

Praise for
Depression Freedom
Ending the Reign of Darkness

A transformative resource, *Depression Freedom* is remarkable for its profound humanity, its absence of dogmatism, and its practicality. This invaluable guide exudes compassionate understanding as it brings hope and healing to anyone experiencing depression.

—James Twyman,

Author of Emissary of Light and The Art of Spiritual Peacemaking

Absolutely beautiful and enlightening. *Depression Freedom* reaches deep into the heart of spiritual depression, providing a new perspective about awakening and transformation. This gentle yet empowering guide touches us with grace, fills us with hope, and provides profound insights for healing.

—Dr. Joe Vitale,

Author of Expect Miracles and The Attractor Factor

If you are one of the estimated 120 million people who find themselves addicted to sadness or if you know someone who is depressed, this book is an inspirational and spiritual gift that offers new insights into restoring peace of mind and hope for a bright future.

—Dr. Joe Rubino,

Founder, CenterForPersonalReinvention.com

Creator, SelfEsteemSystem.com

Annette Colby understands that the roots of depression reach into our very souls, and she has written this book to help uproot it. Her practical approach for facing and healing what she calls “Spiritual Depression” is nothing short of groundbreaking. Whether you are someone who struggles with depression or a professional who treats depression, this book is an invaluable resource.

—Thom Rutledge,

Psychotherapist

Author of Embracing Fear and The Self-Forgiveness Handbook

Streams of personal healing fill the pages of *Depression Freedom: Ending the Reign of Darkness*. Every word comforts us with gentleness and spirit. Whether you struggle with depression or simply want to understand your spiritual journey better, this book is filled with inspiring words and practical ideas. I view it as a gift to all of us.

—Cari LaGrange Murphy,

Best-Selling Author of *Create Change Now*

Annette Colby has not only put a familiar face on depression, she has shared with us her wisdom and vision to guide the spirit toward healing. Brilliant and life-transformational work.

—Kellee Breen,

Publisher, Women of Wisdom Professional Performance Magazine

If you are experiencing a dark night of the soul—and most of us at some point do—let this wise, loving book be your compassionate companion.

—Julia Rogers Hamrick,

Author of Recreating Eden and Choosing Easy World

This book is a beacon of light to guide people out of the darkness of their mind and into the Light of their spirit and purpose. Annette Colby's message is one of hope for those willing to go the distance to live the life we are destined for. A must read.

—Lorraine Cohen,

Founder, *Powerfull Living*
Spiritual life coach, author, broadcaster

Depression Freedom: Ending the Reign of Darkness offers an important perspective that one who is depressed rarely hears or reads about. The journey Annette Colby describes is a means to reach a higher state of self-awareness. It is a tale of transformation, which encourages the reader to be bold and trustingly step forth into a higher perspective of who he really is.

—Shirlee Hall,

Author of *Be: Embracing the Mystery*

This book is a must, not only for those who are suffering from depression, but for anyone who is on a path of growth and enlightenment.

—Joni James,

Facilitator, *Doorways to Freedom*, and author

Reading this book, we discover that we are never alone, and that despite our perceptions to the contrary, there is always an end in sight to our pain.

—Cindy L. Herb,

Author of *Awakening the Spirit*



**I walked into the darkness
of my own fear and disillusionment
and loved myself into existence.**

Depression Freedom

Ending the Reign of Darkness



Annette Colby, PhD

Depression Freedom: Ending the Reign of Darkness

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DEDICATION

With My Deepest Expression of Love and Appreciation

To my husband Ray Nowicki, who deserves credit not only for his constant support and enthusiasm, but also for his remarkable insights, and above all for his constant gift of laughter.



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INTRODUCTION

Emergence of a Higher Self

*What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.*

—T.S. Eliot

What makes life meaningful? Is it a firmness of purpose? Unshaken resolve? A willingness to know what it means to be alive? Sometimes questions are more powerful than answers. Perhaps we would be better off not searching at all. Not delving. Not yearning to open the doors into life's deepest mysteries.

Standing still has never been the path of the human heart. That is not why we are here. Eventually, a call deep within each one of us issues forth and directs us to pursue the deep questions. A lust to understand life, a longing for liberation, and desire for spiritual illumination urge us to go beyond what exists into what is yet to be born.

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Answering the call to know ourselves beyond the hypnotic bustle of daily existence, we enter the doorway into our own personal world of inner knowledge. What meets us is a pilgrimage that requires self-liberation from the beliefs, assumptions, and ideas that form the basis for our prior experiences. We travel deep within to illuminate our previous choices and perceptions so we can become renewed and transfigured into our evolved selves.

During this illumination process, we meet the ghosts we have been desperately trying to avoid. Inadequacies, dissatisfactions, and formerly suppressed self-doubts now rise up to greet us. Unable to run away or push them back down, we face the internal ghosts of our insecurities and fears. At first we believe them to be real. We believe ourselves small and limited, less than divine. We believe that life itself is less than divine.

