

# Personal Growth Concepts™

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## Q&A Forum - Review

### Dealing with Mother's Depression

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Hello, list members,

This week we welcome Sally to our list. We now have 118 members. The list has been quiet because I have not had any questions to respond to. I have also been busy getting Roseann trained with our smoking cessation program (she is now ready to go) and with a Christian retreat that I attended April 26-April 28th. I welcome your questions and input for q&a and how we might better serve you or your needs.

If you haven't visited our website lately, I suggest a return visit soon. Our web page is: <http://www.personalgrowthconcepts.com> Mike, our webmaster has been busy. We have a new spot for forms and our client intake form is there, as well as forms that will help our counseling and coaching clients stay focused between sessions and get ready for our next session. We hope to soon have our QuitSmart Smoking Cessation intake form there as well. If you are visual, then, check out "our team." We have recently added Roseann's picture (she is advocating for a better one) and a picture of our administrative support team. If there are any other changes you want to suggest, send them directly to Mike, our webmaster, from the site, or to me & I will pass them on.

And now, onto the question, answer, quote and, with a special thank you to Barbara and Patty, our 2 bonuses. Peace, John

**Q:** Hello John, I'm in a really big dilemma with my mother..wow, where do I start? My mother has been depressed for most of her life and comes from a line of depression in the family, even passing to my brother and I. My brother and I have gotten help over the years and have come to terms with it and know how to overcome it. Now my mother has in the past had therapy and was on medication. She has since stopped all therapy and medication stating that she is fine and doesn't need help anymore. WELL, she has become more argumentive, she will not listen to anyone's opinion,(only hers is right), she has become more degrading to the family and throws a lot of guilt trips that are really hard to overcome and you can never have a NORMAL conversation with her because she throws her digs in to get you all fired up for battle..

Now to my question. How in the world to I get the horse to drink and what can I do for myself to be less defensive (the silent treatment doesn't work)? My brother and I love our mother very much but are really starting to dislike my mother also. Is it me or my mother..or both? Thank you for your time.

**A:** First off, congratulations to you and your brother for getting the help you need. Second, be mindful that depression may be a symptom of a variety of other conditions, like thyroid problems, anemia, menopause, mononucleosis, etc, etc etc. Have you considered talking to your mother's physician confidentially? Oftentimes, those with depression do not see their physician regularly, or tell them that things are ok. Next, just because she drives up in the guilt bus, doesn't mean you have to get on. You can wait for a different bus that will take you where you want to go --- she will probably not be the driver; hopefully you will be. It would be helpful for you to remember that the guilt trips she runs are based in her emotional pain and unwillingness to accept responsibility for herself (perhaps a side effect of the depression). By distancing your self from her, the impact will be lessened. Limit the amount of time you spend with her on the phone and/or in person. If she asks, you could tell her that it pains you too much to see her this depressed and so unwilling to try to make a change. If her guilt trips and/or poor me s start up, leave. I believe that you may have been too focused on her and not enough on how you are being affected by it. Your first need is to protect your self --- detachment/distance helps. Imagining you have a teflon coat on may also help --- whatever she throws at you, imagine it hitting the coat and sliding off. It is not yours so, please, do not take it in.

I am a firm believer that you may be able to lead a horse to water but you can not make him drink. However, if there is water around, they might realize how thirsty they are. You may want to leave articles or pamphlets about depression around. I would encourage you to be less defensive (teflon coat will help) and more proactive on your own behalf. Try to keep looking at your self and what you need to do to stay ok with your self and your family. Create and rely on a healthy support system for your self. Also, pray for her. I know it is particularly tough with Mother's Day coming up but make sure you are making the decisions based on your logic, not based on some need to avoid guilt or based solely upon what she wants. Please keep me posted. I wish you peace in who you are and in all that you do. - John

**Quote:** "Don't worry about anything. Worrying never solved anything. All it does is distort your mind." -- Milton Garland

A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and backed the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown.

The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, "What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing? That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?"

The young boy was apologetic. "Please, mister...please, I'm sorry...I didn't know what else to do," He pleaded. "I threw the brick

because no one else would stop..." With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth pointed to a spot just around a parked car. "It's my brother," he said. "He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up." Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me."

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out his fancy handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts. A quick look told him everything was going to be okay.

"Thank you and may God bless you," the grateful child told the stranger.

Too shook up for words, the man simply watched the boy push his wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home. It was a long, slow walk back to the Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent there to remind him of this message "Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!" God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at us. It's our choice.

### Precious Marbles

The older I get, the more I enjoy Saturday mornings. Perhaps it's the quiet solitude that comes with being the first to rise, or maybe it's the unbounded joy of not having to be at work. Either way, the first few hours of a Saturday morning are most enjoyable.

A few weeks ago, I was shuffling toward the kitchen with a steaming cup of coffee in one hand and the morning paper in the other. What began as a typical Saturday morning turned into one of those lessons that life seems to hand you from time to time. Let me tell you about it.

I turned the volume up on my radio in order to listen to a Saturday morning talk show. I heard an older sounding chap with a golden voice. You know the kind, he sounded like he should be in the broadcasting business himself. He was talking about "a thousand marbles" to someone named "Tom," I was intrigued and sat down to listen to what he had to say.

"Well, Tom, it sure sounds like you're busy with your job. I'm sure they pay you well but it's a shame you have to be away from home and your family so much. Hard to believe a young fellow should have to work sixty or seventy hours a week to make ends meet. Too bad you missed your daughter's dance recital." He continued, "Let me tell you something Tom, something that has helped me keep a good perspective on my own priorities." And that's when he began to explain his theory of a "thousand marbles."

"You see, I sat down one day and did a little arithmetic. The average person lives about seventy-five years. I know, some live more and some live less, but on average, folks live about seventy-five years. Now then, I multiplied 75 times 52 and I came up with 3,900 which is the number of Saturdays that the average person has in their entire lifetime. Now stick with me Tom, I'm getting to the important part." It took me until I was fifty-five years old to think about all this in any detail," he went on, "and by that time I had lived through over twenty-eight hundred Saturdays. I got to thinking that if I lived to be seventy-five, I only had about a thousand of them left to enjoy." "So I went to a toy store and bought every single marble they had. I ended up having to visit three toy stores to roundup 1000 marbles. I took them home and put them inside of a large, clear plastic container right here in my workshop next to the radio. Every Saturday since then, I have taken one marble out and thrown it away."

"I found that by watching the marbles diminish, I focused more on the really important things in life. There is nothing like watching your time here on this earth run out to help get your priorities straight." Now let me tell you one last thing before I sign-off with you and take my lovely wife out for breakfast. This morning, I took the very last marble out of the container. I figure if I make it until next Saturday then God has blessed me with a little extra time to be with my loved ones.

"It was nice to talk to you Tom, I hope you spend more time with your loved ones, and I hope to meet you again someday. Have a good morning!" You could have heard a pin drop when he finished. Even the show's moderator didn't have anything to say for a few moments. I guess he gave us all a lot to think about.

I had planned to do some work that morning, then go to the gym. Instead, I went upstairs and woke my wife up with a kiss.

"C'mon honey, I'm taking you and the kids to breakfast." "What brought this on?" she asked with a smile. "Oh, nothing special," I said. "It has just been a long time since we spent a Saturday together with the kids. Hey, can we stop at a toy store while we're out? I need to buy some marbles."

**HAVE A GREAT WEEK AND MAY ALL YOUR SATURDAYS BE SPECIAL AND MAY YOU HAVE MANY HAPPY YEARS AFTER YOU LOSE ALL YOUR MARBLES!**

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**We wish you peace in who you are and in all that you do!**