

THE RISING

Out of the Depths of Depression

M K Lyons-Campbell

THE RISING: OUT OF THE DEPTHS OF DEPRESSION © M K Lyons-Campbell.

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National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Creator: Lyons-Campbell, M. K., author.

Title: The Rising: Out of the Depths of Depression / M K Lyons-Campbell.

ISBN: 9781925388855 (paperback)
9781925388961 (eBook)

Subjects: Truth.
Life.
Reality.

Dewey Number: 121

Published by **M K Lyons-Campbell** and InHouse Publishing
www.inhousepublishing.com.au



...And if the sun was to rise with my freedom as its gift
Dawn would be a memory I'd come to treasure most of all.
Radiant and so divine, such a miracle as this, bringing my soul
to life again

In a single moment.

All at once, in this sweet, sweet moment

Night finally turns to day.

Contents

WELCOME	v
Chapter 1: Crossing Bridges	1
Chapter 2: The Ultimate Sacrifice	5
Chapter 3: I Am	9
Chapter 4: The Concept of Shame Vs Guilt	15
Chapter 5: Programming – Are Some of Our Learnt Belief Systems Really All That Good For Us?	21
Chapter 6: Because...You Just Can't!	29
Chapter 7: The Myths of Value	35
Chapter 8: The Scales of Injustice	41
Chapter 9: An Issue of Measurement	49
Chapter 10: Judgement – Processing and Association	57
Chapter 11: Playing with Words	63
Chapter 12: The Interview	71
Chapter 13: Redefining the Definitive	79
Chapter 14: Auditory and Visual Impairment	85
Chapter 15: Chemical Warfare	91
Chapter 16: The Issue of Control	97
Chapter 17: Finding a Surrogate	103
Chapter 18: Seeing Change in Challenge	109
Chapter 19: Finding Motivation (The Will to Live)	115
Chapter 20: How Are You Travelling?	121
Chapter 21: Letting Go	125
Chapter 22: Regeneration	131
Chapter 23: Replacement	139
Chapter 24: A Fair Trade Agreement	143
Chapter 25: Storytelling	147
Chapter 26: Spirituality, Science and Energy	155
Chapter 27: Lost in Translation	161
Chapter 28: Making Connections	167
Chapter 29: Sabotage Requires a Keen Eye	171

Chapter 30: Stocktaking	181
Chapter 31: Which Programs Are You Going to Choose?	187
Chapter 32: The Core Belief System	195
Chapter 33: The Vortex	199
Chapter 34: So...	201
Epilogue	203
Acknowledgements	207

WELCOME

When reflecting on war, I think of bravery awards bestowed and humbly accepted, amongst sadness and celebrations. I think about the victories as well as all the tragic loss (marked by Shrines of Remembrance, lined with hundreds of thousands of names).

When coming to think of the *internal battle* some of us experience with depression, of course much of this comes without any of the public accolades. There are no shrines to reflect the true extent of depression's impact on this world and there are no medals *or* ticker-tape parades.

In reality, those who have come back to life after experiencing their own internal battle often accept peace as their reward. And whilst they may not celebrate in the streets with a whole lot of fanfare, they do celebrate their victory within every moment of every day. Maintaining a bearable existence within a somewhat dysfunctional world, others continue their fight silently yet stoically.

With little understanding shown (in regard to the struggle endured in fighting depression), I shall forever find it deeply upsetting to hear criticism toward another who finally gave up on that possibility of 'making it out alive'. Those who have never fought depression or who simply fail to comprehend that *indescribable* feeling of complete and utter despair may never come to know the full extent of another's pain – the ultimate reason behind the decision to end one's own life. Whilst it remains tempting to judge a person's means of escape, the mental torture, exhaustion and pure desperation that comes with this illness *can* lure us into behaving in ways we once thought impossible.

Having dreamed for many years of putting pen to paper and creating my own interpretation of this terrible mental dis-ease, today I begin and it is my privilege to have you join me on this journey. It is one that is designed to have you seriously questioning your beliefs and behaviour, whilst at the same time having you acknowledge the way in which your beliefs and behaviours relate to the many aspects of depression's multi-faceted nature.

Based on personal experience, the trials of others and some of the most common issues faced, 'The Rising' has been created with one mammoth task in mind – to have you begin questioning YOUR IDENTITY. If it has become your goal to make the transition from depression into some form of longed for contentment this will be no small undertaking by any means. Reaching your goal *will* require you to begin asking a lot of questions, so that you can discover a lot of the answers that will come to change your mind. Basically, the (process of) rising out of depression is going to demand a monumental shift in thinking, hence why it can be so difficult to escape.

