

Depression diminished my feelings of gratitude and left me feeling guilty, but a talk reminded me that I don't have to feel guilty for being depressed.

Most people think depression is a constant, deep sadness. It's not. At least, for me it's not. When my depression is at its worst, 5% of my life is sadness, 5% is frustration about the fact that I'm depressed, and the remaining 90% is apathy. It's emptiness. It's nothing.

Depression is hard in countless ways, and the experience is different for everyone. One of the things I've struggled with the most is guilt. I gained insight on how to deal with this feeling when I read "[The Touch of the Master's Hand](#)," by President [Boyd K. Packer](#). Though he focuses on guilt caused by sin, his inspiring message is applicable to my experience of guilt caused by depression.



When I struggled with depression the most, I recognized that even in my brokenness I was blessed, but I was still just as depressed and just as miserable. Blessings didn't matter to me because I was already at my lowest low—I was convinced that I'd be equally miserable with or without those blessings. I was mad at myself for feeling that way. I wanted to be grateful for the things I had been given, but I wasn't. President Packer says that "some anxiety and depression is caused by physical disorders, but much (perhaps most) of it is not pain of the body but of the spirit." Guilt is also a type of spiritual pain, and it "can be even harder to bear than physical pain."

For me, depression is something that comes and goes. It hasn't been completely taken away from me, and it's possible that it may never be, but I've learned that I can propel my own spiritual healing. If depression is something you are battling with right now, know that you will not always feel the way you feel now. But also acknowledge that spiritual healing takes time. For most people, depression does not simply go away, but your spirit *can* be healed when mental illness is unrelenting. Here are a few things I do to help with my own spiritual healing:

Find the good in life. There is always good; look for it. If you don't feel like finding the good is making a difference, that's okay. It is healing you, slowly but surely.

Don't stop doing the things that matter most. It can be easy to stop attending church, to pray less often, and to give up on scripture study. It doesn't feel like spiritual activities make a difference when apathy has taken over, but that's when doing them matters even more.

Don't let guilt add to your depression. President Packer says that "too many of us needlessly carry burdens of guilt and shame," and the spiritual pain of guilt only makes the spiritual pain of

depression stronger. As long as you're trying and relying on the [Savior](#) and his [Atonement](#), you're on the right path.

Know that you never have to be alone. Christ personally understands our spiritual and physical pains. Lean on him; have confidence in his strength. President Packer reminds us that “when we are racked or harrowed up or tormented by guilt or burdened with grief, [Christ] can heal us.”

There is a lot I have learned because of my battle with depression, but there is one thing that I have to constantly remind myself of: it's okay to feel apathetic and miserable even when I'm blessed beyond measure. With me, I hope you'll keep trying; keep finding the good, even when it is difficult; and keep telling yourself that you're doing better than you think you are.

To learn about how to overcome feelings of guilt, read “[The Touch of the Master's Hand](#),” by President [Boyd K. Packer](#).

Source: [LDS.org](#)

—Nicole Terry, *Mormon Insights*

Find more insights

Read or watch “[Like a Broken Vessel](#),” by Elder [Jeffrey R. Holland](#), to learn about what you can do when mental health issues seem too hard to bear.

Explore the Church's [mental health website](#) to find sources of help and support for yourself and for loved ones.