



Hearing and Understanding

The Sounds of Depression

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Have you ever stood by the banks of a river and seen a big tree along the side of the river that towers above the others? You look a little farther down the bank and you see one that has fallen and lays consumed by the same water? What is the difference in the two trees? They both were of the same, they both faced the same odds with water on one side, land on the other, but one has collapsed.

I remember the song I Shall Not Be Moved and there is a line in that song which says, "just like a tree, planted by the waters..." . The key word to that line is planted. It never occurred to me before as planted being the key word until I started compiling this material.

Also coming to mind was a visit by the U.S. Forestry Dept. to our second grade class back in nineteen whenever it was. But given to each of

us that day was a pine tree in which we could go home and plant in our yard. We were told that we were to plant the tree half as deep as it was long. That the root of that tree would continue to grow to however tall the tree became. All along NC you can see towering pines as they are numerous in the state and each one of those trees amazes me to think that just as tall as they rise in the sky, the root is as deep in the ground. Firmly planted.

I have however seen the results of a storm coming through and the pressure or oppressive forces of the winds causing the tree to break and fall. The tree seen at the river banks, fallen were of results of a different force and that being a depressive condition. Depression in this sense can be described as hollow. For the conditions surrounding the tree that had fallen, though they were of the same kind, the

surroundings were not the same. Looking closely at the area surrounding that fallen tree you can see the ground was softer, the rocky areas were not there, and the land had eroded more than around the tree that still stands. The standing tree had surrounding it rocks, and higher areas of soil that was not muddy or soft created by the water. Until this point no one has noticed the cause of the fall, or even a possible way of preventing the fall. That is what we hope to do in this compilation by identifying the sounds and sights of depression and oppression.

Comics have long used the story of “If a tree falls in the woods and there is no one around to hear it, does it make a sound?”. Then they conclude with, “who cares! It’s a fallen tree!”. It gets a laugh and they move on to the next part of their monologue. But the irony to that story is there is a sound, though unheard by the ears

of man, there was a sound. The fall was not seen, but there was a fall, and the results lay in the woods decaying to the world.

Depression has a sound too. It is often an unheard or visible sound. It is silent and comes with out notice of those surrounding it, or even causing it. To have a clinical understanding of depression let me explain the how the mind works in events leading to depression.

My first real personal experience with depression was when I found out my wife had cancer. Though not fully diagnosed and that would not come until later, there was that inner feeling that it was present and active. The same inner voice that had told years earlier that she was my chosen wife, warned me of the disease. My brain was in shock. For this beautiful lady that I loved so much was facing something I

could not stop. I wanted to, but I couldn't. The fear of loosing her to this took me down to where I found myself sitting under my desk praying, crying and sobbing. I needed help. She thought that I didn't care about her situation and was trying to out do her as it was, where in reality I was so taken by the situation that my normal functions seemed to just shut down. This is how it works and let me warn you, it gets technical a bit here, but valuable stuff.

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that carries vital signals between brain cells, is actively involved in numerous central nervous system actions, such as the regulation of mood, sleep and appetite. Poor diet, lack of exercise, use of harmful substances such as caffeine or alcohol,

and ongoing physical and emotional stress can depress the levels of serotonin in your body makes, resulting in the range of serious problems mentioned above, or what is collectively known as serotonin deficiency syndrome.

Out of the ten or so major neurotransmitters in the brain, serotonin is the one researchers and scientists are most concerned with in the onset and the treatment of these various medical and psychiatric problems. Many studies have been focused on how it affects behavior, mood, aggression, appetite control, pain transmission, sexual behavior, and many more of our traits,

activities and functions. In the past few decades, these intensive research programs by both pharmaceutical companies and universities have led to the development of many powerful serotonin-active medications commonly known as anti-depressants.

It can best be described in easier terms (and your thinking, “why didn’t you use that the first time!) as a shuttle transporting supplies needed to the other side of the brain. Though it has made the trip thousands of times and the docking has been done time after time with out fail, the portal is closed, or the path is off just enough. It does not make the connection or

docks as it should and basically is consumed in space never delivering the needed information for normal function.

For the normal human mode of “understanding” depression, there is none! And sadly, most people don’t want to understand. They have their own set of problems to deal with and hearing of the one who is in depression is not a priority to them. Sure, there is a sense of care, to a point, but once that point is reached you can forget it!

Sounds that cause one to literally back away from the depressed person would be what they consider the constant whining, the unhappy tone in the voice, the sad look on the face. Most people want to be around those of “their kind”. The depressed person is not a person of choice.

