

What's causing my Depression and Fatigue?

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By Paul Shearstone

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Chronic Fatigue and Chronic Depression are absolutely systemic in our society today. Recent studies done by the AMA and CMA purport one in four people in North America are suffering from some form of chronic fatigue or depression and it's expected eight out of ten of us will experience similar afflictions in our lifetime. But numbers like these don't speak to the cause and only tell half the story.

In June of this year, my new book entitled, "Until You've Walked the Path" hit the bookstores. In it, I chronicle my own real life battle and recovery from CFS [Chronic Fatigue Syndrome]. I am pleased to say that from the responses I've received, the book has touched many people in a positive way, both those suffering from the disease, as well as caregivers, looking for new ways to aid the afflicted.

In conversations about CFS, the one question I am asked the most is, "What's causing My [their] chronic depression and fatigue?" Followed by, "Is it just stress?"

I'll admit I am not a doctor and have no medical training, however, I have done a fair bit of research over the last decade and I am a real CFS Survivor. That said, it is my belief there are three fundamental 'Camps' if you will, that can cause depression or fatigue and it is absolutely essential to determine what camp you are in to expedite speedy recovery.

Camp #1: CFIDS [Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome]

CFIDS is the new acronym for most immune dysfunctional disorders which covers a broad base of causes and outcomes. More specifically, the factors that can bring on CFS are viral. In my case I was diagnosed with the Epstein-Barr Virus [EBV]. Another common virus known to cause CFS is the ME Virus [Myalgic Encephalomyelitis]. An outcome associated with CFS sufferers is Fibromyalgia; an excruciatingly painful disease that effects all the muscles and joints in the body.

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I could go on but the important point to understand is that most of what causes 'Real' Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is most often viral. These viruses attack the immune system causing acute un-wellness, fatigue and depression. Stress is another immune-weakening phenomenon and is often a major cause for CFS. On the other hand, motivators like post viral infection - as it was in my case - is known to be much of the cause because of the damaging consequences it can affect to an otherwise healthy immune system. One outcome is Depression and Fatigue.

Camp #2: Mood Disorders

Mood disorders are perhaps easier for most people to understand. Not the diseases themselves but rather the fact that there are commonly known diseases like: By-Polar, Manic-Depression and Schizophrenia, to name but three. We all know they can cause behavioral - often unpredictable - changes in those afflicted. Another outcome is Depression and Fatigue.

Camp #3: Substance Abuse

Whether it's drugs or alcohol, [prescribed or otherwise], many people fall victim to their affects that over time, can clearly evolve into conditions of un-wellness.

Stress-relief is often the reason for those who use drugs and alcohol on a regular basis and one need not be addicted to experience many of the health deteriorations that ultimately come about. Another outcome, of course, is Depression and Fatigue.

By now you may be seeing a bit of an assertion I am making in this article which now compels me to make two important points:

1. Depression and Fatigue can be outcomes from many different motivators.
2. It is critical for sufferers to seek out immediate professional help in determining precisely what is causing their fatigue and depression.

I have seen too many people needlessly wither away with diseases like these, never getting the right help. Many of them try to hide their problem and shrink into the shadows because it's not a glamorous disease and for the most part, is still a little misunderstood - even by many in the medical field.

My advice is to find the right medical specialist who deals specifically with what's causing your fatigue and depression. Understand that no doctor can be a specialist at everything and that the medicine, treatment and care for someone with Schizophrenia would be entirely different from what's required to treat someone with substance abuse or a viral infection. The specialist would be just as different.

It's also vitally important for those afflicted and caregivers alike to know that there is a short window of opportunity in getting diseases like these under control. That is to say, from my observation and experience, the longer one goes without proper diagnosis and treatment, the harder it is and less likely it is, recovery can be achieved.

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Chronic Depression and Fatigues is not something one chooses to have and treatments like "Suck it up soldier!" or love deprivation do not work. Ignoring it works even less.

