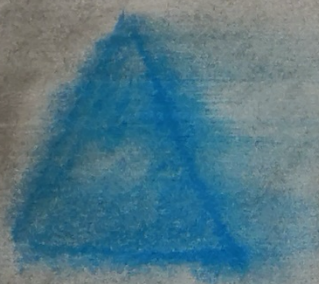


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How I let go of a very long depression

By telling my story, I hope to inspire others to find their
own way out of depression/unhappiness



The human mind has many strategies for survival.

Some of them aim to fit in with our parents or others.
Suppressing one's own feelings and needs is a strategy that serves this purpose.

Suppressing one's own feelings and needs also results in some level of depression, unhappiness, irritation, sadness, and other undesired mental and physical states.

Working my way out of a depression was part of the road to this discovery and it took me many years to fully understand this construct of the mind and body.

I hope, that by telling my story, I can inspire and help others by passing on my experiences and knowledges from this journey inwards.

This is a story from my heart.

The depression built-up

My depression was built up from somewhere early on in my childhood and it lasted until I was about 28 years old, where I was introduced to a small group of people that helped me out. At its peak it was difficult for me just getting through the day and I also had to deal with blackouts, strong body cramps, electrical shock in my brain, temporary loss of sight and other unpleasantness. I often felt lonely, empty, angry, irritated, guilty, and sad. I easily got in to conflict with others and it was difficult to maintain relationships as my behaviour pushed others away.

At the height of the depression, I was taking antidepressant medication and I cannot distinguish between what problems was caused by my mental and emotional states and what was caused by the medication.

I was actually fairly quick to spot that something was wrong, because even as a child I noticed that the other children seemed a lot happier than me, and as we had similar upbringing, I concluded that the problem was with me and not the environment I grow up in.

At the age of about 13 I started looking for answers and my father helped me getting hold on literature on philosophy and different religions. We went to the library together, we read together, and we talked about it. This was back in the late 1980's so the library was the place to go.

This offered a lot of different perspectives and food for thought, but I did not find any useful advice or instructions on how to break out of a undesired mental state. Basically, everything was instructions or advice on how to think and live, but no concrete instruction on how to get there.

After a while I turned my attention to psychology where I read differed publications and books, but still did not find anything solid to work with.

At the age of about 24 a doctor referred me to a psychiatrist because she taught that some of my symptoms were caused by my mental state. In the beginning it seemed that the psychiatrist was knowledgeable and that he could help me with antidepressant medication. The medication did affect me, and in the beginning, I believed the psychiatrist when he told me that the changes that I felt was good and that we just needed to adjust the medication.

After a while I realised that the medication was not the way forward for me, I

did feel effect of the adjustment of the medication, but it was not for the better and I definitely did not feel any happier.

I tried out another psychiatrist and talked to psychologist as well and they all seemed to tell the same story, without really helping me. I got the impression that some of them did actually care and wanted to help.

I was confident that there was a good way out and that there was people out there that had the answers, so I kept looking. This time within parapsychology.

Meeting the right people

In 2002 a friend of a friend advised me to go to a place in Denmark called the "School for self-healing" (this is a rough translation of the Danish name).

So, I went, and I was there for four days.

When I came back home, I felt better and I kept feeling better, so I concluded that this was the way forward for me and after the second time I started decreasing the antidepressant medication bit by bit. The psychologist advised me to stay on the medication, but I had decided that it was time to follow my own opinion and trust my own discoveries.

I kept going there for three to four days at the time, about once a month.

At this time, I was also in the process of finding out what profession I should aim for and my two most important criteria was; something that would be interesting and something that would allow me to retreat to my own space when my feelings got too strong for me to be around other people. I also wanted a profession that would allow me to work in other countries as I thought that I might want to try out working in other cultures and meet different people at some point.

I chose a 3½ years IT-engineer study and set the goal of getting well enough to manage a full time job at the end of the study.

This I did manage, and I have been in this profession for about 14 years now and I also got to work aboard.

The road to my recovery had many more twists and turns than I expected as there were so many more aspects of my life I had to change and I was also on the path to personal growth, because it was not only a matter of letting go, it was also a matter of gaining insight into what happiness really is for me.

