



# **The Chemistry of Joy: A Three-Step Program for Overcoming Depression Through Western Science and Eastern Wisdom**

*Henry Emmons , Rachel Kranz*

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The classic book that *New York Times* bestselling author Dr. Larry Dossey called “a valuable guide for anyone wishing to find greater exuberance and fulfillment in their life,” *The Chemistry of Joy* offers a unique blend of Western science and Eastern philosophy to show you how to treat depression more naturally and effectively, and what you can do TODAY to create a happier, more fulfilling life for yourself.

*The Chemistry of Joy* presents Dr. Emmons’s natural approach to depression—supplemented with medication if necessary—combining the best of Western medicine and Eastern teaching to create your body’s own biochemistry of joy. Integrating Western brain chemistry, natural and Ayurvedic medicine, Buddhist psychology, and his own joyful heart techniques, Dr. Emmons creates a practical program for each of the three types of depression: anxious depression, agitated depression, and sluggish depression.

*The Chemistry of Joy* helps you to identify which type of depression you are experiencing and provides a specific diet and exercise plan to address it, as well as nutritional supplements and “psychology of mindfulness” exercises that can restore your body’s natural balance and energy. This flexible approach creates newfound joy for those whose lives have been touched by depression—and pathways for all who seek to actively improve their emotional lives.

## **The Chemistry of Joy: A Three-Step Program for Overcoming Depression Through Western Science and Eastern Wisdom Details**

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# **From Reader Review The Chemistry of Joy: A Three-Step Program for Overcoming Depression Through Western Science and Eastern Wisdom for online ebook**

## **Heather says**

I found this book helpful. It's not that I didn't know that I needed exercise, spirituality, & nutrition, but this book looks at depression from a western, ayurvedic/eastern & buddhist ways. I learned a lot about why I react to depression the way I do & how I can counteract.

I've already started some of his suggestions as I was reading it.

I found this book so useful, I bought a copy & plan to loan it to some friends who could use it.

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## **Melody says**

I've never read a book about depression like this. It's a blend of the typical stuff you're told on every blog and in every news article - sleep well, exercise, stop eating junk. The second half of the book is all about what type of depressed person you are and the things you can do to alleviate the pain. I like that there is acknowledgement of the various types of depression and how people respond to depression in a variety of ways. The way the author used his patients to tell stories was really interesting. I identified most with the 'grasping' section and the lethargic depression explainers. This book gives practical life advice on ways to break ruminating thoughts, identify what it is that triggers your depression, and how you can help yourself in a spiritual context. Sometimes it did feel like I was reading philosophical psycho-babble until I stopped judging it and started picking out the lines and sections that applied to me. This is technically Buddhism in practice, however I wasn't converted. Instead I was able to take what I needed and leave the rest. I got this from the library, but it's on my 'To Buy' list now.

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## **Julie Christine says**

I've just ordered a copy of this for my home library - it will be a reference I return to again and again. Thank you, Jessica and Elisabeth, for an excellent recommendation!

Pitta with a touch of Vata, Anger type who has experienced anxious and sluggish depression and healed without prescription medication, I felt the message of every chapter in this book. I have so much work ahead of me, but also a good foundation to continue inner growth and healing.

I've been swallowing a TBL/day of cod liver oil for the past 2 yrs and recently- last 6 weeks or so- fallen out of the daily habit. Back on the wagon- I know what this one simple routine has meant to my physical & mental health. Omega-3, baby!

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## **Amy says**

### **A hopeful look at a pathway out of depression**

Mental health is a topic of great interest to me due to personal experience with mental illness. I read this author's *The Chemistry of Calm* (his book about anxiety) last month as it applied more to my own personal experience at the time. I read a review somewhere that cited his *The Chemistry of Joy* as the better of the two books, and I have to agree with that reviewer. In my understanding and experience, anxiety and depression are bound up together. This book paves a bright and hopeful path using Western knowledge about mental health, Ayurvedic understanding, and Buddhist philosophical teachings to offer a three-pronged approach to healing. Some of the suggestions are a bit out of my comfort zone as a thoroughly Western thinker, but it has provided me much food for thought and a great sense of hopefulness, which is invaluable.

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## **Heid says**

Don't get me wrong, I am a HUGE fan of drugs, but this book has all the alternative stuff in one place, gives nice little boxes with how many and which B vitamins we all need (as well as a bunch of other odd oils and supplements to try for sleep and other good brain stuff) and its tone is no-nonsense and not too over-the-top positive for the typically skeptical low-serotonin type like myself. Oh, come on, read it!

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## **Julie says**

Highly recommended for anyone who has ever been depressed or known someone who is depressed.

