Recognising and Healing Depression — The Clouds will Clear

Rhonda Daly

As the drought in Eastern Australia worsens there is always the risk of depression setting among farmers. I find that it is a time when we need to turn to our spouse, family members or neighbours to offer assistance. It is hard to remember that our wellbeing and contribution is more important then money in the bank or what we own.

A farmer dies by suicide every four days in Australia with data showing that farmers’ suicide rates are elevated when compared to the general public, however the rates differ dramatically across regions.

Depression can hit anyone, young, old, rich, poor, you name it. And yes it’s brutal when it comes knocking.

Over my lifetime I remember having times when I have been depressed and contemplating if life was worth living. These were generally times when I was suffering major illness, such as my meningitis and chronic fatigue syndrome. Feelings of loneliness, lack of sense of self and not been able to contribute overwhelmed me. This was despite having a loving husband, family and friends.

Some of the triggers that generally precede depression are things such as:

1. Replaying old thoughts and messages of negativity that may have been said from childhood or school days, stored in our subconscious.
2. Believing that our self-worth is determined by our possesses, bank account, or job.
3. Feelings of lack of self-worth and letting other people down.
4. Believing that we are our relationships and if they break down we are no one.
5. Life will always be like this and will never improve.

When continual negative thinking takes over our reality it is easy to see why there is only one way to afford the pain and suffering.

Admittedly there is no magic pill (some doctors may think otherwise) but with a holistic approach there is every possibility to come out of depression and live a lighter, happier existence.

Here are some steps that I took to help me find my way and helped me through these times:

I believed I had a PhD in worry and stressing. I thought it was helpful, it kept my mind busy and also it felt that I was shelling my share of the world’s woe. Little did I know that it was creating darkness in my life. It was this recognition that allowed me to change and realise that I needed to live in the present and not the future or fears are projections into the future.

I love this quote: TODAY IS THE TOMORROW I WORRIED ABOUT YESTERDAY. IT BRINGS INTO PERSPECTIVE THAT WORRY IS A WASTE OF TIME

I AM — Mindfulness As difficult as it was I simply learned to replace the “monkey mind” negative thoughts with simple statements such as I AM worthy, I AM love, I AM valuable. Two things happen, while repeating these I AM affirmations there is no time for the negative thoughts to surface and the leak begins to release “happy hormones”. There are so many great apps, and online programs or find a qualified teacher who will take you through the steps of learning mindfulness to refocus your mind.

Open Up To Family and Friends — When I felt like withdrawing from the world it was important for me to find someone who I could open up to who would not judge but offer support for where I was at. Look for people who can offer words of support for where you presently are and gently show you your worth and that good times will return.

The “Clouds” will clear and there will be blue skies again. Believing that this is a particularly challenging time but blue skies will come again. (When do we need the clouds for rain!!! — being able to laugh is an important skill)

Regular exercise, Yoga and stretching. Yoga and stretching will open up the body, calm the mind and realign the body back into a healthier space.

Get some natural supplements into you: I have always been a big believer in boosting my food intake with vitamins, minerals and herbs. The quality and nutritional value of our food lacks many of the necessary trace minerals for mental health.

Depression can not only take control of your life, but it can also affect many people around you. We can heal from depression, but it will require some action. Doing the same thing over and over again won’t bring about a different result.

Keep trying new things, see what works for you. If you are suffering depression, it is recommended that you seek professional help, find someone to talk with.

You don’t need to do this on your own, please reach out to someone for help.

Nine Aspects of the Soil—Not Just Three!

The Burning Question — What Fertiliser and When?

One of the most confusing problems for most producers is to know and understand what product is going to give the greatest results.

Many biological fertilisers and inoculants on the market today are being sold as the magic silver bullet.

I can tell you that after 16 years in this industry there is no one product that is going to give you all the results for soil/plant health.

The diagram shows the nine aspects of the soil, being:

Soil Structure — Specific Gravity, Penetrometer, Sieving

Chemical — Base Saturation Balance, Available Nutrients and Micronutrients

Biological — Diversity, Aerobic:Anaerobic Ratio and Enumeration of 6 Functional Groups

By thorough soil testing, observation and consultation you will identify which of these areas are in or out of balance. Once you have a good understanding of your soil you can then make a more informed choice.

But the best rule of thumb I go by is:

If five out of nine of these aspects are not in alignment —

NO ONE PRODUCT WILL WORK

If five out of nine are in alignment —

ANY ONE PRODUCT WILL WORK

Testimonial:

I just wanted to thank you and Bill for hosting the group from the NQ Dry Tropics at YLAD Living Soils, the trip has exceeded their expectations and they were blown away with what they learned. — Carolyn Hall  General Manager Mulloon Creek
Bill and I travelled to the Gold Coast to attend the Australian Biological Farming Conference at the Southern Cross University Campus.

Listening to international speakers such as Jeff Moyer, Michael Phillips, and Carlos Leifert was exhilarating, such brilliant minds.

Throughout the Conference 'Compost' was the word that was on the lips of every speaker.

High quality Humus Compost is beneficial to the three aspects of the soil due to:

1. It pushes soil particles apart allowing for more oxygen and water to enter the soil, improving soil structure.
2. It provides balanced minerals complexed in Humus and the bodies of microbiology, providing nutrients that are available but not leachable. Humus hangs on to both positive (cations) and negative (anions) reducing leaching and erosion.
3. Humus Compost contains a diverse range of microbiology which restores and enhances the biological activity in the soil and nutrient recycling.

Did you know??

Aham measured soil organic matter in Australia in the 1840’s at 11 to 37 percent Organic Matter

This has to explain a lot of things:

Alarm Bells should be ringing!

With most of the 2000 soil tests I read each year the OM levels are 2.5% and lower.

What does this mean for the future of Australian Agriculture?

- Tighter more compacted soils – organic matter decays to humus, the humus molecule cements particles of sand, silt, clay and organic matter into aggregates which will not break down in water. This cementing effect, together with the weaving and binding effect of roots and fungal strands in the decomposing organic matter, makes the soil aggregates stable in water.
- Less water holding capacity - less resilience to droughts
- Less nutrient holding capacity - the need to purchase more fertilisers
- Less microbial food - deader soils
- Is this the future you are looking for??