Confronted by our worst doubts, we feel frightened and helpless. Perhaps we wait for someone bigger, better, and more experienced to take pity and save us. We endure, hoping a merciful God will cure this loneliness within. We believe that if we suffer long enough, things will improve. Then that last flicker of hope fades away. We are in spiritual depression.

When this happens to you, you might kick and scream with rage at the unfairness of the experience. Fear and

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exhaustion might overwhelm you. Friends, family, and experts who witness your struggle might agree that you cannot handle this experience and feel obliged to rescue you. They pity you because you don't fit into their nice definition of what a human being should be experiencing. They judge your hopelessness and may become enraged by your despair. They don't see you as courageous. They believe you to be ill, insisting medication is the only option that can bring you back into normalcy.

They are wrong. Spiritual depression is evolution—a rough and imperfect journey required to remember our place in the world. It is the dark space between the end of what was and the beginning of what will be. It is an experience of transfiguration where we abandon commitments and restraints in search of a freedom that we define ourselves.

It is easy, however, to become frozen within the journey. Where do we turn, when all seems lost, the future seems unknowable, and our very lives are in peril? How do we continue forward when the divinity we prayed to does not answer? The soul has required this precise moment when we rightly conclude that we cannot escape this experience, that fighting is ineffective, and that no one will save us from facing our ghosts and monsters in the dark. Only now, when all hopes of rescue falls away, is the key to spiritual-human evolution within reach.

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Without hope, without permission, and without knowing how, we come to recognize that it is our responsibility to find a way to move forward. “Why am I here? How do I matter? What is the soul?” Looking within to make sense of our existence, we decide whether there is value to our life despite the terrible feelings.

These simplest of questions can never be fully answered, yet they serve a larger purpose, allowing the purging and release of old perceptions and paving the way for the arrival of a new and higher way of living and being. This stormy depression leads us to examine—and heal—old wounds. When we leave behind the pain, emptiness, and fear that has accumulated, we open to a totally new direction in life.

Are you following your innermost dreams? Are you honoring your prime passion? Do you value your innermost beliefs? Are you truly happy with the direction your life in general is going? Sometimes the conditions of our life become so challenging that there is a need to become still and find what is real within.

Finding that realness inside is a process. Our hearts signify an end to one way of living and call us to a new beginning. But before we get to that new place, there is a time of darkness . . . of searching, mourning, waiting, watching, and not knowing. The path is not straight, but twists and turns, circles, and then switches back.

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How much time will it take? Will we make it through? How will we survive? For some, there is a long road ahead. Yet to our spirit, it matters not what time it is or how long it takes to establish a new relationship with life, for there is nothing more important than this journey. Just know you will create the right energy for you and become free from what was. One day, you will emerge—the same, yet changed from what you have experienced.



Finding Your Way through Depression

Moving through depression teaches us a lot about ourselves and about life. When the pain gets bad enough, you turn inward and engage in a period of self-reflection. You have to learn how to listen to your body. You have to learn how best to take care of yourself. Turning inward, you instinctively know the things that need working on.

When we discuss the positive aspects of spiritual depression, including the need for intuition-based self-leadership, the general response from individuals and society is to feel threatened or enraged. The request seems unreasonable, unjust, and unfair. How can we do the impossible? How can we be expected to be responsible for finding our own way through this no-win, no-way-out situation? Our anger is justified because we pioneer into depression without knowing the rules, without knowing how to make a shift to freedom, and without knowing how to work things out.

In a perfect world, we would have a blueprint or model showing us what to do. We would know what to expect and what not to expect, and, therefore, we would move through the process with more grace and ease than we do now. But

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this journey is an imperfect process of releasing the past and establishing new opportunities for this next cycle of human life.

Often, we expect ourselves to recover quickly from difficult or painful circumstances. When we do not or cannot, we may feel emotionally inept or hopeless. The evolution of life is, however, a process. Amid the pain and suffering, there is the opportunity for healing to take place. The soul and the human self must achieve a new balance and harmony, one that will allow a new way of looking at life. Spiritual depression is a journey straight to the heart of your true self. It is a journey filled with challenges, but the rewards are precious beyond belief.

There's a Zen Tale from Japan that can illustrate an essential truth about depression. One day while walking through the wilderness, a man encountered a vicious tiger. He ran but soon came to the edge of a high cliff. Desperate to save himself, he caught hold of a wild vine and climbed down over the edge. Dangling over the fatal precipice, he looked up and saw the tiger waiting patiently. Two mice appeared from a hole in the cliff and began gnawing on the vine. Just then, the man noticed a plump strawberry growing wild on the vine. He plucked it and popped it in his mouth. How sweet it tasted.

When caught between growling tigers and dangling

above jagged rocks while on a rope being gnawed on by mice, what can we do in a no-win situation? There's no way out, is there? No matter how intense our focus is on solving the problem, a logical solution is not available. Hopeless and helpless, we easily become enraged when someone suggests we find our own way out. We simply don't see ourselves as having the answer.

