

SoloSez Popular Threads, September 2012

People with Depression Can Be Successful

A great post by a very successful person, who also has depression:

<http://www.chrisbrogan.com/depression-brave/>

Particularly important for the legal community, which has a high rate of depression....

Lisa Solomon, New York

Indeed, there is a blog and website dedicated to the subject.

<http://www.lawyerswithdepression.com>

David A. Shulman, Florida

Oh, come now! Next thing you know, you'll be telling us short people *do* have someone to love.

-Rick

Richard J. Rutledge, Jr., North Carolina

No, short people (like myself) do have someone to kick in the shins.

E.J. Hong, California

I'm not unsympathetic, but it's kind of "dog bites man" story.

Just off the top of my head, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, our former Governor Lawton Chiles and John Stuart Mills all suffered from depression.

I, for one, never questioned that people suffering from depression can't be successful; it simply never occurred to me to think that one can't.

Ronald Jones, Florida

I'm a big fan of Brogan. For me, I love the "bravery" part: "Bravery is a muscle, like love. You have to exercise it constantly or it will turn flabby. When I am depressed, it's very easy to fall away from bravery. But because I'm working harder and harder to stop avoiding things, when I tell you about my depression, it's because I have something to tell myself, and I just want you to hear so you can think about your own personal bravery.

I understand the "dog bites man" comment, but so much of my experience is that most of us could have more of what we want with a little bravery. So I think there's value here that might be underestimated. (also love the part about not waiting until you're in a good mood to communicate...)

Thanks Lisa, good morning all!

Barbara Nelson
Notta Lawyer. New Jersey

"I, for one, never questioned that people suffering from depression can't be successful..."

Tell that to Thomas Eagleton.

Brian H. Cole, California

The Eagleton reference is pretty funny.

And, being a depressed lawyer is hard -- when depressed, analytical thinking, completing mundane tasks, and confrontation are all difficult. Which is pretty much sums up what we do.

Jason Gage, California

From my read of the article, he's not so much telling the public at large that depressed people can be successful as he is telling other depressed people.

"Im saying that people who suffer from depression can be successful, even though they are depressed. This is important to know. Because sometimes, people want to blame their condition for their lack of success. When I share that Im going through a bout of depression, Im saying, 'Im depressed and I will be successful. I will not let one strip me of the other.' "

And that last part - about not letting your condition define you, is truly brave and very important. Great article for anybody going through a bout of their own. Thanks, Lisa.

Tim
Timothy R. Eavenson, Illinois

I think both messages - to other depressed people and to the public at large - are important.

I seem to remember reading somewhere that men sometimes "deal" with depression by becoming workaholics (by working, they keep their minds busy to try to keep the depressive thoughts away). Working hard (even to the level of workaholism) can lead to financial success. Some people may brush off concerns about a friend or colleague's mental health if the friend or colleague is successful career-wise. How many times have we all read about successful people committing suicide? (Of course, depression doesn't always lead to suicide, but you get the idea.)

Lisa Solomon

Many people use addictive behaviors to cope with things like depression, anxiety etc.

Like you said, some become workaholics, some turn to substance abuse, others go into risk behavior.

Erin M. Schmidt, Ohio

Depression is a tricky little bastard. It manifests in many ways other than appearing sad or having 'flat affect'. Myriad symptoms make for a long-term treasure hunt for the right medication, the right coping mechanisms, the right lifestyle choices. I've read that a single short-term depression changes brain chemistry sufficient that people shouldn't assume it'll never happen again. Sometimes the symptoms don't conform to our limited description so we don't recognize it in ourselves or someone else. PTSD is another tricky one (depression accompanies this).

CJ Stevens, Montana

A great post by a very successful person, who also has depression:

Particularly important for the legal community, which has a high rate of depression....

Interesting, I didn't know there was a high rate of depression among lawyers. Heard that about dentists, but that is pretty easy to understand. I am pretty sure people with depression can be failures too, which would leave me to believe that being either a success or a failure has little to do with depression.

D.A. "Duke" Drouillard, Nebraska

Lawyers have a high rate of depression and substance abuse. Both can be managed successfully with the right help.

Eric C. Davis, Alabama

<http://thesavvypress.com/jobsavvy/sad-lawyers-depression-rate-is-high-in-legal-profession/>

Surprisingly, they didn't even mention that there may be other reasons for the higher rate, such as personality groupings and traits that tend to be found in law.

Or perhaps it is the long hours with typically unthankful clients and being burdened under a stream of student loan debt

Erin M. Schmidt

Here is another

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/therapy-matters/201105/the-depressed-lawyer>

- According to an often cited Johns Hopkins University study of more than 100 occupations, researchers found that lawyers lead the nation with the highest incidence of depression<<http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/depression/symptoms>>.(1)
- An ABA Young Lawyers Division survey indicated that 41 percent of female attorneys were unhappy with their jobs.(2)
- In 1996, lawyers overtook dentists as the profession with the highest rate of suicide <<http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/suicide>>.(3)
- The ABA estimates that 15-20 percent of all U.S. lawyers suffer from alcoholism or substance abuse<<http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/addiction>>.(4)
- Seven in ten lawyers responding to a California Lawyers magazine poll said they would change careers if the opportunity arose.(5)

Erin M. Schmidt

No offense to Psychology Today (which professional psychologists probably don't read), but "I'm not happy with my job" and people happy enough with their jobs to stay until an opportunity arises don't mean they're depressed. It just means their jobs aren't what they wish they were. "I'm not happy with" is the equivalent of "I'm not comfortable with" doesn't even register on the "giveashits richter scale," i.e., I don't care enough to even think of a descriptive word.

CJ Stevens

That's not how they interpreted it. They talked about lawyers tending to be type A personalities and perfectionists, which can lead to a constant stream of disappointment when you realize you have failed because you are not perfect. The stress of the job, the difficulty in having a balanced work/life, the adversarial system, and how difficult those things are hard to overcome in people whose coping skills are not as well developed

Erin M. Schmidt