For some, the exit out will present as an ever so gradual and perhaps painful transformation, for others it may arrive as a reasonably smooth and welcomed transition. And whilst not commonly acknowledged, there have also been cases regarding a process neither gradual *nor* smooth, referred to in some circles as 'spiritual emergency' (or psychosis).

My own personal transition out of depression in 2005 landed me my own 'spiritual emergency' (psychosis), with me experiencing 6-8 weeks of pure bliss and mental torture. What had begun as an innocent and enthusiastic quest to 'rediscover myself' ended with my loved ones genuinely coming to fear for my sanity. Looking back I can't say I blame them.

Triggered by an event, which I shall go on to explain in greater detail as we delve further into this book, my brain had begun to rewire itself at break-neck speed (causing the chemistry within me to change). I was at the same time being tempted to choose between the 'explainable' physical world I had always known and one that was from out of the blue verging on a more surreal or spiritual nature. With my newfound existence now largely coming down to the struggle between fact and faith (and an inability to make solid choices whilst I swung between the two), life was fast becoming like a split screen, threatening to seriously tear my mind in two.

If, like me, you or someone you know *does* happen to experience what may feel like some 'psychotic break' when coming out of depression I cannot

stress enough how important it is that you/they *not* go it alone. It can be extremely disorientating, believe me. Another piece of advice I strongly recommend (given to me at the time of my own transition) is ‘ground yourself’. The temptation to stay flying high on the euphoria of being free can be alluring but if you don’t stay grounded, with a balance of day to day ‘mundane stuff’, there is the potential to go right off with the fairies so to speak. Even though you’ve ‘lost your mind’ to a degree (a lot of that familiar mental programming you’ve been living with), you *do* want to keep your sanity. You need to stay tethered to your *physical* experience in this world.

Now...enough of all that! My intention is not to completely scare you away from the idea of rising out of depression; it is simply to give insight into a rather extraordinary yet not unheard of transition. After all, it would be irresponsible to give you the idea that your much longed for shift out of depression will play out in some textbook fashion; of course not everything in life involves smooth sailing, which I’m sure you’re already well aware of. Whether it be physiological or spiritual (chemistry or Kundalini related or both), no matter *how* one cares to refer to it, your transformation *will* become a very personal experience, with the result being summed up by one single yet incredibly powerful word – FREEDOM.

Before we go on, I feel compelled to warn you that my point of view in regard to society is going to sound brutal at times. This is to be taken as a generalisation. Of course, there are so many wonderful sides to humanity but if your goal is to get out of your depression you’ll need to acknowledge some of societal ideas that may have helped get you into it in the first place; addressing society’s beliefs and faux pas simply becomes a must when getting to the very heart of things.

I must stress it is *not* my intention to have anyone come to resent society or completely close off to it. I assure you, it is in fact with great conviction that I continue to maintain faith in this amazing world which is beginning to find its true spiritual feet. One baby step at a time, we will watch as it gradually walks into a whole new era of consciousness, compassion and (I hope) freedom from the torture that is *depression*.

Note: Amongst certain medical and spiritual communities, there is the recognition that once a particular type of brain based transformative process begins (aka a major shift in consciousness/awareness), it has the potential to ‘open up’ or stimulate certain parts of the brain relating to

euphoria, a feeling of ‘oneness’ with the world (a deep reconnection to life itself), heightened sensory perception, *extra*-sensory perception, highly efficient mental processing (relating to IQ/problem solving) amongst a host of other things.

Considering this, such a significant transformative process also has the potential to create more concerning issues regarding brain chemistry, such as an *oversensitivity* in relation to sensory input, physical ailments (such as headaches) or constant high states of elation occasionally leading to serious delusions (sometimes going so far as to resemble schizophrenia). These are reported as being just a small part of a list of possible emerging or emergency situations.

Rest assured, although some transformation processes *can* offer certain physiological challenges, only a very small percentage involve such intensely altered states (which with the right guidance can be worked through).

Chapter 1

CROSSING BRIDGES

I think many of us would agree, when reflecting on our earlier years, we were never formerly educated or prepared for the possibility of facing depression. There's also a good chance the 'how-to' aspect of dealing with death, miscarriage, divorce or a plethora of other 'negative' things was not covered either. Some would suggest that subjecting happy contented kids to talks about so-called depressing topics would actually be a form of psychological torture. Yet we do manage to gradually introduce our children, at different ages, to a lot of *other* issues they will most likely face in life as adults (preparing them as best we can with a standard of social behaviour, financial responsibility and other bare necessities required to function in this world). So based on the mindset of those who came before us and how 'we *shouldn't* have a whole lot of that negative stuff put into our head', confusion is often inevitable when we are eventually required to cross certain psychological bridges.

