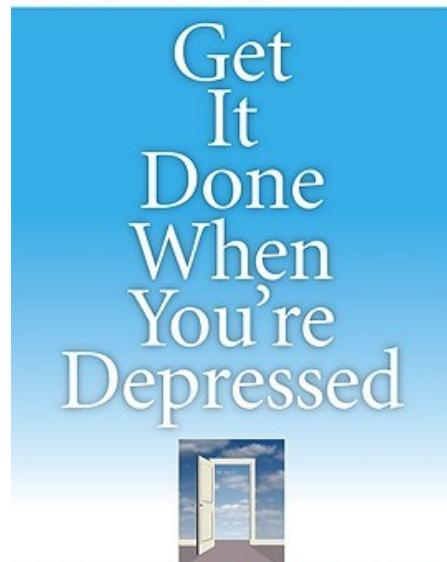


50 Strategies for Keeping Your Life on Track



Julie A. Fast & John D. Preston, Psy.D., ABPP

## Get It Done When You're Depressed

*Julie A. Fast, John D. Preston*

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# Get It Done When You're Depressed

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## Get It Done When You're Depressed Julie A. Fast , John D. Preston

*Shake the blues away.*

Everyone knows that depression can lead to guilt, sadness, frustration, and in the case of 15-20% of people with depression, suicide. Because we live in a culture that rewards (and often worships) productivity, when a depressed person can't meet the expectations of society, the depression becomes worse and a vicious cycle begins. The goal of *Getting Things Done When You're Depressed* is to break this cycle. Readers will learn:

- How to prepare yourself mentally for working while depressed
- How to structure your environment so you can work more easily
- How to work with others
- How to prevent depression

## Get It Done When You're Depressed Details

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## **From Reader Review Get It Done When You're Depressed for online ebook**

### **Joanne Prysunka says**

Practical and succinct. More than conceptual and written from the depressed person's point of view.

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### **Karen Floyd says**

Common sense suggestions to help you get on with life in the midst of depression. I find myself saying, Well, duh! Why didn't I think of that?! But when you're depressed your brain doesn't function properly, especially in a commonsensical way.

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### **Riki says**

This book is written by Julie A. Fast, an author who has struggled with depression most of her life. She teams up with licensed physician John, D. Preston to deliver a book of 50 ideas for getting tasks completed when you are bogged down by the symptoms of depression. My regular readers know that I am diagnosed bipolar and have had my share of difficulties struggling with depression, and this book came at a time when I was starting to feel a little down and seeing the lack of productivity that comes with those moods.

I identified with Fast in many of her personal anecdotes, especially in Chapter Four where she discusses the inability to make even the simplest decisions when feeling down. "Never negotiate with depression," she wisely advises, since it will always win. Each idea for getting out of your slump and into action is backed with a personal story from the author, as well as professional input from Dr. Preston. Most of the ideas are very helpful and gave me insight into how to fight my own monster of inactivity, although some would admittedly be difficult to implement if you are feeling too far down in the dumps.

I especially enjoyed the ideas for keeping a structured schedule and the chapter devoted to school since those are two things that affect me on a daily basis, but there are ideas in this book for people from all backgrounds and in all situations. Fast speaks in a no-nonsense tone and each chapter has easy exercises to get you started. I would recommend this book to anyone who struggles with having the blues and finds themselves unproductive. You can get things done while depressed, and this handy book shows you how.

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### **ayanami says**

Julie Fast offers effective strategies to be productive when you're depressed. Her writing is clear and concise and I like the fact that she doesn't spend much time discussing why you're depressed-- I find that knowing the cause of depression doesn't really decrease the depression (sometimes it even makes it worse), but getting something done makes me feel better immediately. A lot of the things in this book will be hard for a depressed person to hear (or read), but I found it extremely helpful. Her strategies are quite simple and a lot

less tedious to do than the lengthy writing exercises in *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*; I was able to use my time directly on whatever work I needed to get done instead of doing extra writing exercises to convince myself to work. However, as with all books on depression, this book won't be very useful unless the depressed person him- or herself is open-minded and willing to try out some of the strategies. The main point of all these books is that you must take action in order to feel better quickly. This book won't be helpful at all if the person himself cannot muster up the (sometimes small, sometimes big) effort.

