

Dealing with health issues

☆ The day comes when we all must deal with the loss of our good health—and we never know when that day will be.

For many people, dealing with major health issues can be perhaps the most difficult struggle we ever face.

♥ There's no way to overstate how difficult health problems can be, because they can change everything about your life, destroy your way of life, drastically affect your job and your relationships and your ability to do many of the things that you're used to doing.

The range of health issues is too wide to make a list, but you know them already: cancer, diabetes, dementia, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, paralysis and amputation, Lupus, bipolar disorder and OCD, and on and on.

♥ How are we to cope with these nearly unsolvable problems? And what if a family member has one—how do we cope with that difficulty?

I won't go into ways to treat the diseases, to exercise or eat healthy or get medical treatment. This isn't a book about that.

I also won't pretend that this short chapter will dissolve all your problems if you're dealing with an illness,

or a loved one's illness. All I hope to provide is a strategy for coping.

First steps

One of the most important steps as you get started with coping is to take care of yourself. Comfort yourself and give yourself compassion, and take steps to form healthy habits that will put you in a good position to deal with the changes that are happening. Use the habits method in this book to form healthy eating habits, one at a time, along with regular exercise and perhaps yoga or meditation. Consider this a part of taking care of yourself.

♥ Finding support from family, close friends, or a support group is also an important part of taking care of yourself.

☆ Talking to people about what you're going through, and learning to communicate your feelings, is an important coping mechanism. It's also crucial to be able to communicate with people in your life about your feelings about how the illness is affecting your relationship, without blaming any of them. Try to direct feelings at the disease and not the other person.

♥ Finding others who are going through similar experiences, perhaps in an online support group, can help you feel less alone.

Finding Zen

♥ Dealing with your resistance, frustration, and emotional suffering is one of the most important strategies you can use for coping with an illness. We'll take a look at how the Zen Habits Method can help.

♥ Mindfully turn to your feelings and accept that they are a part of your experience, though each feeling is temporary, only a passing cloud. See the suffering that you're experiencing, and see the ideal that you are attached to that is causing the suffering: the ideal of being the Self that is healthy and free of pain, which is a Self that no longer exists in reality. See that your Childish Mind, which wants its way, really wants this ideal to be true, and is angry, frustrated, depressed, upset that it can't have this ideal.

♥ Loosen your attachment to this ideal, which is causing you suffering on top of the actual physical pain and discomfort from the disease. Let your tightness around this attachment melt a little at a time. Let go of your previous identity, which no longer exists, and see your current Self for who you are, and your current reality as it is.

♥ Embrace the changing nature of your Self, which was never an unchanging statue but always in flux, always learning and growing and renewing. This changing nature is beautiful and means that you can reinvent yourself now and in the coming months. Know that the disease isn't your identity, but a part of your environment, just a phenomena that is happening around you.

See the changing nature of your life, and appreciate this life you have in front of you—in reality, not in some ideal. Find gratitude for this life. ♥

♥ How can you find gratitude when you are sick and in pain? That's extremely difficult, but there are things to be grateful for: that you have others in your life who love you, that you can still experience music and food and art and film and books and nature, that you can still learn and create, that you are alive.

♥ Finding gratitude and appreciating the reality of your life isn't easy, but this process will help during this difficult time in your life. And perhaps you'll find a way to make the most of what life you do have left. ♥

Frustrations w/
others

· The Zen Habits Method ·

♡ For dealing with any life changes, loss, illness, frustrations with others, unhappiness with ourselves:

1. SPOTLIGHT:

♡ Be mindfully in the moment.

2. PLUM BLOSSOMS:

♡ See everything as change (impermanence), and embrace it.

3. CREATE A SPACE:

♡ Deal with things as they come, one at a time.

4. MIND MOVIE:

♡ Don't be attached to expectations and ideals.

5. GROW A PLANT:

♡ Focus on Intentions, without attachment to Outcomes.

6. CHILDISH MIND:

♡ Let go of the Self that wants the ideals.

7. SEE THE MOUNTAINS:

♡ With Appreciation and Gratitude.

8. DEWLIKE LIFE:

♡ Don't waste a moment.

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ZEN HABITS

♡ Every Day - ask:

- What is suffering in my life?

- When does it start?

- Investigate!

♡ am I cultivating a happy mind?

♡ Remember - Clara has mental/emotional illness/limitations - she cannot respond effectively - it will

♡ - my intention is to be helpful and kind

♡ offer service to Clara + Herb