

Life... Disability and lack of motivation

S i t u a t i o n :

I receive disability payments because of depression. With medication I'm feeling better, but it seems that most days I can't seem to get motivated. I get an idea to do something and end up sitting around wasting time. I'm constantly putting things off. If it doesn't absolutely have to be done on a particular day, I ignore it, then later wish I had done it. Can you suggest anything to help get me going?

A n s w e r :

A lot of people who are on disability, consciously or unconsciously, try to live up to the disability. Examine your beliefs. Perhaps you're thinking along the lines of: I'm getting money for being sick, so I need to stay at the same level of illness that I was at when they determined that I was eligible for disability payments.

Many people feel somewhat guilty or wrong about receiving disability payments because of the notion that it's taking a "hand out". This is especially common when they've made some progress. What people need to remember is that it's more difficult to measure the level of wellness with a mental or emotional disorder than it is if you've been out of work because of back surgery.

With depression, if you wait for an even tiny burst of motivation or energy to hit you, you may be waiting a long time. "I just don't feel like it" is so much a part of the illness. In order to start functioning again in the "real world" you have to move your muscles, move your muscles and move your muscles.

The next time you have a task that needs to be done, do it – no matter what your mood happens to be. Making yourself move and do may be somewhat uncomfortable. You may have to push yourself. And after you're finished, you will feel better than you would if you had put it off. Putting it off is giving in. Not many people feel good after they allow themselves to give in to something or someone.

Doing even a small task reinforces the fact that you are the master of what you do. No matter what your diagnosis, you are in charge of your actions/muscles, not your depression. Depression may influence a part of your life, don't allow it to take over all of your life.