

*"This book changed my life. Either I'm worse off or had a miraculous epiphany of serenity knowing I'm not the author. Either way, it's insanely hilarious."*

*-Richard Lewis*

*"This book is the quintessential neurotic's manifesto. It's also very funny, which I'm sure is quite by accident."*

*-Larry David*



**MISERY**



**IDIOS**

**THE NEW**

**HAPPINESS**

A Neurotic's Guide to Living  
PART 1



JOHN DEBELLIS

## **MISERY IS THE NEW HAPPINESS - BOOK 1**

*"Life is not my medium."* -- **our reality**

*"Life's a bitch, and then you realize you're twelve."* -- **our awakening**

*"Everything that can go wrong will go wrong, and that's the best part of your day."* -- **our motto**

*"Every day above ground is a day you can get trampled on."* -- **our optimism**

*"Life is dull when the voices in your head are snoring."* -- **our motivational slogan**

*"Life: you can't live with it, and you can't live without it."* -- **our dilemma**

*"God grant me the insecurity to worry about the things I cannot change, the cowardice to not change the things I can, and the ignorance to not know the difference."* -- **our unserenity prayer**

*"Misery is the New Happiness"* -- **our Bible**

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\*Typos or mistakes of any kind are the residual effect of inbreeding.

## PROLOGUE

To the millions of us, whose numbers are growing geometrically by the minute, this is not your ordinary self-help book. It's not designed to cure or even change you. Its purpose is to encourage you to recognize your limitless limitations and by doing so it will show you how to shamelessly accept your empty lot in life. Realize that when it was said, "There is nothing more precious than life," they didn't mean *your* life.

You are wanted as much as a leper's handshake. No one cares about you, nor should they. So live like each day should be your last. When God said, "Let there be life\*\*," He also said, "with these exceptions." You are on that list of beings who are here because of a loophole in nature. Embrace these principles and you will never be tempted to open the hazardous gift of life. You will clearly see that the wrapping is as good as it will ever get. Your only feast will be on life's leftovers. And since we may soon be in the majority, misery has become the new happiness.

*"If we were God, we would have created the earth in six days, and on the seventh we would have complained."*

\*\*Poetic license (lame excuse for changing the quote)

## THErapy CAN BE YOUR FRIEND

In our country's most cosmopolitan cities, you won't be accepted as truly miserable until you are clinically diagnosed. But there are other reasons for going to therapy. Therapy will also allow you access to the drugs of choice--Valium and Xanax. (We'll talk about these little delicacies in another chapter).

Therapy is a great place, especially group therapy, to meet others who share symptoms and traumatic experiences-- and to watch people in more pain than you. But if that isn't enough of a reason to see a shrink, think of it as the ultimate excuse. You can tell people, "I'm really trying to get better; I've been in therapy for 35 years." (make sure you're at least 36 years-old). Or, "The reason I'm broke is that I spend six hundred dollars a week on therapy."

Of course, selecting the right therapist is a tough challenge especially for those of us who have a difficult enough time deciding what side of the bed to get into: on top or hiding under. So how does one of us select a therapist? A bad shrink can do you more damage. So here are a few words of warning: Never, ever, go to a shrink whose name you find on the letterhead of a friend's suicide note. Or worse yet, don't go to one who hands you her card while offering to give you a lap dance--especially if it only takes them five seconds to say, "Your time is up." And by all means, never visit a shrink whose ad you see tattooed on a sheep's genitals. And if you do, only pay him by check (one that will bounce). I know that last reason may seem exaggerated, but in certain third world countries, it's quite common. Below is a list of the most common therapy methods and ways to find a therapist.

### Ways to Find a Shrink

1. **You are referred to by fellow depressive.** This is usually the most common method and it has the same success rate as the others, which is zero. There are a few reasons why a friend

would refer you to a shrink. The first is because the therapist isn't very good, so it's a foolproof way to make sure you don't get any better. To me this is the purist reason. Another reason could be that your friend just wants to see you foolishly throw away as much money as he does. Recently, a very ill cousin referred me to a shrink because he wanted me to distract the shrink while he robbed his office. Unfortunately, the shrink specialized in kleptomaniacs and the criminal mind and was aware of the scam. My cousin was arrested, fined, and then ordered to go back to therapy. Of course, the therapist, knowing that the state ordered him to attend, raised his fee, which forced my cousin to rob other people, which kept him in therapy. A perfect example of our cycle of life.

2. **You find the name in the yellow pages.** After debating about which number to call, you finally pick one, either because the ad catches your eye, or your finger has landed on the name. This method is risky because with your luck you might get a shrink so unqualified that he or she actually says there's nothing wrong with you.
3. **The therapist is covered by your insurance.** These guys are in the shrink game because your insurance company is willing to pay a lot of dough to help you find a cure. Unfortunately, the only thing cured is the shrink's gambling debt. The reason the shrink even remembers your name is because he has to fill out the paperwork in order to collect his cut from the insurance company. This kind of shrink is good if you're planning on murdering someone and want a second opinion.

