

SUMMARY

RISE FROM DARKNESS

KRISTIAN HALL



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Summary of “Rise From Darkness” by Kristian Hall

Written by Lea Schullery

Learn How to Overcome Depression through
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Positive
Psychology.

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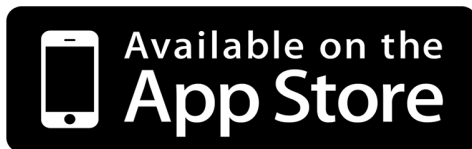


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Introduction

Before we begin, we must ask ourselves “What is depression?” According to author Kristian Hall, depression is not a specific illness; instead, it is an umbrella diagnosis that covers a variety of situations and conditions. The core of depression, however, is persistent sadness, sorrow, and melancholy which isn’t necessarily caused by a specific source. Those who suffer from depression typically have low energy and require more sleep than the average person. Additionally, they may have crying spells and intense psychological pain which may result in more physical symptoms. At its worst, depression is accompanied by suicidal thoughts as the sufferer believes life is too painful to continue living it. Some causes of depression may be trauma from childhood or youth, mourning, bullying, low self-esteem, self-criticism, and even unbalanced chemistry in the body. Others, however, may simply be depressed without a clear explanation of why. Those who suffer from depression have a mind full of mechanisms that only magnify depression. The key is to change and eliminate those mechanisms. Lastly, Hall suggests that finding the cause of your depression doesn’t necessarily lead to improvement; instead, the opposite is true and the problem may only become worse as you think of your pain. To cure yourself of depression, you must think of the things in life which give you joy and make you feel positive.

How Our Feelings and Life Experiences Can Alter Our Reality

So what makes you feel sad? Or happy? What exactly are feelings, and how do they occur? Knowing the science behind our feelings will help you learn how to take control of them. The first thing you should know is that the brain sends signals to the body's cells via two systems: the nervous system and the endocrine system. The nervous system is the one that allows you to feel pain when you accidentally hurt yourself, whereas the endocrine system produces and manages your body's hormones.

Both systems are based on chemistry. The nervous system utilizes electrochemistry in which information is sent as an electric signal and is transmitted between nerve cells via molecules called neurotransmitters. The endocrine system is solely based on chemistry. Hormones, which are relatively large molecules, are produced by various glands in the body and brain and are then transported via the body's fluids to the body's cells. Together, neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, and hormones like endorphins and adrenaline, are produced by the brain and attempt to communicate with the rest of the body. For instance, when your body is full of endorphins, you feel positive, energetic, and happy. On the other hand, when you have too little serotonin and dopamine in your system, you may feel depressed.

Therefore, if you want to improve your mood, you must learn how to change the chemical balance in your body. You must increase the production of serotonin, endorphins, and oxytocin. Of course, you'll soon learn exactly how to do this through this summary. When it comes to thoughts and feelings, each influences the other. For instance, if you're depressed, it's hard to think positive thoughts as the negative feelings pull the mental processes down. Meanwhile, negative thoughts can cause the body to produce signals that lead to negative feelings. However, your thoughts and feelings are affected by the mental filters that affect the way

you perceive the world. This simply means that each person experiences similar situations differently.

For example, if two people see a large spider and one of them has a fear of spiders, each person will have entirely different reactions. Another example includes the following three people: Jon, Sue, and Joanna. If Jon and Sue meet Joanna for the first time, and Jon believes that all people are wicked while Sue believes all people are good, they will each interpret Joanna in different ways and have two different experiences. This is because Jon and Sue have different mental filters. These filters serve an important purpose and allow us to break down information and understand our world.

Everything from our views on politics to our values and personal ethics is all affected by these filters.

Unfortunately, these mental filters can also work against us and distort our perception of reality. For example, neo-Nazis believe that black people are worth less than white people. A radical communist believes all capitalists are evil. Basically, we take our beliefs as truth. Robert Anton Wilson once explained it by saying, "What the Think thinks, the Prover proves." In other words, humans tend to search and find proof for what they believe in, no matter what it may be. So if you believe that people cannot be trusted, then you will take note of everything that supports this idea while ignoring signs that prove the opposite. Psychologists Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatté call this phenomenon the Velcro/Teflon effect.

