

DEPRESSION One of the most precious of the Psalms seems to be one of the least known as well as one of the shortest. It is the 131st. "O Lord, my heart is not lifted up," is the way it begins, "my eyes are not raised too high; / I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me."

be in a state of depression is like that. It is to be unable to occupy yourself with anything much except your state of depression. Even the most marvelous thing is like music to the deaf. Even the greatest thing is like a shower of stars to the blind. You do not raise either your heart or your eyes to the heights because to do so only reminds you that you are yourself in the depths. Even if, like the Psalmist, you are inclined to cry out, "O Lord," it is a cry like Jonah's from the belly of a whale.

"But I have calmed and quieted my soul," he continues then, and you can't help thinking that although maybe that's better than nothing, it's not much better. Depression is itself a kind of calm as in becalmed and a kind of quiet as in a quiet despair.

Only then do you discover that he is speaking of something entirely different. He says it twice to make sure everybody understands. "Like a child quieted at its mother's breast," he says, and then again "like a child that is quieted is my soul." A kind of blessed languor that comes with being filled and somehow also fulfilled: the sense that no dark time that has ever been and no dark time that will ever be can touch this true and only time; shalom - something like that is the calm and quiet he has found. And the Lord in whom he has found it is the Lady Mother of us all. It is from her breast that he has drunk it to his soul's quieting.

Finally he tells us that hope is what his mouth is milky with, hope which is to the hopelessness of depression what love is to the lovesickness and lovelornness of fear. "O Israel, hope in the Lord," he says, "from this time forth and for evermore." Hope like Israel. Hope for deliverance the way Israel hoped and you are already half delivered. Hope beyond hope, and -- like Israel in Egypt, in Babylon, in Dachau - you hope also beyond the bounds of your own captivity, which is what depression is.

25 WAYS TO BEAT THE BLUES

By Candace Smith

Do you ever wake up feeling bored, depressed, lonely or unhappy? Fortunately, those unhappy times can be turned around. On your next "bad" day, consider using some of these proven mood-lifters:

1. Make a list of everything that is preventing you from being happy today. Consider postponing all negative feelings for 24 hours.

2. Make another list--this time of your blessings. Include everything good that's ever happened to you.

3. If you spend a lot of time watching television, decide today you will watch only one good program.

4. Declare a be-kind-to-your-body day. Enjoy a massage, facial, manicure and/or new hair style.

5. Spoil yourself a little: Buy something you've always wanted.

6. Give your environment a face lift. It doesn't have to cost much. How about new dish towels for the kitchen, or some beautiful new bathroom accessories?

7. Take a walk through a park, or explore a new area. See how much beauty you can find along the way.

8. Eat foods high in vitamin B. Avoid foods high in refined sugar or salt. Vitamin B foods (whole grains, fruits, vegetables and meats) are especially soothing. On the other hand, refined sugar devours the B-complex vitamins, upsets your blood sugar level, and predisposes you to nervousness. Salt increases irritability.

9. Give yourself at least one success experience today. It could be doing exercises you hate or completing an unpleasant task.

10. Lose yourself in a good book. Read anything by Erma Bombeck.

11. Buy a new plant or a bouquet.

12. Call two favorite people and tell them how much you love them.

13. Take a minivacation. Get on a bus, plane or train and visit a place you've always enjoyed. Or go somewhere new and exotic. If money is a

problem, check into a nearby hotel and play tourist for a day.

14. Get out an unfinished project and finish it.

15. Start a new project.

16. Clean and organize your environment. Attack your drawers, cupboards and closets. Gather up photographs and put them in an album.

17. Do an anonymous good deed.

18. Write notes of appreciation to people who have been a special help or influence in your life.

19. Live out a daydream. A good how-to book that will spur you is *Wishcraft* by Barbara Sher and Annie Gottlieb (Viking Press, 1979).

20. Visit a friend you haven't seen in a long while.

21. Plant some favorite flowers.

22. Take a friend to lunch. Talk about the good things in the world.

23. Make up with an old friend.

24. Realize that having a good day is really your own choice.

25. Give everyone a smile.