

Impact of Emotions On Your Health, Drive, and More

Some people need proof that self-care is critical... Let's start by talking about how emotions affect everything.

Come again?! Your emotions control and influence everything from your health and your sense of wellbeing, to your motivation, focus, success, and even physical strength.

If this sounds like a whole lot of nonsense, then consider what emotions really are: they are neurotransmitters and hormones. What many people don't realize about neurotransmitters and hormones is that they have a huge range of different roles in the body that go far beyond simply affecting our mood. That is to say that when you change your mood, you also change many other things.

For example, did you know that norepinephrine (a neurotransmitter with much in common with the hormone adrenaline) can increase your physical strength? Hence, when you are "amped up" in the gym, you can lift more!

Likewise, if you have high cortisol (the stress hormone), then you will be more likely to store fat, you will have more anxious thoughts, you will struggle to sleep, and you will even degrade your muscle? Worse, cortisol can actually direct blood away from your immune system and digestive system, which is why chronic stress can lead to so many health issues over time. This same process is useful of course if you are in a life or death situation!

Hormones and neurotransmitters regulate our appetite, they control our sleep-wake cycle, and they impact on our ability to store memories. They can even increase or decrease our perception of pain! Did you know for instance, that serotonin is a natural painkiller? Whereas cortisol makes it much

higher?

There are no good and bad hormones or neurotransmitters. That is not the point here!

The point is that if you can take control of your emotions, then you can take control of your entire body and system. As a result, you can be calmer, happier, stronger, healthier, and more resilient against illness. And that is all pretty amazing really when you think about it.

And THIS is why self-care really matters. Because if you don't look after your well-being, it's more than just your mood that is going to suffer. Learn to control your mood and you can perform your best, you can combat feelings of pain and lethargy, and you can feel amazing doing it!

So let's consider ways to turn around a bad mood...

Being in a bad mood is often taken lightly and can be seen as something of a joke. You may have teased a friend or relative for 'getting out the wrong side of bed' or 'being a bit moody' and generally we don't consider this to be a big deal. Sometimes though, being in a bad mood can be a serious problem if it happens often or is consistent. Not only can being in a poor mood prevent you from enjoying yourself, it can also lead to severe depression (or be a symptom of depression or stress), cause you to make bad decisions, and even cause you to drive your friends and loved ones away.

When a bad mood is severe, or when it emerges a little too often, it becomes a serious problem and you need to do something about it.

Here are some ideas of how to improve a bad mood:

Let it Go

There are a lot of articles and books out there advising catharsis when you're in a bad mood. 'Vent your anger' they

recommend, 'by punching a punch bag or screaming into a pillow.' Unfortunately, there is one small problem with this advice – it's unfounded. Studies have shown repeatedly that punching a punch bag or 'venting' anger in any other way will achieve nothing and in fact only make you angrier and for longer. The better way to deal with anger is to make a conscious decision to 'let it go' – because after all you're not going to help anyone (especially yourself) by continually focusing on the same issue. Likewise if you're very upset, make the conscious decision not to wallow.

Be Incongruent

In other words do something that is incompatible with being in a bad mood. Watch a funny film, sing a happy song, or otherwise act in a way that doesn't sit well with being angry or depressed. This can actually become a self-fulfilling prophecy: you act happy and suddenly you start to become happier. Even just smiling can help to improve your mood due to a process known as 'facial feedback.' It sounds awkward at first, but try it then next time you are down and see if it works!

Go Incremental

You need to actually convince yourself to listen to that happy music if it's going to have any effect. This can be tricky seeing as your bad mood will be clouding your judgement and will be affecting what you want to do. The solution is to be incremental – to listen to gradually more upbeat music, or to watch gradually more upbeat programs (try googling 'funny videos'). Doing this you will be able to 'ease' yourself into a better mood and it won't seem quite so off-putting.

In whatever way you can, try to leave the bad mood in the past, and focus on the good that already exists in your life. It can be a challenge, but it is so important to your health to keep your own spirits lifted (and not rely on others to lift them for you).

Please share your recommended bad-mood buster method in the comments below.