Demons and Thought Fallacies

Unfortunately, our thoughts and feelings can end up in locked patterns and habits. This is because thoughts run along the neurons the brain makes. These neurons take the path of least resistance and follow the highways in your brain. Think of these paths as a bicycle track. As a cyclist cycles around a circle over and over again, a deep track is created that the bicycle will easily follow. Over time, it becomes more difficult to steer in a different direction. Your brain works the same way.

While some of these patterns are beneficial, such as when we brush our teeth every morning, other patterns can be incredibly detrimental. These thought patterns are referred to as demons. These demons can manifest themselves in both conscious and subconscious ways. For example, imagine one day you are called in by your boss for a meeting. Your boss commends you for your recent work and is overall satisfied with your performance. At the end of the meeting, however, he mentions that you could improve on giving constructive feedback to your colleagues since you tend to be a bit negative in department meetings.

When you leave the meeting, you have a bad feeling and fail to consider all the positive comments you received from your boss. Instead, you focus solely on the last comment about your negativity towards colleagues. You fill your head with thoughts like, “There goes my promotion” and “My boss sees me as a negative element at the office.” As you go about the rest of your day, you’re in a bad mood and you are miserable when you get home which results in fighting with your spouse or snapping at your children. If you were to ask your boss, however, the meeting would have been an overall positive one.

You see, demons can change everything you experience and color your world in dark hues as you transform all things positive to negative. Demons can be incredibly dangerous and destroy lives. Of course, demons are caused by the many thought fallacies which lead to this flawed thinking.

Some thought fallacies include: generalizing, over-dramatizing, personalizing, and mind-reading. When it comes to generalizing, we tend to generalize quite often. Most of the time, our generalizations are harmless like, “All dogs are cute;” however, generalizing can turn harmful and damaging with thoughts like, “I never succeed at anything,” or “Everyone I know is an idiot.”

Over-dramatizing occurs when you take a negative incident and make it out to be more significant than it is, as we saw in the example above.

Personalizing occurs when we take responsibility for something that occurs, even though it's not your responsibility. To avoid this thought fallacy, we should always remind ourselves that life is full of good and bad experiences, most of which are out of our control. For example, when your friend is in a bad mood, you may believe it is your fault; however, we cannot take responsibility for someone else's feelings. Lastly, there is mind-reading which is when we believe we know what someone else is thinking. We typically make conclusions like “She doesn't like me,” based on misinterpretations of expressions or body language. Instead, the person you think doesn't like you may have just had a bad day and wasn't overly friendly the last time you interacted.

Take it One Step at a Time and Learn How to Chimney Sweep

So how can you begin to get through your bad days or weeks? It's important to start by breaking the day into smaller parts and getting through each of them one at a time. Once you get through the day, that day will turn into weeks, then months. Things will soon get better. Start by getting up when you awaken. You see, depressed people need more sleep than the average person, so instead of lying in bed all day, you should get up and move your body. You should also try to stay awake during daylight hours and sleep during the night.

Next, tidy up your accommodations, and even give them a good scrub if necessary. Mental hygiene begins with clean surroundings. Speaking of being clean, take a shower. You'll feel more refreshed and have more energy to get through the rest of the day. Make sure to put on clean clothes that remind you of positive memories, try not to spend the day in sweats or pajamas. After your shower, eat a healthy breakfast. Eat regularly even if your appetite is nonexistent. Your blood sugar levels affect your mood, which is something you can control. If you truly cannot eat a meal, force yourself to eat a handful of nuts that are rich in energy and nutrients.

After breakfast, go for a long walk, preferably somewhere in nature. As you walk, listen to uplifting music that improves your mood. Get out in the sun, get exercise, and you'll see an improvement in your mood. Next, it's time to do something distracting. If you're up for it, meet up with a friend or a family member. When you meet at someone else's home, you experience a change in your surroundings which will help distract you from your own pain. If you can't meet up with someone, watching something funny or uplifting or playing videogames can also distract you from negative thoughts. It's important to find things that calm you when you are feeling anxious. Finally, go to bed when you are tired. If you cannot sleep, get up and try again later when you are feeling more tired.

