

Mental Health September 1, 2021

Brenda L. Moore

On June 23, 2021, I published my book titled, "Walking in the Shadow of a Schizophrenic / Power of Forgiveness." The book is a personal narrative about the unawareness of marrying into Mental Illness, the survival of the struggles, the horrific challenges that come with it; and how unconditional love, faith, and God's word led to forgiveness. The article is a continuation of my perspective and personal experience with "Mental Illness. One book could not contain all the experiences encountered living with mental illness.

Statistics according to the Center for Disease Control, (CDC), say more than *50% will be diagnosed with a mental illness or a disorder at some point in their life. 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental illness in a given year.*

<https://www.cdc.gov> mentalhealth/learn>: January 26, 2018,

Chronic Paranoid Schizophrenia is a severe mental disorder that causes one's thinking to be unclear, distorted, difficulty differentiating between fantasy/reality, and can result in isolation from loved ones. In addition to the above, the mental individual can suffer highs and lows of depression, hallucinations, delusions, catatonic behavior, a lapse of memory/time, accompanied by immense side effects from various potent medications.

It is a major adjustment trying to adapt to the psychosis, the traumatic character changes, and working with Doctors to find the correct medication/dosages; notwithstanding convincing the person he/she is sick and need to be responsible for taking medications. Schizophrenia affected

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my entire family. What was hard for me to digest was the word "*chronic*" attached to the mental illness, schizophrenia, implicating the disease is long-term and there is no cure.

I was not in a relationship with my husband when he first developed the illness. Having no control over the sudden changes in his mind, I could hardly imagine the depth of his fears. Being the proud man that he is, the embarrassment of the breakdown happening in the military among his' peers had to be distressful. Mental Illness is symbolic of walking in the path of a venomous Snake. The disease can strike without a moment's notice; leaving the victim mentally paralyzed, vulnerable, helpless, and in a hopeless state, betwixt of life and death.

Over time the mind subtly deteriorates and the disease takes ownership. Its sick-mindedness from the pit of a dark place of the heart, ushers commands, and demands to perform heartless, gruesome, and heinous actions. Some examples: (A woman drowned her children and said, God, told her to do so. God wouldn't demand such an evil act. A person who thinks it's okay to murder masses of people. Mothers and fathers justify brutally abusing and killing their children because life because burdensome and complex. A mind that violently kills with no regard for life.

Repeatedly, mental illness surface and summon the evil part of my husband, to the point he was no longer identifiable. Unimaginable is wrapping my confused mind around how humans, created in the image of

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God, can have the most animalistic ways and within a heartbeat, will commit the most atrocious crimes toward another human being. Everyone who commits these acts is suffering from schizophrenia. Yet it's evident there is a mental disorder of some type.

["You can't magically think your way out of a mental illness, whether it's mild or severe. This idea is pervasive-and damaging because it creates unreasonable expectations for the person who is suffering from the illness."]

You can snap out of mental health problems: Frailer, Nelson, MD: University of Los Angeles, California

For centuries, mental illness carried biased stigmas. For most, living in close proximity, and are neighbors with the mentally ill is detesting and resentful. History has recorded longevity of insensitivity, lack of apathy, and misinformation regarding MI. Much shame and embarrassment encompassed those who had a family member with a mental disorder. The community didn't make it any easier on mental sufferers. They weren't met with the same respect given to others.

In retrospect, today there is much change in the way mental illness is viewed in our communities. Yet the mentally ill remain victims of sarcasm, discrimination, assumptions, and false ideologies. They are deemed as unapproachable, ostracized: dehumanized, degraded, and demoralized. In the Black communities, there is a fear of conversation about mental illness, and neither is there much empathy. Sadly, if a discussion of one's mental

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health does surface, the conversation of the victim is the majority of the time antagonistic, selfish, and vicious.

Past Treatment of Mental Disorders

["History and prevailing theory of psychopathology was the idea that mental illness or abnormal behaviors were a result of demonic possession, evil spirits, witchcraft, or an angry god. (1960) People who exhibited strange behaviors were greatly misunderstood, treated cruelly. Various forms of treatment were used to release spirits from the individual.'] The most common practices were:

- Exorcism - Prayers, given medicinal conducted by priests or other religious figures.
- Trepidation- For extreme cases, a small hole was made in the afflicted individual's skull to release spirits from the body. Most people treated in this manner died.
- Execution or imprisonment - People with psychological disorders were also left to become homeless beggars.

["The mentally challenged were condemned by the courts, considered to be Witches... and were often burned at the stake. By the 18th century, people who were considered odd and unusual were placed in asylums, with the focus on excluding them from society rather than treating their disorders. They were beaten, chained to their beds, kept in windowless dungeons, and had little to no contact.

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In the late 1700s, Philippe Pinel, a French Physician argued for more humane treatment of the mentally ill-suggesting that they are unchained and talked to. Patients benefited from more humane treatment, and many were able to leave the hospital. (La Salpêtrière in Paris in 1795) In the 19th century, Dorothea Dix led a reform for mental health care in the United States, investigating the treatment of the mentally ill/poor. She discovered an underfunded and unregulated system that perpetuated abuse of this population (Tiffany, 1891).

