



## **I'm OK Feeling Low for a While**

***Preamble:** There is a wonderful and practical new body of psychology largely led by Russ Harris, called ACT. It talks about focusing on thoughts that are **helpful**. It's not a problem being up or down. It's part of the diverse range of human experience.*

*ACT addresses focusing on thought that are helpful. The following activities draw on this body of work.*

*We suggest you read a great book called **The Happiness Trap** by Russ Harris.*

It's natural to be overwhelmed by 'low feelings' from time to time and it's important to accept your feelings – but you certainly shouldn't be at their mercy.

Next time you catch yourself feeling depressed, decide on a set period of time to experience that feeling fully. It could be 5, 10, or even 30 minutes. Set a timer, and for that amount of time, truly let yourself wallow in your feelings. You can write, yell, talk, or do anything else that lets you feel everything you need to feel.

When the timer goes off, however, it's time to stop. Of course your feelings won't immediately go away, but you'll stop focusing on the negative and do something constructive or practical.

In addition, every time you use this timer activity, be sure to take 5 minutes afterwards to check in with yourself. Note what triggered your feelings of depression, how long you set the timer for, what you did, and how you felt afterwards.

Over time, you'll start to see patterns – and hopefully, you'll be able to avoid the triggers, shorten the amount of time you need to be depressed, and feel better afterwards.