

The Throes of the Non-traditional Student

Many college students are not in their early twenties. More and more, college student populations include a large percentage of older students who were engaged in activities that led them to postponing their college education. These students experience stressors similar to those experienced by younger college students such as grades, course overload, and breakups. But in addition they experience some stressors that are also unique i.e. mixing careers, family life and school concurrently. Even though each of these stressors may be manageable alone, when they coexist there may be an overload which may result in illness or disease.

Not only are many non-traditional students working, but many have family responsibilities as well. Questions may arise about what to do with after-work time. Should they work on their term paper, play with their kids or spend time with their spouses? Will the in-laws understand if they don't visit because they're doing school work, etc.

So what takes off the pressure? A very understanding spouse helps. A spouse who can spend a few extra minutes with the kids, take on more than his/her share of the household chores, can provide a shoulder to lean on and an ear to listen can go a long way in intervening between stress and illness for the older college student.

It helps to remember there will be a payoff down the road. If the whole family believes it is worthwhile and is willing to put off immediate pleasures to achieve long-range goals the sacrifice is easier. If the older student has to continually justify the expense of college, or if the family's sacrifice is periodically brought up, the stress associated with guilt will be greater.

Since older students may have all sorts of doubts about their ability to be successful in their studies many counseling programs and support groups are available for these students. The Center for Academic Learning Services help with study skills including effective note taking, active reading skills, test taking, time management and memory improvement all of which are imperative for success in school. The Counseling Center offers a multi-purpose group for older-than-average students as well as several other support groups. The Women's Center in the EMU has a support group for Women In Transition.

Remember you can make college life less stressful if you attend to the stressors rather than ignoring them.

by Robbie Ross

Food, Emotions, and Compulsive Eating

Do you often hide out in your room binging on large amounts of food, barely tasting it, and going way past a reasonable level of fullness? This is the behavior of a compulsive eater. Food abuse can be likened to drug or alcohol abuse in that it is a way to escape. A compulsive eater feels out of control and food may occupy hours of thought. Compulsive eating is finally getting some attention as a serious eating disorder since the effects are harmful mentally and physically, and are damaging to one's self-esteem.

Food abuse really has nothing to do with hunger. For many, food is tied up with many emotions and is used for comfort. Remember when mom gave us a cookie when we were hurt or sad? It's natural for one to bring this into adulthood and to care for ourselves and assuage our pain. This can be linked to many emotions such as sadness, depression, loneliness, stress, and even happiness. Compulsive eating becomes a way to deal with emotions.

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It is essential to realize that dieting and self-punishment are not going to help because they avoid the psychological issue. Food abuse is a continuous cycle where one binges one day and feels extreme guilt the next.

It is possible to overcome this compulsive behavior. It's important to learn what emotions trigger a binge. Keeping a food diary is a good way to record it. Next, the person needs to allow themselves to feel and express the emotions they are suppressing with food and learn to deal with them in a positive way. Separating food and emotions is the key. A compulsive eater needs to relearn regular eating patterns and learn to trust themselves and their bodies' wants and needs.

Compulsive eating is an eating disorder that deserves to be dealt with and recognized. Don't be afraid to seek help and to stop punishing yourself.

by Perrin Elmore



"LETTING YOURSELF GRIEVE SEEMS TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BREAKING DOWN OR BREAKING THROUGH."

NICKI ROKICH

Lost

Lost in confusion
No way out
Trapped in a prison...
The mind

Dying for freedom
Not in sight
Shedding a tear...
Left behind

Pain searing through me
Unrecognized
So watchful, yet,
So blind

Will I survive this?
Still unknown
Hoping peace, someday,
I'll find.

* * * * *

Have you ever felt lost and alone, or down and unable to lift your spirits like the author of this poem? Chances are you have. The feeling that both inspired and is expressed in the poem is called depression. Most, if not all, of us will feel depressed at some point in our lives. Depression is a very common emotion and is triggered by a number of things. Perhaps you're new to the area and are having a hard time making friends. Or maybe you just had a relationship end with someone you really cared about. Or it could be that school or even life in general just isn't going the way you'd like it to. Whatever the case may be, the result is often the same: feelings of un-shakeable sadness or simply the inability to feel good.

Ranging in intensity from mild to severe, and a time period from hours to days or even months, depression is something that should be taken seriously and dealt with. A person should talk to someone about how they are feeling and try to uncover the reason(s) for feeling that way. It may be that there is no apparent reason, but that is no excuse to ignore the depression.

If you notice that a friend is depressed, lend an ear and let them know that you are there for them. No matter what the severity of the emotion nor what the cause, it is always good to know that someone cares. But keep in mind that signs of depression aren't always easily noticed. Some people are excellent at putting on masks to hide their depression when around others. The following are some less-apparent characteristics of depression as described by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (AMI):

- * Poor appetite and weight loss, or the opposite, increased appetite and weight gain.
- * Sleep disturbance: sleeping too little, or sleeping too much in an irregular pattern.
- * Loss of energy: excessive fatigue or tiredness.
- * Change in activity level, either increased or decreased.
- * Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities.
- * Decreased sexual drive.
- * Diminished ability to think or concentrate.
- * Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt which may reach grossly unreasonable (delusional) proportions.
- * Recurrent thoughts of death or self harm, wishing to be dead or contemplating suicide.