Those are the noticeable sounds of depression, but what about those not seen or heard?

One in depression loses the ability for concentration and the mind does not fully stay focused on events or tasks at hand. Every task seems too much trouble to do. Loosing track of time and even days often occurs when one is in depression. Darkness in the home which is often seen or explained as ways to conserve energy is really a lack of desire for light or entrance of the outside world. For it is to them, the outside, in the world, the causes of their situation has arisen. They seem safe, and seemingly no one is seen to be home from the outside causing them to be hidden. The darkness becomes the safety zone.

The nights in which the one in depression has fought for hours to sleep because the mind is

racing one minute with the causes of what put them where they are, to the next a pleasurable experience soon replaced with other disturbing thoughts. When they finally do sleep, it is a hard, deep sleep consumed in the thoughts in which they fought often causing dreams that wake them. The whole process then starts over again.

The normally clean home is a shamble, and the clothes are wrinkled, the personal appearance is not as it was. Telephone calls are left unanswered for fear of having to explain, or hear someone tell them to get off their dying butt and start living again. The one in depression has come to know that when “friends” ask, “how are you?” they don’t really want to know.

Being in a crowd of people familiar with them

becomes a fear. Some, who would normally speak, shun them, some who out of the normal didn't speak before only come to them for reason of being curious or should we say nosey. When they hear, they don't return for they have gained the information they desired with out real care or understanding.

It has been said that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. But in the battle for the souls, the way to a man's heart, is through his mind. Every dirty trick in the book is pulled out. Every remembrance of every Sunday school class, or every sermon on faith is challenged. Some soon reach to the secular world for the answers for they are not seen or felt even in a temporal mode. In the secular world it is a lot easier for people to come out of depression or to live in it with a bit of ease than it is for the Christian world. The secular world

can at least try to hide the thoughts bothering them by drugs, alcohol, compassionate friends found in the drugs or alcohol, or worse, suicide.

For the REAL Christian however, depression is harder to deal with and live in. We have been taught there are over 25,000 promises to us in the bible as believers. And one by one it “seems” that the promises are not there for you at that time in depression. There is likely to be a knock-on effect from the depression onto your spiritual life. NOT the other way around! Being a Christian does not offer immunity from trials, troubles or illness. The basic stale set in their ways believer instantly looks for spiritual faults in you or your situation. Some even go as far as casting the demon of depression from you often in public spectacle and you are then watched to see if it worked! Let me make this point however, I do believe there is a spirit of

depression that works in each believer. Some are worked on stronger than others. Some are lost in the battle, not because God is not able to answer the prayers, but the faith, the ability, and the help to guide through is not present or cultivated properly.

God is not only sorting out the ones in depression, but the ones who are around those in depression. He may be sorting you out permanently, and this may involve dealing with your past, and it is not an overnight process! Your individual attitude as to how you approach the person in depression can be controlled realistically not by just their feelings, but your feelings from past events that you shut out, turn out, and don't want to be reminded of them. In the past there can be a lot of leftover baggage of hurts suffered, wrong attitudes, incorrect information and so on that has been attempted

to be covered by the “face” of a Christian. This will slow us down not only in the recovery process of the one you “comfort” or even avoid in depression, but in you as well leading to and can lead to dealing with past issues in your life, be a source of hidden depression. There is no need to feel guilty about being depressed. It is not a sin to doubt what you have been told, as the process of “organized doubting” can build a stronger foundation for you to re-build on later. The effects of your attitude towards the one in depression may be a result of your reward in times end. Speak carefully when you speak.

I had recently told a friend of mine that I had completed my book “Where From Here?” as it had been updated with current events that would bring this part of the book to a close. He replied with a question as to the contents, and I told him it was all about me, the family, and experiences

I had in the past to the present. He quickly turned and said “I don’t want to read it, I want to be uplifted!” Then I heard him say, “reminds me too much of things I have gone through.” To this writing, he has continued in avoidance of me or the situations in my life that lead to that conversation. I “heard” the sound of rejection from him. An accomplishment turned a disappointment. Who knows, had he read the book he may have found there was more to it than what he thought! Which by the way... if he decides to buy the book, the price just doubled!

Real Christians don’t get depressed

There is a hidden sound behind this is that the depressed person is not a “real” Christian. That hurts, especially if it comes from someone who holds authority over you or one that you would

consider high in esteem. Understand if you will it is hard to be depressed and Christian, very hard. For the saved, born-again Christian, it takes more faith to hold on to the fact that God exists when your situation is screaming out that even “if” there was a God (which is a feeling caused by your emotions and feeling of worthless prayers), he now has turned his back on you and hates you, than it cries out when all is going your way. Within each of us our spirit cries out daily, for something.