The next step is chimney sweeping. Chimney sweeping is emptying yourself of negative thoughts and feelings and loosening emotional knots. This step is important for those who find they are depressed without really knowing why, or for those with a history of trauma and negative experiences they are struggling to unlock. There are many methods of chimney sweeping, the most common being talking oneself dry. This means calling a good friend or close family member to talk through the pain. Another method is crying. Try to set an environment in which you can easily release your emotions: turn off the lights, play sad music, and let your tears run freely. Afterward, you will feel relaxed and empty.

Next, try pairing your chimney sweeping with keeping a diary. Write down things in your diary that you may be too embarrassed to tell a close friend or even a therapist. Try writing in your diary when you are feeling pain *and* when you are feeling enjoyment. Writing out your thoughts will help you ease the pain and can have the same effect as talking to someone else. The best part? A diary is always available which may not always be the case for people. To begin, start on the first page and simply start writing what you feel and why you think you feel that way. Write about your desires, and write until you can't write anymore. Next, make sure you take note of how you feel before and after your writing session.

Turning Your Negative Thoughts into More Positive Ones

Let's take a look again at our thoughts and feelings. The main difference between the two is that the brain can handle only one thought at a time, whereas feelings can often operate simultaneously. For instance, you can feel both grief and shame at the same time, or even happiness and grief. Think of feelings as colors which can be blended into different hues and shades, while thoughts operate just one at a time. This means that you can get rid of a negative thought process by replacing it with a more positive one.

For instance, imagine your mind is a coffee mug. If the coffee mug is filled with mud, you can clean it by rinsing the mug with water. You can do the same with your mind by distracting yourself with activities when you are suffering emotionally. In other words, you can exchange the negative thought process with something more neutral or positive. One way to do this is through the use of mantras. A mantra is a powerful thought impulse that works like a massive rinsing of the brain. You can use a mantra to stop an emerging negative thought and to prevent yourself from going through a downward spiral.

For Hall, he uses *strength* and *trivial* as mantras. For example, when he is about to do something he knows he shouldn't, like eat chocolate, he mentally yells to himself, "*Strength!*" Other times, he roars the word so loud that he almost jumps. Similarly, he uses the mantra, *trivial*, when he finds himself about to enter a bad mood over something insignificant, like when his son colors one of his favorite books. Hall also learned another mantra from Richard Bandler, one that is particularly effective when you want to silence your negative inner voice that tries to pick at your self-confidence. The mantra is simple: *Shut up*.

To create your own mantra, you should first map out what you want to use for when and where a specific demon attacks you. Next, choose a mantra

that suits the situation. To make the mantra even more effective, try using a visual aid as well. For example, when you mentally roar out the word, *strength*, you can simultaneously imagine boxing gloves pounding away at your visualized demon. Another visualization technique you can use is a catastrophe scale. Begin by visualizing a scale from 1 to 100, where 100 represents your worst nightmare, like losing your entire family in an accident. Then, each time something negative happens, place the event on the catastrophe scale. For example, losing your job is quite serious but can likely be placed at a level 10. However, events like missing the bus should hardly register on the scale, even if it is a frustrating experience.

This technique will allow you to recognize which events in your life are relatively minor, allowing you to avoid over-dramatizing and over-reacting.

How Self-Hypnosis Can Help You Rewrite Your Brain's Operating System

When it comes to your demons, they live in your subconscious, born of painful experiences that likely occurred throughout childhood and youth. In fact, research shows that brain activity occurs at the delta and theta levels (between 0.5 and 8 Hz) of children between the ages 0 and 6. These same frequency levels are found in adults during their sleep/unconsciousness and day-dreaming/meditation. This means that children are relatively unconscious before the age of six-years-old and register experiences like a tape recorder.