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## **Gregory says**

Parts were usable, but about 2/3 of the way through it started to remind me of *What the Bleep Do We Know?*, and once he got into spiritual matters it felt very cultish. From there until the end I had to grit my teeth and bull my through it.

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## **Sarah says**

empowering!

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## **Mimi Somsanith says**

As the *Intuition* book describes the WHAT, this book explains the HOW to maintain a healthy self. The first section covers Western medicine such as noting your deficiencies in the "happy" chemical, the "energy" chemical, and/or the "motivation" chemical and how to rebalance according to your individual needs. Of

course, the author has scientific terms for these chemicals. The second section illustrates your persona as the air, fiery, or earth type. We all have some combination but there is one prominent type that resembles how we react to various food ingredients and how we find certain kinds of activities more agreeable. The third section is deep and may require a compelling thirst for knowledge to read through it. You'll learn some wisdom that you may not be ready to comply but know in your heart it's holistic and empowering. For me, I was glad to realize that we have options beyond our normal reactive responses for each frustration. Sometimes, we just need to be reminded.

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### **Sharon Miller says**

Practical and accessible, a very useful and helpful book.

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### **Erin Goettsch says**

Some parts of this make all the sense in the world: treating patients' overall wellness, as a whole person, instead of reducing them to a diagnosis, is so great. There should be more books about this.

But this particular book is problematic in a handful of ways. Primarily, the tone is condescending and edges dangerously close to blaming patients for causing their own depression by having poor overall health (while seeming blind to the idea that it's actually the inverse of that cause/effect in many cases). Also, his recommendations of the types/cases of "depression" to treat without medication don't seem to match with the medical definition of "depression" -- which in some places, he seems to imply that you don't need medication even if you have actual chronic depression (although he also specifically disclaims that in several spots too? is confusing).

When I can put aside those issues, though, I really did like SO much of this book. It is clear and presents helpful practical ideas for overall wellness, and understanding how the brain works (and crumples) in depression. The sections on seasonal/light cycles and vitamin/nutrition are particularly good. The bits on Buddhism and ayurveda didn't quite click with me, but that's not really my jam anyway.

Interesting read - just don't use it as actual medical treatment or a mental health plan.

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### **Elisabeth says**

This book has been recommended to me by almost every professor I've had in my graduate program, as well as an Ayurvedic practitioner I interviewed for a research project. I'm so glad I finally got around to reading it - it is excellent. Dr. Emmons focuses on depression and how to best cope with it and make yourself a "crucible for joy," with recommendations for diet, vitamin, mineral, and herbal supplements, as well as ways to treat depression from Ayurvedic and Buddhist perspectives. It's a very accessible read for people of all levels of interest in holistic health, and I've already purchased copies for several friends and family members. Whether one considers themselves clinically depressed or not, the dietary, lifestyle, and spiritual recommendations in this book can be life-changing. I've implemented several of the suggestions he makes in my own life, and have noticed a significant different in my energy level and mood.

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## Chris says

I know this is a resource I will go back to time and again. An excellent and comprehensive look at East/West remedies for depression. Emmons wasn't preachy and didn't lean one way or another. Great resource lists included as well.

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## Siel Ju says

“Allow yourself to become a crucible for the chemistry of joy.”

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First, an FYI: I'm not actually depressed! But I picked up this book after hearing it recommended on a podcast about happiness. The book is really just about nurturing habits that make you happier in general — through diet, exercise, sleep, relaxation techniques, and mindfulness practices. I finished it with a new resolution for myself: eat more salmon! (For omega 3s)

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## Jessica says

I recommend this book for anyone who copes with depression, esp. chronic depression, or who lives with a loved one who suffers from depression. Dr. Henry Emmons is a psychiatrist who combines Western medicine with nutrition, fitness and lifestyle choices and Eastern health philosophies. He explains how depression meds work and why they do not work for everyone, although he is quick to say many of his patients have success with meds and that readers should not stop taking medication without a doctor's supervision. Instead, readers can take his recommendations alongside their meds, or it is a useful book for those on medication breaks.

The first section of the book discusses different types of depression and the diet and exercise plan that might work for each, but these vary only slightly and are mostly common sense advice: lean protein, complex carbs, fresh food, moderate to intense activity. The second part of the book discusses Ayurvedic medicine, a system of traditional Indian medicine. He writes about three Ayurvedic types, how they correspond to types of depression, and how patients of each type can work to balance their brain chemistry. He also writes about Buddhist philosophy and meditation.

I like that Dr. Emmons encourages the reader to take small steps and make the changes she can, without absolving the person of responsibility for her own mental health. I am doing many of the things in the book and rereading passages for perspective. I suppose this review is dragging my personal life onto Goodreads but this book is so important that I feel it is worth it to get others to read it.

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