

# BREAK FREE

with

**OSCAR BAMUHIGIRE**

## I quit drinking but I am now depressed

**Q:** I have been sober for some years. I to quit but I suffer from depression. Despite the fact that I have taken antidepressants for months now, my condition has not improved. What can I do to get better?

**David, Kampala**

**A:** Dear David, From experience I would say that one of the most common causes of treatment failure among people suffering from depression, is their tendency to think that medication alone can fix their problem. What happens is that such people will take their medication, but make no serious effort to change their ways or thinking.

Just like alcoholism, depression is a disease of the body and mind. The way you think greatly determines how you feel. Most people suffering from depression also have a problem with the way they think and behave.

In order to fully recover, you need to learn how to think differently.

The first thing you have to learn is to give yourself a pat on the back for each day you stay sober. . Very often, people who suffer from depression tend to overlook their own achievements, and focus on their failures. This is also worsened by the fact that, they may have friends who do not think much of their achievements. Learn to look at your achievements both great and small, as often as possible.

Most addicts who get sober on their own, tend to relapse when they suffer from depression, because they lack social support. It is very important that you join a self-help group such as Alcoholics Anonymous, which can offer you the social support that you need to overcome your depression. . It is impossible to maintain your mental health on your own.

Another common problem with people who suffer

from depression is that they procrastinate over implementing what they learn from counselling.

But a very simple thing like regular exercise can help to treat or prevent depression. That is according to a 2017 study published in *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 2017, "Regular leisure-time exercise of any intensity provides protection against future depression but not anxiety."

According to the study, just an hour of exercise a week can prevent depression. The researchers went ahead to explain that, those who do not exercise are almost twice as likely to suffer with depression, compared to those who exercise for as little as one to two hours a week! The small changes one makes in their life, eventually make a big difference.

**Oscar has about 20 years of continuous sobriety and 18 years experience as an addiction counsellor**