

“It is not my body that is tired, it is my mind. Having to think in order to get something done just wears me out before I even start. I want to sit down and cry, but I don’t. I just keep going. And it is hard.” – TJ, on how her day feels, every day lately.

The lethargy of depression is astonishing in its hold on the mind of the person suffering this condition. I stand in awe of those who “just keep going” even though they feel so completely overwhelmed. Yet those who keep on going hold the secret to the depression recovery without knowing it. Your mind is powerful. It creates that lethargy and it can also direct the bounce-back from it.

When you feel so depressed you would prefer to sit and cry rather than go to work, do the housework, return those messages, put gas in the car, make dinner.... then actually doing those things is the best depression strategy you have. Your brain gets a kick out of doing something physical. Using your body, and especially using your hands to make or create something boosts the level of the brain chemical dopamine, which is responsible for helping you feel good. You get more dopamine out of working with your hands to produce something than thinking, reading, or watching TV.

That is a good reason to get up and move your body when you feel the mentally overwhelmed sensation of depression. You can use your thinking brain to make the decision. If you are like TJ, your body may not feel energetic, but you do have physical capability to keep going. It is your depressed mind that needs the boost. Deciding ahead of time that no matter how uninspired you feel, you are going to do a specific task or work on a creative project like a painting or cooking or knitting will help you when the time becomes available and you do not feel like doing what is in front of you. The trick is to know what it is that you have in mind and then face it in small bites.

If it is your job and you need to do it all at once – like clean that house or start at the shop – getting there might be accomplished with the press of needing income. But things that are less compelling can be done with your decision and a plan

Get redy in small steps – get out he paints, ccollect all the dishes from around the house and stack them into the kitchen. Then walk away for a bit if you need to.

Plot out how you can get started in stages.