

How to Find A Ray of Hope When Your Skies Are Filled with Dark Clouds by Carole Lieberman, M.D.

We're told to think positively when life gets us down, to make lemonade out of lemons. But it's gotten increasingly more difficult, as the world's problems keep knocking at our door. We don't want to answer. We hope that they'll just go away. But sometimes problems find a way to get in through the cracks. And the more sensitive our soul, the more we are affected—whether it's the global economy or a sick friend, a senseless shooting, or a break-up with our lover. Sometimes the darkness feels overwhelming.

The more you let these dark thoughts take over your mind, the harder it is to see the light. The key is to try to stop your descent into the abyss before reaching the bottom step. Here are some ways to do this:

Don't underestimate the power of beauty. Surround yourself with beautiful colors, music and nature.

Find an animal to love. Whether you can care for a horse or only a hamster, the bond you create with another living thing—one who depends upon your nurturance to live—is magical. The love you get back is immeasurable.

Reach out. This is often the hardest, but the most crucial step. When darkness has taken over your mind, you feel that you don't deserve help, or that no one could understand you or "fix" you, or would want to help. But this is only a trick that your mind is playing on you. There are people who care about you and want to help take away your pain: your family, friends, church or synagogue, self-help groups, and mental health professionals. You need to take a leap of faith and give them a chance, before the light is snuffed out.

Remember that everyone has a gift to give the world. If you hide in the shadows, you are depriving the world of your gift. Do something every day to make the world a better place, whether it's writing a song or smiling at your neighbor, volunteering at the local food pantry, or collecting litter at the local park, working to end hunger, or promoting peace. Imagine a world where each person did one good thing every day. All the dark clouds would be dispelled by rays of hope—a veritable rainbow of hope.

Now go out and make it happen!

Carole Lieberman, M.D. is a psychiatrist, bestselling author and talk show host. A three-time Emmy award-winner, her passion is helping people stay sane in an increasingly insane world. She does this with her books, media commentary, speaking engagements, and by whatever other means the universe sends her way. You may also recognize her from frequent appearances on Fox News, CNN, BBC, The Today Show, Good Morning America, Court TV, Entertainment Tonight and many more. Find her online at: <http://www.drcarole.com>.