

My Way Out of Depression

The Secret I Wish Someone Told me Years
Ago -- And Why Psychologists and Experts
Are Wrong

Josh Bercu

Nobody Understands What
You Are Going Through

I went through a clinical depression that lasted for about one year and three months- from October 2017 through February 2019. Depression... what is it? Really, it's frustrating, but nobody (and by nobody I mean something like 99% of people) knew what the hell I was going through.

My best friends, strangers, family, lovers, experts on tv, youtube, books, audio books, psychologists, therapists, my parents, my brother, my sister, my worst friends, the checkout clerk at 7-11, the yoga guru, you name it -- the sea of people in my life that I talked to every single day - nobody understood. Many of them, with their best intentions, told me things that meant nothing to me, were so vague - and therefore useless - like " focus on your work " or " learn to love yourself " or " time will heal you " or " do meditation ", or a million other stupid things. It felt like all of the people that I was surrounded by everyday - were living in their own world. And I was completely alone.

It was the worst time to be alone. Because it was one of the only times in my life when I really needed help. My brain was barely working. My memory was shot. I was lost in the middle of the ocean with a small rowboat, in the middle of a storm, waking up to the never-ending storm every morning, month after month, and nobody really

could tell me what direction to go in to make it back to land.

I can tell you that I was absolutely dedicated to getting better the first 8 months of my depression. In fact, I was militant about it. From the moment that I woke up in the morning until the moment I went to sleep, I did everything in my power to get better. I followed the advice of people that I trusted. I read many books about it from every angle. I completely quit drinking and smoking weed. I ate the most perfect boring and healthy diet you could possibly imagine. I worked out for two hours every day. I read a ton of books on psychology -- about depression, philosophy, various kinds of spiritualism. I went to catholic church and prayed to God for hours at a time (even though I am not at all religious and actually was raised Jewish). My mind was open and I was willing to try anything. I tried to donate my time and help people. I met with Holocaust survivors. I read Man's Search for Meaning, a true story by Viktor Frankl about a psychologist finding meaning in life, even during the holocaust. I listened to The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle a zillion times. I tried Byron Katie's methods. I tried life coaching. I meditated. I forced myself to not go to my bed and lie down, which is all I wanted to do all day long. I did sessions with therapists, psychologists. What I

learned from experts in books or therapists, I did. I wrote in my journal. I confronted my ego. I microdosed LSD. I forced myself to go on dates. I went to live in India for a few months with a friend and was a vegetarian while I was there. I forced myself to go to Carnival in Brazil. I made myself go out and dance and party for days on end, even while I felt horrible inside the entire time. I would go on long walks. I would go on daily drives and just drive around endlessly. I had learned mind hacks that I read about from scientists about creating new neural pathways -- to try to stop my mind from thinking the thoughts that were crushing me. I did them all the time. Nothing worked.

And then eight months later, I accidentally stumbled on something that made me start get better. It was something I started doing everyday after I had given up. I wasn't even conscious of it. And it wasn't something that single person, book, expert or psychologist told me to do. And even if someone had told me how to do it, I wouldn't have believed them, because of all of the uselessness things people were telling me every day. I spent so much wasted time for 8 months doing the things you are "supposed" to be doing, and none of it worked at all. And the truth is, I was angry with the world, and still am, for not

having someone to help me and just tell me what to do to get better a long time ago.

But after I got out of my depression, a good friend of mine called me and told me out of nowhere that he was in a real crisis. I bought a ticket and was there the next morning, and spent a few months with him. I taught him everything that I had learned from when I went through it. And I prayed to God that what I shared with him would speed up the process so that he wouldn't have to be in pain for as long as I was. He followed what I said and it worked. He got out of depression in about 3 months.

And so, I eventually realized that the universe gave me two gifts for going through the hell of depression:

A) I can empathize and really understand at least on some level what others go through in a real depression. Before, I was truly ignorant.

And more importantly,

B) The knowledge in this book. Which if there was a way that this book could reach every depressed person in the world and I wouldn't even make a penny from it, I think I would have achieved perhaps the greatest thing in my life.

I hope that this book talks to you and gets you out of depression in the shortest time humanly possible.

What is Depression?

For me:

Sleeping was the best time of my day, because I felt no pain while I was sleeping. I knew that from the moment I woke up in the morning, my heart was racing. I could feel my heart pounding endlessly on my chest. I could often feel the pulse from the vein in my neck without even touching it. I also felt a little bit like I was sinking. You know that feeling you get when you are at the very top of a roller coaster? You're sitting in your car hundreds of feet up in the air, it slows down, and the train car hits the peak, time slows, and then you start to drop, you have no control. As you start to drop you feel it in your gut. That pain in your stomach. The pain from a roller coaster is associated with a happy thought- "Holy Shit! This is scary but it's going to be fun! ." It's the same pain, but with depression, the pain is associated with negative obsessive thoughts going through your head-- ones that make life not worth living if you could never find a way to make it end. It's the pain of deep heartbreak. And your mind can't stop thinking the same thought, over and over, all day long. It's total insanity - versions of the same thought racing through your brain all day long. You can't stop it day after day. It's completely exhausting. And I felt it all 24 hours a day, every day for 8 months straight. And then one day, it

started to slowly fade until it was gone after 15 months total.