At the "School of self-healing" they helped a lot of people to let go of negative feelings and negative beliefs and they had a lot of knowledge of how negative feelings and negative belief affected the body and mind and how.

In short, they knew how a specific symptom of the body and mind was caused by one specific or a collection of specific beliefs and negative

feelings. And they were honest about what they knew and did not know, and after so many years of trying to find answers and cutting through all the miss information, misunderstandings and inconsistencies it was a huge relief to hear the exact reason and what to do about it or "I do not know, but we can find out together".

In the case of depression, I was taught that depression is a symptom of freezing down feelings. The illustration for this episode shows the iceberg of cold feelings that is build when a person suppresses the feelings.

So, I undertook a journey inward to unfreeze my feelings.

The journey inward

I like to think of this process as walking backwards and forwards at the same time. Or growing up while finding my inner child.

Walking backwards or finding my inner child; because I had to find the way back to me, what I really enjoy doing, allowing myself to do it and discovering what feelings I have really had and letting go of them bit by bit, like peeling of the layers of an onion.

Walking forward and growing up; because it is an evolution to let go for negative feelings and negative beliefs and growing into a stronger, more independent, more loving, knowledgeable, action oriented, self-responsible and happier person.

In the beginning I had a lot of help and some very simple homework in-between the treatment.

I remember that one task was to let go of irony, because irony is saying the opposite of what I mean, and it is miscommunication rather the communication within my-self and with others. Irony is basically a rejection of one-self and others.

A simple way to think of it is “The way to something good is via good communication, within myself and with others”.

At the “School of self-healing” they used objects and dialog as a way to let go of negative feelings and negative beliefs.

Here are a few examples:

- Stones unlocks fear.
- Salt unlocks insecurity.
- Johannesbread unlocks feeling lesser.
- MSG (Mono Sodium Glutamate) and a picture of an iceberg – unfreezes the feelings in the iceberg.
- Eraser, erases vulnerability.
- A toy T-Rex unlocks old anger and vulnerability.
- Liquorice root unlocks the desire that drives a negative feeling, thought, belief or action.

The list is as long as the list of human emotional constructs and beliefs, and there are a lot.

As you may imagine I used a of for MSG with salt and a picture of an iceberg.

The dialog was focused on the exposing the negative belief that lies behind the feeling, thoughts, actions and symptom.

And a big part of this is learning to see my-self as I am and discover what is my own wants and needs and separate this from what is the voice of my parents and other influencers.

And it turned out that even though I thought of my-self as a very independent thinker I was very affected by other people's opinion of me, and I was so hung up on wanting to be what I thought that my parents wanted me to be and I felt so guilty that I did not manage shaping my-self into this ideal offspring.

I had even forbidden my-self to feel happy about the activity that I enjoyed the most, just because I thought that my parents did not approve of it. Now when I am writing this, I can feel that there is still a resistance to enjoy it, so apparently I have not yet fully let go of this.

So, for me, letting go of depression was a process of letting go of beliefs about what I thought I should be like, what I should enjoy and what other feelings I should have.

So instead of "I should not be annoyed about this or angry about that", I turned to think "is there a better way of communicating in this situation?", "can I achieve this in a better way?", "what is the belief that drives this emotion?", "do I really agree on this perspective?", "is this what is best for me?" or "is this who I am".

As there were so many negative feelings and negative beliefs involved in the depression, my exit out of the depression included processing all of these aspects, simply because when I stopped suppressing them - I felt them, and I did not like to feel them, so I had to work on letting them go.

Now I am happy most of the time and I am doing well in life.

Different ways out of depression

My way out of a depression is just one way to go, there are many other ways.

I know this because since then I have continued my journey inwards ever since and found other very useful tools on the way.

You can read more about other tools on “Your evolution” and in all of my other articles on this site, as this site is dedicated to self-healing and personal growth.

The stories that follow in this article are about how I broke out of mild depression or out of a path that could have led to depression. These stories are from late on in my life.

Two mini depressions

I am sharing these two stories because they are examples of how we can allow our self to slide into a state of unhappiness or depression just because we do not stop and ask our self what we need, or we know it and just do not act upon it.

