

from
Helplessness
to
HOPE

A perspective on suicide and depression



"Sometimes
in life,
success is
just
surviving"

BY MIKE BEAN

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FROM HELPLESSNESS TO HOPE

I used to be one of those people who, when I would hear of someone dying by suicide, I would think to myself, "How could someone be that mentally weak?" I would never say that out loud to others, but that's how I thought about it. I would think similarly when hearing about people who were suffering from depression.

I don't think like that anymore.

Due to circumstances out of my control, over a nearly four-year period, I was on the path to losing everything. I was watching what I had built over a twenty-year career go up in smoke, along with being robbed of my health.

"Due to circumstances out of my control" is the key point here. I never thought I could be in a situation where I wouldn't have complete control over my response to a situation. However, when my health began declining, that is exactly where I found myself. My money was being taken from me, and my physical condition was deteriorating. No matter what I did, things just kept getting worse. I was fighting with all I had, but due to the circumstances, I found myself going down the path of losing everything.

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I was suffering physically and mentally—week after week, month after month, helplessly watching everything go up in smoke. My kids' college education money was gone, as was all my savings. I was living off what was left of my retirement account, and I owed the IRS money due to having to take early withdrawals from my IRA. Prior to this situation, I had just lost my job, and two years earlier I had gone through a divorce. I had cancer years ago, and this was worse than that.

Nearly the entire time, I suffered from severe insomnia despite what I did or what the doctors prescribed. These extended periods of insomnia were causing headaches. Because nothing was working, I began drinking alcohol frequently to help relieve the pain of the headaches. That led to a roller coaster of being on and off alcohol throughout this period as well. I was miserable with no end in sight.

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Ten years prior to things turning for the worse, I hired on with a company and helped build a new product line. Over that ten year period, I did well financially, with the anticipation of things getting even better. Having come from humble beginnings with no money and no connections, I was proud of what I was able to accomplish. Unfortunately, things were about to change. I lost my job, and at the time, the best option was to start my own business. Soon after, I faced an unjust legal attack that caused incredible financial damage that wouldn't go away, ultimately forcing me to pull the plug on building my business.

For the first time in my life, I was in a helpless situation. The legal attack was causing ongoing financial damage, and I was constantly suffering with extreme fatigue along with the headaches that resulted from the severe insomnia. I was on prescriptions to help me sleep, which rarely worked nor did anything else. I was able to earn very little income, and I couldn't even fight back.

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After two years of this, I was in poor health, both physically and mentally, and things continued to get worse. Day after day, week after week, month after month, it was just more of the same. Just more suffering. I thought to myself that the only way to end the suffering was to end my life. It was then that I understood what causes suicide. Helplessness causes suicide. I also learned that there is a difference between feeling depressed and suffering from depression.

I could tell I was getting worse, so I decided I didn't want to have guns in my house. I had a friend come get my guns. When she came over to get them, she told me someone she worked with just died by suicide the week before, leaving his three young kids and wife.

I was fortunate that for a few days the insomnia let up a bit, and I was able to somewhat gather my thoughts. Feeling the need to move around, I peeled myself off the couch and attempted to go for a jog. As I was jogging slowly along, I thought of the adversary causing much of my pain and said to myself, I don't care how painful it gets, I am never going to stop. "I WILL NEVER STOP!"

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I then had an idea for an athletic apparel brand with that motto: "I WILL NEVER STOP!" At that point I thought, why not? I've got nothing to lose—so I began working on it. I then had ideas for other potential brands and businesses. Although at this time things didn't all of a sudden get better, I did begin to have hope in a potentially positive outcome should I not be able to get my health back and therefore not be able to work at full capacity again.

Prior to all of the loss, the way I had created much of my wealth was through compounding. I no longer had compounding on my side like I did when I was younger. I shifted my thought process from compounding to creating. I knew that if I could use what little I had left to create something, there was hope. For me, looking at life through a different lens or using a different "formula" than I had in the past created hope.



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After getting my head around things a bit more, I felt guilty for the way I used to think about those who have died by suicide and those who were suffering from depression. All I wanted to do was help someone who may be in pain because it is miserable. Once you've gone through real suffering, you then spend a lot of time thinking about how to help others who may be in a helpless situation and may be suffering. I considered creating a charity. However, I didn't have the money to fund it, so I decided that I would create the apparel brand I had thought of and have a portion of the proceeds go to fund the charity. I moved forward on both ideas. That's when the Getting Back Up Project was created.

Prior to my crisis, my primary goal was to see how much wealth I could accumulate for my family and myself. I look at things differently now. Doing what I can to help those who are suffering is now a more important part of my life.



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For those who view suicide and depression like I used to, I get it. It's a bit like a military combat veteran. Those who have not been in combat can never truly understand what it's like to fight in a war, no matter how well veterans describe it or tell us about it.

For those who are fighting a personal war and are suffering, just keep fighting. Sometimes in life, success is just surviving. Surviving is your success story that could help others. To view more stories, visit our website at www.GettingBackUpProject.org.

KEEP FIGHTING!!

GETTINGBACKUP PROJECT

ABOUT US

According to the World Health Organization, depression is the number one disability worldwide. If not dealt with and overcome, depression can lead to many negative outcomes, including poor quality of life, unemployment and even suicide.

Getting Back Up Project partners with mental health organizations to provide financial resources in order to execute workplace and school-based initiatives which share potential solutions for addressing depression as well as stories of how others have overcome. In addition to these initiatives, resources are also provided for education programs to help families learn ways to support family members suffering from depression and other mental health challenges.

Though part of the initiative is to reduce the stigma around depression, there will be those who choose not to talk about it or let others know they are suffering. For this reason, GBU Project will also support and promote an online resource for sharing stories of how others have overcome depression along with other potential solutions for recovery.

www.GettingBackUpProject.org