

This article was published in Inner Realm magazine in November, 1999. The following is just an excerpt from the complete article. To read the complete article, visit their website at [www.innerrealm.com](http://www.innerrealm.com) (no longer an active link, sorry).

## Depression – What is it and why is it here?

I recently received this letter from a reader. Depression is a disease that is plaguing this country. I felt this was the perfect opportunity to address this subject. We printed the readers letter and asked several therapists to address the letter. We also asked Cathy Bormes, the author of the article the reader is addressing to reply. Included at the end are two excerpts from books with two additional perspectives on depression. One is scientific from *Molecules of Emotion* from Dr. Candace Pert and the other is more spiritual from *Interview with an Angel* written by Stevan Thayer & Linda Sue Nathanson, PhD. I wanted to address with a very whole picture in mind. Harvard recently released a study that 1/2 hour of exercise daily replaced anti-depressant drugs for patients.

To our reader, LA. please keep in mind that there is help out there in all shapes and sizes. We all wish you well. Thank you for your letter.

**Dear Ms. DeGraw:**

**How could you publish such a shallow article in "Inner Realm?"**

**" Please don't get mad", my daughter wrote in her latest letter...but how could I possibly get mad at her? Considering the potential path she could have taken - drugs, depression, pregnancy..."**

**So, according to the author, depression is a path one chooses to TAKE. I have suffered from depression for many years, and continue to suffer. Depression is not a path I chose or choose "to take." No one chooses this path. Depression is a debilitating disease and should never be taken lightly, as it seems to be in this article.**

**I believe the author has some issues of her own -women's weight training groups, one-on-one fitness training, and an "eight-week" health educational program for women? Women**

**and men should love themselves for who they are, not what size they wear or how many wrinkles they have, and everything else will fall into place (Le., an all-around, life-long healthy lifestyle).**

**Why don't Ms. Bormes and her arsenal of paints, creams and cover-ups take the path into instructing aerobics?**

**Reader, L.A.**

### **FROM CHARLES HELLER**

**Depression is an emotional and mental condition that in its most severe form can be fatal. In its less severe manifestation, sometimes referred to as dysthymia; it can rob the person of pleasurable days ...stealing years away one day at a time. Most human beings experience some form of a depressive state several times in their life. These could occur secondary to a great loss, a grief reaction, a trauma, crisis or other kind of situational cause. Although depression caused by a situation could be transitory, it could also last for years if not adequately diagnosed and treated. Another kind of depression is called endogenous depression. This form of depression has a physiological or biological cause. It tends to not be situationally caused and tends to cause many years of depressive symptoms.**

**Depression regularly accompanies serious physical illness and can be considered a normal response to the misfortunes of life. Nevertheless, it is useful to contrast pathologic depression with normal disappointment, sadness and grief. Mild depression manifests itself largely by a loss of pleasurable interest in the usual affairs of life. Spontaneity is gone. Everything requires extra effort and provides less gratification than before. One does not feel physically ill but neither does one feel comfortable and well. Fatigue is excessive. Realistic worries and ordinary bodily discomforts are prominent in awareness, while encouraging memories, hope and plans are hard to keep in mind. A person with a mild depression such as this does his or her work, meets his obligations, and appears normal to acquaintances. To himself and his intimates, however, something has changed. In a more severe depression the patient is despondent or feels physically ill (or both). He or she is gloomy, hopeless, helpless and bereft of self-esteem.**

Thinking, speech and movements may be slowed (psychomotor retardation) or he may be tense, hyper- and restless. The agitated depressed patient is likely to complain endlessly about aches and pains, fatigue, feelings of unworthiness or guilty fears. If the depression is of a psychotic severity, the patient may actually believe things are as bad as he or she feels they are and he may have elaborate delusions often hypochondriacal in nature. The diagnosis of depression is easy when the patient understands that he or she is despondent and talks freely. The difficulty occurs when the patient's symptoms are predominantly physical or he is uncommunicative. There are also "masked" or "smiling depressions" that make diagnosis difficult.

The treatment for depression depends upon its severity and cause. Evaluation must be made by a competent, licensed professional, an expert in human behavior such as a Psychologist, A Psychiatrist or Clinical Social Worker. Usually psychotherapy is used to uncover the reasons for the depression and resolve them. There are also many beneficial medications, anti-depressive medications that can be successfully used to reduce symptoms. There are many types of treatment plans that can be implemented once a person begins the road to recovery. The problem usually becomes more severe when the person refuses treatment or is in denial. Suicide can occur as well as other self-destructive impulsive behaviors. However, depression can be successfully treated and there have positive advances in recent years both in psychotherapeutic techniques and psychopharmacological medications.

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## **EXCERPT FROM "INTERVIEW WITH AN ANGEL"**

By Stevan J. Thayer & Linda Sue Nathanson, Ph.D.

Published by Edin Books, Inc. 1997 ISBN 1-887010-04-1

**Linda:** What are the consequences of not paying attention to warning signs that one is off his life path?

**Ariel:** You have a wonderful word for this phenomenon. You have labeled it hell. Myriad results take place when, in essence, the ego fights the natural call of the divine, or it hears the instinct and knows the heart's desire but does not follow it. It is much akin to, in our physical world, trying to block a mighty river. You may succeed for some time, but not without much effort, and ultimately, if you are successful, then everything downstream becomes parched and withers. If you do not follow the flow and the harmony of your life, constantly seeking to fill your heart to overflowing and close to the divine, then many emotions that stem from fear will become predominant. These include feelings of jealousy, competition, guilt, shame, anger, bitterness, apathy and depression. The list is too numerous to describe, but as you hear these words, you can understand this phenomenon. If the flow of your life is held back long enough, it becomes like blocking the river and denying what is downstream its source of nourishment. What is downstream will wither. Similarly, the human body and the human spirit will wither. Despondency, despair, even distress and disease can occur.