On child leave

This depression lasted just a week.

I had been on child leave for a while together with my wife and now that she went back to work, so I was on my own with this little miracle.

The time with us tree went well, and I think that I just assumed that it would be easy to just continue this with the same effort. Or I just did not think about it at all.

It turned out that not planning anything was a disaster.

When I was with my wife, we took turns in preparing and taking care of our son, but when I was alone there was no one to take turns with. So, I did not get to tend to my own needs; I did not get to eat proper, and I had no adult social life.

So, I just got more and more hungry, lonely, and depressed.

I turned it around by having my father over to help me and keep me company and this I started to prepare more in the evenings, for the day after, and the weekends when I was with my wife. I went to different activities with my son and thereby got to talk with other adults during the day.

Work related

At work, I was given the task of managing a project that had a much larger scope than what I was used to.

I thought it was interesting to try it out, so I just dived in.

As the project progressed it became clear the I was not dressed for the occasion and there was no time to learn, I had to perform from day one.

One of my colleagues was an experienced project manager and I only asked him for a bit of advice, because I thought that the budget could not carry involving him more.

I became more and more stressed, uneasy and I developed insomnia.

At some point I became fairly dark-mood 'ed.

At this point I contacted a hypnotherapist and she helped me turn it around.

I got better at planning, more confident and focused on using communication to spread out the responsibilities.

This turned my situation around and the dark clouds cleared off.

In hindsight, I think that I could have involved my colleague much more and have used him as an ally in getting a more realistic view on the project. I think he would have enjoyed being involved in the project and to giving me advice.

But I just did not see this as a valid option at that time.

Now I am much better at listening to my needs and to reach out to my colleagues when I pressed for time or when I think that having a second opinion will be useful.

Can a broken heart lead to depression?

One evening we were all tired from staying up late, the wife, our son and I.

I reacted a bit strongly on something my son did, so he got sad. We tried talking it through, but we were partially caught up in a blame-game.

When my son was asleep the wife and I talked about how this can be done better.

I wanted to be a bit happier before I slept so I watched a bit of comedy before surrendering myself to my dreams.

When I woke up in the morning all wants and needs were on a total lock down.

Whatever I thought of I just got covered in a blanket of nothingness and my heart felt broken.

I could hear the son and wife talking in a cheerful and happy tone and part of me wanted to join but another part of me wanted to have nothing to do with them at this moment.

We were at a summerhouse; the weather was nice, and the beach was nearby so I decided to go for a walk to shake off the naysayer inside of me.

I informed the family about my need for a stroll along the beach and agreed with them that they could just call me if they decided to go out, then I could be back within about 15 minutes. This gave me some space and I was still available for family activities.

Besides enjoying my walk on the beach, I had the following inner dialog:

I suppress my desire to do anything because a block has manifested in my heart reducing the ability to give and receive love and I do not even want to give myself anything.

The fear of getting hurt freezes down the desire to be close to others or to myself, to protect me from another heartache.

What do I gain from holding on to this hurt?

Self-pity was in play; what does this give me?

If I act out my hurt, others might treat me as if I were made of glass (meaning

that I break easy) and this will put me in a position where I do not need to take responsibility for finding my way back to a good emotional state.

Why would I push this responsibility to others?

Ahh, part of me think's that I do not have the ability to find my own way back. I heard a voice saying, "you are not worth loving", "you have no value" , "no one likes you".

So, I concluded that some part of me still believes these last statements, and they are the foundation for all of the above reactions.

I decided that I will not listen to this old misunderstanding.

I managed to shake the pessimist and I could return to my family, and we had a very good day together.

There were still some hurts left I my hart though, some sadness and shivers of cold told me that I had frozen down a part of my desire to live life to the fullest. I could also feel the pessimist clouding my thoughts.

So, can a broken heart lead to depression?

I think it can.

If I were to keep being afraid of getting hurt and continue to freeze down my desire to enjoy the activities with my family and kept my distance to them It would keep me in a depressed state. It would definitely mess up the holyday and If I were to persist this course it would create a gap between us.

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