

PERSPECTIVES

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The average guy's guide to battling depression

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Anyone who has survived the hormonally driven snake pit that was middle school knows that depression sucks. Whether induced clinically, chemically, or by the perpetual ridicule of your peers, depression can do serious damage to every aspect of your life. The worst part is that once you get stuck in the vicious circle that is depression, it's almost impossible to break away from. So how can anyone be expected to overcome such a terrible task? The only way is to understand depression and how it affects the world around us. This guide will follow a route designed for a quick fix that will only act as a temporary band-aid. I encourage any person with depression to see a specialist as soon as possible; but until then, this guide should get the job done.

First thing we need to establish is that humans, by nature, are socially selfish beings. What I mean by this is, when interacting with others, we want to be around people who make us feel good and are positive because we feed off of that positive energy. So if a person is not emitting that positive aura, then

people are going to run away from that negative person. Though this may seem like a very obvious observation, people with depression, have a very difficult time in these situations because they can't help that they feel awful. When you have depression you obviously feel like crap, and on some strange, primal level you want everyone to know because you would kill for just a little sympathy. However, if you continue to project the negativity vibe, then people (even longtime friends) are going to start to run away. The situation then worsens for the depressed because now their friends are leaving and there is no hope in sight. They now feel even crappier and the cycle continues until a crash course with rock bottom is imminent.

So what happens now? How can a person be liberated from this perpetual purgatory of self-destruction? Well, like most cliché coming-of-age stories, our intrepid and depressed hero must look inward to the light within. The power to be free of depression lies within us and us alone. It cannot be found in a lover, friend, or drug. Those things all make for great handrails along the journey to happiness, but only you can do the walking. Below are some guidelines that should be followed when embarking on

your quest for peace (with the help of a trained professional).

1. Fake it 'til you make it. Depression sucks. Believe me, I know from personal experience, but the only way to get your friends and confidence back is to be happy, or at least pretend to be. When making decisions, ask yourself what you would do if you were confident. If you want to act on it, swing away. If not, that is okay too. Just try to appear as if everything is fine and dandy. This will make you appear as if you are content and that is all that matters. If you pretend long enough, then people begin to think that it is how you really are and will start to gravitate to you.

2. Smile. Smile a lot. Even if you don't feel like it, smile; maybe after a few minutes of smiling, you will actually want to smile for real. A genuine smile can be all it takes to generate the appearance of confidence and happiness.

3. Exercise. Exercising releases serotonin and endorphins into your brain. Those are your body's natural 'happy drugs.' It's a great way to boost your confidence and you can get in shape, too!

4. Give yourself a break: One of my biggest problems was I was always too

hard on myself. I would tear myself apart for every little mistake. If you are anything like that, stop it right now! No one is perfect, and everyone makes mistakes. Even that special someone who you idolized has flaws just like the rest of humanity. Learn from your mistakes and try again. You only lose when you give up.

5. Pick up a new hobby. Nothing can boost confidence like being really good at something. So find a productive new thing to do that you can develop a talent for. It is good if you can do something that is kind of unique, but that really doesn't matter in the end. What is most important is that you enjoy doing it.

6. Don't ever, ever, EVER give up. It's not easy to get over depression, but it's not impossible. Just keep your chin up and keep pushing forward. Things will get better eventually. The results may not appear as soon as you might want, but they will come none-the-less. So don't throw in the towel, and live on.

Don't do it for a girlfriend, boyfriend, school or anything else but yourself. You deserve to be happy. So strive on my friend and be joyous. Just remember, it's like I always say: everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, then it's not the end.

We're all in this together

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The way my schedule works on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, I have three classes from 11 in the morning to a quarter after two. The last two classes of the day are back-to-back and in the same room. In the 15-minute break, I will either check my email, go to the restroom, or get a drink of water.

Last Monday, when I was on my break, I went to the restroom for five minutes. In those five minutes, someone took my school bag that was lying innocently against my chair.

At first I was scared and nervous, not sure what to do when all that was left at my seat was my notebook, planner, and jacket. I asked my professor if she saw anything and went to ask the School of Humanities office if they could look out for the bag in case someone thought I had left it and turned it in.

I had to get to my next class and I sat through it patiently while the 50 minutes lasted hours. After class, I rushed to Police and Safety to reassure myself it wasn't a lost cause and that they will look into surveillance and see what they can do.

It's been a couple days since it was taken. At first I was scared and upset about the theft. I was concerned that someone had my ID card and room key. Then I went to being furiously mad that someone would be so inconsiderate. Now, I am ashamed.

I knew better than to leave my bag in a classroom with a professor still in it while I left the room for five minutes. But the student who took my bag knew even better.

I'm ashamed that a student who goes to this school, who is in my class, who wears navy and white and chants with me on game days would deliberately ruin my day. The time the person had to take my bag suggests that they were in my class and that makes it worse.

That student, whoever they may be, saw that I had gotten up and had left my bag. With feelings of selfishness and inconsiderateness, they took the bag that didn't belong to them. They didn't think twice about how wrong it might be to take another student's school bag.

What makes this all worse is that a student did it to another. Some student took my bag that had almost nothing valuable in it. However, what was in the bag were notes to my Biology class, notes I need to study to get an A. They also took the textbook for the class we were both in, a book I needed to read for a quiz. Not only did they take three birthday presents from my 20th, but also they took my grades away from me.