My good friend who went through it, he felt some things that I didn't - like he felt pressure like " something was crushing his head ." And I am sure that there are a lot of other things that people feel or don't feel so the details are different for everyone.

For me, by far the most annoying people in the world were the ones who thought that they too have had pain in their life, and so does everyone else...The type of people who loved to think that they have been through it too and that you had to just somehow "toughen up" or do something differently. Even today, I would love to punch all of those people in the face. What childish nonsense. But they don't know better.

And then there were the equally annoying superfiicals who say " do yoga " or " learn to be detached " or " learn to be happy by yourself, on the inside." Maybe one in a million human beings on the earth, or less, has learned how to be detached from heartbreak. And yet these people are telling you all this nonsense about detachment, they are the same ones who haven't even learned how to be detached from their iphones.

The truth is that depression doesn't really have everything to do with reality. It can be triggered by something horrible, or by something that other people would think is silly. But the reason why it happened doesn't matter. The person in a real depression is going through hell regardless.

So for all you annoying people who don't know what it is, here is easiest and maybe - the only way that I define depression:

I was in such pain all of the time -- so much that all of the small things in life that normally felt good and were a little bit enjoyable -- no longer give me any pleasure at all.

We take it for granted when we take a shower, but the water pouring on us feels kinda good. It's not the greatest thing in the world but it feels good. When I was depressed, not even the water hitting my face in the shower felt good. The pain I was in eclipsed even any small pleasure in life -- all of the time. Feeling the wind on my arm with the window open while driving, watching a sunrise, eating a slice of pizza -- all of these things I was numb to. All I felt was pain and all I thought of was the

same horrible thought that made me feel more pain - all of the time.

Step 1:

**Do You Want to Feel Less
Pain?**

This is a very simple question. If your answer is anything other than an immediate yes, then this book probably won't help you at all.

And these:

If you could change absolutely nothing about your situation in life -- if you wake up tomorrow and the world is exactly the same it was today, but there was something you could do to feel less pain, would you do it?

If you could do something to feel 20% less pain today, would you do it?

If your answer isn't yes to all of these questions, the rest of this book might be a waste of your time. Go ahead and return the book to the book store and get your money back. Or give it to someone else. Or put it on your kitchen table until you are ready and come back to it later when your answers are different. Why am I being such a pain in the ass? Only because I know it is true in my heart.

Step 2:

How Much Pain Are You In?

On a scale of 1-10, how happy are you? What I am about to tell you is something that I would absolutely end up getting sued for somehow or make someone upset in the world. I don't really care.

I'm just a regular guy so I'm not telling you this as a "specialist" or an "expert" or a doctor.

If you are a 1-3, meaning that everyday, you could care less if a bus happened to hit you, because every day is miserable, your brain chemistry is probably completely screwed up.

There are only a few things that will change this:

1. Time (it could be one month, six Months, one year, two years, five years, ten years before your brain naturally heals itself)
2. Rock Bottom at the level of some near death experience that might actually kill you.
3. Prozac or some other drug prescribed by a psychiatrist to temporarily fix your brain chemistry for 3 to 6 months while you get this bullshit depression fixed for real.

Between those three options, the only one that makes sense is #3. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever for anyone to go through any pain that they don't have to. I can tell you that I did #1 and waited for time to heal my brain chemistry and looking back it was not worth it at all. My good friend did #3 and it really helped.

If you do diligent research on your own, which will take you a really long time to do with much of the bad information and many not-helpful psychologists and therapists that are out there sending people in the wrong direction -- you will eventually find studies that show that it is really drugs like Prozac and therapy at the same time that gets the good results for depressed people. Just one without the other doesn't tend to help people.

It's up to you, but if you are in the situation that I was in, I would highly recommend opening your mind to seeing a psychiatrist, and if there is anything they can do to help take the pain away some - as soon as possible. These drugs were designed to be temporary (4-6 months, something like that) and more importantly, will make it possible for the secret sauce that I am about to give you to start working as soon as possible. If this will knock 6 months time or more off of your total time in pain, it's very worth it. Quite simply, if you are not a 4 more better for

ANY part of the day, then no therapy and no book (including this one) will help you. You need to get to the point where you are a 4 for at least some of the day, then you can start using the rest of the book to get your life back. Now for my secret sauce, which is better than any therapy and is the “ therapy ” end of the equation.

