic.
2. Try to spend at least an hour every day doing something that you enjoy.
3. Take a break. Go away for a few days if you can. Don't take work with you - and don't tell anyone the telephone number.
4. Let yourself go occasionally. If you feel tense or uptight go outside and smash a tennis ball or football. Or dig the garden!
5. Learn to laugh. It really will make you feel better. Visit a local joke shop or toy shop. Buy books and magazines that you find entertaining and amusing rather than just educational. hire a funny video and invite one or two friends round to enjoy it with you.
6. Visit your local travel agent and pick up a collection of holiday brochures. Look through the illustrations and imagine that you are there - soaking up the sun.
7. Write down your problems. They'll seem less threatening when they're written down. And you'll be able to tackle them more easily too.
8. Don't be afraid to cry. Tears shed for emotional reasons contain special proteins - crying is a useful and constructive way of dealing with sadness. Crying will make you feel rested, calmer and happier.
9. Make sure that you have something to look forward to - an outing, a trip to the cinema or a meeting with friends.
10. Buy yourself a rocking chair. There is evidence to show that rocking backwards and forwards produces calming, relaxing hormones.
11. Try to reduce your exposure to stress and pressure. Look through your regular commitments - see where you can cut back.
12. Build up your self-confidence. People who suffer from depression often lack self-assurance. Write an advertisement for yourself listing all your good qualities. Carry your advert with you and look at it whenever you're feeling down.
13. Talk to your friends. Explain to them how you feel. If they are real friends they will want to listen - and want to help you. If you don't have any friends ring the Samaritans - the telephone number will be in the phone book.
14. Get a friend to give you a massage - it will help remove the tension from your muscles.
15. Go for a brisk walk. take big, deep breaths. You'll feel revitalised.
16. Check your diet. If you're eating irregularly or eating too much stodgy, junk food that can make you feel tired, lethargic and depressed. Make sure that you're eating plenty of fresh fruit. And remember - a little of what you fancy will do you good.
17. Make sure you get a good night's sleep. Do some hard physical exercise - a brisk walk maybe - then soak in a hot bath for 15 minutes. Get into bed with a good book. Or a partner you love. (Sex is a real antidote to mild depression).
18. Take up a new hobby - maybe something that you've always wanted to try. If you can't think of anything you want to try pop into your local library - you'll soon get some ideas.
19. Try to decide what is making you feel depressed. If you can change things do so. If you can't find an explanation talk to your doctor.
20. Have you got your priorities right? Make a list of the five most important things in your life. Do you spend enough time on them?

This is a really good list. It may be a bit much to try all these things a once, but just try 3 or 4, and perhaps see which ones work best for You.

Today's quote - "Being happy doesn't mean that everything is perfect. It means that you've decided to look beyond the imperfections."

I know it's a way off yet, but all the best for the New Year from Derby Depression Club

FUTURE DATES

14th November 2011

28th November 2011

12th December 2011

19th December 2011

9th January 2012

23rd January 2012

Editorial Note Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Derby Depression Club or the Depression Alliance