We are all in this together. The fact that a peer and classmate would do this to someone just like themselves is inconceivable. Why purposefully bring down someone you don't know? We're in college, let's help each other, and not hurt one another.

Why I don't like Scale Up

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It is a relatively well-known fact that Engineering is a pretty difficult major. From the asinine amount of math that students have to trudge through to the cavalcade of generic science classes that never seem to stop, engineering is obviously no walk in the park. This was the understanding of what to expect that each engineering student accepted when we filled out the application. However, little did any of us know that we would be expected to teach ourselves an impossibly difficult subject with little to no help from faculty and battle the most vile curriculum ever designed. Such is the tragic reality that is Scale Up Physics.

For those blessed students who are not familiar with the abysmal hell that is Scale Up, allow me to enlighten you through the magic of metaphor. Imagine walking into a classroom on the first day of the semester. Upon enter-

ing, you are immediately hog-tied, gagged and tossed into a pool of boiling water, only to find that the pool has been fully stocked with an assortment of vicious sharks and a very large squid.

Bear in mind that the only weapon you have to fight your way out with is the very basic crap that you learned back in high school. This horrific daydream is essentially what happens to a Scale Up student's self-esteem on a daily basis.

There are no lectures, class discussions, or anything that is remotely helpful to a student's education. Instead, the bewildered students are given impossible busywork that is poorly worded, hardly proof-read and about as enjoyable as being lathered in bacon grease and heaved into a cage of severely pissed off wolverines. Sound good yet? But wait, there is more. In addition to having to teach yourself from a text book that is longwinded, overcomplicated, and as poorly written as the busy work, students must complete online homework which is also packed full of ambiguously phrased questions that require a perfect

answer which isn't even accepted half the time anyway. Did you just do three hours of excellent work only to have your answer be one thousandth of a percent off and be thrown out? Yes? Then too bad! Enjoy your clinical depression with a side order of insecurity, because this happens every day.

An outside observer may wonder: "Why don't you just correct your answer and enter it again?" The problem is that it will not tell you what is wrong and just leaves you hanging at the front door like a bad date. Confounded students also have the option of posting questions on the problems forum. However, this is only about as helpful as Dell Tech Support staff, because how helpful can they be if the only other people who post things are other students who don't understand it either?

Some readers may think I am being slightly over dramatic, however, please understand that with the course load an engineering student has to take, it is tough to balance time that you don't have. If any reader doubts my claim,

then I challenge you to ask any engineering student about Scale Up and they will spin a similar tale of misery and woe.

Second semester engineer Emily Harrington said, "Scale Up is really a great idea. It asks students to use a discovery method to learn about basic physics concepts. However, this great idea is only great on paper. In reality, everyone can't learn this way, which is what makes the class more difficult than it should be. It would help if the professors would at least introduce some of the material at first, then turn us loose in the labs. Otherwise, we are a herd of lost sheep wanderings aimlessly about the physics realm, unsure of the magnitude of our direction."

Scale Up has a lot of potential to be a good system, however, as of right now it is loose, misguided and a flimsy way to run a science class. I know that I will eventually learn something in Physics 211, but right now I'd much rather wrestle a rabid badger than take that class.

Behrend Roundtable Society wants you

The Behrend Roundtable Society is the equivalent of the English Club here at Behrend. It is a laid-back organization, and membership is not demanding at all. We are a group of students and instructors that all share a common interest: English in all of its forms. Whether you enjoy writing, reading, or criticizing, there are members of the Roundtable society who more than likely have much in common with you. We hold a variety of events every semester, and while attendance is encouraged, membership does not require it. We understand that students have very full schedules, so we make it a primary goal to ensure that

membership in our club does not add any further burden. All of our events are geared toward fun themes. Most of the events also provide attendees with free refreshments.

We have a weekly, email-based newsletter which is easy to subscribe to. Simply email the president, Lee Kinney, at rlk222@psu.edu and ask to be added. Joining this list does not commit you to anything; it simply puts you in line to receive weekly updates on Roundtable and English-related happenings at Behrend. We also have a newly-formed Angel group. To join this, simply search on Angel using the keyword

"roundtable."

We have been granted full SGA funding for all of our scheduled events for the Spring 2009 semester. To summarize them briefly: we will be holding two student/faculty readings, geared toward specific fun themes and provided with food and drinks. Also, we will be publishing a student journal at the end of the semester containing the poetry and prose of Behrend students from all fields of study. A workshop and final editing session slash pizza-party for the student publication will be held later in the semester also. Whether affiliated with us or not, any student at Behrend is wel-

come to submit material for the journal.

For detailed information about these events or how to go about seeking publication in our journal, simply email rlk222@psu.edu and ask away! The best way to get information about these events along with future events is to join our mailing list. We hope to see many new faces at our events this semester!

R. Lee Kinney
President, Behrend Roundtable Society
Junior English Lit option

In my opinion:

Start planning now.
35 days till spring break (give or take a few days depending on when you've picked up your Mustang. Cancun? Miami? Vegas? Hawaii? What about?
My only requirement is... you show.

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Google images
- Bangkok
- Pretzel sandwiches
- Zebra cakes

Submission Guidelines:

Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries 700 words. The more concise the submission, the less we will be forced to edit it for space concerns and the more likely we are to run it.

The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Please include your major, faculty or administration position, and semester standing. Deadline for any submission is 8 p.m.

Email submissions to jdj5061@psu.edu or drop them off at the Beacon office.

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Poorly made omelettes
- Theft
- Having to borrow textbooks
- Expensive clocks