

*Where Are You Now?*

helpless is being a victim. It makes you feel powerless.

**HOW DOES HELPLESSNESS CONNECT TO MONEY?**

Luanne's constant job changing reflected her posture as the victim; never doing what gave her life meaning, always living paycheck to paycheck, she never saw her life in "the big picture." Her finances were scattered and she never wanted to really see what was going on.

In spending more time connecting her current behavior to old childhood assumptions, she started to exercise more control, take back her power and protest less that things were not her fault.

What are you protesting today that's not your fault?

**DEPRESSION:  
ANGER TURNED INWARD**

Depression is the ultimate "drug" for removal from the moment. It takes us out of the line of fire by making us act emotionally dead and lifeless. We become a spectator.

It is a subtle form of manipulation — being physically present and emotionally absent. It can even invite a strong negative response from those around the depressed person. One hears such comments as,

*It's NEVER About The Money... Even When It Is*

“Time to get going!” “Move on.” “Snap out of it!” “Stop acting so grumpy.” Or, “Slow down! Why can’t you make time for (fill in the blank)?”

The common definition of depression is anger turned inward. Why do we use it? Where does the anger come from, and how do we change that way of expressing ourselves?

There are many ways one can express depression, but the underlying consistent root is separating one from one’s authentic self, which, in many cases, is due to acute pain and fear — all statements of a misperceived lack of power.

People have choices in which mode they show up — which costume fits their need to stay in the shadows. Some people pick weight, others choose debt, drugs or depression — and the list gets longer. Some withdraw and appear lifeless, helpless and without effect. They cannot get out of bed or off the sofa; they feel powerless and trapped. Or they can be overly busy, always in motion. They are angry but cannot identify their anger. Depression is a defense mechanism. Addiction is a form of depression.

*Where Are You Now?*

***When we use a secondary form of expression — such as debt, food, alcohol, mispending, or chaos — we create a smokescreen that takes on its own life. It's a form of denial that distracts the outside world. Whatever form of expression we choose can create shame, which separates us from our authentic self.***

Accepting the fact that anger sits underneath depression, it is important to understand where the anger comes from. Not getting our needs met as very young children initiates the assumption that we are not worthy of love.

Where our lives go from that very early message is the explanation for our current negative behaviors. Depression is a fear-based expression — fear of being seen for how we *really* feel, who we *really* are. We were warned early on in our childhoods that we needed to conform in order to survive. As a result, we isolated ourselves in order to protect our true feelings — our identities.

Alice Miller writes, in *The Drama of the Gifted Child*,<sup>7</sup> “...the true opposite of depression is neither gaiety nor absence of pain, but vitality — the freedom

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<sup>7</sup> Miller, Alice. *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997.

*It's NEVER About The Money... Even When It Is*

to experience spontaneous feelings, which is crucially important for us if we want to live without depression and addiction.”

In medical journals, articles by psychologists abound with debates as to whether depression is a chemical or environmental issue. There is no question that certain drugs will alter one’s mood, but in some cases drugs will disguise the underlying source and make managing the moment ahead easier. One out of five Americans takes some sort of medication to manage stress, to regulate moods, to cope better.

We are a society that does what is easy — taking a diet pill is easier than dealing with the underlying issues of *why* we eat out of control; taking a sleeping pill is easier than taking the time to understand our adrenal system and hormones; taking a mood elevator in some cases just pushes away dealing with the intense inner pain that needs to be acknowledged.

***The key to prevent depression is to own your power by building self-awareness.***

When we are depressed, fear and anger own us. As adults, we actually have choices that we lacked as children.

I have had many clients who struggle with isolation, which is fueled by shame, which in turn, looks like depression. Many of them had the same retreat

*Where Are You Now?*

mode: stay in bed, on the sofa. Work longer office hours. Do more pushups, run more errands. They do anything and everything to avoid *feeling* the underlying issue.

**VANESSA**

Vanessa was the oldest of two children and the only girl. She was an image consultant working with Fortune 500 companies, training incoming staff on their appearances, appropriate dress, and behavior conducive to a professional atmosphere.

No one would ever guess that her personal behavior at home lacked polish and boundaries. For her, working was her only real connection with the outside world. She was a functioning depressed person; her relationship with her brother suffered constant friction — her parents continued to infantilize him through adulthood. This behavior on their part continued siphoning off attention that she had needed as a child and, as an adult, would never experience. Her parents' subtle message to her was: "Your brother's needs are more important than yours."

Every session always came back to her suppressed anger; how it got displayed in subtle actions during her day, and not-so-subtle behaviors when she left her office. Our constant tying of her feelings of depression to her anger helped her identify her trigger-points so she could manage the moment better.

*It's NEVER About The Money... Even When It Is*

By learning a new vocabulary, she developed tools to identify what was actually going on in the moment, thereby giving her the power to choose a behavior that would serve her best.

**HOW DOES DEPRESSION CONNECT TO MONEY?**

Vanessa's primary financial issue was careless spending, but it did not go over the edge. She just felt nothing, deadness. No joy in a new item, always wearing the same basic style day after day, never allowing herself to experience something new. She never felt connected to what she was purchasing, as if it would be a statement of lack of control. Basically, she simply made herself numb.

Her challenge, as it is for us all, was to live in the present moment, completely. She had to give herself permission to *feel* that whatever was going on was legitimate for her and then choose how to react.

Her journey to become more present started with creating plans and keeping commitments to herself. It was the beginning of her healing. She is finally being heard now as an adult and is able to express her needs without fear of recrimination, which has reduced isolation and shame.

She is on her way. How about you? Have you strapped on your tool belt and laced up your hiking boots?