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### **Karen says**

I thought that this book provided a lot of useful strategies on how to be productive even when you're depressed. Getting stuff done is essential or else one falls deeper into depression. I especially liked the advice about starting projects even if you feel like you have no motivation to start because the motivation will usually come in the middle of the task and push you through to the end. And afterwards, the sense of validation will propel you to further complete other tasks. I also thought that the advice on setting up a realistic work space was useful as I never can find a place that I like to work. I can't work at home because I get too distracted or lonely, but if I go to a coffee shop, I feel obligated to buy a ton of stuff to justify staying there so long and sometimes get distracted by the noise. The author points out that depressed people get distracted very easily, which is why it can be hard to find a place to work effectively (and I thought that I was just crazy.) One other strategy that appealed to me- breaking projects into small steps to be completed one at a time. I have a tendency to look at the big picture to the point that I find it impossible to see the many little steps that it takes to get to the goal and get frustrated. I will definitely try to break up things into conquerable bits and reward myself for finishing each part. I used to think that this sounded silly, but I am beginning to see that it is critical for maintaining one's sanity when faced with seemingly insurmountable tasks. Little by little, things are supposed to get better, right?

A lot of the strategies seem simple and common sense, but the author explains them in a meaningful way that doesn't belittle the reader, and she provides interesting examples that show how to effectively implement them. I like how the methods are easy things that you can start doing right away. The book doesn't tackle the bigger issues of why you're depressed or how to get out of depression, but I see that as a strength because that is a much harder subject to tackle, and I'm not convinced a book can really pull someone out of depression by itself anyway. I am really glad the author wrote this book. She does a good job of relating to her audience since she also deals with depression herself, which gives her advice more credibility with me.

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### **Anne says**

I really want to say this book is a load of crap. Some of these "methods" will push a depressed person over the edge. But I can't give it a total wipe. Different people have different coping methods. For some people this "get yourself moving" idea is probably complementary to their ways of coping.

To me, it would be a cause for worse feelings about myself and my situation. If it wasn't a library book I'd flush it.

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## **Liesel says**

I'll save you the trouble of reading it. Highly structure your day, regulate your sleep, exercise, break projects into steps, avoid isolation, accept limits, expect to cry, expect to have trouble thinking, and explore medication. Really? Wow, soooo groundbreaking- duh

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## **Olivia says**

This book is painfully repetitive, and contains some misguided advice. For example, in a chapter devoted to the benefit of exercise, Julie A. Fast mentions offhand that we might be less depressed if we weren't so fat. That's not how it works, Julie. Skinny people don't have some magical quality that saves them from mood disorders. She also harps time and again against whining too much, which is a great way to perpetuate silence in a society that stigmatizes mental illness. I'll also say the idealist in me wishes this hadn't conformed quite so much to the belief a person's value is determined by how productive a member of society they are.

Despite my low rating, this book does have some useful bits. Chiefly, I appreciate that this isn't trying to treat depression, but rather provides strategies to get things done despite depression. I have a great deal more control over what I do than my mood, so this was cool. I should also add that I do plan on using some of the strategies from this book, so I suppose that recommends it somewhat.

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## **Emma Frost says**

This book offered a different take on depression. It believes you can work through it even if you don't feel like it. I like how she divided the book in short chapters, about 3 pages each. It makes it easier to read and apply the information. I think she realizes the urgency for people with depression to get quick advice because she didn't dilly dally in this book. She got to the point.

Some other reviewers said that this book was too simple and had things everyone knows. I think those who thought it was simple, weren't as depressed as others who really need this book. When you are depressed, you forget even the easy things, like wake up and have a plan or exercise. We need these reminders because our brain isn't functioning. But, I think her advice was good even for non-depressed people as well.

Her advice comes from an author that has battled depression, which makes the book more relatable. Often, books about depression are written by psychologists and doctors without depression. But this one is written by both.

I don't agree with everything she says. For example, chapter 2 says that "depression is a very selfish illness". I think that's not true. Most people don't want to be depressed. They don't ask to have it. That would be like saying diabetes is a selfish illness. Nevertheless, it's still a good book.

Even though her advice is for depression, those with dysthymia could get some advice out of it. So, she assumes you have days when you get out of depression. And dysthymia means being constantly depressed, so dysthymia sufferers wouldn't know it would feel not to be depressed.

I like how she suggests seeing an "action oriented therapist" because a lot of them are not. They just expect you to talk while they listen and take your money. This is a topic that I wish there was more information about, because its hard to find a therapist like that.

