



* Thanks for Subscribing to My Newsletter! *

Dear Reader,

Thank you for subscribing to my blog, **Fashionably ill**. As a free gift, I've attached my **Depression Tool Kit**. The Kit contains 2 things: A) 10 Strategies for Getting Stuff Done When You're Depressed and B) 4 Scripts for Difficult Conversations/Scenarios. Often, I find that telling people (friends, employers, and professors) we're depressed is so difficult that we don't engage in these conversations at all. Being

seen as unreliable only hurts us further. I live with bipolar 2, polycystic ovarian syndrome, Myasthenia Gravis, asthma, and psoriasis. I graduated *cum laude* with two majors from Northwestern University. I have an award-winning blog and write for multiple websites including *The Huffington Post*. I wanted to share my strategies for being productive despite depression. Hope you find it helpful!

--xoxo, *Jessica Gimeno*



Know someone who can benefit from the Depression Tool Kit? Encourage them to Subscribe to Fashionably ill at www.jessicagimeno.com!

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Bonus Resources for Tool Kit:

- www.askjan.org (U.S. Government website on Accommodations)
- www.jessicagimeno.com/4-tips-for-working-with-illness/
- <http://jessicagimeno.com/work-chronic-illness-part-2-how-to-find-accommodations/>

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GO YOU

When depressed, focus on 1 tasks first (eating breakfast) As you finish 1 and 2-level tasks, you build confidence to tackle 3-level ones (finishing a paper, assignment for work)

LABEL ALL TASKS: 1, 2, 3



Keep a daily To-Do-List

COMMUNICATE IN ADVANCE

Sample email to friend (not boss or work supervisor)


"Hi Mike,
I am interested in collaborating with you Thanks for the offer. Right now, I'm fighting some depression. I've been in bed all day. I will get back to you ASAP."
--Jessica

IDENTIFY "ALLIES"

ally - someone you can be vulnerable with w/o consequences
--example: emailing friend to say you will respond to his email ASAP but you've been depressed lately

REWARD YOURSELF

example: If I finish this paper, then I can watch Sandal live!
OR If I meet this deadline, I can get a McFlurry at McDonald's



HOW TO GET STUFF DONE WHEN YOU'RE DEPRESSED: 10 STRATEGIES

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website: "Fashionably Ill" at www.jessicagimeno.com

Schedule an Appointment with Your Therapist ASAP



- Have phone number accessible
- Too depressed to leave the house?
- Try Web Therapy (ex: Skype, V-Spe)

GIVE YOURSELF CREDIT

Give yourself points for every task you complete

- example: taking a shower or eating breakfast
- as you complete tasks, you build confidence
- Instead of saying "30 more minutes of exercise, say "GO ME! I did 10 minutes!"

Say "no" to non-essential tasks

ESSENTIAL	NON-ESSENTIAL
• Work Assignment	• Church Bible Study
• School Paper	• Watching the game
• Seeing your Doctor	• Dinner party

CLASSIFY TASKS BY URGENCY

When is it due?

When depressed, focus on 4 and 3 *** tasks first

4 **** - due today
3 *** - due tomorrow
2 ** - due this week
1 * - next week

EXERCISE



- Exercise releases endorphins, which help fight stress & depression
- 15 minutes can make you feel better
- Exercise helps you find solutions


PRACTICE MINDFULNESS


15 minutes of:

- Deep breaths
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Daily Affirmations
- Listening to music



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Depression Scenarios: 4 Scripts

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Scenario 1: Missing a Party

You missed a friend's party because you were depressed. Now, your friend is hurt. It's best to talk as soon as possible over the phone or in person. Text messages and online communication often lead to misunderstanding.

Conversation:

"I am so sorry I missed your party. I was looking forward to it but got depressed that day. I would still love to celebrate your birthday with you. We can have lunch at your favorite place."

Examples of Work Accommodations for Depression & Bipolar Disorder from Ask Jan (www.askjan.org):

- Flexible schedules
- Working from home
- Leave for counsel
- Increased natural lighting

Scenario 2: Paper Due

You have a paper due but are severely depressed (or manic/hypomanic for some with bipolar disorder). It's important to contact your professor and seek help (seeing your psychiatrist, for example) before the episode snowballs. It's ideal to ask in advance—not the night before the paper is due.

Sample Email:

Dear Professor Green, I have been trying to work on my paper but I've been really depressed for a week. I have diagnosed depression [or bipolar disorder]. I have been seeking help. Attached, you'll see a letter from my psychiatrist. I am asking for an extension. With an extension, I can finish this paper.

Scenario 3: You Need to Ask Your Employer for Accommodations

Ask Jan (the U.S. government's website explaining accommodations) says "Remember that you have a right to keep information about your disability private. It is not necessary to inform coworkers and colleagues about your disability or need for accommodations. While they may be aware of the accommodations...they are not entitled to know why. Your employer is required by the ADA to keep your disability and medical information confidential and to give it to managers...only on a need-to-know basis."

Conversation:

"Thank you for meeting me. I have diagnosed depression [or bipolar disorder]. I have a letter from my doctor explaining my diagnosis. With proper accommodations, I know I can do a great job. [List a few, key past accomplishments.] One of the consequences of my illness is an irregular sleep-wake cycle. With accommodations like [insert what you need here], I am confident I can do my job well."

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Sample Email:

Dear Susan,
I didn't get any sleep last night and will be unable to come to work today. I experienced a [hypomanic] episode. I am seeing my doctor today. I would like to make up my work by staying after hours on Thursday and Friday and working this Saturday. I can provide you proof of my work. Please let me know what would be acceptable to you for keeping my work on schedule.
Thank you,
[John]

Scenario 4: No Sleep

You slept at 3 am due to an episode of severe depression (or mania/hypomania in cases of bipolar disorder). It's impossible for you to go to work on time or at all the next day.