

# **The Darkened Mind**

A journey through anguish & hope

**Written by**

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# ***The Darkened Mind***

## *Preface*

During my early to mid-twenties, I struggled with depression for years. As my life slowly crumbled around me, I did not understand what was happening. It just felt like I had a void in my life, and that even getting out of bed in the morning seemed pointless. I felt worthless because I couldn't keep up with societal expectations. So many addictions took a firm grip on my life—substances that saved my life, but also came at a cost. Ultimately, I just couldn't deal with it anymore.

Yet, something within me was always burning. I did not yearn for suicide, even though I contemplated it at times. What was holding me here? It wasn't until I went through many years of therapy and read books like *The Myth of Normal* by Gabor Maté or works like *Stillness is the Key* by Ryan Holiday, that I gained a better understanding of life and our way of living. I uncovered so many subliminal truths by exploring philosophy and spirituality—truths that I will share with you in this book.

I also have a background in psychology, which added an interesting juxtaposition to my condition. A psychologist who suffers from severe depression seems like cruel irony, but I viewed it differently. My expertise in psychology gave me a deeper understanding of what happened to me, and why I behaved the way I did. As I mentioned, addictions gripped my life for years. Video game addiction completely destroyed my life, and unhealthy eating habits made me overweight and pre-diabetic. These changes happened slowly, over the years, making them insidious and dangerous yet very real.

This book serves as a journey, to share my pain and wisdom with anyone who seeks support with their depression. It is written for anyone with depression or similar mental health problems, or for any one who wishes to gain a deeper understanding of how this mental illness actually works. It is a raw, unfiltered journey, you will find no nonsense or fake optimism in this book. Modern society will be harshly criticised, as there are a multitude of areas where we could do so much better. The worrying rise of mental health issues—especially among young adults—is not random; they are an obvious consequence of our misguided way of living.

There is still hope and a way to heal. Depression is not a chronic illness. It is a demon of darkness that may seem insurmountable, but it can be beaten. I will offer my perspective, using many metaphors, philosophy, and personal experiences to sharpen your mind and feed your soul. Not everything in this book will resonate with everyone, and that is fine. Additionally, I may be overly critical of mental health professionals, as my experience with them has been overwhelmingly negative. This leaves me vulnerable to bias, which I am aware of. Skilled professionals do exist (special shout-out to Dr K.), so I will try to stay nuanced. Ultimately, everything in this book is just my perspective, my way of seeing things, in a genuine hope that it will help people find inner peace, stillness, and healing. Hopefully, this journal can be your companion, a flickering light in an infinite ocean of darkness. I hope you take the lessons to heart; they may save your life.

There is a profound sickness in this world, a harmful illusion that obscures who we truly are and what we are doing on this planet. In a healthy world, mental illness would be scarce or even non-existent, but the opposite is true right now. No, mental illness is not just because of your genes, upbringing, or your personal trauma. These factors do matter, but there is so much more going on. The symphony of life is far more grand than you can initially see. Step back, see the bigger picture, and you will comprehend what I mean.

Go on this journey with me. Embrace the darkness of despair and experience what *true* suffering is like, before we walk towards the light and work on healing. This can be scary, but that's okay. Grab my hand; it's time to go.

# ***Part 1: Darkened mind***

Descent into darkness





## Chapter 1: *Building your own prison*

Do you ever wake up with a fleeting feeling, where things just don't seem quite right? You wake up as usual and perform your regular morning routine. As you make your way to work or school, the feeling persists. You lack happiness and you just feel numb. Maybe you didn't sleep right, or something that happened in the recent past is still lingering at the back of your mind. You try to put these feelings aside. Perhaps you're just having a bad day; it happens to the best of us.

But the next morning, the feelings remain. You wonder if it's because of physical health factors. You take reasonably good care of your sleep and diet, and you even exercise sometimes. Sure, you could probably do better, as achieving 'perfect' health is not realistic, but you do what you can and you live in relatively good metabolic health. What could explain this persistent feeling of numbness? What is going on?

As the weeks and months go by, these feelings never really go away. In fact, they slowly get worse—unnoticeable, yet present and real. *What is wrong with me?* You think it's time to ask for help, and you contact your trusted doctor. You describe the symptoms and your behaviour to the doctor. The doctor isn't sure, but it may be as you feared: *depression*. As you return home, you ponder your options after the initial shock worn off a little bit. Is it really true? How does the doctor know? Maybe you should get a second opinion.

Is there just something wrong with your mind? Are your neurotransmitters not functioning? Is something 'broken' inside your head? Maybe you should consider taking SSRI's (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors), as so many people who struggle with depression do. Serotonin is a key neurotransmitter when it comes to regulating your mood and emotions. It is obvious that, if these elements are dysregulated, certain drugs could help stabilise your mind. You ponder the possibilities and evaluate the pros and cons. You leave the option open, but refuse them, for now.

But perhaps there is something else. Did something specific happen recently? You recall your recent past, but can't think of anything in particular. You didn't face any significant hardship or loss. Your life played out the same it always has; the days just seem to blur