
Drowning Again

One cold day in February 2008, I awoke to find that I had a very serious illness: depression. Much to my shock and horror, it came out of nowhere and gripped me hard to the point that I was suicidal. I tried to keep the details of my health private for fear my clients would let me go thinking I was unable to work. Rumors were circulating on the Internet that I was battling cancer—scuttlebutt that started in a chat room, no doubt. I didn't have cancer, but I neither confirmed nor denied. To be honest, cancer seemed a much more noble disease. So I let the rumors fly and simply had Jo Schloeder, my marketing consultant and friend, run interference with the companies, passing on vague messages and putting off commitments.

But I was about to face the most devastating six-month battle of my life. This time I wouldn't just think about doing myself in; I'd actually try.

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To explain depression—to really and truly describe this illness that swallowed me up for another six months of my life—to someone who has never experienced it is like me trying to tell you what childbirth feels like. Unless you've been through it yourself it is nearly impossible to explain. Though I was with Mary through her contractions and labor and ultimate delivery of Tara, I can only tell you what I observed. I obviously can't know exactly how it felt.

It's the same with depression. If you have not personally experienced the fear and overwhelming helplessness of clinical depression—and I pray you never do—I don't know if you will be able to really grasp what I went through. But I'll try to explain it the best I can.

Remember, I began to aggressively warn my readers in 2007 that “America had been robbing Peter to pay Paul, and Peter is tapped out.” I pounded the table in 2007 that the U.S. stock market wouldn't top out until the Federal Reserve Bank began easing monetary policy. They did in October of 2007 and I issued my most bearish forecast ever, titled, “Man Your Battle Stations.” I envisioned the worst economic and stock market fall since the Great Depression.

In January 2008, I was in Vancouver for a conference and a few media appearances and I came down with a bad case of bronchitis. I was really sick. Coming home on the plane was gruesome for me. For weeks it dragged on, but I finally felt better by the time the Super Bowl came around because the New York Giants were in the big game. Having spent time with many of these guys in the locker room and Bible study, their pending success made me smile briefly.

However, shortly after the Super Bowl, a combination of my health and the grim markets really began to plague me and I started suffering from anxiety. It wasn't depression, but stress and anxiety, which Joe Klecko joked was due to a lack of football. But the worry and apprehension quickly worsened and one day in February I awoke *paralyzed*. Not from some horrific spinal injury,

but depression. I was essentially physically and mentally paralyzed by fear and a sense of total and utter lack of hope.

I would learn I was quite ill. This led me to spend days and weeks on end in my bedroom, venturing out only when I was forced to go to the doctor or therapist. I had motivation for nothing—not showering, shaving, eating, working, watching television, nothing. I stayed in my bed for hours, then days, simply crying uncontrollably at the mess I thought I had made of my life and the lives of my wife and daughter.

Though I had gone through panic attacks and depression before, this time it was different. It was debilitating. Last go 'round I spent days with Father Williams and Bill Wegner seeking comfort and slowly pulled out of it. This time, however, I stayed inside in the dark—like an agoraphobic frozen by the thought of being around people. The Devil had his hands around my throat and my heart and was squeezing the life from every single breath I took.

Then came the fatigue, the hours and hours of sleeping, followed by the inability to sleep at all. There was no escape from the impending doom I foresaw. I withdrew from everything. The simplest of tasks seemed unfathomable.

It was as if a truck was parked on my chest. I simply could not move. Sadness gripped me, swept me up, engulfed me and drowned my every moment. No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't control my thoughts; negative, irrational, utterly nonsensical thoughts consumed my every waking moment.

I had to stay away from my computer because the news in the U.S. and around the world made me perceive everything to be far worse. I sent cryptic messages to clients and readers through Jo about the fact that I was “undergoing tests” and “under doctor's orders.” That certainly wasn't a lie because in the beginning I really had a potential fatal ailment.

Though I didn't lie about my condition, I was afraid to tell people what I was really dealing with. First, because at that point I didn't think I would ever recover. And second, there was the notion that admitting that I was battling depression would brand me as being weak or emotional. (This from the man who cried and cried in front of family, friends, and complete strangers.)

My perception of the world was that I was a total failure. Guilt set in.