Therapists deploy varying methods, some quite unorthodox. A close friend who, let's just say, when sleeping couldn't turn off his personal leaky faucet, if you get my damp drift, quit therapy when his shrink tried to cure two bed-wetters by making them sleep together. There's no end to the techniques that shrinks will attempt at our expense. They know we're suckers for someone who shows us the least little bit of attention even if we're paying for it. I was once referred to a tough-minded therapist by a friend (who lived in a box made by a mime). I wanted someone who could give me a kick in the rear (we are all masochistic to a certain degree). Well, I ran out of his



office mid-session when he told me that he cured a schizophrenic by chopping him in half.

To me, therapy has been an endless procession of meetings with unhappy beings who hold social worker degrees. I heard from former friends that they found good therapists that have helped immensely. I tend to believe them because as a result of their therapy they stopped socializing with me. In my anxiety-riddled journey into therapy, I've experienced a few really memorable episodes. A few years back, I was in the midst of a severe identity crisis. To add fuel to the fire, my therapist told me emphatically that being a man was just a phase I was going through. It took me several months before I could stand when I relieved myself. Then there was the time I told a rather callous therapist I was thinking of committing suicide. And he told me, "Try it. You have nothing to lose." Then there was this especially upsetting session with my fifth shrink that year. As usual, I was feeling my lowly self, when my shrink boldly told me that there was only one thing I could do to feel better and that was to eliminate my will to live. In the very next session, he confessed to me that he had a death wish--mine. I stopped obsessing about it when I used up the allotted sessions on my insurance.

Of course, some of the problems I encountered were of my own doing. In my day-to-day life, I often made poor choices. I selected a therapist from the phone book and went to several sessions when it suddenly hit me that I was going to the wrong kind of shrink. I was in the middle of a session when I looked around and noticed that our therapy group was meeting at a gay bar. Before I left he asked me if I was homophobic and I told him I wasn't. He smiled and said, "Good, then I don't have to stop kissing you." This little anecdote leads me to my next point: selecting the right kind of therapy for you--one that doesn't work for all the right reasons. Below are a few diverse styles of therapy.

## **Types of Therapy**

1. **STRICT FREUDIAN THERAPY** - If you like to spend a ton of cash to lie on a couch talking to yourself about yourself for twenty years and end up worse off because you uncovered horrible things about you and your parents (especially your mother), this is the therapy for you. Make sure your therapist is actually listening. If while you're pouring your heart out and he's shaving, or wearing headphones attached to an iPod or checking out porno sites on his computer, I'd consider looking for another therapist. Don't ask him for a recommendation, but if by chance you do and he responds, "What the f%#&2\* did you say?"—then, for sure, he's not the right man for you.
2. **COGNITIVE THERAPY** - If you don't have the time or the money to agonize over your traumatic formative years and think you can fool yourself into thinking you can change the miserable mess you are by altering your approach to the here and now, this is not only the therapy for you, but I have an uncle who would love to sell you three of his kidneys. Or I'll sell you the ones he sold me. I think even most Internet dating services have a better success rate, and it might only take them fifteen years to get you a date.
3. **GESTALT THERAPY** - Here they'll tell you that you are greater than the sum of all your parts, which means they really haven't taken a real good look at you. They could give you every spare part off of every creature in the universe, and you'd still be a spineless bundle of anesthetized nerve endings.
4. **PRIMAL SCREAM THERAPY** - I know this therapy is a leftover relic from the sixties, but just the thought of a fellow sufferer trying to cure him or herself by yelling at the top of their lungs, makes me want to yell at the top of my lungs, "You moron!"
5. **INNER CHILD THERAPY** - Are they kidding? If my own family wouldn't touch me when I was a real child, why the hell would I want to touch my inner child? Besides, after being trapped inside me for all these years, the last thing that kid would want is to think he might grow up to be me. In fact, if I did get

in touch with the kid, it would only be to get him to pay for the therapy.

6. GROUP THERAPY - They say group therapy speeds up your therapy because you can see yourself and your problems in other group members, as well as you learn to interact with people. I say it's because the people in the group are so boring, creepy, or annoying that you leave after only a handful of sessions, pretending you're cured. Being in group therapy is like having multi-personality disorder with separate bodies.
7. SHOCK THERAPY - This is where they zap you full of electricity, hoping to jolt you into feeling less depressed. It's much like torture, but instead of trying to get you to "remember" certain things, they want you to forget certain things like who you are, what screwed you up, and where the electrodes were attached. This therapy is not used as much anymore, not only because it violates the Geneva Convention, but because electricity has become more expensive.

Does therapy help? Sure, it does. It tells you that you were absolutely right when you thought you were a psychological mess full of unresolved conflicts. It enables you to feel secure in your insecurities. In those moments when you actually doubt that you're incapable of achieving an adult relationship, all you have to do is think back to your last therapy session, reflect on the shrink's explanation of why you became a dysfunctional gnome, and you'll snap back into your cocoon. Think of therapy not as a way to mental health, but as a note from your parents excusing you from life.

*"My therapist put me on Prozac. It's working--Now I feel good about committing suicide."*