

"Second Chances - A Cry from the Heart"

A poem by Kim Moore and used with permission¹

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*I wish that I could lie, like the sand,
and let the warm ocean waves wash over me,
Removing all the things that don't belong in my life,
And when it's finished, let the sun dry my tears
and bleach my heart pure and white.
If only I could stand on a mountaintop
and look at the perfect world below,
Without the trace of war and death, poverty
and hunger, disappointment and sadness,
Breathe in fresh, pure air and watch as eagles soar
freely in the blue sky above.
To float weightlessly in the depths of the ocean,
where silence engulfs the angry voices
of those who dwell on land,
Watching, as light moves, and changes colors and shapes,
while dancing with brightly colored beings whose water is home,
Lovingly surrounded, like a baby in the womb,
not yet knowing the worry and cares of life,
I yearn to fly high above the clouds
where only the sound of the wind whispers in my ear
and the soft brilliance of the clouds
reflect their perfection.
Where concern is carried faraway, in an instant,
and the rush of beauty is all around,
The earth, with all its problems and pain,
faraway beneath the clouds and out of sight,
To have the chance to start again
and do it all right - the way it should have been.
A second chance at life, a second chance to live,
a second chance to make the choices
I should have made back then.
And what would I do with a second chance?
Would I see the light, hear wisdom spoken,
or run back to the choices
that have pulled me into this darkness?
I did not listen then; I ran away,
choosing everything that has brought me
down-and left standing-alone-in this hell I've made.*

Introduction to the Subject of Depression

This material obtained and written by Joseph M. Carver, Ph.D., a psychologist in private practice at Joseph M. Carver, Ph.D., Inc. in Portsmouth, Ohio.² It is printed here with permission.

Depression is perhaps the most common of all mental health problems, currently felt to affect one in every four adults to some degree. Depression is a problem with mood or feeling in which the mood is described as sad, feeling down in the dumps, being blue, or feeling low. While the depressed mood is present, evidence is also present which reflects the neurochemical or "brain chemistry" aspects of depression with the depressed individual experiencing poor concentration or attention, loss of energy, accelerated thought and worry, sleep or appetite disturbance, and other physical manifestations. When this diagnosis is present, the individual will display at least five of the following symptoms during the depressive periods:

- Depressed mood, most of the day or every day
- Markedly diminished interest in all or almost all activities
- Significant weight loss or gain or appetite disturbance
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation (restlessness)
- Low energy level or severe tiredness
- Feelings of inadequacy, loss of self-esteem, and/or self-deprecation
- Decreased attention, concentration, or ability to think clearly
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide, an expressed desire to be dead

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Prologue: An Introduction

It was August 2012, and I was at the end of my rope and seriously depressed. Faith in anything ceased to exist. Life had no meaning, and I felt as if religion failed me. The news media weren't helping me either.

It's impossible to listen to the radio or watch television and not be bombarded with daily news reports of mass murders or about individuals who take guns and start shooting people in malls, theaters, at work, and in schools. Throughout the world, there are wars and conflicts ravaging nations.

Watching and listening to these reports, we delude ourselves into thinking it can't happen to our friends, our family, or us. Yet, the unsettling likelihood exists that you or someone you know has been a victim or died of a serious crime.

Unemployment rates have remained high for years, and according to CNSnews.com (reported on February 3, 2012) there are 44.7 million Americans receiving food stamps.³ The cost of living continues to rise faster than our ability to earn, and the amount of homeless people is at an all-time high. The number of criminals imprisoned exceeds the capacity of the systems meant to house them. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, 22.5 million Americans have used illicit drugs or abused psychotherapeutic medications.⁴ Their research shows the number

is increasing by almost 5% each year. The website CDC.gov points out that marriage continues to end in divorce at a rate just under 50%.⁵

We are blasted with negative news and information daily influencing the feelings of depression or hopelessness that will strike nearly everyone at some point and time in their life. We are struggling to live, eat, and survive. When it comes to the feelings of depression—illness, death of a friend or family member, loss of a job or mate, and sacrifice of a home through foreclosure—these represent just the tip of the iceberg. The list of causes could go on forever. Is it any wonder why we feel hopeless about certain aspects of life?

Some people shrug the effects. Others learn to cope with life's pressures with drugs and alcohol, and some individuals will turn to a spiritual institution. Sometimes, certain individuals can't cope and will resort to violence leading to mass killings and shooting sprees. We want answers, the reasons why, yet we feel the pain of depression inside our head and know it's real.

In our journey to conquer depression, I can assure you, this book may not provide the absolute answers you're seeking, but it will supply you with the answers that worked for me. I'll share the problems I faced, and the insights I discovered. More importantly, I will show you where you can search for the

answers and how you can find hope in the process. This book is for you if you have experienced or struggled with any or all the following:

- You're considering suicide because you can't cope
- Your life seems empty and meaningless
- Drugs, alcohol, or prescription medication allow you to cope with life
- You're confused, or feel hopeless about your future
- You want to know why some turn to God in uncertain times
- You think there is more to life than what you're experiencing now
- You can't resolve science and what the church teaches about creation
- You belong to one faith, and despise the "others"
- Your thoughts of being a "good person" is the right answer to the challenges facing humanity
- You can't understand how a "just" God would allow the world to get where it is today
- You're incarcerated in prison, hate your circumstances and want to be free
- You grew up in some religious setting or home, and your life is miserable
- You think you're tough and can handle any situation

- At one time, you were a religious person, but now you're struggling with the principles
- Everyone views you as smiling on the outside but inside you're hurting

At first, it may seem that I wrote this book for everyone. Well, you're correct because, like you, I've identified with many of the above statements. I was searching for answers, but only recently discovered them. It wasn't the whole truth, but I opened the door, which lead me to the next door, and then the next. A journey that started long ago, was interrupted, began again, sidetracked, and finally I was shown a glimpse of the truth I had missed along the way.

I share my journey in hopes you won't give up. I was depressed, felt hopeless, and near the final act of taking my own life. I no longer could smile and pretend everything was okay, yet no one knew my depression was pushing me to the brink. For me, suicide was the answer, an end to my emotional pain, and I convinced myself that no one would care. However, I discovered I was wrong. Misguided, I confused death with an end to my pain, but nothing could be further from the truth.

This is why I'm sharing my experiences in this book, hoping like me, you too will find a way to the truth. If you're reading everything up to this point, and are willing to join me on this

path of discovery, my wish is that you will continue moving forward on through the next chapters.

You must know I'm not a therapist. I didn't graduate from a theological seminary. I'm just an average person struggling to survive this journey called life. Along the way, I discovered information, which may encourage and help you. To write this book required personal courage, because I've laid bare certain aspects of my life that are far from a stellar performance. Nonetheless, during my journey, I have discovered there are no crimes, wrong deeds, or mistakes that can ever separate us from the most powerful love in the universe.

Reviewing this Chapter

Are you now, or have you ever been depressed?

Is hiding your depression from others an answer?

Is your depression triggered by someone or something?

Has the thought of self-death crossed your mind?

Will you team up with me, to overcome your depression?
