3-Day Rule Contingency Plan

"What do you know you need to do and not give yourself the option NOT to do?"

It's time to make yourself the priority. As described in the Mood Health Assessment, one of the most difficult challenges with depression is that it creeps up on you. You may feel sluggish and find yourself laying around more. Your concentration may start to diminish and routine tasks somehow seem more difficult.

By the time you realize that depression has a grip, you find yourself knee-deep in quicksand instead of ankle deep. The more you sink, the harder it becomes to escape.

The only way to regain your mood balance is to get into purposeful action. Your first line of defense is something called the "3-Day Rule." Down days happen with ongoing challenges or dreary weather. But, if you get to that third day, it's imperative to put yourself above all else by structuring your days and staying in motion.

Knowing that motivation is in short supply, it's vital to become your own parent by not giving yourself a choice to not do something. Exercise is essential, especially cardio. It will get your endorphins up and help you get your head straight.

Of course, proper sleep and nutrition matter, including hydration. However, a commonly overlooked factor to foster and ease recovery is to minimize stress and avoid negativity. We'll cover more about this for Being a Life Athlete as well as for Managing Energy.

Every day you let pass beyond the 3-Day Rule can take two more days to rebound. Day 4 may still be within your wherewithal to pull out of that quicksand before sinking too deep.

As much as you may want to isolate, it's important to reach out. Make someone you trust your accountability partner. It's also crucial to seek others who lift your spirits and avoid anyone who brings you down.

Part of that daily structure is to seek positivity. Consider watching comedies and listening to upbeat music and encouraging podcasts. Meditation and journaling can also help. Set phone alerts to be you taskmaster.

That's one plan. Now let's think through what works best for you. This doesn't have to be for full-on depression. It's essential for anyone to keep their spirits up. This can apply to anyone, regardless of whether they contend with depression. We all have down days.

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3-Day Rule Contingency Plan

Of course, there's no shame in having imbalanced brain chemistry and surely not when it comes to "environmental" stressors in challenging times.

Putting yourself first is NOT selfish. In fact, doing that is what helps you be at least closer to your best which enables you to give that of yourself.

Activity #1 (Time: 15 minutes)

Below is your "Quicksand Escape Plan." You know yourself. In the top section, it is essential to define [as precisely as possible] the circumstances to which you'll hold yourself accountable.

Next, complete the "Five Things About You" section by listing what you like most about yourself and your life.

Complete the remaining sections by referring to the "Coping Skills Menu" on the following page. Be as specific as possible. There's an additional section for anything else as well as one at the bottom for any additional notes. Keep this in a readily accessible location. Re-review it every 60-90 days with any updates.

Activity #2 (Time: 15 minutes)

Use a blank piece of paper (or your personal journal), be direct with yourself and answer:

- Might I suffer from some sort of mood disorder?
- Should I consult a professional?
- Am I resistant to taking medication that will help me feel better?
  - If so, how can I overcome that self-stigma?
- Who in my life can be part of my "safety net" to place my trust and lift me up?
- Is there someone close to me who needs a true friend to help them get help?
- Am I that friend to be part of their "safety net"? Might they need me to reach out?

If you or someone close to you is in trouble or headed for it, please take charge and seek help for everyone's benefit. Patience, persistence and self-compassion are vital to core health. Sometimes there's just no other way but through. You'll make it just like always.

Note: *Available on my site is an interview with a child psychologist about how to talk with kids about suicide.*

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LIFE UPGRADE

QUICKSAND ESCAPE PLAN

(IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: BUST YOUR @$$)

Define circumstances/behaviors that require you to get into action:

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES	EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	REMINDERS
		Five Things About You
•|	•|	•|
•|	•|	•|
•|	•|	•|
•|	•|	•|
•|	•|	•|
SPIRITUAL PRACTICES	**WHAT ELSE?**	**CRISIS PLAN**
		Who will you call?
•|	•|	•|
•|	•|	•|
•|	•|	• 1-800-273-TALK (8255) • mattzinman.com/moodhealth

NOTES:

DISCLAIMER: *This plan of action is not intended to provide a psychological or psychiatric diagnosis or treatment. Your interpretation of this content does not constitute a professional counseling or coaching relationship.*

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Coping Skills Menu

Physical	Emotional	Mental
• Run / Bike (sweat) • Lift weights • Walk/Hike (in nature) • Play sports • Gentle stretching • Swim • Dance • Get a massage • Clean • Martial arts/punching bag • Garden / Plant flowers • Hot bath/shower • Stress/Tennis ball • Eat/drink healthfully • Visit somewhere new • Redecorate / remodel • Tear up old magazines • Hug someone • Have sex (if positive)	• Laugh / make others laugh • Positive affirmations(cards) • Talk to an uplifting friend • Interact with children/pets • Play/Listen to music • Look at photo albums • Visualize those you love • Watch home videos • Take pictures/shoot videos • Cry • Scream/Yell (into pillow) • List Pros/Cons for whatever • Write letters (maybe shred) • Sing • Make others feel good • Buy yourself something nice • Pamper self (manicure) • Smile in the mirror • Hold sentimental object	• Journaling (track mood) • Read positive content • Make a new To-Do list • Rest / Restorative Nap • Watch YouTube videos • Watch movie/TV comedies • Listen to positive podcasts • Visit positive websites • Write a story • Think of favorite memories • Plan a vacation • Candles / Aromatherapy • Puzzles/Crosswords • Do crafts / draw / paint • Play cards/online games • Visualize a stop sign • Cook / Bake • Count backwards from 100 • Hyper-focus on an object
Spiritual	**Miscellaneous**	**Crisis**
• Deep breathing • Meditation (body scan) • Do Yoga • Practice mindfulness • Gratitude exercises • Visualize (favorite places) • Pray / place of worship • Be in nature (picnic) • Watch clouds/trees blow • Watch fish swim/birds fly	• Abstain from caffeine • Abstain from alcohol/drugs • Volunteer • Finish a task/chore • See photo of self as child • Work on your vision board • Meet someone new • Organize something • Blow bubbles • Hold a baby	• Family/Friends (safety net) • See a therapist • Do group therapy • Psychiatrist • Hotline / 911 • Telehealth consult • Crisis team / ER • 1-800-273-TALK (8255) • mattzinman.com/mood-health

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