Step 3:

Make a List of Experiments

If you are roughly a 4 out of ten (at least sometimes during the day), this is what you need to know:

The plain truth is that what everyone is telling you to do is based on their own lives and their own brain chemistry. This is exactly why what works for them will NOT work for you. This is what 90% therapists and psychologists completely miss. You may walk out of a session with a psychologist feeling horrible and the psychologist thinks they are doing a good job while they tell you to do things or talk about things that actually make you feel bad. Never go to that psychologist ever again.

Your friend, who does meditation, takes you to go and do meditation with them and a spiritual guru. The trip there and back and the mediation session, you felt bad while doing it all.

Never do that again.

Your goal, starting right now, is to do only things that make you feel less pain.

So you need to take out a pen a paper right now and write down on a notepad. (Not on your computer, but a real pen and paper.)

This paper where you are writing is the holy grail and you need to keep it out where you can see it in the open and keep it in mind (in your pocket, on the fridge door, wherever.)

Now keep in mind, there is one exception to the rule you are about to follow. You do anything that makes you feel less pain today but you can't do anything that will make you feel horrible tomorrow. For example, I went to the bar to watch basketball games and have a couple cold beers and it made me forget everything for a few hours, and I woke up the next day feeling fine. Or here's an example of the opposite: you get hammered on a bottle of tequila by yourself today and feel good for a few hours but wake up feeling like shit tomorrow, or feel guilty about it tomorrow. It could be alcohol, it could be people, it could be things, it could be places, it could be sex, food, or a million other things. You are a smart cat. I am not going to tell you what are the things to stay away from. You know what the hell those things are. So I don't care if it's smoking weed or running around naked or joining a book club-- whatever the hell it is, it must make you feel less pain today but it can not make you feel pain tomorrow.

Now, back to your pen and paper. You are about to make a list of experiments to try to see how they make you feel.

Your job is to try one experiment a day. That's it. No More. No Less. When something makes you feel less pain, you keep it on your list. When something doesn't help or makes you feel worse, you cross it off the list and never do it again.

The things on your list could be everything and anything. It could be going to see Bob the psychologist who you never saw before. Eating a slice of pizza, or eating an entire pizza. Playing tennis. Going on a date. Making love. Having sex. Going for a walk. Going surfing. Taking a one trip to another city or country. Taking a one way trip. (if day 1 of a day trip goes well, keep doing more of it.) Playing in a poker tournament. Play monopoly. Play a video game. Tutor poor kids. Feed the homeless. Going shopping. Getting your haircut. Take dance lessons. Go dancing. Hanging out with your 3 year old niece. Going to meditation. Go out on dates. Take a language lesson. Do a session with a life coach. Drink a cold beer. Making pizza at home. Cooking. It could be going to see a new psychologist or psychiatrist who you never saw. It could be going to see a psychiatrist. See a hypnotherapist. (I know a good one I can recommend.) Staying up all night. Sleeping all day. Smoking cigarettes. Lifting weights. Doing sprints. Eating a super burrito whenever the hell you feel like it. Doing magic

mushrooms. Taking Ayahuasca with a shaman in Peru. Eat a steak. Stop what you are doing at any moment and go get your favorite food. Do Byron Katie's exercises of thought reversals. Hang out with your friends. Give someone in your family a hug. Stop talking to someone in your family. Do only the things at work that you like doing. Stop doing anything at work that gives you bad feelings.

These are just all examples to give you ideas of experiments to write down. You will make your own list based on the things that you think you may like doing. Write down all the things of having some potential of taking away some of the pain while you are doing them. The important thing is to pay attention to how you feel. Obviously if you are against any of these for ethical reasons then don't do them. But if your stupid mind is against anything because "it's bullshit" then you are missing out on getting better. Some of these things in this crazy list above will take pain away for you. And many of the things on the crazy list above will make you feel worse and you should never do them again. When any of them doesn't help you, you cross it off your list.

So for now on, here is your job:

1. Do only one new experiment a day and grow the list of the things that make you feel less pain
2. Start to fill your days with only the things that are making you feel a bit better, and the hell with everything else.
3. If something makes you feel neutral (no super happiness but no pain either) that's a win. That's all you are going for.

And importantly,

If you are ever feeling really bad, stop whatever the hell you are doing and go do one of the things that takes some of the pain away. For example, if you are at work and feel bad, just leave and go get some ice cream if ice cream is on your good list.

Do the thing or things that take the pain away for however long it takes. Your new goal and priority in life is for you to not feel pain. I promise if you follow this simple method of a list of experiments, one experiment a day, two things will happen. First, while you are going through this absolutely

horrible time that has no end in sight, you will be reducing the amount of pain you feel until your brain heals.