[CONCLUSION] This book is great. I love how I could read a couple of pages a night and absorb the information. The book itself is about 1/2 an inch. Its not overwhelming with pages. But its also not a pamphlet. I think the author made sure to put only useful information. I will definitely read this book again.

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### **Anna says**

I'm not sure if my rating has any value, I just realized I'm facing a different kind of issue. I feel like I'm mostly over the depression part, I just have a hard time getting things done. It's like my brain learned the depression habit and now I don't know how to change the habit anymore. I do know how to plan, I know how to break up my tasks, I just have a problem with getting started on things.

Anyway, what I do like about the book is, that it gives concrete advice. Things you can do. I felt like this was the problem at some point, that you sort of knew that you should do something, but you didn't know what it was, so that's a plus. What I don't like is, that it assumes everyone has family around. When you live abroad and you've lived in the place only about 2 years and you don't speak the language very well, for example asking for help gets complicated. I have colleagues and friends who are happy to help, but I already have to ask for a lot of help just because of language stuff. And it's hard to push those relationships even more. It would be very different if my family was around or friends I've known for 20 years.

So, I'm a bit disappointed on the level of the advice. It applies in a certain kind of situation, but I feel this is so not written for me.

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### **Dani (The Pluviophile Writer) says**

Full review at The Pluviophile Reader: <http://wp.me/p3VFNP-6V>

3/5 stars.

ebook, 270 pages.

Read from August 26 to October 07, 2014.

As I usually do with most of the self-help books I read, I took my time. What was refreshing with this book is that it helped me to realize that some of my thoughts and even behaviors are not actually who I am. That when I wake up in the morning and that cloud is lingering over me, I know that I may have difficulties with what I expected to get done that day, that my negative thoughts are a result of my depression and that my brain is lying to me as a result. In recognizing when I'm struggling, I know that I can put out the extra effort to push past as much as I can and still be productive or at least be kind to myself that day if it's particularly bad.

The author's main suggestions are in regards to self-recognition and knowing when your depression is taking hold and when your thoughts and behaviors can't be trusted, along with suggestions to stay focused and organized. The author also provides plenty of exercises to help the reader along. Additionally, she lays down

the science behind getting enough sleep, the importance of exercise and the effects that alcohol and caffeine can have on a depressed brain. What was also very interesting was that at the end of each chapters she poses a question or scenario that relates to the content that was just discussed so that you can get the scientific explanation to that question.

Many people have complained that this book is too straight forward or that if they had tried the author's suggestions it would have made their depression worse for them but I disagree to an extent. I believe that this book is directed to people with mild to moderate depression, so those of us who are held together enough to not be hospitalized and are of no harm to ourselves or others. While depression sucks all around, no matter how bad you have it, the less severe it is the more we are able to deal with it and I feel that this book is a great aid for the milder situations. The information may be straight forward in some areas but how many of those complaining have willingly tried and put forth positive energy into applying the authors methods? Everything is harder when you're depressed so it takes more effort to try the exercises and recommendations but, like anything in life, the hard stuff is often worth it.

I think that there are a few stages that a sufferer goes through with depression. The beginning starts with the unawareness which is the pre-diagnosis, the second stage is that recognition and the diagnosis, and the third is how the person chooses to deal with the situation. Depression has a horrible way of making the sufferer very negative and more often than not during the third stage, the sufferer victimizes and feel sorry for themselves at some point. I think many people sadly, are not able to move past this victimization. With this victimization the sufferer believes that they are their condition and that nothing will ever change, therefore handing over all of their power, control, and ultimately their life over to the condition. This is why, I think some people scoff at the exercises and suggestions that the authors makes.

The suggestions, I think to a person in this position, seem to mock their suffering in that they didn't ask for depression so they don't need to be accountable for it. However, nobody asks for depression and just like a lot of things in life you have to learn to adapt and to deal. One of the most difficult things I've done has been recognizing my own depression for what it is, stop being angry that it's there, and learn to manage my life with it. Nothing happens over night, so repetition and practice are key to leading a life with depression which, is where this book comes in handy. Everyone is different so not everyone's coping methods will be the same. Some people require more compassion while others need a tough love approach.

I believe that people who are dealing with mild to moderate depression don't have to let it consume their lives. Depression really blows and the effects from it can be overwhelming but the best plan of action is recognizing its presence and not giving up your control to it. It's a matter of trying to alter our focus and knowing that we have choices and we have options.

