

Antidote to Depression: Simple Pleasures

It is important to plan pleasurable activities into our daily lives. They not only make us happier, they actually heal our bodies and protect us from the wear-and-tear of stress and depression. Even the anticipation of participating in some activity that we enjoy begins the healing and rejuvenating process. Planning and doing pleasurable activities produces positive physical and emotional states that last beyond the moment. By adopting a practice of incorporating simple pleasures into our daily lives we create our own antidote to depression, and protect ourselves from burning-out. Doing simple, joyful, nourishing, and replenishing activities reminds us of our inherent self-worth, and moves us beyond the grind of our responsibilities. Take a few moments to complete the exercise below and identify enjoyable activities that you can do in your current state of health and well-being

List 5 things you enjoy that are free or easily accessible without paying (e.g., a television show you enjoy, a walk in the woods behind your home).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

List 5 things you enjoy that are easily affordable once or twice per week and/or fairly easily accessible (e.g., yoga class, trip to the library, new magazine).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

List 5 things that you enjoy that are more expensive, but you could plan and enjoy them occasionally (e.g., music concert, meal out).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Begin by adding one thing into your life every day or two, and add more and more until you are doing pleasant activities daily. Be flexible and creative with your list so that you have variety. Change your activities, and add to your list occasionally, so that the pleasant activities do not become routine and lose the ability to cheer you up. Notice how having the discipline of doing pleasant activities improves your mood, improves your self-esteem, and increases your optimism.