Spiritual depression asks us to face this absurd situation, look beyond logic, and discover a new trust in ourselves. Enjoying the moment is likely impossible, but learning to accept this life experience—including its most uncomfortable aspects—leads to the discovery of true freedom as a human spirit. It seems as if you will feel bad forever, but that is not the case. Even with the tiger above and jagged rocks below, your spirit and body will point you toward the best action to take in the moment.

Opening to Freedom

Throughout life, we've gotten out of trust and communication with ourselves. We don't trust our body or our mind, and we don't have the foggiest notion of where our spirit is. Depression initiates a process of tapping into the innate lines of wisdom that lie within. To achieve new trust with ourselves and bring this new heightened outlook into life, we have to let go of old conditionings. We have to let go

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into the moment. We let go not to another human being or to our perception of an outside deity who can save us, but to ourselves.

It's frightening to let go. It turns you upside down. It causes your whole consciousness to shudder and shake. Everything becomes confused. The world as you know it begins to dissolve and, as it does, despair and doubt can overwhelm our senses. We question our worth and come close to giving up. What we might fail to see is the value of these moments.

Spiritual depression is also a time of spiritual awakening. Although the journey ahead is an elusive one filled with many twists and turns, it is not an impossible journey. You are creating something new, although it may seem like nothingness for a time. If we could see our situation from a higher perspective, we would see that although it appears like there is nothing within the darkness, this is only because we have not *yet* activated the higher self within. We have not *yet* reached deep enough into the unknown to trust ourselves to stop, take a deep breath, and tap into our true self to find a new direction.

The experience of spiritual depression often looks for something or someone to blame, even you. There's no one to blame. It's here, and it's here for a reason. Not because something is wrong with you, but because you are growing,

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expanding, and in the process of discovering something new about yourself and life.

Depression is not a human defect at all, but a mechanism that holds the potential for us to take an honest inventory of ourselves. It is our personal attempt to raise our sights and explore new possibilities. Depression is unbearably complicated and sometimes even an incapacitating process, but also a time of healing the ghosts from the past so we can lead liberated lives. The experience of depression takes us through darkness to find our freedom, healing, and inborn wisdom. During the process, we grow into a new wholeness.

Higher consciousness is not a place to reach. It is the removal of erroneous concepts, attitudes, and thoughts allowing for the hidden qualities of our creative nature to come forward. As we come into direct contact with our spiritual nature, we may more deeply appreciate who we are and why we are here, and we will recognize how to get back on track with our life's true purpose and sense of self-fulfillment.

Depression is a time to rise above inner oppression and cut ourselves loose from old patterns so that a new balance of mind and body with spirit can form. For this to happen, the fabric of your old reality must unravel at the same time that a new reality is being woven. This is indeed a strange

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experience. It's a dual state in which things fall apart and move into dissolution while new freedoms form for your mind, body, and spirit. This process of restructure occurs as a natural byproduct of evolution, but it often feels unfamiliar and disturbing.

You don't know what lies ahead, or if anything at all exists beyond this depression. In all likelihood, you will want to retreat to survive. Yet going back is not an option. You are experienced at fighting or pushing depression back down. The temptation is to resort to old ways of coping. Learning to move through this depression requires the types of self-leadership tools outlined in this book. These tools give you the opportunity to allow the completeness of all your feelings and the formation of a new level of trust within yourself.

There is no single right way to move through depression and no definitive outline of the steps you should take. There is just your decision to stay with the process. What is there to do when this happens? Acceptance, conscious breathing, nature, movement, intuitively guided actions, and creative expression all help create new threads of connection with trust. Not control, but trust.

In the midst of depression, very little is possible in the way of spiritual breakthroughs. Changes are occurring, but most likely you won't become conscious of them until

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well after depression has lifted. Moving beyond spiritual depression is extremely challenging and not something that happens overnight. In fact, being confident in yourself that you can successfully move through spiritual depression may never occur.

Move forward anyway. One day, you'll realize that the worst is behind you. It won't be dramatic, but you will find yourself in a place beyond spiritual depression. You won't suddenly know the deepest desires of your own heart or experience radiating bliss. Yet something will be profoundly different within you. You will be more honest with yourself. More trusting of yourself on a deeper level. Where once the logical mind ruled over the body and dismissed the spirit, now a new configuration exists between the mind, body, and spirit. This new relationship will grow with time and experience.

Emerging from depression, you will find yourself at a higher level of awareness. The changes in your new reality may not be immediately apparent, but they will come forward. It will take time to discover all that has changed, but the mystery of your higher consciousness will reveal itself to you as naturally as a rose blooming. Your knowledge that you are more than your logical mind is awakened, available, and self-revealing as you move forward in life once again. The dawn breaks, and a new life begins.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Annette Colby, PhD, has been a pioneer in conscious evolution for over twenty-five years. As an author, empowerment counselor, and teacher of enlightenment, she is committed to fostering inner peace and helping people move beyond fear and limitations to live a heart-awakened life. She believes firmly in the power of the individual to overcome adversity and transform one's life. She is the award-winning author of *Your Highest Potential*, *Body Redesign*, and *Depression Freedom*. Annette lives on a beautiful wooded creek in Dallas, Texas, with her husband Ray Nowicki and their three cats.

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