My one complaint with the book is that the chapters seemed a bit repetitive after a while in that the relayed very similar information. I mean, if practice and repetition are key I suppose this isn't a terrible thing, it just made for some tedious reading.

Overall I really enjoyed the books message and I have noticed a difference in my own work flow since reading this book. I highly recommend this book to anyone dealing with depression.

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### **Christine Dyar says**

Getting It Done When You're Depressed was a wonderful read for me. I have read a number of reviews of

the book, and many say the opposite. I've seen reviews that state that the book is just common sense, that it doesn't tell us anything we don't already know. I don't believe that the fact that it contains common sense makes it any less worthy a read. The long and short of it is this: when you are in the thick of depression, you aren't thinking clearly. It takes common sense solutions, and hard work to function during a bout of depression. Getting it done is difficult. You have to be your own drill sergeant, and this book gives very valuable advice on being just that. I encourage anyone struggling with depression to read this book, and use the tools it provides.

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### **Becca says**

Some of this was helpful some of it not. The only thing that rubbed me the wrong way was that this book acted as if the advice inside should be seen and treated as a general, blanket cure-all, when it absolutely is not. Some of these things (depending on the person) may exacerbate the symptoms and make it worse. Again, it depends on the person. There isn't a blanket cure-all as this book likes to claim. With that said, there are things in here worth giving some thought or an honest effort. However, if you already know yourself and know a certain technique won't work, then yeah, don't bother. There is also an emphasis on productivity that made me uncomfortable. I understand she was probably just trying to emphasize that this is simply the culture and society we live in (productivity=success and happiness). Yet, I think it would have come off better with a bit less emphasis on productivity and work. There was also an odd oxymoron of not telling people you have depression/how you feel or what you're thinking, and then asking other people to do things for you because you should have them understand that you're depressed. The former I found, again, a bit unhelpful because often, I think it can be cathartic and a release to discuss feelings, even if they're irrational. And the latter may work if you have a lot of people close by that you know and understand if you are sick. Unfortunately, not everyone has that, and I saw that as a big challenge in this book. Some people may be in abusive families or relationships--they can't go and talk about their depression or ask these people to help them, or they'll risk getting hurt!

Again. These can be useful but not the cure-all. It got a little repetitive with a guest story an the doctor explaining why certain things happen in scientific terms rather than the layman's terms that were usually explained a couple paragraphs prior to the doctor's.

I would still recommend it to anyone that thinks they could use some ideas or techniques on how to help themselves and cope--or read it because they know someone who is ill and they want to help someone else.

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### **Cheryl Bentley says**

I was fortunate enough to win Julie Fast's newest book in a Goodreads drawing. It was especially fortuitous, since several family members and I had read Julie's "Take Charge of Bipolar Disorder" three years ago when my daughter was diagnosed with that illness. I did a lot of reading and research before coming to Julie's book and still think it's the best thing I've read on bipolar disorder. "Get It Done When You're Depressed" is written very much in the same vein.

In "Get It Done," Julie combines personal experience and the experiences of others with clinical input from her co-author, John D. Preston. Each of the fifty short chapters deals with one of the obstacles depression can present to simply getting through life. And, as with her book on bipolar disorder, there are ample opportunities for reflection and goal-setting throughout the book. This is what I love about Julie's books. She

has a knack for blending theory and practicality, making her books not only informative but eminently useful.

I have read a great deal on depression, partly because that was how my daughter was first diagnosed, as is often the case, but also simply because there is so much written on the subject. Again, I would say that this is the single best and most helpful thing I have read on depression, and I can't wait to recommend it to anyone I know who either suffers from depression or cares about someone who does.

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### **Christy says**

First, I have to say thank you to Julie Fast for writing a book without the confusing medical jargon and giving us strategies that can be truly applied to everyday situations and circumstances. There are too many books out there that just give you big words, no help and just a bunch of fluff. Julie's writing is honest, eye opening, and to the point. You don't have to read 100 pages to start applying her guidance to productivity while dealing with anxiety and depression. There are 50 chapters and I read them in my order of importance which helped me obtain the "accomplished feeling" along with working through chapter's short trainer to apply the chapter's lesson. Each chapter is only about 6 pages which means her strategies are simple and condensed. There is no run-on discussion, just to the point strategies to help you function, acknowledge, and move past any anxiety, self-esteem or depression issues you are dealing with. We all deal with depression in our lives and this strategy reference guide (which is what it will be for me now) is quick and so helpful... Thanks Julie...

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