The Bottom Line:

What's causing Your Depression and Fatigue could be many things. You need to align yourself with the right specialist, the right medication and the right treatment As Soon As Possible!

The good news? You can recover from it and you can triumph over it! I am living proof.

Paul Shearstone is President of The CFIDS Foundation of Canada Inc. He is an International Keynote Speaker, Author, Writer, Motivation, Corporate Ethics, Sales, Time & Stress Management Specialist.

Paul enlightens and challenges audiences as he informs motivates and entertains.

To comment on this article or to book Paul for your next successful event we invite to contact Paul

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or

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For more information and how to order Paul's new book, "Until You've Walked the Path" please visit

"Every day millions of people struggle valiantly with the pain of CFIDS and Depression... the very real physical pain and the excruciating psychic pain of the soul. Paul gives both voice and face to their pain. More importantly, he gives expression to their courage, resilience, and valour. By his account of his own remarkable journey, he gives hope to the millions of others who are still on theirs".

Karen Liberman
Executive Director
Mood Disorders Association of Ontario

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome And Depression Are Not The Same Thing!

By Claire Williams

You may have noticed that Chronic Fatigue Syndrome /M.E. /Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome is a very misunderstood illness...

...and this is perhaps why there are so many myths about it.

Perhaps the most common myth about Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is that it is effectively a mental

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condition, and another name for depression.

But these two conditions are very different!

And when you label a condition incorrectly it can cause no end of problems when trying to diagnose and treat it. So it's extremely important to make the distinction between Chronic Fatigue Syndrome /M.E. /Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome and depression – because they are completely different illnesses.

Depression can be a ****symptom**** of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, but there are many Chronic Fatigue Syndrome sufferers out there who do ****not**** suffer from depression at all.

I, for example, used to suffer from depression when I was first diagnosed with Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome (CFS/M.E.), but now I (thankfully) don't have depression anymore.

-----SIDE NOTE-----

My recovery from depression (whilst I had PVFS) was down to having psychotherapy. And I can safely say that it's THE BEST thing I've ever done.

If you're depressed, then I urgently recommend that you try a talking therapy of some sort.

I'd personally describe the whole process of going through psychotherapy as "reading a fascinating book" – where the topic is on 'yourself'.

To find out what it's like to go through psychotherapy /counselling, visit:

If you're housebound, or just want to conserve your energy and don't want to travel to see a therapist, then why not try online counselling?

There are services out there that can give you counselling sessions via telephone, via email, or via 'Instant Messaging' (real-time chat sessions on your computer, where you type instead of talk).

-----SIDE NOTE-----

There are other differences between Chronic Fatigue Syndrome /Fibromyalgia and depression...

Research has shown that Chronic Fatigue Syndrome sufferers have an abnormality in their 'deep sleep' brainwave patterns. But, depression sufferers do not have this abnormality!

And in a recent study by scientists at the University of Alberta, it was found that there were significant differences in skin temperature and electrical activity in the skin, which sets Chronic Fatigue Syndrome sufferers apart from depression sufferers (Pazderka–Robinson, H. Int. Jnl. Of Psychophysiology Aug 2004).

What's more, depression sufferers tend to feel tired ****all**** the time, whereas Chronic Fatigue

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Syndrome sufferers' exhaustion ****increases**** notably after mental or physical exertion.

There are also symptoms of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome that are not shared by depression sufferers. Nasty flu-like symptoms, headaches, painful muscles and joints, Restless Legs Syndrome, and an increase in colds and viruses, are all just a few symptoms that can play a part in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

There you go – just a few of the differences between Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and depression! So the next time someone mistakes your Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ M.E. /Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome /Fibromyalgia for depression – you can set them right!

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Claire Williams is editor of

and has suffered from Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome since 1995.

She created '

' to help Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia sufferers to deal with

the condition – from handling their money worries, to recovering from their illness....

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