On February 25, Jo, the only other person to ever post on my blog, sent this message to my clients:

*Peter Grandich has been ill for the past several weeks, starting on January 14th in Vancouver and recurring twice since then, including this weekend. As a result, his immune system became so depleted that he ended up in the hospital Sunday and was kept overnight. He has been ordered to stay on complete bed rest for at least the next 7-10 days, as he is nearing severe exhaustion. Regretfully, per doctor's orders he'll have to cancel his trip to Toronto this weekend.*

*Peter asked me to express his sincere gratitude to all of you who he knows will be praying for his recovery, and wanted me to assure you that in relatively short order (after some much-needed rest) he'll be as good as new. Although he truly appreciates knowing that you are thinking of him, please don't send any gifts or flowers.*

*For the time being, Peter will not be responding to phone messages or e-mail. If you need to speak with him, please e-mail me as I will be in touch with him once daily.*

To my great surprise, I got a lot of very positive emails via Jo. Dozens of messages and phone calls came in to her from clients, members of the media, and business associates. One e-mail said, "Just let Peter know that he is in my prayers, and that the drop in the price of gold is not a personal challenge from God just for him."

Everyone wished me a quick recovery, but I couldn't envision getting better; I was mad at myself. I thought despite telling everyone to sell everything and even go short, by staying with the junior resource stocks I was hurting many people and myself. Because of what I saw happening in the economy, I knew a major economic recession was coming, and how would I support my family?

On March 24, I wrote a friend and said,

*The antidepressants made me sick as a dog. Will try another one. Trying to hold on but I'm scared I screwed up my whole life being aligned in this mining business. Can't make any real money elsewhere.*

Then on April 2, I sent an email that started with,

*I'm writing to my dearest friends on my 52nd birthday. I wish it was 72 as I would be closer to meeting my maker... I so much want to meet my maker and spend eternity with him.*

Five days later I emailed Jo:

*I put my family behind the eight ball.*

*I realize the majority of the money I made these last few years has been from gambling on stocks.*

*Being a broker again has passed by as starting to build a book of business would be costly, timely, and I don't think the next several years will be great times so no matter what I said in the past, isn't going to drive people to me.*

*Mary doesn't realize any of this and already is very mad.*

*Yes, I have a so-called bankroll, but what do I do, sit and wait to die? And since I don't seem prepared to drive a limo for the rest of my natural life, I have no real hope. And the worst part is suicide is certain damnation.*

*Pretty good for the Wall Street Whiz Kid which was also*

*b.s. Turns out most of my life was deceit and selfishness.*

*Now don't go calling Mary because I'm not about to jump off a bridge—yet. But outside of a miracle of miracles I ruined 3 lives—2 good ones and one lousy one, mine.*

I was serious about driving a limo. I thought it was the only thing I was qualified to do. I also toyed with the idea of being a car salesman, but was told that I was overqualified for that. Oh, God, I

couldn't even sell cars!

I know how unrealistic all of this must sound. Clearly, I had a thriving business and enough money in the bank to live comfortably for the rest of my life. I had no debt. I had a loving wife and daughter. Aside from an ailment that many people successfully overcome, and a few extra pounds, I had a great life. I had the ability to continue to provide for my family and I could even play golf several times a week.

To balanced, level people like my wife and many of my friends, they couldn't understand why I couldn't just "snap out of it." Get over it. They told me over and over how irrational I was being. But what they didn't and couldn't know was that "rational" thoughts as we know them are not part of a depressed person's thinking ability. Your doomsday thoughts are programmed by the sickness and there is no "rational."

There was a constant, unbreakable feeling of sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness, and eventually suicide. Ultimately, life just didn't seem worth living, and I told myself that Mary and Tara would be better off without me.

One morning in April, while Mary and Tara were in Ireland, I awoke feeling I just couldn't live anymore. I wrote Mary a long letter explaining all the financials and why I couldn't live. Then I wrote another letter, this time a goodbye note to Bill Wegner, who had been my most faithful friend. I was taking Xanax at the time, so I loaded a jarful in my pocket and headed down to Bill's office at St. Veronica's Church to give him the note.

For good or bad, Bill was out at the time, so I handed the note to the secretary and headed back to my car and started downing pills. I had taken six or eight of them by the time she followed me out and took the bottle, and within minutes Bill had called the police and I was admitted to a specialized psychiatric hospital.

It was almost like prison. For the first time in my life, I was locked up. I couldn't leave; in fact, I couldn't even leave the floor for the first two days, and then the farthest I could go was to walk around the grounds.

Everybody at this place had a problem—big problems. Some were addicts, there was a teacher who was cutting herself, and others were suicidal, like me. I felt extreme compassion for these patients and at times felt like my life wasn't nearly as bad, yet I remained full of fear.

Because I had already gone through psychotherapy and a number of different drug therapies, the doctors decided my only hope was electroconvulsive therapy, a k a electric shock therapy. It is as barbaric as it sounds: they plug you in and shoot electric current into your body until it convulses and you can't talk or think. It was debilitating. Painful. The plan was to have three rounds a day of this torture for four days, but after day one I couldn't even walk.

That's when I decided the therapy wasn't working. Since I had been there long enough I was able to check myself out, and I did, pronto. I couldn't deal with the thought of my wife or daughter seeing me there, so I called Bill to pick me up.

