



## THE “UMBRELLA EFFECTS” OF SOME TYPES OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

By Yvonne Thomas, Ph.D.

Many people have experienced some level of depression and/or anxiety at some point in their lives. Depression and anxiety can be traced to different reasons. Sometimes, a person is born with a chemical imbalance which can cause depression and/or anxiety. If troublesome enough, one may be prescribed some type of anti-depressant or anti-anxiety medication to regulate and balance the person's moods.

However, many other people suffer from a non-physiological form of depression and/or anxiety. These types of depression and anxiety frequently can originate from the person experiencing current or past upsetting events and/or people. In reaction to these difficult events and/or people, the person may (consciously or subconsciously) ignore and try to bury his or her feelings. By repressing one's feelings either long enough or by using much energy to do so, these feelings can collect and grow bigger and bigger, culminating in depression and/or anxiety. What is really interesting and IMPORTANT to note about the kinds of depression and anxiety NOT due to a chemical imbalance is that they are often the SYMPTOMS that camouflage the REAL problem. Non-chemical-imbalance types of depression and anxiety, in fact, often can act as signals that there are OTHER feelings going on underneath that one is not sufficiently, if at all, dealing with, and of which may be actually unaware.

It is ESSENTIAL that a person recognizes if he or she is depressed or anxious since these “umbrella”-like feelings can limit, prohibit, and cause much discomfort to that person, while simultaneously preventing the person from seeing and, therefore, dealing with his or her actual problems and the feelings attached to them. Thus, not noticing or working through one's depression and/or anxiety can DOUBLY hurt a person.

Some signs that a person is experiencing depression can include low self-esteem, under-sleeping and/or over-sleeping, under-eating and/or over-eating, having low energy or feeling fatigued, a lack of interest and/or pleasure in most or all activities, poor concentration, difficulty making decisions, and feelings of depression. Some signs that a person is experiencing anxiety can also include under-sleeping and/or over-sleeping, and under-eating and/or over-eating, along with muscle tension, feeling irritable, and feeling restless, keyed up, or on edge.

If a person recognizes that he or she is having some depression and/or anxiety, there are several things one can do to actually use the depression and/or anxiety to HELP, rather than hide from, oneself. First, one can recognize that “knowledge is power,” and welcome the signal from the depression and/or anxiety that something else is going on UNDERNEATH that truly needs to be identified and then dealt with. As scary as it can be for people to become aware that they have some unresolved, uncomfortable experiences and associated feelings that need to be worked through, it is even MORE SCARY to hide behind a cloak of ongoing depression and/or anxiety and suffer the symptoms from either or both of these. With the knowledge that the REAL ISSUES are hidden under the depression and/or anxiety, one can try to pinpoint what past and/or present areas of his or her life may be causing the discomfort or upset. Next, the person can try to name any feelings he or she has in reaction to the identified area. Often, these will include some of the feelings that have been masked by the depression and/or anxiety which should be dealt with so one can move on and not “need” further depression or anxiety to cover things up. One needs to FEEL the feelings and adequately express them through modes including journaling, talking to supportive people in one's life, etc. For further assistance in dealing with depression and/or anxiety, talking to a Psychologist trained in these areas can be very liberating.

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