ForeWord Reviews

SELF-HELP

10 Steps to Taking Charge of Your Emotional Life: Overcoming Anxiety Distress and Depression Through Whole-Person Healing
Eve A. Wood
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Change happens continuously, but for those trying to control emotional ups and downs, finding a way to change negative behavior seems impossible to accomplish. Some people even sink so far into hopeless despair that they begin to experience symptoms of mental and physical illness that set their lives more firmly in stasis.

Those who try to alter emotional distress to a more positive outlook find that negative patterning is difficult to break. Anyone ready to explore the way out of a personal abyss should read this book. Their luck may well change by using this ten-step program, but the work won't be easy. The author asks readers to think deeply about themselves, to ponder questions and record answers until they begin to understand their stories and how they can experience life-affirming change.

A psychiatrist for almost twenty years, Wood has taught at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and serves as clinical associate professor of medicine at the University of Arizona Program in Integrative Medicine. An author of books, articles, columns, and self-help kits and speaker at workshops and conventions, she also hosts a weekly call-in radio show.

First, Wood asks readers to examine their lives to discover any medical conditions or chemical imbalances that might exacerbate distress. "You can learn amazing things about yourself when you take the time to visit your own history," she writes.

Although individuals can't control their genetic makeup, Wood says that they can choose how to live with it. This realization marks the beginning of emotional transformation.

Medication can help to stabilize conditions that might be blocking change. Working with a qualified physician is vital to finding the right drug and dosage for each individual. Wood explains complementary and alternative medicines of proven efficacy. “I always try to combine the lessons of ancient wisdom with the science of modern medicine,” she writes, “because I believe all disciplines contain offerings that can enhance our lives and our work.”

Step Five encourages readers to think about their true natures. This action-oriented step requires readers to think, write, reflect, and identify who they are. Seeking the truth of a person’s inner world is not easy. Throughout her book, Wood encourages readers by telling her own life-changing stories and revealing both strengths and weaknesses. She admits, “I’m deeply flawed and wildly successful!”

This book will make an invaluable difference to those willing to do the work required of them. With the author’s permission, the text could be used by other psychiatrists as they help and encourage clients, monitoring their progress through her ten-step program. Above all, individual perseverance is required, for, as Wood says, “Living authentically is an ongoing project, the work is never done.”

Margaret Cullison