On that day, I returned home still a broken man and immediately returned to the lifestyle of crying, fear, loathing, and remorse. I'd later find out that although depression is more prevalent in women,

men are four times more likely to kill themselves. So it made sense that I would try again.

The next time Mary and Tara were out of town, I attempted for a second time to take my life, this time by drinking and taking pills. However, my sister, who called in the midst of my self-destruction, thwarted my efforts by calling Bill who called the police again.

This time they took me to a community hospital psych ward where there were some really tough cases. Some were very, very mentally ill. I struck up a relationship with a young man who was there because, though he worked, he also drank and had been tossed out of where he lived and had no place to go. He was homeless. I had about eighteen bucks in my pocket, and the day I was released I gave it to him. The guy cried as if I had given him a million dollars.

“You know, no one’s ever done this for me, no family, no nothing,” he said.

“It’s only eighteen dollars,” I replied. “It ain’t the eighteen dollars,” he said.

At that moment, even though I was so deeply depressed and suicidal, I could see the differences in his life and mine. I wept. And on the way home in the car with Bill I realized that though I was miserable and things seemed very bad, I could no longer just sit home wallowing in my fear and agony; I had to do something to occupy my mind.

Friends like Joe Klecko reinforced this. Time after time as I sat in Joe’s living room he would preach to me about how life isn’t just about money ... and it’s not about me. It’s God’s. It’s ALL God’s. He tried to convince me of all that I had going for me and all that I had to be thankful for. And he gave me all the reasons why I should trust in God. I listened. Maybe I even believed him a little.

Remember that before getting sick, I sent out up to five *Grandich Letters* or *Special Alerts* a week. But from March through May I sent out a few brief paragraphs. Any time I felt well enough to write a few lines I would in an attempt to show my clients I was still alive.

In April I wrote to a colleague, “My return will likely not be seen for a while and please God not never.” Then a few days later I also sent this to a few close friends:

*Over these last several weeks, I’ve discovered how badly I’ve lived my life through total selfishness, pride, and sinfulness. My friend Joe Klecko really gave it to me in a good way yesterday showing me it’s all about me and money, not trusting God. I went so far as to think I can drive a limo and discovered you make only \$500–600 and have to be available 72 hours a week. Bottomline, there’s nothing out there in any new field that I can make a living at.*

*God visited my bedroom last night at 3 a.m. and showed me besides all this, I’ve been a lazy worker and a quitter versus a fighter. I don’t think this was the Devil because it wasn’t with malice, but who knows.*

*I felt lost again and dragged myself with all my fears to church this morning. While sitting there, I saw a man who I’ve noticed there for the last two months. After church, I introduced myself and we began to talk. He ended up telling me he was 37 years old, had two children and a wife who doesn’t work, was almost bankrupt, and last July was prepared to kill himself. He came to church after not being a religious person and felt he had to try his business again. He described how while he’s still in hock he isn’t depressed anymore and has stopped medicine and therapy. I told him a little about*

*me and he ended up saying I should try to do whatever it seemed God had blessed me with. I told him it seems to be to talk about investments, economy but then gave him a long list of how that business has passed me by, etc. He absolutely urged me to go at it again as it has to be what God gave you as a gift—even if you didn't use it right in the past. I told him there seem to be a lot of obstacles to do it, including the fear of failure and ability, and he said is there anything else you could do and of course the answer was no.*

*Is this God speaking to me? I'm supposed to do His will. Could His will be for me not to try this again?*

*Trying to hold onto my money is only going to kill me over time. I'm scared to death, hard to think but want to share with my closes friends who could give me their insight.*

After sending this email, Frank Congilose tried hard to make me see things rationally. He pulled me in his office one day and said, "Let's take a real look at your situation."

And he went line by line asking questions with me answering. "How much money do you have?"

"Millions," I murmured.

He said, "Are you married?" "Yeah."

"Marriage happy?" "Yeah."

"Child. Child okay?" "Yes."

"Do you owe anybody any money?" "No."

"That means you own where you live, your cars, and everybody is healthy. You realize that your net worth puts you in the top 3 to 5 percent in America?"

Then he said, "What do you think, God is just going to shut it off now? You're never going to earn another dime again? Come on, that's stupid."

He said, "Do you really think that if you just came back here, went and got your license and started talking to people, you wouldn't do *any* business?" And he said, "Besides, you could easily not work for the next ten or fifteen years, as long as there is no major disaster. You know that most of the people we see, they have little or no savings, six months and..." he trailed off.

"So stop it," he concluded.

About the same time Frank was beating me up, so was Klecko. He pounded me about having to totally trust God, to give everything up to Him, and realize that it is all His anyway. Everything we do has to be in line with what God wants, Joe would tell me. He'd say that it's hard to stay focused on the Lord, but it comes with prayer, constant prayer.

