

# **Depression 101: How I Came Back from the Brink of Despair and Hopelessness**

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One thing for sure, depression does not discriminate! It can strike anyone at any moment! Whether you are a movie star or politician, man or woman, black or white, young or old – it doesn't matter. At some point of your life you might find yourself depressed.

I am writing this article to tell my story of depression and how I was able to find my way back from the brink of despair and hopelessness so that I might help others suffering at this time.

Depression is described as a mental state characterized by a gloomy sense of inadequacy and a despondent lack of activity.

Some people described depression as if they are living in a glass house and life continues to go on around them but they cannot participate. Others have described it as if they were lost in a maze that they could not find their way out of. For me it was like living in a cave, you reach out and all you can feel is deep, dark, dead air.

Nowadays because of the economy, many people will find themselves depressed. For many it will be because of the loss of a home, the loss of a job, the loss of their health, and the loss of a spouse or loved one.

If you find yourself depressed then you have only two choices to make: 1) Sink deeper into despair and hopelessness and risk being hospitalized or worse, or 2) Take some type of action in your life and restore your life to some sense of normalcy.

Taking some type of action in your life will be the first step to restoring your life to some sense of normalcy. Actions alleviate fear and often people who are depressed are fearful! Fear is described as a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined – it is the feeling or condition of being afraid.

When seeking out supporters don't think immediate family members will be the only people that can bring you back to your old self again. Sometimes it can be your friends! For me it was my advocate friends who surrounded and supported me by bringing helpful information into my circle.

You do not want to surround yourself with people feeding you bad information if you are depressed; hearing urban legends, old wives tales, and community myths can be detrimental to a person who is depressed, so you must be vigilant of your surroundings.

Most people who go through depression think of themselves as victims. There are 3 stages in which any victim must pass through in order to come back from the brink of despair and hopelessness. These are: 1) the victim stage, 2) the survivor stage, and 3) the empowerment stage.

### **VICTIM STAGE:**

Being a victim means your power has been taken away. It should be your goal to figure out how to get your power back! What actions do you need to take to get your power back!

There are many victims out there such as: 1) Victims of this economy, 2) Victims of domestic violence, 3) Victim of incest or rape, 4) Workplace abuse victims, and 5) Victims of society.

For me, I was a victim of workplace abuse. I found working in a male-dominated industry where many unlawful workplace practices occurred on a daily basis was very harmful to my well-being (RE: The Cathy Harris Story (<http://www.thecathyharristory.com>)). Workplace abuse is designed to control and make employees submissive through fear, humiliation, and verbal put downs.

Most victims in the workplace get depressed when the abuse first starts but for many it comes after they chose to fight back or file a complaint. For me taking action and fighting back was what ultimately gave me my power back.

The media enjoys using words like "victim" but you want to be careful because as long as you think of yourself as a victim, you will remain a victim. It should be your goal to keep moving forward and leave that victim mentally behind.

Moving on sometimes means asking for help! Remember asking for help doesn't mean you are weak. It simply means you want to remain strong. So reach out to others and ask for help!

For some who are severely depressed, they might need to work with professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and mental health therapists which will sometimes consist of working in support groups.

Many times professionals will put you on anti-depressant medications. Sometimes in order to remain in the workplace, you will be required to bring in a doctor's note to prove you are under the care of these professionals; otherwise you will be forced out of the workplace on UNPAID stress leave.

Even if you are prescribed anti-depressant medication, it doesn't mean you have to take the medication but you have to keep your appointments in order to stay on the job.

Most people who work with professionals to come back from the brink of despair will feel ashamed and will try to keep it from their coworkers, friends and even family. It is nothing to be ashamed of. In the workplace, you should seek these professionals out early on before you are forced out of the workplace and left without any type of health insurance. That's a very bad place to be!

I wasn't ashamed of working with professionals or going on Zoloft, an anti-depressant medication. However, if I knew then what I know now, I would have sought out more natural remedies from health food stores.

I would have chosen to change my diet to a healthier raw organic diet, take supplements such as St. John's Wort which improves your mood naturally without side-effects, Omega 3 which gives you that calming effect, B-vitamins for the nervous system, etc., get more exercise and try to get more sleep.

Eating green foods releases serotonin and exercising releases endorphins which makes your body feel good which are all natural remedies to fighting depression. You can also read "***Top 12 Health Tips to Take to Start Feeling Better in 30 Days***" ([www.howtotakecontrol.com/series3.html](http://www.howtotakecontrol.com/series3.html)).

When you are depressed and go on anti-depressant medications there are side-effects that you will experience. Three of these side-effects includes: 1) Your actions slowing down from your speech to your physical capabilities, 2) Anti-depressant medications will also cause memory loss, and 3) Any prolonged use of any medication will clog your organs causing you to eventually feel weak, sluggish and run-down.

## **SURVIVOR STAGE:**

Choosing to move forward from being a victim to being a survivor will be a significant step in your life. Life is about choices and if you pick the wrong choice then you will suffer the consequences.

After being on unpaid stress leave and medication for one year, I realized I wanted to take control of my life so I slowly took myself off the medication and returned to work.

After coming off the medication, to get back to my old self again, I started "mediating daily" which can heal your mind and body. I also chose to work with a speech coach to prepare myself for a speaking and writing career.

Just because you are depressed, it doesn't mean that your life is over. What it does mean is that it is time for you to regroup and come out fighting. We all are a "work in progress." But remember the longer you are depressed chances are the harder it will be for you to spring back. So decide what type of action you will need to take to get back to your old self again.

For most people you will have no other choice - you either 'sink' or 'swim.' Some people however will be more resilient than others because of their upbringing or other experiences they have had in their lives, so they will have an easier time bouncing back.

Growing up with 8 siblings made me a resilient person early on in life. I had no voice in my childhood home so when I was picked on - it made me develop a thick backbone.

### **EMPOWERMENT STAGE:**

When you have left the victimhood mentally behind and become a survivor you will know it. Many will have a compelling story to tell. Others will hear about your trials and tribulations and start to reach out to you. Then you will be in the position to empower them!

Remember people who have gone through challenges in life are more equipped to handle life's challenges and for others you will become their lifeboat.

All you can do at that particular time in your life is count your blessings, keep your eyes on the prize and carve out a rewarding and fulfilling life for you and your family.

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