



The Depressed Person

David Foster Wallace

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The Depressed Person Details

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From Reader Review The Depressed Person for online ebook

T. says

Unforgettable short story that filled me with simultaneous pity and revulsion. Yes, the narrator was a sad case. No, I wouldn't want to know her. The narcissism and the needy demands would drive me ... nuts.

Weltschmerz says

Koliko surovo.

Carol says

pretty accurate portrayal of the ugliness of depression, written by someone who suffered from it. it made me, as a depressed person, very uncomfortable(in a good way), but I guess that is the point.

Sarah says

A story too close to home for me, for the author, and for friends. And that's what makes it important.

Wonderfully modeled on the depressing spiral of searching within oneself to find an answer to a problem that IS oneself. She exists in a place made of her faults, with no real connection to others. The story comes full circle with the titular character begging for honesty, for sincerity. It's a theme that is repeated again mid-story by watching her roommate make disgusted face while talking sweetly into the phone; by wanting the therapist to just be blatant about eyeing the clock.

Yet, is she too busy asking for honesty to listen to honesty? I couldn't help but feel that simple acceptance, with less rumination, was the key here. Yes she was a burden (to read about, and to her Support System friends). But her inability to just let herself be a burden for a while – her hatred at knowing she was a burden—began again the circle that steered her away from what could actually help ease that burden for her and her friends. From her flows a bottomless well of sorrow, breaking forth in hour upon hour of phone conversation.

We see too, at the end, that she is so obsessed with her own pain that she cannot inquire about the pain (or joy) of others. All her conversations are one-sided. But it is this missing inquiring about and listening to others that would form the connection with others.

The author seems to be saying that it is only this connection that can fill one's own ache. Yet there is a fear that one can never truly be sure of the sincerity of such connection with someone outside one's self—even when one blatantly asks for it. And thus the spiral of depression begins again.

Rosemarie Donzanti says

Nicole had to write a paper on this short story. I decided to read it as it was written by David Foster Wallace. Wallace wrote *Infinite Jest*...a book with over 1,000 pages that I swore I would read when I retired. Not so much, just yet. Wallace suffered from depression and took his own life in 2008. Reading "The Depressed Person" you get a glimpse into the isolation and overwhelming obsession with this woman's darkness. Sadly Wallace had much experience in this realm. Very touching.

Emily says

I found it eerily accurate. It's clear that he also experienced many of these feelings in order to express them so clearly.

Fedelm says

This sad, well-written essay/story offers no solutions; just an accurate description of what it's like to be clinically depressed and the many obstacles to healing, both within the depressed person's psychology (such as her self-hatred, leading to difficulty believing that anyone could truly love her) and in her surroundings (past child abuse; her "support system" of friends who are losing patience with her -- or is that in her head?). It is interesting that the depressed person is smart and knows exactly what's going on, sees how her past affects her present, understands why she thinks and acts the way she does, and discusses every little detail with her therapist and friends -- but neither having all of this knowledge nor discussing it endlessly solve her problems; she remains depressed, she still hates herself. Maybe that's part of being clinically depressed; talking and understanding are not enough to help the person heal and move on.

Amanda NEVER MANDY says

I picked this one up and put it down multiple times before finally getting through it. Almost every aspect of it was difficult to read and I honestly did not like it at all.

Why the four stars, you ask?

The story was difficult on purpose, writing style and content. It was meant to do exactly what it did. Had it been longer then I would have deducted a couple of stars, so the length complimented it well.

Ariya says

Tangible, very solid and absorbing. It's the opposite of happiness, well, what I mean is it's very depressing as fuck that you want to read while continue tearing the pages apart to release the suffocating madness. Gladly, I'm reading this online.

Florencia says

Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life → Cheryl Strayed's Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail → Cheryl Strayed's Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life from Dear Sugar → the latter's most voted review → [here](#).

Josh Friedlander says

For friends of a depressed person, it's really hard to know how best to relate to them: whether to indulge their need to talk (often difficult when one's time and energy are limited) or, on the other extreme, tell them to 'snap out of it' - cruel, yes, but how else will you go on? Whose responsibility is this thing, anyway?

That question seems to be the basic premise in this funny, whip-smart short story, originally published in *Harper's* magazine. But it's difficult to relate to it without mentioning the pachyderm in the quarters: Wallace's own depression and eventual suicide. The story's ending (spoiler alert, but c'mon, it's like eight pages) shows the neediness of the depressed person to be even more thoughtless and craven than we first realised - but what else would we expect when the author identifies so strongly with the self-loathing of his character?

Perhaps the picture isn't quite so bleak as it's made out to be here. Perhaps the woman's friend (revealed to be suffering silently from a terminal illness) isn't quite as put upon as she seems to be. Seen through the lens of the depression which robbed America of one of its brightest, most promising writers, it seems impossible for it to have ended any other way.

Izabela says

read 20 times

You will not find more brilliant story about depression than DFW's masterpiece.

Jeanne says

I adore David Foster Wallace's writing style, and one of 5 people who ever existed that I read their footnotes in the pieces of writing. It gives an interesting perspective.

Shmuli Cohen says

DFW had an uncanny ability to place the reader into the minutiae of the character in the circumstance of the particular moment. Here we become the woman, depressed, foreboding, lonely and self obsessed. We feel her loathing, her agony, her fear. We empathize with her, yet despise her thinking. We don't want to be her, but would agree to hug her if that would help ease the pain, a pain we no nothing about because its completely indescribable.

It's hard to read DFW's work in situ in toto without the context of the authors own suicide. I guess that makes it even more compelling, more foreboding, more real. Just more really.

Riley Redgate says

one of my all-time favorite stories. the depressed person is so quick to jump on her own faults, so sharp and merciless in identifying where she goes wrong at every turn. even as the reader privately condemns her for her persistently manipulative and self-obsessed behavior, the depressed person is a step ahead, already condemning herself, as if that were an acceptable rationalization for her actions. understanding the selfishness of the way she acts does not keep her from playing it out over and over.

the ritualized interpersonal performances of this person's life--the therapist, the Support System, the "friends" used as tools, all used as walls for the perpetually bouncing tennis ball of the narrator's misery--cuts to the uselessness of trying to fix constant mental agony with other people, whose perceived "joyful" lives are, most often, anything but.

horrible in the context of david foster wallace's death, but unmissable.