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I now know that depression is caused by genetic, biochemical, psychological, and environmental factors. Most notably, it is brought on by stress, trauma, and a chemical change in the brain that

affects how the brain functions. I won't go into details but when millions of nerve cells called neurotransmitters don't function properly, the results can be deadly. To compound matters, depression can often run in families, and I learned that my father and all his family members and their children suffered from depression for many years.

It's been reported that over 18 million Americans suffer from depression, though I think that number may be way off because of the high number of unreported cases from people who either cannot afford to seek help or just don't. According to the National Institute of Health, major depressive disorder is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for people ages 15–44.

Though we all throw around the term “depressing” from time to time, trust me when I tell you that true clinical depression is something you wouldn't wish upon your worst enemy.

It's an illness, and thankfully for me, it was a treatable one.

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Unlike my first bout with depression, which took months to emerge from, this time it was like somebody flipped the switch and turned it off.

On August 29, a little more than six months after my living hell began, I received an e-mail from a friend that changed my outlook. Often throughout my illness, my friends would send me motivational messages, but this one was a link to a YouTube video called “That's My King.” I don't know why, but I clicked to watch it.

By following a link to the Igniter Media Group website, I now know that the audio is of a service delivered by the late S.M. Lockridge, who delivered “an incredible message, describing our God and who He is. Though God can't be described with just words, this is as close as you can get this side of Heaven.”

Dr. Shadrach Mesach (S.M.) Lockridge was the Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in San Diego, California and was active in the civil rights movement.

The moving audio, in which Lockridge barks out again and again, “That's my King!” is accompanied by religious images that depict Jesus Christ. Lockridge asks over and over, “Do you know Him?” He describes how Jesus Christ supplies our strength, how He saves us, how He blesses us, and rewards us. Lockridge asks again and again, “Do you know Him? His mercy is everlasting, His love never changes, His yoke is easy, His burden is light. He's invincible. That's MY KING!”

Well, I watched that video and it was as if God himself reached down from Heaven and flipped the switch. I just bawled. And cried some more. Not crying out of fear or agony this time, but tears of joy—I was full of emotion and felt as if the Holy Spirit went through my whole body. I just knew that all the things the pastor said in that video were true. That God is everything, everywhere. It just hit me that I had to surrender. People like Joe Klecko and Bill Wegner had been telling me the same thing for months, imploring me to totally trust God. Somehow when they told me it didn't mean as much as when S.M. Lockridge, a pastor now dead, told me.

Mary and Tara were due home from Ireland and I didn't want them to see their father and husband in the bed crying anymore. So, that very day I got down on the floor and prayed. I called out to God

and praised Him. My heart was full of joy. I know that sounds clichéd, but there is no other way to describe joy in your heart. I had a sense of warmth come over me. In fact, I was so warm I took my temperature because I thought I had a fever.

Later, I went to church and just sat for an hour thanking God.

The next morning, I had breakfast with George McGovern who prayed over me, and I had that great warm feeling again, just like I did as Father Williams has prayed over me. And I concluded that I had to get up and get to work. My potentially deadly illness was gone and my mind was clear and upbeat again.

It was an unbelievable journey. The feeling inside was like I finally allowed the Holy Spirit to come alive. Like I was finally allowing Him to operate within me.

HE flipped that switch.

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When you're depressed, you get a knot in your head and can't think, and anytime you try to think, no matter what you think, you come up with a bad conclusion so that you don't think it can work. To truly overcome it, you need a combination of prayer, therapy, and medicine.

From my experience, I learned that Jesus is the ultimate answer. One person said to me, if you take one step and trust Him, he'll take a thousand, and that's what happened ever since then. I really think this was the first time that I had a real, true, purely personal relationship with Jesus. Although I may have appeared to be a Godly man before, in the past it was some of Him, and a lot of me. I had a "fair weather" relationship with the Lord. When things were good, I was willing to do all the things Jesus called me to do, especially on a generosity side. I always loved giving money to people and causes. It made me feel good. (My father was that way; he never had any money, but he was the most generous man you'd ever meet.)

But when things turned, I didn't have real trust in Him. I allowed the other one that roams the earth seeking to destroy to enter my mind and I listened to his lies and deceit. In my opinion, there are only two true emotions in the world: love, which comes from Jesus; and fear, which is of the devil.

When things went bad in the past, I didn't love Jesus—I called Him as if I was dialing 911. "Hello, Jesus, can you fix this?" I never said, "I love you, whatever you have planned I'll accept." That was the difference this time ... because I truly accepted His will that morning, and said whatever I have to do, even if it's not what I want to do, I'll do it.

The future? I'm taking it one day at a time.