If you recognize yourself as being in a state of depression, be it mild or severe, reach out for help. You deserve to be happy. And remember, tomorrow is a brand new day.

by Deborah Smokey

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A smile from a stranger's face
A happy tear
A warm embrace
Knowing I belong
Someplace----

These are things that
make me high.
—Deborah L. Smokey

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FREEING CREATIVE PARALYSIS

Do you remember trying to figure out a way you could leave a note on your friend's door when the wind was blowing? Finally, you decided the only way you could leave your urgent message was to use your chewing gum to stick the note to the door. This is creativity! Creativity, we use it everyday and yet, we tend to equate it with the famous works of daVinci, Einstein, Thoreau and other famous people.

The process we know as creativity, then is not so much coming up with something "new" as it is finding a unique way to make familiar things seem new and different. It is a combination of many factors, including curiosity, openness and a willingness to go beyond the accepted norms. The creative person can come up with new ways to solve problems, do a presentation, improve business, stay motivated and have more fun.

Unfortunately, suppression of our creativity happens to most of us through authority figures, parents and institutions (such as politics, religion, education and media). Creativity plays a vital part of our "child within" because expression is freed. When expression is freed we become alive, energetic and fulfilled—we become our real selves.

Bringing creativity back into our lives, however, is not without its perils. Self-doubt may bring about fear of criticism when you are faced with doing something in a new way. "What will people think? What if they laugh at me?" You may wonder if it might be easier to do it the way you always have. It may be easier, but the tradeoff is that you shut off a part of yourself with that decision, the part of you that is the child—that creative, playful, always new part. To cope with this creative paralysis, first recognize your "creative crunchers" adapted from Kathleen Martin's article "The Creative Edge":

1. "I might appear silly or foolish." Nobody enjoys being ridiculed. New ideas, however, are not born from conformity. The willingness to risk being made fun of open the door to creativity.
2. "I am not creative." The person whose self-belief says this, rarely even looks at alternative possibilities. The risk is low, but so

is the interest level and enjoyment of life. The "I am creative" self-image leads to an openness to different ways of doing things, and the willingness to experiment and take a chance.

3. "It's easier not to change." We are basically creatures of habit. Habits free the mind to think about more important things. But habits can crunch creativity. If we are unaware of how we are doing it now, how can we do it in a new way? We need to do things with conscious awareness, not just habit, in order to be creative.

4. "I must do it right." Early in school, we learn that the more we are right, the better our grades will be. We tend to grow up avoiding situations in which we might fail. But the creative thinker looks at error as a learning tool. To a creative thinker, richness of thought is more important than rightness of thought.

5. "It must make sense." One of the things that happens when your creativity is blocked is that you start disregarding your own ideas when they come up because they don't make sense. Often it is those very nonsense ideas that turn out to be the best ones.

We can use our creative abilities to find new solutions, new combinations and new ways to look at things. The following "creativity expanders" will give you some ideas to help you think more creatively.

- ** Develop a positive mental set. Begin to think of ways you have been and are creative. Believe that your ideas are worthwhile, and they will be.
- ** Learn to relax.
- ** Practice using your imagination.
- ** Suspend criticism and judgement for a while.
- ** Increase your awareness by observing something old as new.
- ** Learn to trust your instincts and hunches.
- ** Look for different "hows".
- ** Practice making changes.
- ** Be more willing to appear silly or even be wrong.

We all have creative ability. We just need to find it!

by Amy Tantau

SUCCESS

Whatever your mind can conceive and believe, it will achieve. Dream great dreams and make them come true. Do it now. You are unique. In all the history of the world there was never anyone else exactly like you, and in all the infinity to come there will never be another you. Never affirm self-limitations. What you believe yourself to be, you are. To accomplish great things, you must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost—put foundations under them. Yes you can. Believing is magic. You can always better your best. You don't know what you can do until you try. Nothing will come of nothing. If you don't go out on a limb, you're never going to get the fruit. There is no failure except in no longer trying. Hazy goals produce hazy results. Clearly define your goals. Write them down, make a plan for achieving them, set a deadline, visualize the results and then go for them. Just don't look back unless you want to go that way. Defeat may test you; it need not stop you. If at first you don't succeed, try another way. For every obstacle there is a solution. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. The greatest mistake is giving up. Wishing will not bring success, but planning, persistence and burning desire will. There is a gold mine within you from which you can extract all the necessary ingredients. Success is an attitude. Get yours right. It is astonishing how short a time it takes for very wonderful things to happen. So, do it—and show us the color of your rainbow.

Contributed by Beth Reed

by Barbara Smallwood and Steve Kilborn



Ah, a book, it can take you away to your favorite fantasy, make you laugh, cry, dream, and much more. The best part is a book never pushes you to hurry. In fact you can re-live those compelling moments over and over again.

Talking to Yourself by Pamela Butler
This is a great book for reprogramming those negative messages you've been telling yourself. You learn how to recognize your negative self-talk and change it to more positive messages.

Wellness Workbook by Ryan and Travis
This book provides the "how tos" to better wellness. It's very well written, creative and enjoyable reading.

Healing the Child Within by Charles L. Whitfield
A great book for the discovery and recovery for adult children of dysfunctional families. It refers to that part of each of us which is ultimately alive, energetic, creative and fulfilled; it is our real self.

Minding the Body Mending the Mind by Joan Borysenko
Shows you how to take control of your own physical and emotional well-being. It teaches you how to elicit the mind's powerful relaxation response to boost your immune system, overcome chronic pain and alleviate the symptoms of stress related illnesses.

Confidence by Alan Loy McGinnis
Discover how you can build inner strength, develop your uniqueness, keep flaws in perspective, make friends with your body, help others become more confident and more!

