



Your Emotions Can Make You Well

By **LEWIS L. ROBBINS, M. D.**

Medical Director, Hillside Hospital, Glen Oaks, N. Y.

as told to **James C. G. Conniff**



Dr. Lewis L. Robbins was associated with the famed Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kans., for 18 years. During this time he was director of the Foundation's Outpatient Division and Department of Adult Psychiatry and chairman of its Psychotherapy Research Project. Since 1958 he has been medical director of the Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks, N. Y.

SHE WAS A WOMAN in her early 30s, happily married to a successful poultry farmer and the proud mother of five children, oldest age 10. She was pretty, nicely dressed, and apparently self-possessed. Inwardly, however, she was a wreck.

When she first came to me at the suggestion of her family doctor, she had let the normal emotional stress of running a busy household build up inside her almost to the point of explosion.

Her trouble was in not knowing how to find an outlet for the ordinary feeling of anger and frustration which every mother has—an outlet acceptable to the neighbors, that is, and to her family. By talking with her I found that on this score she was like a surprising number of women. They have the mistaken notion that it is improper to give vent to routine emotions. As a result, they develop

A noted psychiatrist reveals a simple secret that has helped many patients find within themselves a remedy for destructive tensions

a haunted, driven look. In my patient's case, it told me the moment I saw her: *this woman is going to be ill unless she gets help in a hurry.*

Without hospitalizing her, we gave her that help. I saw her not long ago. Smiling and relaxed now, she leaned out the window of her car to tell me, "I've stopped building windmills, Doctor. From here on, it'll be dikes and canals, the way you said. It's the only kind of life that makes sense."

And not only for housewives, she might have added. The teen-ager from our Adolescent Pavilion waved cheerily as I rode up the tree-lined drive to my office. Not long ago this awkward youth, tense from the strain of trying to control the emotional rip tides of adolescence, wouldn't even have nodded. Today, thanks to the patient guidance we were able to give him, the glum anxiety which had made him painfully withdrawn has vanished.

He turned toward me, grinning and confident the way a boy should be. "No more windmills, Doc!" he called. "That's a promise!"

Were these patients the victims of hallucination—modern Don Quixotes who, like that tragicomic Spanish knight, imagined windmills were their enemies? Not at all. Like countless other men, women, and children at hospitals like Hillside, where we specialize in mental health, these were people recovering from actual or threatened ill-

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