In coming to use the bridge as a metaphor, I'm not talking about some sturdy four lane suspended freeway but rather a bridge that feels just wide enough to get through on our own. It's a rickety old bridge with boards or progressive steps missing and it may be miles long, connecting two incredibly high cliff faces (past and future). With the fear of such challenge fuelling self-doubt, the winds of torment can leave us feeling like everything is against us as it all sways out of control.

With no obvious skill set in dealing with 'bridge crossings' or major adversity, how is it that we eventually do come to cope with the greater challenges in our life?

At times some of us find ourselves not coping too well at all. With such a serious lack of ‘crossing’ or survival skills, our ignorance can lead to emotional dis-ease occasionally resulting in the manifestation of mental and even physical illness (as the chemistry within us gradually alters). Facing challenging events, whilst at the same time battling a developing mental illness such as depression, can be an extremely isolating experience. This feeling of isolation can lead us to believe we are alone and broken or one ‘defect’ within millions of high functioning human beings. Of course, we are not *really* broken just temporarily in the dark.

Author’s tip: An often effective way of coming to understand that we are not alone, whilst dealing with our sense of isolation, *can* be found within the support and guidance of a group.

The idea of revealing our innermost self (especially to a lot of strangers) may feel daunting at first but the benefits of meeting others with a similar mindset or those going through comparable trauma can be worth the effort. Although we’re all different, there is one thing most people do have in common and that is the ability to relate.

For me personally, it *was* a group setting which allowed me to gain the sense that I was not alone. Having been given a chance to experience compassion, acceptance and understanding (not *just* towards others but also myself), I shall forever define such an opportunity as a gift. As part of a (post-natal depression counselling) community, I was provided with what I believe are just a couple of the basic foundations on which to build my life:

- It is important that I allow others to inspire me, through *their* experiences. We are not designed to be solitary beings.
- It is important to recognise how people can be of service to each other (leading to the experience of what I believe to be our ultimate purpose in life); in sharing philosophies and skills within a positive group/communal setting, any one of us may hold the answers and the inspiration *someone else* is searching for. WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO HELP ANOTHER EVOLVE.

I should also add, whether our issues involve depression, post-traumatic stress or anxiety, in a group setting there is the chance to discover

the most common traits of these disorders. In finding what is *common*, we discover what is 'normal' (given our circumstances).

There are now so many resources available to us, ensuring that we do not have to 'go it alone'. Much can be found in the growing number of organisations that are popping up within certain societies. In Australia, for example, there are several well-known foundations in place offering support for those struggling with depression, as well as their families. Group meetings, access to information over the internet and the one-on-one counselling services available mean such foundations have now become a game changer in a world that once condemned people with severe depression to a life of institutionalisation. A number of authors who face or have faced depression are yet another great resource, offering guidance and comfort through the telling of their own experiences.

With a seemingly unstoppable wave of depression sweeping this world and with suicide rates continuing to steadily rise, mental health *is* fast becoming a global topic. Once a subject exclusive to the medical fraternity, it is now beginning to attract much needed government attention (in certain countries). In recognising depression as being the number one cause of workplace absenteeism costing billions each year, governments are beginning to put their hand in their pocket to help those in society most affected. But whilst such reactive measures continue to be offered up, so too do more and more questions and amongst all of the questions posed, two in particular appear to stand out:

'If depression *is* an illness relating more so to the dynamics of an individual mind, why is it now affecting so many?' *and*
'What can we do to stop it?'

Like with any epidemic, people are left scratching their heads as they direct their attention to the possible source of such dis-ease.

With some fairly typical questions being put forward, perhaps it's time we start tackling some of the far less obvious ones, so let's begin:

1. Is there something *specific* that could have been taught to you in the earlier part of your existence, in order to prevent or (at the very least) help you deal more effectively with your challenges/current mental state?

Of course there will be some who argue that we could not possibly *pre-learn* some 'blanket' skillset covering every possible challenge to be

faced in life, especially those challenges relating to extreme trauma, but when reality kicks in sometimes we are given little choice but to learn some of these coping skills *after* an event (such as when investing our self in psychological therapy of some type).

2. What is the reason behind *why* we wait to develop coping abilities in regard to challenge? Could it be because the option to choose *when* we want to learn about tackling challenge just isn't there?

