



# Careletter

## Encouragement for TREK Wives | WEEK 5

### Verse of the Week

I waited patiently for the LORD to help me, and He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.

Psalm 40:1-2 NLT

### A Note from Melissa

I am an optimistic, glass half-full kind of person. I can usually find a positive side to most situations. That was my entire life's experience, until the discovery of my husband's sexual addiction. In one fell swoop, we lost everything—our jobs, our home, our friends. At the time we were missionaries in Kenya, and I was 39 weeks pregnant with our second child. My husband was sent to a treatment center, and I stayed behind to have a baby, pack up, and say good-bye. I was in survival mode, just doing the next thing, pushing all the feels down. When I finally joined Troy in the States, my heart couldn't hold itself together anymore. A black cloud engulfed me, and no matter what I did, I couldn't seem to shake it. I talked to God about it, talked to my therapist about it, and worked on good self-care. It was the first time I had ever experienced depression. For me, it lasted about three months. Fortunately, it was mild enough that I was able to recover from it without medication, but the experience taught me a thing or two about what emotional pain can do to the human brain and body.

If you are feeling depressed, you are not alone. I encourage you to read the **Help For Healing** section of this careletter for some ideas on ways you can recover from depression and also gain a better understanding of when you may need a medical intervention to help you get back on track.

Asking God to comfort you, Melissa

## TREK Program Information

Since a primary goal of the TREK program is for men to be honest with themselves and others about the ways they have acted out in their addiction, one of the assignments the men complete weekly is called a **Moral Inventory (MI)**. In each inventory, the men choose a time when they acted in a way that caused them great shame and/or harm to themselves or others. They briefly describe the event and then evaluate what they were feeling before they made the choice, what they were feeling while they were doing the behavior, and what they felt afterwards. Then they list the consequences that resulted from their actions. Finally, they write about changes they want to make moving forward and resources they can use to make better choices in the future. Every Thursday, men present their moral inventories to the whole group, and with the help of one of our therapists, process their shame and regret with each other as well as gain insight about their emotional triggers.



Many married men in the program will also prepare for a **Therapeutic Disclosure Process** with their wives. This is a three-part process that takes place over several weeks, in either on-line or in person sessions. Present in each session is the client and his primary therapist, the wife and her primary therapist if possible, and the HopeQuest spouse-supporting therapist. The first session is the **Disclosure** session, in which the client discloses ways he has betrayed his wife during the marriage. His wife is able to ask questions and get clarification on what the client has done. The goal of this session is for the client to acknowledge and take ownership for the ways he has harmed his wife in his addiction and for the spouse to have the information she needs to make an informed decision about the relationship. The second session is the **Emotional Impact** session, in which the wife reads an emotional impact letter to her husband, describing how his actions have impacted her emotionally, physically, sexually, relationally, and spiritually. The final session of the process is the **Emotional Restitution** session, in which the client reads a letter acknowledging the hurts he has caused and validating his wife's experience.

## Help For Healing

Depression is a common side-effect of living with someone in active addiction. It is actually a physiological condition, meaning that your brain and your body are no longer functioning as they should. Symptoms of depression include feeling empty or hopeless, feeling worthless, feeling apathetic and having no interest in things that once brought you joy or pleasure, overwhelming fatigue and lack of energy, insomnia, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, eating disruption—either because of lack of appetite or overeating, isolating yourself from others, and thoughts of death or suicide. Many people who are depressed don't necessarily have a plan to hurt themselves, but they often find themselves wishing they were dead or thinking it would be easier if they were dead.

**Mild depression** (experiencing a few of the symptoms I've listed above) can be navigated with good emotional support, healthy habits, and therapy. **Major depression** (experiencing most of the symptoms consistently for

two weeks or more) needs all these things plus medication. While anxiety is uncomfortable, depression can kill you if it goes untreated.

If you believe you are depressed, talk to your therapist about it. Your therapist may recommend that you see your primary physician or a psychiatrist, depending on how severe your depression is or if you have other symptoms that need the care of a specialist. You can support your recovery from depression by limiting sugar, eating lots of green vegetables and lean proteins, drinking at least 64 ounces of water a day, doing 30 minutes of aerobic activity every day, practicing gratitude, establishing a consistent bedtime and wake time, and spending time with safe friends.



## Self-Care Strategies

How are you doing at self-care? Here are suggestions to try this week.

- **Be intentional about minimizing triggers.** Take a break from Facebook and other social media. Avoid conversations with unsafe or nosy people. Stop searching for evidence of your husband's behaviors. Identify your triggers and attempt to protect yourself from situations that will increase your anxiety.
- **Do something kind for your body.** If you have been sitting, take a walk. If you are weary, take a nap. Drink some water. Take a long shower or bath.
- **Give yourself a break.** Call it a successful day if you get one thing done on your to do list. There is grace for your lack of energy and motivation. Be kind to yourself.
- **Enjoy a favorite dessert with a friend or family member.** Take some time to appreciate the sweet things in life.
- **Sing along with your favorite music.** Dancing gets you bonus points!
- **Buy yourself flowers or a flowering plant.** Put your flowers where you can see them often and appreciate their beauty.
- **Pray a favorite psalm to God.** Find a psalm that matches your current emotions, personalize it, and read it aloud as a prayer to God. (Some of my favorites are Psalm 23, Psalm 42, Psalm 116, Psalm 139, and Psalm 143.)

