

Informative

Emotional Cycles

Upon reflection, the emotional pattern of my entire life has consisted of cycles. Doctors say that continual cycles of depressive symptoms, like I experience, are one of the determinants of a chemical imbalance. Instead of “normal” bouts of depression, which come and go depending largely on circumstance, my symptoms continually remain. Imagine a circle, and at the top, about the twelve o’clock position, is when life is coasting along quite well. This upswing might last anywhere from a few weeks to a month and a half or so. Then, for no apparent reason, I would head for the three o’clock position of the emotional circle, and for about three to five weeks I would become bogged down with the rigors of life and find everyday challenges difficult to handle. Before long, I would spiral down to the six o’clock position, where severe symptoms of depression might lead to harming others, property destruction, or self-harm in order to alleviate inner turmoil. I would suffer at this lowest point of the cycle for probably a week to ten days.

At this point, Donna would find a way to bring me out of my depressive state and talk me down from the ledges, so to speak. She was good at that. She would calm me and convince me not to hurt or kill myself. She has done this for practically the whole seventeen years we have been together—but more often the last few years. My cycles of imbalance used to be more subtle and take longer to come full circle, but over the years the intensity and frequency has increased. When Donna rescued me from my suicidal state, the floodgate of darkness opened its jaws to regurgitate the poisonous affect from the bowels of my soul. As I headed for the nine o’clock position of the emotional circle, I began to feel cleansed. Donna’s added comfort and longsuffering as she walked me through my personal hell in the midst of the worst phase of depressive symptoms would help me find a reason to go on with life and slowly pull out of what I deemed to be a hopeless slump. This healing time, where Donna offered added nurturing and care, at about the nine o’clock position, would linger for a couple of weeks as I struggled out of my rut until I had climbed to the top of the circle, once again on top of my game. I would find hope and a desire to live. My whole outlook on life would continue to improve and I’d be on top of the world at the twelve o’clock position again.

Sadly, I knew high noon wouldn’t last.

Drowning your sorrows in your beer can literally be a temporary fix and momentarily relieve your anxiety, stress, and depressive symptoms so you can feel a pseudo or counterfeit happiness. Once you feel this temporary relief from what ails you, chances are you'll seek more of the same relief. It's natural to want to feel good.

If drinking is not your thing, highs can come in varying forms, and not all of them have to do with substances like alcohol. Addictions come in many disguises. Sexual addictions, frequent masturbation, video games, body piercing, tattoos, chat rooms, internet surfing, having affairs, extreme exercise, pornography, over or under eating, violence, controlling or manipulating other things or people, gambling, being a workaholic, shopping and spending money you don't have, and so on, are just a few examples of possible addictions. All these types of addictions can bring about neurological highs similar to the ones experienced when ingesting a substance. Addictions are simply short-term fixes causing long term destruction.