



#depressionhurts

My Story—Patrick

My name is Patrick, this is my story, I'm 52 years old, a Business Man, I'm divorced, a father of wonderful twin sons, both at University and doing well in their studies and I suffer from depression.

When I was about 20, my older cousin took his own life.

I wasn't particularly close to him but recall clearly how it affected me. I felt desperately sad that he had reached a point where this was the only way he felt he had of dealing with his struggles. It brutally exposed me to how much people can be affected by what is going on in their lives.

Later I came to understand he was struggling because he couldn't find work. He came from a family where, like many others, to a great extent work defined your worth. Perhaps he felt he had no worth, he never spoke to any one about his feelings, so of course we never fully understood what he was going through.

My own life was different, I went to University and then on to be a very successful in Business. I built my own Company, exporting our products throughout Europe and to the United States, a poster boy for success.

I revelled in the cut and thrust of the business, the people, the travels, the deal making but also felt great pressure as the business grew. At first I shrugged it off but in time it became overwhelming, so much that I had few problems and sought support through Counselling. The Counselling I had, taught me to look at things differently, it helped me a lot and I am grateful for the help I received. It made me realise I was out of balance, defining my life and life success only in terms of how successful I was in Business and that this focus led me to neglect many other areas of life, including my health.

I carried on working but after another few years became very unwell, it was found I needed bypass surgery which I subsequently had. My recovery was longer than expected as there were complications and I became very depressed. I tried medication but found the tools I learnt from my counselling helped me more. Depression is still a visitor in my life and to this day I still use those techniques to help me combat it and support myself.



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Like many men of my age, I've always been independent, a quiet machismo, never one to show weakness, or feelings or turn to family for any help, I've never been prepared to let them see 'the successful Businessman' as just a normal human being, with some of the frailty we all have.

Lately though, the recession has brought massive business challenge and the most difficult times I've known. The depression returned, for the first time in my life, I reached a point where I've had to drop the facade and confided in two people who's response has been fantastic.

One's a friend I've known for many years, himself a successful Senior Manager, the other my sister. Their practical support and care has helped me through such a very difficult time. When we first spoke, it was like the flood gates opened and I just talked, talked, as I've never done before. What a fool I was not to have done so in the past, them just being there, listening, not judging but caring , supporting helped me so much to get through a very difficult time.

I'd heard it said 'talk to a friend or family member if you feel depressed' but never could before, I thought they'd think badly of me, instead they cared and helped and gave me the confidence to know I can keep talking, things can get better.

Depression may always be a part of my life, I don't know if I'll ever be rid of it, I don't want it, I hate the way it can make me feel but I now feel I am able to meet it differently, to talk when I need to, to seek company not isolation, to use all the tools from my counselling and of course to both seek and accept the love and support of my family and friends.