

## FEELINGS OF REJECTION

Everyone feels the pain of rejection once in a while, not only people who live with mental health challenges. But do you think the problem occurs more frequently in those with such problems? I very much suspect it is. The stigma society has towards people who live with illnesses like ours makes feelings of rejection pretty well inescapable.

- What do you think?

But I suspect it's more than just the stigma that's at fault. I suspect it's the illness itself that causes us to easily feel rejected even when there is no *real* rejection, but only *perceived* rejection. (And perceived rejection hurts just as much as the real thing.)

Maybe the way we are – because of our neediness, because of our response to the world – we *are* hard to deal with and are *actually* rejected.

These are some of the thoughts that came to me as I grappled with the feelings myself.

WHY DO WE EXPERIENCE FEELINGS OF REJECTION? Might it be due to:

- Oversensitivity because of our mood disorder?
- Being less approachable because we're depressed and withdrawn?
- Our own inappropriate actions because of our mood disorder?

Or is there a greater possibility of reading things negatively because of our susceptibility to depression? Being ignored or rejected might only be perceived and not the reality at all. People don't always know our needs or what we're feeling. And we don't know what the people who we feel are rejecting us might be going through or thinking.

And yet, how we would at such times love for someone to say hello to us! During times we're most needy we often receive the least attention. It takes a very compassionate, understanding and caring person to draw us out at times like that. Not everyone has that gift.

I'm a fairly outgoing person and yet, I often feel rejected or ignored in social situations. And how that hurts! It leads me to doubting my likeability. Are people uncomfortable talking to me because of what they know about me? Have I been too open about what I'm dealing with? At times like this I go home with a very lonely feeling, a blanket of gloom over me that I can't easily escape.

## WHAT CAN WE DO WITH THIS PAIN?

- Talk to one or two people close to you. It helps make the pain more bearable.
- Wait it out, trying to realize that people do love you and just don't understand your needs of the moment.
- Try to bring to mind times when you've felt surrounded by love.
- Try to remember that people have limitations.
- Try not to focus on it too much, making it a bigger deal than it is.
- Know that the pain *will* wear off.

## SOME WAYS TO AVOID THE PAIN OF REJECTION:

- When you are feeling well and strong – confident about yourself – develop friendships. When you come to trust a person and find them compassionate, share the problems you deal with now and then, so they will come to understand you better. At the same time, get to know this person and their needs as well.
- In social situations, for example, reach out to others who you know have health problems. Ask how they're doing. Show an interest. Be there for them.
- When you're feeling down, find a person with whom you've built a trusting relationship and tell them how you're feeling. Let them know your need. Ask for prayer. Come right out and ask them for a hug.

It is said that God allows pain to test us. To bring us back to Himself.

- How do you feel about that? Have you experienced that?

Words of wisdom from a friend:

“Be who you are, who God made you to be, and know who you are in His eyes. You are a person of great value and worth to God...ultimately what matters most is not what I think, or even what you think or others, but what God thinks. His first and continual and last thoughts of us are overflowing with love and grace.”