You need to have more faith / have faith in God

Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance [or realization] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”

How much faith, therefore, does it take to hold

onto the basic tenets of the Christian faith when emotions scream at you daily to give up, to get out and to avoid God? How much faith? The bible tells us that faith the size of a grain of mustard seed, small, so very small is all it takes. Very often a depressed Christian will be hanging onto things by their fingernails in a situation that requires seemingly more faith than the average because the faith experience is covered by a mountain of complexities brought on by the cause of depression. There MUST be and INCREASE of faith, and when you as fellow PRACTICING Christian believers pray for the person in depression interceding for them to have an increase in faith. It becomes your responsibility to nurture and cultivate the growth of that seed of faith. As the seed is cultivated and then begins to grow, the sounds of depression are heard less as the mountain is soon consumed! This is part of the healing

process that you have a part of, but not the only part.

Taking anti-depressants is playing God, He can heal you

Yes, God can heal. And He does heal. Proven numerous times in the bible, and yes even today, God is still healing people of diseases.

Sometimes he doesn't just flick a switch and the illness is gone, sometimes the healing comes through the conventional ways of doctors, psychiatrists, counselors, therapists and medication. Back to the point earlier in which God may be reminding you of your past through the experiences of the person in depression? By persuading someone not to take the medication in preference for fast, supernatural healing, they are being denied something that will aid in the healing, right now.

A pressure cooker is designed to cook at a certain temperature for so long, yet unattended the pressure inside the boiling pot can increase and the warning level is unseen or ignored causing a massive explosion. That explosion can reach out to not only the one cooking, but those within several feet and can cause temporary or permanent damage. We have to maintain the pressure in depression to avoid explosion.

I can remember in someone hearing of the separation of my wife and I and how angry they became when they approached me trying to show compassion. After confirming that yes, we were separated they replied to me “that b_____h!”. This was a Christian! They could not understand why I got angry at their remark, but hey, even in deception, that was “my wife” they were talking about! And in the ups and downs of the depression I became defensive.

They failed to see the wrong in what they had said. If anyone was going to call her names, it would be me!

Speaking of saying.... **Scripture says everything that happens is for your own good!** Romans 8:28 says “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” This verse in no way implies that the sufferer should sit back and accept the illness for the rest of their life. It also does not say that illnesses are not to be fought with prayer or medications with the intention of a cure. James 5: 16 tells us “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”. While God may well have things to do with a depressed person (such as Job), the illness is not to be treated as the latest gift from God and rejoiced over.

When I was going through my divorce which brought on my second bout with depression, I was often told by well meaning Christian people that I should consider it a “gift from God”... BULL! I don’t know about you, my God gives good gifts! I know in my heart that when I heard God’s voice speak to me telling me “that is your chosen wife” it was not a bad gift.

You heard me refer in the previous section “my second bout with depression”, I have had many. Some were stronger than the others, and the latest battle seemed worse. **People will tell you it's all in your mind.**

Saying this denies that there is anything actually wrong with the depressed person, and implies that they are just making it up and looking for sympathy. This piles on the guilt again! Then,

you hear said, You've got nothing to be sad about. Depression isn't about being sad, often the sadness of the situation has no effect on the disease at all. This statement misunderstands the disease; depression can have an origin that has nothing to do with the surroundings of the sufferer. Most of the time however, it will and does. Then you will hear, "It's your own fault you're depressed". This is the kind of thing that Job's "comforters" said, and it didn't help then either. If any one person in the Bible had a reason for depression it was Job! Bad things can happen to good people. Denying this hurts the sufferer. A mental illness can be defined as one that affects the mind; the brain is allowed to get ill, just as the liver and lungs are. What about headaches? They too are impairing at times and are they not in the head as well?

So many times you are told when in depression

to (I like this one) Pull yourself together. If you've been trying, then someone saying this to you comes across as "You haven't been trying hard enough, do more, and more, and more until you get it right." So back they go, trying more and more, and still getting nowhere because you cannot pull yourself out of depression by your bootstraps. One dear lady came to me after a Sunday service and meaning to give me a kick in the pants on the right path so she thought, told me that I should forget everything that was happening putting it in the past and do everything I could for my children forgetting about me. This was taken to say that I was not a good parent. I thought I was doing good, and providing to the best of my ability. Yet, she did not know that just the day before, I had been fired from my job for being and honest salesman! She actually made me think that if I had lied to the customer, I might still have a job

and a bigger commission check! To top it off, she said, I told you so didn't I?

