



## Depression: Simple Soothers to Lift Your Spirits!

by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

### Stuck in a Rut? Shift Gears!

Take a brisk walk, vary your route, find 6 things along the way that make you laugh.

- Try Tai Chi, Reflexology, Reiki, or a new recipe.
- Get a free makeover in a department store.
- Rent a movie you'd never have picked before.
- Buy a pet.
- Plan a trip.
- Tense day? Shake it up! Pop in some oldies and sing really loud!

### Overwhelmed? Start Small...

- House a mess? Piles to file? Ask for help. Organize just one drawer.
- Work 30 minutes on/30 minutes off.
- Pay 3 bills at a time or weekly, but avoid the "monthly mountain."
- List your successes. Enjoy a healthy reward for your efforts!
- Make a "To Do" list of no more than 5 tasks. Keep goals manageable.

### Overworked? Overwhelmed?

- Take a lunch break every single day. Go for a walk. Feed the ducks. (*Ducks need lunch too!*)
- External clutter can increase internal stress. Organize your desk. File just one pile at a time.
- Take a mini-break every hour. No excuses.
- Keep water handy. Dehydration stresses the whole system.
- Write in your journal for 10 minutes.
- Throughout each day, ask yourself "*What is the one next right thing I need to do now?*" Don't think about tomorrow, or even 2:00 this afternoon. Just do one "next right thing." You will see your day unfold as you do one thing after another, calmed by staying in the moment.
- End your day with a steaming shower and a quiet "No-TV" evening.

### Looking for the Secret to Happiness? (*Hint: It's in the Little Things*)

- Pick out three nice cards. Send them to three people for no particular occasion.
- Smile at strangers. (*Keep trying. Somebody will smile back.*)
- Play with a baby. Go to a pet store and watch the puppies.
- Life is too short to waste it feeling angry. Make up with someone. If forgiveness is in order, find some.

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**Spirits Need a Lift? Make a "Thrills" List!**

- Get yourself a beautiful journal, a special pen and start a "Thrills" List - from shooting stars to simple pleasures.
- List every thrill you've ever had or hope to have.
- The clearer we are about our desires, the sooner we can take steps that might just bring them closer.
- Update weekly, and create a couple of new thrills!

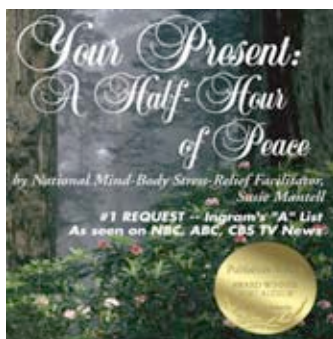
**Not Having Enough Fun? Take Time for Recreation**

- Set aside time each week to "re-create." Do something utterly engaging that makes you feel alive and whole.
- Take Yoga or dance classes. Play bridge, listen to music, or make some!
- Stumped? Ask friends what they do for fun.

**Bonus**

An stunningly simple way to boost your spirits is to smile to yourself! You don't have to mean it. You don't even have to be smiling at anybody else. For some reason, people who smile throughout their day, even despite feeling sad at the time, report that they experience a mood lift. Smiling sends a message to the brain that all is well. Try smiling as the rule more than the exception. See what you discover. You will likely need to remind yourself repeatedly at first, but if it becomes second nature to maintain a soft, easy smile, you may notice a real lift to your spirits. [I know! Simple, yet effective!]

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## END OF THIS TIP##