

# Depression and pregnancy alarm woman fearing it's not normal

Dear Dr. Brothers: I'm not usually a downbeat, depressed woman, so I'm worried, because at a time when I thought women were supposed to be at their happiest, when they're happily married and about to have a baby, I find myself a terrible exception. As much as I want a child, I find that a lot of the time, I'm really quite sad. Why? What is wrong with me? I'm afraid to admit this to anyone, so I pretend while everyone's cooing around me, telling me how lucky I am. I find myself lying, but when they're gone, I cry. I don't know what to do.



**Dr. Joyce Brothers**

• Ask Dr. Brothers

— E.D.  
Dear E.D.: First of all, what you're describing isn't as unusual as most people think. Pregnancy doesn't necessarily equal the bliss and the joy that are so often attributed to it. I believe it's important to be able to express your feelings, and the fact that you're denying your depression is making your condition worse. According to doctors, more than 20 percent of women suffer from such symptoms at some point in their pregnancy.

Let your doctor and your husband know when you're blue or when you seem to be crying more than usual. Sharing and being honest with girlfriends and relatives will also reduce stress, and you might be surprised at the number of women who admit that during their pregnancy, they went through what you're going through. Therapy is generally better than antidepressants, but discuss that option with your doctor. This is probably related to hormonal changes, and it certainly doesn't show a weakness in you.

old woman who's filled with anger at my ex, who left me eight months ago for someone who looks as if she could be his granddaughter. My divorce is now final, and I'm left with a home and money, but that's not enough to heal any of the pain or the sense of worthlessness he's left me with. Fortunately, I have a wonderful daughter, but I don't want to weigh down her life and wreck it. She's already been hurt enough by this situation. Happily, she has a lovely husband, and I have two nearly perfect grandchildren. Any suggestions as to how I might get myself back in shape? I don't want to put my problem on them.

— I.C.  
Dear I.C.: I'm wondering if you could experiment with trying to look at yourself and what you have in a totally different way. Instead of thinking of yourself as a victim, and of a part of your life that's gone, try to shift so you can view your present security with your home and the guarantee of a certain amount of money as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for freedom and adventure. Today it's possible to take trips at a relatively low cost to exciting new places on tours in groups, where you'll probably meet widows and widowers with backgrounds not unlike your own. If you hate travel, get involved in community activities or take some adult-education courses that have always interested you but you might

never have had time for. Don't hang around the house, but make an effort to meet new people. Celebrate your freedom.

Dear Dr. Brothers: My son and his wife are of the opinion that if their children are disciplined in any way, if they ever have to hear the word "no" or don't get what they want when they want it, it's going to destroy their spirit and creativity. As a grandmother, I love them, but even I can see that they're spoiled, and if it continues they will be true brats. Am I out of step? Is a total lack of discipline the best in the long run?

— F.J.  
Dear F.J.: No; your son and daughter-in-law are wrong about this, and a number of very fine studies have been done that clearly show that children need some discipline and that children of permissive parents are, in some ways, the worst off, because their kids become immature youths with low self-esteem. As a result, they have a difficult time getting along with peers, tend to have difficulty in school and are more likely to be promiscuous and heavy drug users. They share many of the same problems as do youngsters raised by tough, authoritarian parents — the "do as I say, and do it now," no-nonsense parents, who are strict and may be abusive.

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