As you read earlier one of the features of depression is a disturbed sleep pattern. This can often take the form of waking early each day (say 4 AM) and being unable to get back to sleep. There is even difficulty in getting to sleep from the start. The person in deep depression will often lie in bed tossing and turning as the mind is constantly churning thoughts and desires for true peace. When sleep does finally come, you do not want to wake up! When you do wake up and start the day the feeling of energy and desire is great, but often will last only a few minutes. Multiply this over several months, and the results can be severe. So at this you are then said to being just plain lazy. On top of this, everything is screaming that the world is a horrible place and nothing is worth

the effort any more. Acting like a spring bunny is just plain out of the question. It is not laziness; it is a consequence of the illness. Am I making excuses for the situations of depression and the events it can cause? No,... it is fact and it does happen without a desire for it to happen.

A good example of looking in the essence of the depressed person is like looking at a thick chain. One that has hundreds of links, yet, many of the links are broken and not just one. It is most tempting, when you find out someone is depressed, to attempt to immediately fix the problem. However, until the depressed person has given you permission to be their therapist (as a friend or professional), do not attempt to mend that missing link(s) with words that can cause damage even farther.

The things that will not make the depressed person feel worse are words which:

Acknowledge depression for what it is because it's not just a phase it is a happening event that is real. There is a reason for the situation they are in and they must be accepted by your ability to give permission to feel depressed. Not condemning them for the feelings they have.

The Depressed person needs to hear sounds of certain things felt in reality such as “I love you! And “I Care”. So many times we say I love you in such a passive way, and care is shown only for a moment. A person in depression seems at times to have a stronger sense for reality in hearing the words spoken, because it may have been those words that brought them down. Love is an action with compassion so when you say “You’re not alone in this” or “I’m not going to leave/abandon you”, you must be prepared to

back up those words or not speak them at all.

A personal touch sometimes is missing in the life of a person in depression, though you may not hear the sound crying out, “someone please, anyone, let me hug you...” it is there. Give them a hug and be prepared to hold on as long as it takes, be prepared for the tears for they will come with it. Have the attitude and approach of “All I want to do now is give you a hug and a shoulder to cry on...” They may not understand or even feel that in time it will pass for it feels like an ever going battle. But with assurance let them know that you are there for them and mean it when you say it telling them “We can ride it out together and when all this is over, I’ll still be here (**if you mean it**) and so will you.”!

Let them know that they are not crazy! For so many times when one is said to be going

through depression all that is thought of is a mental condition and with that they are instantly considered to be “nuts”. Yes, it is true that some people do have to be hospitalized for this condition; it is only because they fight the battle alone and in rejection. Remind them gently of how the strength of their past has had an affect on you if it has and how it reflects in both of your futures.

If you say you understand their pain be assured you don't. Just let them know that even though you can't fully understand what they are feeling, you offer to them true compassion or kindness with loving care.

Many times there is a compassion that is felt by the person who suffers from depression towards the one that is trying to offer care yet being rejected. Why? Already the person in depression has a knowledge of what is happened in their life and being unable to control it alone fears that your being caught up

in their problems will cause you pain. Let them know that you are sorry they're in so much pain. That you are not going to leave them. And if not going to leave them you are strong enough to take care of yourself so they don't need to worry that their pain might affect you. They need to know that they are important to you and if you tell them those words so often forsaken "If you need a friend... be prepared to back it up any time day or night.

Depressive disorders make not only the one in depression feel exhausted, worthless, helpless, and hopeless, they can also make the one trying to help them feel the same way. That is why so many attempting to help are only there for a short time. The depressed person is left again starting from scratch with another person saying the same thing, yet they know the results will be the same. A second chance at help may not be

there. Such negative thoughts and feelings make some people feel like giving up. It is important to realize that these negative views are part of the depression and typically do not accurately reflect yours or their situation.

Negative thinking fades as both yours and the depressed ones treatment begins to take effect. Yes, I said your treatment. But you're thinking, I am not the one depressed! Why should I need treatment? Unknowingly each day, you echo sounds to one who may be suffering the depressive disorder in his or her life. I have documented 100 individual things that are said each day that can cause a reaction in a negative way to one in depression. Some have been mentioned in this book, some when you think hard enough will become a reality to you. But sharing your experience of depression or second hand information of depression is nothing more than a compounding effect.