Therefore, a child who experiences abuse may create demons that will manifest later in life. This is why Hall believes that one of the best ways to battle these demons is by getting on the same wavelength they were created on. To do this, you'll need to undergo hypnosis. You can certainly do this by seeking out a hypnotist, but you can also learn how to do meditation and self-hypnosis. Self-hypnosis allows you to access the operating system of your brain, the programs which direct the subconscious parts of yourself. When hypnotized, you can remove parts of or entire programs, changing them or even rewriting them. So where can you begin?

The best method of self-hypnosis is to listen to a soundtrack that you've recorded in advance. The content of the soundtrack is called a script. For Hall, he typically records a script on his smartphone which allows him to always have access to it, that way, he can perform self-hypnosis anywhere he wants. Your script should have three parts: induction, re-programming, and exit. The induction is the part that should put you into a trance. The re-programming is the active part of self-hypnosis in which changes in your subconscious can occur. Finally, the exit is the shortest phase and its purpose is to take you out of your trance.

Some examples may include, "My health is getting better and better," and "I am getting calmer and calmer, less and less caught up in worries, and my

sleep is getting better and better.” Once you’ve written your script, you should listen to it in a calm environment, like lying in bed or sitting in a comfortable chair. Listen to the soundtrack multiple times to allow the change to take effect over time. You’ll find that listening to your soundtrack has the power to make you calmer, stronger, more confident, and even healthier.

Using Visualization Techniques to Fight Depression

Similar to self-hypnosis, visualization can also be a powerful tool to help you battle your negative thoughts. You see, the brain cannot discern between imaginary and real impulses. This is why if you visualize your greatest fear, like standing over the edge of a cliff, you might experience your pulse quicken and your skin begin to sweat; meanwhile, the glands in your body will produce stress hormones. This is the same process that occurs inside your brain when you visualize. This is why competitive skiers spend time visualizing the track they are about to ski through.

Research even suggests that it is possible to increase the body's muscle mass simply by visualizing weightlifting. So how can you access the power of visualization? First, begin by entering a completely relaxed state and letting go of the day's stress and worries. Next, think about what you wish to change. Perhaps it's your wants, dreams, fears, or worries. For instance, perhaps you wish to make the best possible impression at a job interview the following days. Begin by closing your eyes and imagining that you are sitting in a cinema with a huge screen in front of you. Your visualization will play as if it is a movie on the screen.

Imagine yourself sitting in the interview and that you are radiating with self-confidence. Imagine the interviewers laughing out loud at your jokes. Perhaps they are even thinking "*This candidate is the one for us!*" Then, create a new scene. In this scene, you imagine yourself signing the contract for the job. Everyone around you is smiling, and more importantly, you know that you will do a great job. In the next scene, imagine that you enjoy your colleagues and that you respect and trust them. They too laugh at your jokes and even admire the work you do. Personalize this scenario with details that suit your situation.

It's important to make the details of your movie vivid and colorful. You can use this technique as well to visualize your ideal self. Close your eyes and

imagine another version of yourself standing before you. This version should be the most perfect version of yourself. Visualize each detail, including the way you are standing, the expression you have, and the clothes you are wearing. Next, visualize how you will handle life's problems and challenges. How do you relate to other people? Do you smile and laugh? How is your body language? Next, imagine what the perfect day might look like for this version of you. What does the ideal day look like? Finally, imagine what your ideal self says, hears, and feels. Use this visualization technique every day for a week and see how it helps your mood. If you find the technique works, then it's time to adopt visualization techniques into your daily routine to improve your happiness.

Final Summary

Depression is experienced by many people all over the world. And while depression can look different for each person, there is a set of techniques that Kristian Hall believes can help anyone live a happier, healthier life. By breaking your day into simple steps, and implementing methods like self-hypnosis and visualization, you too can rewire your brain's operating system to avoid negative thoughts and falling into a downward spiral. According to Hall, the world is like quantum physics: the world is an illusion which is made by its observers. This simply means that you create your own universe, and the only real world for you is created by yourself. At the end of the day, "we are the creators of our own reality. You can form your own world and in so doing form your own happiness."



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