

Do You Isolate During Depression?

By Nicole Lyons



“If you know someone who’s depressed, please resolve never to ask them why. Depression isn’t a straightforward response to a bad situation; depression just is, like the weather.

Try to understand the blackness, lethargy, hopelessness, and loneliness they’re going through. Be there for them when they come through the other side. It’s hard to be a friend to someone who’s depressed, but it is one of the kindest, noblest, and best things you will ever do.”

— Stephen Fry

Isolating when depression hits is a tool that many of us use for all sorts of different reasons. I isolate not only because when I’m depressed I sometimes find it exhausting to be around others, but also because I don’t want my dark cloud looming over everyone else.

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It can be very difficult to be supportive when a loved one is depressed, but it is also very difficult to be supportive to others when you are going through your own depression.

The other day I received a text message from a dear friend of mine who was very hurt that I had let her down again. We haven't spoken in awhile and when I tend to go through depression I isolate. I don't like to bring others into my pit of sludge for fear of bringing them down as well. This particular friend, who is amazing, has repeatedly told me that she wants to be there for me when I'm down, and I couldn't ask for a better friend, but her text message highlighted all of the ways I was failing her while trying to shield her from my less than rosy moods.

Sometimes depression is selfish, and at that very moment I felt horrible, which was not her intention at all, but this is how my self-talk can run on a loop. I told myself that I'm an awful friend, that I needed to suck up my sadness in order to be there for her and that by failing to do so I was undeserving of her friendship. All of those things were untruths but at that time it set me off, and I believed what I had told myself.

Isolating during depression can make it extremely difficult to be there for others when they need you for support, but if just try a little harder (do not read "*pull up the bootstraps*," because that is **NOT** what I'm saying) maybe focusing on being a friend to someone else will help us break out of that place of isolation. I don't know for certain, everyone is different. But maybe, if you have a great friend who wants to be there for you in your time of isolation and depression, just maybe if you let them in, they'll be supportive, help you get through, and be thankful that they could be that shoulder for you.

Isolating during depression, for whatever reasons we do it, may not be the best way to treat our depression. When we say we want others to understand, cutting them off at the knees when they want to help us is kind of infuriating to them, I would imagine. That has to be not only exasperating but also really difficult to live with when those special friends just want to help.

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There is no magic cure for us, but there are tools to help us get through, and when people who love us are trying their hardest to help us, cutting them off serves to do nothing but create an even bigger gap between understanding, education and support. We must keep those who love and support us in the loop, and I am the first to admit that I have been terrible at doing this.

To My Dear Friend,

Thank you for always being there for me. I promise that not only will I try harder, but I will also do my very best to be there for you as well. You have no idea what your words have done for me. I am grateful for you. Thank you.

Nicole

Self help tips for depression

- Reach out to supportive family and friends
- Get moving. I know it's hard but try to get out of bed and do something productive.
- Stop beating yourself up for not being at your best
- Talk to yourself the way you would talk to someone you love and support. End that cycle of negative self talk.
- Feed your mind and your body. Read a good book and take care of yourself with good healthy foods.
- Journal your thoughts. Keeping a mood journal is a great idea.

You can connect with Nicole on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [The Lithium Chronicles](#) which is her personal blog.

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