Look Who’s Talking

Evan Moreland*

*Iowa State University

Copyright ©2012 by the authors. Sketch is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress). http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch
Look Who’s Talking
Evan Moreland

I’ve done my morning routine: brushed teeth, gotten dressed, etc. I have the right textbooks, and my assignments for today are done. I’m ready to go to class. Ready to face the day. Ready to-

Hey there, schmuck. How do you feel?
I feel fine.

Fine? Not sad? You should think again. This really hasn’t been a good day. And this week was pretty poor. Also has been one tragic month. Heh, don’t get me started on all the awful years. What a waste of life. Am I right?
I want to say no. That isn’t true. What he is saying is absurd. I want to tell him he is wrong. I don’t. I start thinking, and it all falls apart. The more I think about it the better he sounds. It’s irrational to listen to him, some might say crazy. I don’t agree. I’m slurping up every single thing he says. I try to think stop, don’t listen. Listen to my own thoughts instead, but this is the problem. I am listening to my own thoughts and that man is simply voicing them.

Confused? Here’s the deal. There are two sides. There is his side, which is supposedly logical and “reality.” What a hoot. Oh, that is the wrong side. Then there is my side that tells the truth, how things really are. You sir, have a sad life. Sorry, but it’s true. Also, I’m not sorry.

I agree. Two sides to my mind. The side that knows my parents care, that I have a few good friends, and that I’ve got it good by going to a university. The other one casts a darker light on my life. This is how I see it. How I see…

Are you going to say it? Admit? Knowing doesn’t matter. There is no curing this. No helping you. Admission here doesn’t equal salvation. ‘Cause it won’t change anything. Not a thing.

Depression. People hear of it, but do they know what it is? Do they know what depression really does to people? It’s like an argument between conflicting thoughts where the twisted thinking overwhelms the logical side. My twisted thinking takes the form of a slimy salesman with the fancy suit, slicked back hair, and shady moustache. He tries to look smooth and suave, when everybody knows he is a greasy sleaze. This is my version.

Then there is the clinical version. Depression is a mood disorder with different levels or forms - the main one being called major depression. The is a list of symptoms: being withdrawn, fatigue, agitation, irritability, feelings of self-hate, guilt, helplessness, and thoughts of death or suicide. Basically these symptoms lead to a withdrawal from an active life. It does affect people differently. Usually someone becomes lifeless and empty or angry and aggressive. These symptoms don’t equal depression unless they last weeks or more and interfere with one’s ability to function in life. Dysthymia (what I have) is a level above major depression where one can still function in life while feeling miserable. Many treatments are available, so this is an easy fix.
Right? No. No it isn’t. There is more to it than the symptoms can describe.
Do you feel better now? No. You saying all that medical jargon didn’t make you better? Cured? That it doesn’t matter? Well I’m saying it doesn’t matter. And it doesn’t. You can’t escape from this rain cloud. Clouds can follow.

True. To go from knowing what is wrong to getting help is tougher than it seems. This is one tricky salesman. He is always around. He is always right. I mean wrong. Right? I don’t like being alone. I would like to be more social, but he tends to keep everyone at an arm’s length. He isolates by creating this boundary and keeping people at that distance. I’m stuck in a yard made of quicksand. There is no reaching out, and no one will come near. I want to talk to someone about what I’m feeling. Someone to understand, but then I hear lies that are too sweet to pass up.

Talk to someone? Understanding? This is a laugh. No one even wants to be near you. You know exactly what they will say. Don’t make excuses. You’re just being lazy. You’ll get over it. Cheer up already. They don’t really care anyways. It’s you and me pal. I don’t see anyone else. Do you? No. Looks like I’m talking to myself. I think. Besides would anyone understand or care? People seem to care, pretend to. I’m probably just a nuisance to them, something in the way. It’s the treatment I deserve. Or is it? These negative thoughts keep circulating around my mind infecting the truth. I know people aren’t all that bad, but I feel tremendous contempt from others. I shouldn’t, but I do. All I need to do is get away from the stressful college with the tests, essays, and so many people. I should be fine. I hope.

I get back home for the weekend, back to comfort. It’s just me with my mom and dad. I’ll relax; enjoy catching up on recorded shows. This is nice.

You’re trying too much and too hard. Stop. Slow down. Get in your suit, you know, the one I got you. It will help you settle down. Pull down the visor so you’re fully enclosed wouldn’t want anything to get in.

Yeah, good idea, I guess. I have to pace myself. I’ll sink into my suit of armor. Dang is this heavy. Remote is right there, but tough to move around, so heavy. Maybe I’ll take a nap. Stop moving. Stop thinking. Do nothing. Nothing. It doesn’t hurt. Feels pretty nice actually. Besides, you’re too tired otherwise. What energy or motivation do you have? Doesn’t matter. Why care? Doesn’t matter! Everyone with me now. Doesn’t… Oh yeah, still just me and you. Besides shouting would be over-exerting yourself. Can’t
have that ‘cause that’s what matters. Am I right?

Yep. I feel this way at times. Other times I feel like I’m suffocating. The air won’t reach my lungs. When I try to breathe nothing happens. I’m gasping for no reason. I’m that flailing fish, confused why I can’t seem to breathe anymore - only the obvious answer for the fish is it is out of water. Breathing trouble? Didn’t I tell you? It’s a tiny side effect for the armor’s protection. I don’t get why either. The chest plate will suddenly collapse from time to time, crushing those precious lungs. It pops out after a few minutes. So wait it out. You’re good at waiting.

These “episodes” are rare, but painful. Where one pain leads to nothingness, the same pain can go an entirely different direction - anger. Not everything is your fault, entirely. Those uncaring folks, you know - parents, friends, acquaintances - everyone else can be so darn annoying. Irritating even. You, my pal, are better off alone. Agree?

Sure. Why is there a pop bottle in the trash when it should be recycled? Are they that lazy and inconsiderate? It’s not that hard to find a recycling bin it really isn’t. I want to, to…

Hurt them. Give’em pain. Oh, don’t stop, you’re cooking now. Go get’em! This is a crime or it should be. Punish them! And remember, you’re still to blame. Yeah! Yeah? Maybe I’m overacting. Aren’t I? Sorry. I try to stay rational, calm. I can’t help listening to him. He is always there. Might seem like he goes away at times, but he comes right back. A false hope.

Whoa. Whoa! Look here, stupid. I knock, and you keep opening the door, inviting me in. This is all you. I do all this talking. No, wait, you do all this talking. Hold on. I’m speaking what you are thinking but my words are actually your thoughts and. Wait. Who is talking here? Me? You? It doesn’t matter. Bottom line is Your Life Sucks.

I think this a lot. I know it isn’t true but it’s what I think. This is the side that wins out. Depression is negative thoughts clouding and consuming the mind. Controlling the emotions one feels. I try ignoring my dark thoughts, but they are persistent. I try to make it another person. I tell myself there is no way I would think that. It has to be this guy, this unwelcomed guest, who is saying all these bad things about me. Sometimes it really does feel like a whole different person is talking down to me. My thoughts being such a muddled mess I wonder-

Who is talking?

---

**Evan Moreland** is from Afton. He enjoys writing short fiction stories the most. He hopes to be a writer for video games.