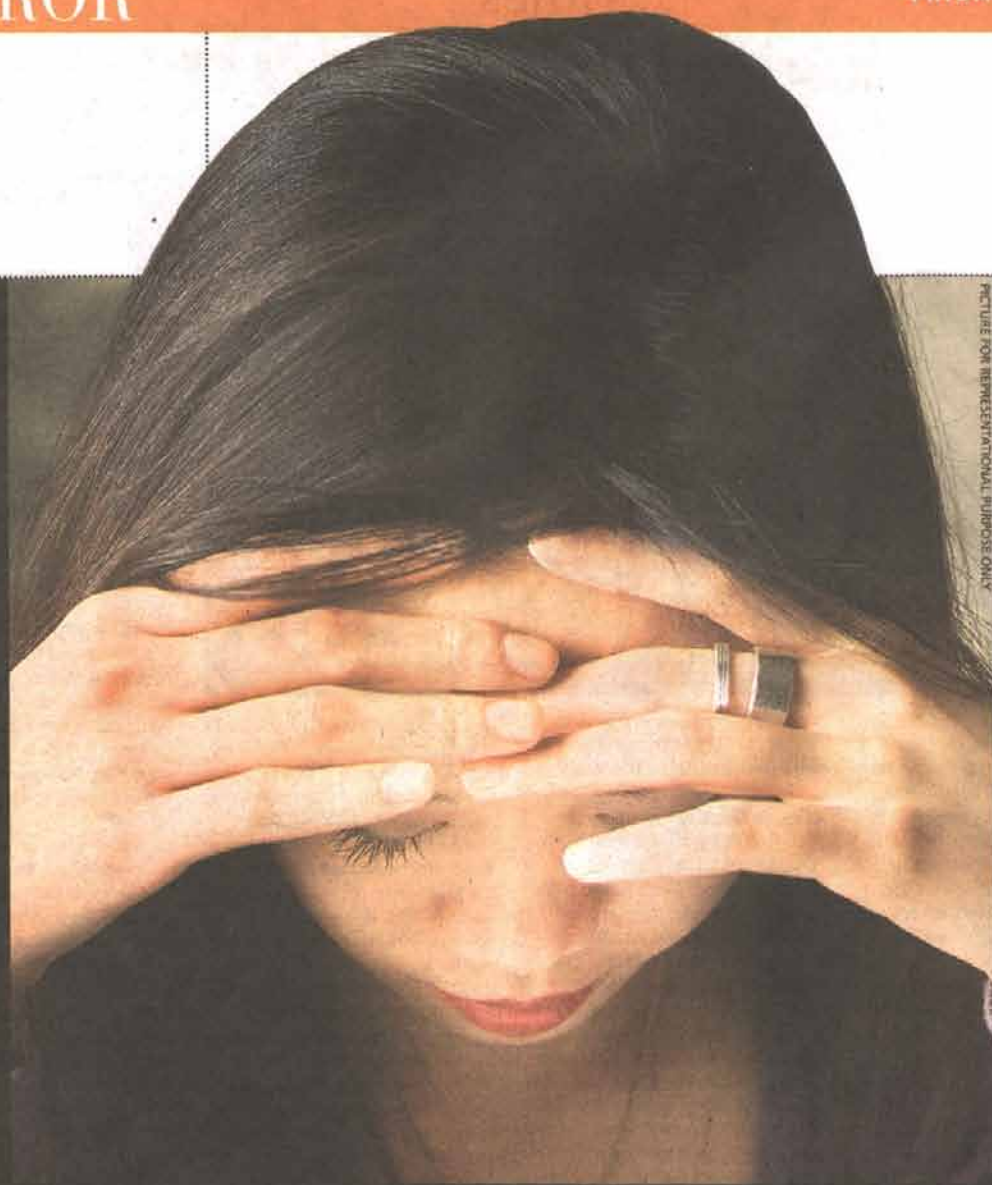


you



In school, we had studied *ash-tanga* yoga which led greatly to all-round development. But I had no clue that when faced with the real pitfalls of life, yoga would cure my 'severe and recurring clinical depression' — for good!

RELATIONSHIP WOES

I've always been an outwardly happy person, but crushing blows from repeated failed relationships had left me feeling churned inside out. At 22, I was definitely sinking, compounded by the pain and lack of comprehension at how things had turned out. I'd spend hours weeping; I would want to get home, just to lock myself in the bedroom and sob, hoping my broken heart would heal. As years passed, my general levels of clarity went down drastically, something my family noticed but couldn't figure out exactly why.

Soon, I started regressing into someone totally unreliable. I found every task unbelievably tedious — even a trip to a shop down the road seemed challenging. People my age were finding jobs and signing up for courses, my years were slipping by. I finally took up a job, only to quit within a fortnight claiming I wasn't in the 'right frame of mind' to work. Truth was, I was simply not capable of handling responsibilities. Yet I felt I would be out of this 'phase'.

Meanwhile, the weeping got worse and I became emotionally fragile; I could no longer make any new friendships. Physical conditions included a desire to sleep all the time and 'twitching' or sudden muscular jerks frequently.

HELP AT HAND

Fortunately when things just seemed to go out of hand (thoughts of death were clogging my mind), I approached a wonderful counsellor, who suspected I was suffering from clinical depression — something even cognitive tests confirmed. Depression had occurred, she explained, as continuous grieving had changed the natural production of serotonin, the happy chemical in the brain. I needed a course of anti-depressants called SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) to remedy it. The word 'anti-depressants' worried me, especially its side-effects, but it was a relief to get diagnosed since it meant I understood what I was going through and could find a cure! I started with the medication.

SQUARE ONE

The results were immediate.

I WAS 22, DEPRESSED, UNTIL...

A *Mirror* reader recounts her journey through clinical depression and her rejoice at a permanent cure through yoga

Within four days I started feeling 'normal' — I hadn't been myself for eons; it felt like getting a new life! Two months later I was back, with a steady job and was going from strength to strength.

Unfortunately, this wasn't the end of my demons. Over a year later a stressful phase triggered the old symptoms. When I consulted my counsellor, the horror of my depression struck me. Since it was 'severe and recurring', it meant I was prone to it and it had re-occurred. Meaning, recourse to anti-depressants whenever it occurred since it was a life-long ailment. However, I was convinced that there had to be a permanent solution to this.

MIRACLES DO OCCUR

Finally, I found an answer to my stress — a column by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev in the Speaking Tree Column of the *Times of India* where he spoke about a technique to create a 'favourable Inner Climate' through yoga, so that no matter what was happening externally, internally you would be peaceful. After all, as he said, unless you are happy, you cannot be of use to the world. I signed up for the Inner Engineering programme and from then there's been no looking back.

Through a process of simple *asanas*, *pranayams* and AUM chanting called the *Shambhavi Maha Mudra* I learnt to leave my problems far behind.

Now, depression is a distant memory that I recall only when I read about people committing suicide. If only everyone could do the right form of yoga there would be no more depression, no more suicide.

I believe that those who are facing personal battles, like me, need not feel ashamed; help is out there. Use this tool that has shielded me from external situations along my path.

FACT FILE

According to World Health Organisation (WHO) Depression will be the second largest killer after heart disease by 2020 - and studies show depression is a contributory factor to fatal coronary disease. Fifteen per cent of depressed people will commit suicide.