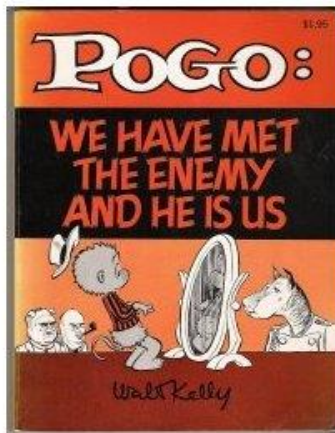


I had a black dog and his name was depression.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiCrniLQGYc>

Summary

1. Whenever the thoughts appeared I felt empty and life just seemed to slow down.
2. The thoughts appeared without warning, or at least I didn't see them coming.
3. I felt older and then I began to look older and became more tired.
4. Activities that used to bring me pleasure, were no longer of interest.
5. I lost my appetite, my memory and ability to concentrate worsened. I became less effective in my work relationships. I dreaded being social. My self-confidence was gone. I was like a scared cat.
6. My energy level was so low that I needed to muster incredible courage to begin a task.
7. I was afraid that people would see me as weak or sick and judge me as worthless.
8. I thought and said negative things. I was frequently irritable and difficult to be around. Depression robbed me of my love and buried my intimacy. I lost the one true thing that mattered the most.
9. My sleep was disturbed. I experienced repetitive thinking that was all negative.
10. The longer I suffered, the bigger the problem became.
11. In an effort to chase the depression away, I often times turned the anger against myself, but found that without the proper skills, I just hurt even more. I was beaten. Going down and staying down became easier than getting up again.
12. Eventually, my life seemed as if hijacked and I'd lost all joy. With no hope in sight, I began to question the point living. Suicide seemed like a reasonable alternative. Self-medication only made the situation worse.
13. Once I finally got professional help, I learned that depression is common, that there is no magic pill and that living a healthy lifestyle has a hugely positive impact that improves the quality of my life.
14. I also learned that being emotionally genuine to my family, friends and co-workers helped me to find people that are also genuine. I found good people and built a circle of care.
15. I learned that it is important to develop the skills to quite my mind.
16. It has been scientifically proven that regular exercise is as effective at treating mild to moderate depression as are pharmacological anti-depressants.
17. I learned to use a mood journal and found a professional to help me to reflect on it. We found patterns that were positive and to be repeated and other activities that were negative events that led to bad days.
18. Know that you have the ability to create your own battle plan to face the enemy and conquer it.



Pogo is a political satire cartoon strip. In this image, Pogo might be commenting on the importance of knowing ourselves so that we stay in charge.

Family
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