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### **SOME INTERESTING POINTS ABOUT DEPRESSION**

Many of those who sought help from me for depression came as a “point of last resort” either because previous therapies were not effective or they were against being medicated in order to treat their symptoms. Many people wanted to take control of their symptoms and their lives while their reliance on medication became just another problem to deal with. Meds may often mask symptoms leaving their sources untouched.

Indeed there are some depressive reactions with a chemical imbalance for which medication is necessary. And there are cases that can only respond to medication intervention and not to a psychotherapeutic approach. I treated one woman for suicidal tendencies and severe depression who was placed on medication upon my request but would not work on her personal or marital issues. She admitted that if she became healthy, her husband would probably leave her and she would rather have remained in a depressed state. I also found a number of cases in which medication alone was not the answer but either psychotherapy or a combination of psychotherapy and medication were the preferred courses of treatment.

I could not have imagined the hype that has been occurring over recent years over pharmaceutical companies vying for sales of various psychotropic drugs such as anti-anxiety and depression medications on TV. This kind of approach adds to the fantasy that a pill can fix everything. Indeed, it cannot! There still is and always will be the need for individuals to change the patterns which led to the conditions and/or symptoms being experienced. My primary purpose as a consultant is to instruct people as to the nature of particular patterns and how to change them. However it should be noted here that not everyone is motivated, capable or chooses to work on their patterns.

Depression, in particular, has some “hidden agenda” associated with the disease. Stephen Ilardi, Ph.D., Associate Professor of psychology at the University of Kansas associates depression with the way we live our lives. He cites our “sedentary, socially isolated, indoor, sleep-deprived, poorly nourished lifestyle” as major sources of depression and points out that in the course of human evolution. if people were as vulnerable to depressive illness as 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans, we would be extinct by now.

The most interesting part of his thesis is this: we think more than we do. I have always stressed the need for clients to distinguish between their ***thinking and their doing*** as being an essential part of their becoming healthy both in dealing with depression as well as in its prevention. Our minds and bodies were meant to be ACTIVE and FUNCTIONAL. Instead, we have become lazy, highly stressed and relatively non-functional in our day-to-day routine. Case in point: the obesity crisis. Many people will talk the talk but not walk the walk.

People need people, stimulation, conversation, activity, movement and to feed their bodies the nutrients that it needs to be healthy. Being unable to afford a gym membership or trainer doesn't preclude that we can't walk twenty minutes once a day at a brisk pace. Our bellies would be just as full if we ate healthy foods as it does eating fatty foods. Watching TV with the people we love would be better served with shutting off the TV and communicating and sharing our lives with them. In simple words, if you're not in control of your life, you'll become depressed. Changing those patterns can be as important as taking antidepressants...perhaps even more so.

So the solution to the problem of depression may be a patient's need to take medication but it must also be stressed that the factors I've pointed out need to be realized as well. I understand that lethargy and a tendency to remain sedentary both physically and emotionally are natural consequences of depression. Allowing those consequences to continue, however, will only curtail successful treatment. Changing them tends to insure that the process of treatment will be successful both in emerging from the depressive pattern as well as preventing its return. Another major factor that I have found to be prevalent in the treatment of depression is repressed anger or anger that we may tend to internalize and not express. This topic will earn its own column in future writings.

### **A Brief Biographical Sketch**

*After an over 40 year career as a professional psychotherapist and Director of The Sports Stress Clinic in Amherst, NY, Charles Bonasera came to Florida and decided to use the benefits of his previous professional experiences in his new roles of Consultant in Life Management and Business Coaching as well as his expertise as a Motivational Speaker. He once again became involved with athletes in different sports training them with his techniques to help them develop and maintain focus as well as staying in their zone. Much of his training methods are derived from the CD collection he developed under the heading of WIN-WIN SECRETS as the President of Personal Identity Controls. This collection consists of thirty-six programs dealing with vital issues in the management of stress.*

*Another role that he adopted to add to his professional career was that of Author. Early in the 1980's he wrote Guide to a Life Management Process which he has re-written as a workbook to successfully help people manage their stress which includes his own Working Model. As a result in his interest in golf and realizing that it was*

*essentially a “mind game”, he wrote The Mental Side of Golf which can benefit the beginner as well as professionals playing the game of golf.*

*He then compiled over five-hundred sayings that he had developed in the course of his professional career as stimuli to help people change patterns in their lives entitled How to Stay Well and Live Life to the Fullest. This was followed by a book documenting case studies around disruptive life patterns including ways to change them under the name of How in the Hell Did This Happen to Me? Both his personal involvement in sports as a participant, coach, manager and in his role in officiating, inspired him to write a primer for parents and coaches entitled The Legend of Little League.*

*Charles invites you to view his website at [www.charlesmbonasera.com](http://www.charlesmbonasera.com) as well as to write with your comments and questions to his e-mail address ([charles@charlesmbonasera.com](mailto:charles@charlesmbonasera.com)). He would also be very happy to communicate with his readers by telephone should they desire. His professional motto is “seeking alternative methods to happiness” and wishes those touched by his words to practice the three secrets to a happy life: “enjoy life and enjoy it thoroughly ... develop and maintain a sense of humor ... bring as much love into your life as possible.*