

Teeya's story

Ever since I was 8 years old, I had felt depressed and wanted to kill myself. I had friends, loving parents, was physically healthy, did well in school and had a spiritual life. My life was very positive, but I couldn't figure out why I felt so very, very sad. At the age of 26, I finally gave up and tried to kill myself with an overdose of aspirins. I failed.

After they had pumped my stomach, they sent me to the hospital psychiatrist. I told him that I thought that there was something "biochemical" wrong with my brain and he agreed. He suggested that I try a modified form of megavitamin therapy. He put me on a very high dose of Vitamin B3 – Niacin. It made me turn as red as a lobster for about 15 minutes each day, but it did seem to help me to feel somewhat better. I also decided to accept the fact that depression was "my cross to bear in life" and promised myself that if I ever felt actively suicidal again, I would be open to taking medication until I could discover the reason for my depression. Even though I was taking megavitamins, the thoughts of suicide returned. I went to my family doctor and he prescribed Ativan – a powerful, fast-acting anti-anxiety medication. It kept me alive for the next 6 months until I found out what was actually causing the problem.

It was at this point, that I had finally decided to listen to my neighbour who had repeatedly advised me to take our three-year-old son, Jeff, to an allergist. Both she and our pediatrician believed that allergies were the reason that he was getting frequent colds, ear infections and bronchitis. The allergist didn't believe that food allergies could be determined using needles or "scratch testing". He suggested that Jeff and I both eliminate milk products for a week and then put them back into our diets. We were instructed to do the same thing with wheat. He even had us fill out the same Symptom and Food Diary (page 5) I now use with my clients. Each day, we had to keep track of what we ate and how we felt. The results were very interesting!

I discovered that if I ate wheat (i.e., bread and pasta), I began to feel irritable, discouraged and ultimately suicidal. My mind just began to think in negative and self-critical ways. When I drank milk, I seemed to cry more often and needed a lot more sleep! Jeff's complexion looked much rosier when he gave up milk products and he seemed to breathe a lot more clearly.

The substances to which we were sensitive were causing different kinds of reactions. Jeff had a respiratory reaction to milk products and I had a neurological reaction at the neurotransmitter level of my brain. These “good foods” had been the cause of my 18 yearlong depression (from age 8 to 26) and my son’s frequent sickness! What a revelation! It took me a long time to listen to these people, but, once I did, we have never looked back.

We put Jeff on a Calcium supplement and eliminated all milk products from his diet except for Saturdays. I went off milk and wheat. What a difference it made to both of us as well as our family life. Jeff never got sick again – not even one cold for seven years - from age three to ten (at which point he started to make his own decisions about what he was going to eat). As soon as I took wheat and milk out of my diet, my depression lifted and I felt a lot better mentally, physically and spiritually.

In the meantime, I had certainly had enough time to learn and practice a lot of other techniques for dealing with depression. Most of these are in this book. I had become a “wounded healer”. For the 26 years since my suicide attempt, I have been free of depression. However, I know that if I don’t take care of myself, my depression could return. This is the way I am wired and I am vulnerable to feeling this way if I get overwhelmed. So, I make sure that I take good care of myself in Body, Mind and Spirit by using all of the techniques mentioned in this book, as I need them.

I take care of myself by paying attention to what I eat and drink. I try to stay away from those things to which I am allergic. I begin each day connecting with Spirit. At this point in my life, I let the Spirit lead as to how I spend the time – meditating on Spirit’s love (see Light and Love, page 83), reading a daily devotional or simply praying. I ensure that I get enough rest and journal three times a week (often using the “How Do I Feel when I think about...” technique on page 50). All of these techniques help me to stay on top of my feelings by dealing with issues (i.e., accepting myself and forgiving myself or others), thinking in a positive way and living in the present moment.

If you try out some of the ideas in this book, you will discover what works for you. We are all beautifully and wonderfully, but differently made. You probably already know a lot about what you need to do to take care of yourself. I encourage you to do it.

Taken from Overcoming Depression, p 11 - 13

If you don't know yet what you need to do to feel healthy and joyful, you may need to rely on medication for a while. Through my story, you can see how medication served a purpose (i.e., it kept me alive) until I could discover the underlying cause of my depression. Once I addressed the causes of my depression, it vanished, provided I take care of myself on a daily basis. This is not a lot of hard work; but it does require building habits of wellness. Above all, we need to be patient with ourselves as the process unfolds. I believe that Spirit loves each of us and will help us on our journey if we open ourselves up to that Intelligence beyond ourselves. Have you asked for help today?