If we were to actually *ask* our parents/guardians for the tools required to deal with challenge, would they be able to teach them to us (share some handy philosophies)? Maybe it is a case of our parents/guardians not being able to teach us what they did not learn themselves; perhaps the most *they* were ever taught (in regard to strategies for dealing with challenge) involved unhelpful and non-sage-like phrases, such as 'If you stop stressing so much and just get on with things you'll be fine' or 'Sorry kid, I don't have all the answers; after all, life doesn't come with an instruction manual. You'll have to cross that bridge when you come to it'.

Now that I've got you thinking, I'm going to ask you to begin contemplating what some may perceive as the impossible – considering the seriously limited life skills initially taught to us in today's world, is it at all plausible there could be *the ultimate manual* based on how to cross bridges?

In other words, can we be prepared *before* we reach our most challenging of crossings?

Of course, with many people in search of direction and with a plethora of 'self-help' books in the world today, there have been many attempts when it comes to producing such a thing. By the way, I am not so arrogant as to suggest I myself have all the answers. What I propose is that 'The Rising' is simply one stepping stone on the path to finding many of those much needed answers.

If some definitive instruction for life *does* happen to exist somewhere in the far reaches of the universe, it is with no doubt in my mind that a good portion of it would centre on the importance of SACRIFICE, for without sacrifice we become stagnant (deprived of evolution).

Without sacrifice, we never truly come to know our self...

Chapter 2

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Whilst in the state of depression, that compulsion to ‘surrender’ can be incredibly strong, yet sadly misinterpreted; despite how it may feel, it is *not* our entire self that we are slowly and painfully being led to sacrifice (through the tragic act of suicide). In order to find true freedom, we are really being urged to bravely let go of *a deluded and misguided concept of self*, a concept the world has gradually taught us to believe in – OUR IDENTITY.

When initially coming out of my depression a friend posed what I still regard to this very day as one of the most profound questions I’ve ever been asked to face. At the time I actually thought it a rather odd question, dismissing it a little too prematurely. It wasn’t until some days had passed before these words popped into my head again, ‘What did you sacrifice?’ With the answer finally being revealed, this became yet another of the major turning points in my life. I had sacrificed *myself*.

At the tail end of my fifteen year battle with ‘the black dog’, I had found myself in a postnatal depression (PND) group, trying my best to adapt to life with a new responsibility. Being amongst like-minded people who had suffered depression for many years, this was actually the first time I’d felt ‘normal’ *and* accepted in a very long time. As the weeks gradually came to pass and as the group began to open up and speak the ‘truth’ in regard to how we saw ourselves, I eventually came to realise another truth hidden amongst all our confessions; as far as *the mind* is concerned and its obsession with forming associations or relationships, *it* ultimately comes

to define your identity. In other words, **who you are is literally ‘a state of mind’**.

With identity being comprised of a vast collection of personal and social beliefs, all these beliefs begin gradually forming over time, with the first of many rooting itself in the psyche during the very early stages of our life. It is extremely important to acknowledge this for depression does not *just* involve the obvious negative or sad thoughts you believe formed your current state of mind; depression entails a commitment to a mindset that began long before the illness came to touch your life. Another way of putting this is ‘Every thought has its origin’. Considering our learnt belief systems can at times be somewhat riddled with faults (as I shall go on to explain), you may actually have been leading up to the state of depression due to the ***unrecognised faults within some of your deeply rooted belief systems***. The challenge or trauma responsible for triggering your depression may now be forcing you to look more closely at those particular glitches (especially the ones relating directly to the issue/s at hand).

Example: We are taught from an early age the basic and widely accepted idea one is either ‘male’ or ‘female’, even though this is actually a flawed/faulty idea (not a fact at all). With gender determination taking place in the womb, sometimes gender is *not* always fully determined as being male or female. The result may be a baby who is born ‘mixed gender’.

For someone who is born with both male and female reproductive parts, this faulty belief which dictates that they should be either one gender or the other may induce sufferance on many levels. The triggers leading to depression may involve numerous social and personal relationship rejections (all based on *a faulty ideal/teaching*). Or perhaps all it takes is one major trigger such as a physical beating or public humiliation, confirming the destructive idea of ‘freak’. The widely accepted belief that *this person is faulty* as opposed to the stereotypical gender idea *itself* being faulty presents problems all ‘round.