I know that the list is very different for everyone because as I experimented all of the things with my good friend that made me feel ok, (playing in poker tournaments in casinos for example), I realized that many of things like this that kept my mind occupied and was a positive escape for me, actually made him feel worse. Meditation makes him feel better, but makes me feel worse. Your list is your list. Hold on to it tightly and tell everyone who “ knows ” what you should be doing or what psychologist you “ need ” to be seeing to go screw themselves. Only you will know all the things that will stay on your list.

Why It Works

The “ Why ” doesn’t matter. In fact the “ Why ” is often the big thing in people’s ways to the truth. People are annoyingly obsessed with the “ why .” Because they need an explanation for everything.

Would you rather understand the “ why? ” of psychology to get out of being in a living hell or would you rather just have something that cared about you show you the path to get out?

In my case, by accident, I decided after 8 months “screw everything” and I was so tired of pain I just wanted to do anything to avoid it. I ended up doing a lot of unhealthy things to avoid pain. But I became so smart with avoiding pain that I also avoided things that I knew would make me feel worse tomorrow.

And so what was left? After 8 months,

when I decided the hell with it,

I Went From:

Eating perfectly, sleeping 8 hours, waking up at 8 am everyday, in great shape, exercising every day, following

advice from psychologists, “focusing on my work”, meditating, not taking any substances at all, with a militant approach to fix my mental, physical and spiritual health, and being in a horrible clinical depression every day.

To:

Not giving a shit about self development. Smoking cigarettes (which I had never done regularly in my life), eating burritos all the time, eating whatever I wanted whenever the hell I felt like it, staying up all nite in poker tournaments (which by the way for me was not self destructive because i actually was good at it), sleeping all day whenever I felt like it, drinking cold beers, smoking weed occasionally, getting fat, out of shape and starting to better and feel less pain.

My good friend that I told you about, who got out of depression in 3 months using the same exact List of Experiments idea,

Went From:

Bad physical shape, focused and stressed at work while trying to do everything himself, not talking with anyone

about his suffering, closing himself off from the world, not believing in self-help mumbo jumbo (especially anything that didn't have strong science or data behind it), dating and worrying about girls that made him feel worse.

To:

Exercising and getting into amazing shape, completely dropping any little task at work that stressed him, doing meditation regularly, a real interest in self development and opening his mind to trying things that made no sense, seeing a psychologist or two (after testing out a bunch of really bad ones that made him feel worse) helping tutor underprivileged kids, hanging out with his 3 year old niece all the time, not dating girls that made him feel bad, dropping whenever he was doing when he felt bad and going to get ice cream.

This is all a true story. How could we both be going in such opposite directions and yet, we really had the same exact plan that helped us get better?

Because what makes us feel bad or feel better is different for everyone-- especially when we are in a depression. The secret is to prioritize everything in your life to feel less pain.

Maybe you are starting to understand now why the advice of “what to do” even from experts is worthless. Because it is not about what you do, but

1. Becoming aware of the things that make you feel less pain by experimenting with them, one by one.
2. Making it a priority that feeling less pain today and tomorrow is the most important thing in your life.

.... I promise you that if you do this, it will eventually wake up your spirit.

There are two things that happen as a total side effect when you do this that are the keys to getting out of depression.

1. You have told your brain through your actions “feeling less pain is our #1 ” priority. And it takes a while, maybe even a month or so, but your brain will start to listen. Why does that work? I have absolutely no idea. And I don’t care. I’m just thankful that it does. And it seems to be the only way your brain will listen to you.
2. You start to catch glimpses and reminders of who you were before this whole depression thing happened. You’ve been in such pain that you can’t

even remember who that person was. Remembering what it felt like to just be neutral and normal, and to just enjoy water on your face in the shower and go on with your day.

And that is the path out of depression. Nothing more. Nothing less. And remember, most importantly, if you are feeling bad, drop whatever the hell you are doing, and find a way to go do something that's on your list that gives you a small glimpse of something you used to enjoy before all of this happened. Then fill all your days with all of that, as much as you can, for as long as it takes. Because there is absolutely no reason for you to feel pain until this thing is over.

For me, what happened is, I was up all night playing poker, drinking beers and smoking cigarettes for weeks. But while I was doing all of that, I wasn't feeling pain. I just felt normal while I was there. One day, around 6:30 in the morning, I got in my car to go home. The sun was rising, and the windows were down, and for the first time in a year, I felt the wind on my arm and it felt kinda good. And I saw the sun rising and it looked pretty. I was so happy that day. And it was all because I saw a little bit of hope. And I started to see more and more of it as the

days went by. Until eventually, I was ok. Eventually, months later, I saw life the way I used to again.

I wish you the quickest way out of the horrible pain that you are in every day. And at least to minimize the pain you feel until you get better. Noone deserves to go through that.

The End.