

Case study 1 – Rachel Lambarth

Rachel is a 32 year old woman who has been diagnosed with clinical depression. She works for a boss who does not value her and makes her do unpaid overtime. She would like to be a freelance photographer and work for herself, but lacks the confidence to leave or stand up to him.

She is unhappy in her current relationship. She has lots of friends but since becoming depressed hardly ever sees them as she feels so down. She has stopped running, which she used to love, and has lost her appetite. She panics a lot about her age and how she is getting older (although she is only 32!).

She is quite a high-achiever but seems to have forgotten her past successes and concentrates instead on all the failures in her life.

Rachel Lambarth

Need	Where I am now	Score	I'd like to be...	Steps I can take	I'll have got there when...
1 Attention	I don't feel like I am properly getting attention from my partner, or valued at all at work. Hardly have energy to socialise anymore.	5	In a satisfying relationship, seeing my friends more often.	Develop intimacy with my partner by going for walks on the beach together etc. Try and see my friends again by calling them then work up to going out for coffee etc	When I feel happier
2 Mind/body	I have stopped running although I used to love it. I don't have much of an appetite. Loss of libido.	4	Running again and enjoying it. Eating again.	Now: I will start going for a walk everyday. I will eat healthy nourishing food to give me long lasting energy. Later: I will turn my walks into runs. Future: I will run several times a week, like I used to.	When I enjoy running and eating again. When I stop worrying I should be running and eating and actually do it
3 Security	Not an issue for me.	10			
4 Community	I don't really worry about this.	8			
5 Challenge	Not an issue for me.	10			
6 Intimacy	I do not feel intimate with my partner, or with my friends, anymore.	4	Having moments of intimacy (as well as moments of light hearted fun) with my friends.	Now: Start meeting a few friends for coffee again, organise to do intimate things with my partner again like walks on the beach. Later: Keep in touch with friends regularly by doing things like having a weekly movie night or coffee date.	When I don't feel lonely anymore.
7 Control	I do not feel in control as I am aging all the time. My boss is always taking advantage of me by asking me to work overtime without pay.	2	I'd like to feel that work doesn't control me and that my own time is my own.	Now: I will do relaxation exercises to calm me down about my worries of getting older. I will role-play telling my boss I will only work overtime when I can and for pay. Later: I will not dwell too long on people treating me badly in the future but stand up for myself quickly before it becomes a pattern.	When I feel better about all these stresses.
8 Status	This is not an issue for me.	8			
9 Meaning	I have goals but am too exhausted to try and meet them and feel I will fail anyway, so what's the point?	3	Working as a freelance photographer instead of for the company I work for now.	Now: Take a couple of photos a week. Challenge my black-and-white thinking about how I 'can't do anything' as I have had lots of success in my life in the past. Later: Keep taking photos in my own time to build a portfolio, to show myself I can do it. Look back over my list of achievements to remind myself of what I can do.	When I believe I can achieve things again

Mark's commentary on Rachel's situation

Rachel's life clearly hasn't been working for her. She is taken advantage of at work, is not really fulfilled in her job anyway, and has become isolated. She has stopped running and lost her appetite, which are typical signs that depression has a negative impact on physical motivation. She is also unhappy in her relationship. The attention she gets (and perhaps gives to) her boyfriend isn't good quality and her need for emotional intimacy doesn't seem to be being met.

It's worth remembering that it's not these issues in themselves that caused her depression, but her **ruminatio**n about them and the fact that they are unresolved.

Rachel feels that safety and security are not an issue for her, but then says she feels powerless in her life, suggesting that she doesn't feel too secure. She explicitly states she feels too exhausted to pursue constructive goals and feels hopeless about making plans anyway. Although only 32, she feels she is already 'getting old'. Depression certainly can make people feel older than their years. Ultimately she wants to work independently as a photographer. Rachel mentions that she wants a satisfying and fulfilling relationship so we need to help her build or recapture better intimacy with her partner. She has a fairly clear idea of what she needs, and has also written positive steps she needs to take to get there – a very encouraging sign that she can at least see a realistic and measurable way forward.