

Reaching the Light



A Story of **Recovery**

By Robert Kinnear



*Me & **My Health***

I had a normal background, just the usual. I had loads of friends growing up. My family has always been supportive and loving. I've been luckier than others in the respect that I've travelled to lots of places that most people won't have had the chance to. That was down to my parents and grandparents. School, for me, was the same as most kids. I did get bullied but nothing severe; I suppose that's part and parcel of school life really.

When I got diagnosed it seemed as if it kind of came out of the blue. I didn't really notice anything, it crept up on me. I remember when I was out with my friends at nightclubs and I would feel as if I was the only person in that room and there could have been a hundred people there. I would see other people having fun and I would just be standing in a corner wondering why I can't be like that. There was one night I was on shift in my old job where I starting thinking about taking my own life which made me take note. I did eventually open up to my best mate. He was completely honest and said that he didn't know what to say and that he didn't understand fully but he suggested that I go to the doctors because they know about this kind of thing. When I went to see the doctor and I spoke to him it then became clear that I was suffering from depression and I was put on antidepressants. I've been on them for 3 years.

I mentioned about the thought that I had about taking my own life. That was at the beginning of my depression. Fast forward to now, it was on Saturday 8th September at 10:30. I was already in a bad place and I upset one of my best friends who was always there for me throughout my depression. I thought I'd lost that friendship, the person that really understood what it was like to go through our illness. I felt terrible. I thought 'how am I going to cope with this on my own?'. I felt like I was alone again and all the thoughts flooded my head, you're all alone again, you're not good enough, no one loves or cares about you, no one will even notice you're gone and before I even realised what I was doing I took a overdose. I was tired of the constant fight, it's mentally exhausting. I just wanted it to stop.

What ***Helped*** My ***Recovery***

Before this depression and the battle with it I kind of found it hard to talk about feelings but ever since the depression, a couple of months into it I realised that if I didn't speak to somebody it would only get worse. That's something I've learned, that a problem shared is a problem halved. Once I eventually talked to someone it was like a weight had been lifted off me. For the first time in my life I actually went to a group for people with depression. I don't like speaking in front of a big group but this did seem to help. It took me a couple of weeks to speak but when I did it felt good. I suppose I'm also very lucky in respect of the friends and family that I have. I felt at times that no one would really notice or care but I realise now that there are so many people that do. That obviously helped me, knowing that people actually do care. Right now I'm in a really good place but I do have down days like most people who are going through depression. I also think that having a job is also part of my recovery because it keeps my mind active and on other stuff rather than over thinking or over analysing. It doesn't need to be a job, it could be going to the gym or just spending time with friends. As long as you're not in your bedroom doing nothing because by doing nothing it makes you think even more, especially with depression. You might have thoughts that you wouldn't necessarily otherwise have. I always say that the mind can be the devil because it's telling you one thing and deep down you might not think it's true. But the mind is a powerful thing so it can make you believe that things are true when they're not.

Even though I know that I'm in a better place now I do realise that this might never go away but at least I know that I can deal with it in the best way that I can and that there's always somebody there to listen, which is a very important thing.





*My Thoughts on **Depression** and **Stigma***

Depression doesn't know who you are or where you come from. Somebody could have the worst upbringing or childhood. Someone could have the best childhood. But with depression, it doesn't choose. Loads of money or poor, it just one of those things. Even the most successful and well known people like the actor and comedian Robin Williams, who has made millions, has battled with depression and unfortunately found it too hard to cope. He sadly took his own life. It shows that anybody can get depression and find it difficult to cope with.

The easiest way that I can explain it, how I explained it to my mum, is that in many ways depression is like cancer because everyone in the world has the cancer gene in their body, it's just whether that gets triggered. Nowadays cancer can sometimes get cured but there's nothing to cure depression, just things that can help manage it. I used to be one the people who was ignorant. I thought depression was an excuse for people being negative. I thought people going onto medication was a load of rubbish. I do understand why people might think like that because I was one of them. I feel that it's a good thing in a strange kind of a way, that I'm going through depression as now I understand how people feel and what they're actually going through. I've seen on many occasions that people will quickly avoid someone who may be showing some kind of mental illness. Put yourself in their shoes for a second. How would you feel if someone did that to you?. Also not all mental illness can be seen, depression being the biggest example. But if you come across someone who is dealing with this constant battle please don't judge or make a joke of it. This is a real and exhausting battle. Just taking a few minutes out of you're day to talk to that person could just make all the difference.

People don't know and understand if they haven't been through it themselves but that doesn't mean they can't help as it's not necessarily answers we are looking for it's just someone who is willing to listen and that can really help massively.



Whenever you find yourself doubting how far you can go just remember how far you have come. Remember everything you have faced, all the battles you have won, and all the fears you have overcome.

Samaritans

Safe place to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you. You don't have to be suicidal. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. FREE to call.

Phone: **116 123**

Email: **jo@samaritans.org**

Breathing Space

A free, confidential phone and web based service for people experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety. Call on **0800 83 85 87**. The phone line is available 24 hours at weekends (6pm Friday - 6am Monday) and 6pm to 2am on weekdays (Monday - Thursday).

NHS 24

A call centre operated by the NHS to provide health advice and help over the phone when your GP services aren't available.

Call: **111**

eLament

Lanarkshire's first stop for online mental health and well-being resources providing information for people seeking assistance with mental health issues. Our service directory provides listings of key organisations in North and South Lanarkshire and nationally who can offer help and support with mental health issues.

www.elament.org.uk