Just imagine the life this person would be leading if everyone was taught to accept the truth about physical gender, from day one. By the way, we could take it a step further and simply define gender

as ‘labelling’ (designed to specifically point out our *differences*, for a variety of reasons). Gender does not necessarily point to the absolute truth of who we are, in fact sometimes it can interfere with it.

So...getting back to that question, ‘What did you sacrifice?’ Although I didn’t have the issue of determining what gender I was, I did eventually come to sacrifice **just about everything I had ever come to believe** about myself *and* the world around me.

Of course it sounds a little bizarre to imagine dismissing large parts of your identity – your age, gender, race, social beliefs etcetera – but when you come to see a majority of these things as socially contrived descriptions or observations, the moment of sacrifice or surrender involves seeing yourself for who you truly are, *without* description or labels.

Finding freedom in this sense is quite an odd feeling indeed. It is as if the mind, body and spirit all breathe a unified sigh of relief; in one single moment without blocks, distractions or misconceptions in the way they meet with each other and in doing so recognise the important role each plays in making up YOU. Once all three finally ‘click into place’, creating balance, things can begin to change dramatically.

In a life that has long been fragmented, with the focus largely being directed toward a physical existence, you come to understand some of the reasons as to why depression manifests within such imbalance and disconnectedness.

For me it was a simple list that triggered that light within the darkness. Whilst in the PND group, we were all asked to offer certain aspects of our nature so they could be written upon a whiteboard and boy did they come thick and fast: anger/rage, self-degradation, control (the obsessive need to always have it), lethargy, sadness, resentment, mood swings, isolation, the feeling of social inadequacy. As the list carried on beyond this handful of traits, I recall staring at it thinking how well it summed me up. I experienced all of the above, of course making life quite challenging for not only myself but also my family and friends. As everyone in the group literally joked over our similarities, I continued staring at that whiteboard. I clearly remember the precise moment when it suddenly hit, like a bolt of lightning – ***THIS IS NOT ME!***

The reason I share this list of idiosyncrasies is because I want you to understand the fact that these are the traits of depression itself. They

are not necessarily *your* traits. I know it sounds a little strange but if you can visualise depression as some nasty little creature hanging on for dear life around your neck, the traits belong to *it*. Do you think it was sheer coincidence that *everyone* in the group had these characteristics? I assure you, they leave exactly when you exit depression. So please, in the meantime, don't be too hard on yourself as you're trying to find the way out.

Important: Once you realise the characteristics of depression are not *the real you*, you may begin questioning who in fact you truly are.

How many of your beliefs acquired throughout your life *have* actually involved the real genuine you?

Which of your perceived 'truths' have actually come from somewhere else?

Why do you think you're having such difficulty coming to terms with some of the beliefs you currently face? Are you really facing fact or some interpretation of fiction (in other words, something *you've been led* to believe in)?

At this stage of your life, how many of your belief systems *are* you prepared to let go of, in order to **reinvent your own personal truth** (so that you can begin coming to terms with your challenges, in a more constructive way)?

In escaping depression, the overall process of **sacrifice** remains extremely important. Holding onto every self-limiting thing you believe in whilst expecting to rise above it all may prove impossible. There are some heavy or burdensome beliefs you may have to let go of. Things must change and for the better.

Although there are no promises as to exactly when you will find yourself rising above your depression, there is one thing I can guarantee and it is simple – a majority of your beliefs in life did not magically manifest on their own. This is what this book is partly about, waking up to how certain aspects of your personality came into being. And once you understand the *how*, you will come to find your *true self* amongst the debris.

Chapter 3

I AM

If I was to ask you to give a detailed description of who you are, there is a good chance you would include your name, age, gender and marital status. You may go so far as to tell me whether you have children and what your current employment is. Or, if you're ashamed of your job (for whatever reasons), you'll most likely leave that out, embellish or lie about it and if you haven't accepted your own homosexuality (if this is the case), there's no way you're going to tell me *this* is the reason as to why you're not married or don't have kids. Unless we have the mind of a sociopath, we will most often try to avoid harsh judgement or rejection from others. We will choose to offer information that we believe is socially acceptable or deemed worthy of being proud of under the circumstance.

The 'I AM' aspect of our self, otherwise known as our unique identity, ultimately comes about through how we *identify with* or *relate to* factors such as people, places, events, actions, behaviours and beliefs.

- My parents named me John and everyone calls me John
***I am** John
- Francis is my mother
***I am** Francis' son
- I have a business I started called 'Go Australia'
***I am** the founder of 'Go Australia'
- I was born in Australia to Australian parents and now live in China
I live in China but ***I am not** Chinese