Horrified by her findings, Dix began lobbying various state legislatures and the U.S. Congress for change. Her efforts led to the first mental asylums in the United States. [Despite reformers' efforts, a typical asylum was filthy, cold, offered very little treatment, and often kept people for decades. (Tiffany,1891). One treatment in the Willard Psychiatric Center in upstate New York was to submerge patients in cold baths for long periods. Electroshock treatments, now called, (electroconvulsive), were administered; which often broke patient's backs. (1943) Conditions like these remained commonplace until well into the 20th century. Starting in (1954) and gaining popularity in the 1960s, antipsychotic medications were introduced which helped in controlling the symptoms of certain psychological disorders, such as psychosis.]

[In 1963, Congress passed and John F. Kennedy signed the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction

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Act, which provided federal support and funding for community mental health centers (National Institutes of Health, 2013). The starting process of institutionalization was the closing of asylums, by providing for people to stay in their communities and to be treated locally. By 1994, there were 92% fewer hospitalized individuals (Torrey, 1997).

The mentally ill who were released from institutions were supposed to relocate to newly created centers; unfortunately, the system was not set up effectively. Centers were underfunded, had untrained staff who weren't qualified to handle severe illnesses such as Schizophrenia...without these adequate supports, people who were deinstitutionalized often ended up homeless.

Today, a large portion of the homeless population is considered to be mentally ill. Statistics show that 26% of homeless adults living in shelters experience mental illness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] (2011) lumenlearning.com: mental-health-treatment-past-and-present. Every year, about 42.5 million American adults or, (18.2%), of the total adult population in the United States suffer from some mental illness; nearly 1 in 5 adults each year." Mental health fact sheets: www.macmh.org. (February 28, 2014) "Approximately 1 in 5 youth aged 13-18, (21.4%), experience a severe mental disorder at some point during their life. For children aged 8-15; the estimate is 13%.³ Among 10.2 million

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adults who experience substance abuse-10.2 million have a co-occurring mental illness.”] National Alliance on mental illness: (May 1, 2019)

I suspect the statistics of mental illness are now higher. Statistics of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) say more than 50% will be diagnosed with mental illness or a disorder at some point in their life; 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental illness in a given year.”

A Ways to Go

[“Representative Tim Murphy proposed a bill to reconstruct certain parts of the federal mental-health system so that its focus is on the seriousness of mental illness rather than mental health...”] National Review: national council for behavioral health, (2015). Gaffe and DJ: (December 23, 2013) In retrospect, across the nation located in our neighborhoods and communities are Mental Health Centers, which provide mental health services.

[“Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015 raised the profile of mental health. It ensured the lead policy officials knew about mental illness, that mental illness grants were used appropriately, and provided activities leading to reduction of suicide attempts, suicide, abuse, emergency hospitalizations, incarcerations, crimes, arrest, victimization, homelessness, joblessness, medication; increased minority mental health, and increased number of culturally competent behavioral health professionals, etc.”]

“Unbiased Information for Policymakers media” Gaffe, DJ: New York, NY.

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MentalIllnessPolicy. Org

[“President Obama’s 2016 budget unveiled a \$4 trillion budget proposal for 2016. The budget entailed proposals for agencies/programs of importance to people and families living with serious mental illness. Eliminated the unfair 190-day lifetime limit on inpatient psychiatric care in the Medicare program; proposal of current budget limits by \$74 billion. A \$56 million increase for the National Institute of Mental Health-increased current funding to a level of \$1,434 billion to 1,489 billion, \$135 million for brain research through Advancing Innovative Neuro Technologies, and a 144.6 million increase, boosting overall funding to \$3.666 billion.”]

President Obama’s budget proposal 2016: what does it mean for mental health? National Alliance on Mental Illness: Sperling, Andrew, (20, February 2016).

The fight for mental illness has progressed over centuries; regardless we are far from resolving the immeasurable needs of the vast number of mental disabilities. Mental health, mental facilities, housing, and funding for medical attention for the mentally ill must be a priority. Intentional strategically planning, enhancing medical science and adequate funding is finally getting mental illness the attention it deserves and is long overdue.

Trained professionals, improved medications, and better medical treatments, and more long-term treatment facilities are the keys to a successful mental outcome; and to help them the best life they possibly can.

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Mental illness is more recognized as a sickness, a health issue like any other physical problem. Most importantly, it is no individual's fault.

I can't count the times I came to my ex-husband's aid because there were no vacant beds at the VA Hospital. He was incarcerated versus taken to a mental hospital or Rehab facility. Due to the need for long-term care, and there weren't any long-term care facilities in Louisville, KY. Throughout the years, his Mental Health Consultants and his' DR. wanted to send my ex-husband to an unfamiliar facility out-of-town to an unfamiliar facility.

Mental Illness isn't Partial

Mental Illness occupies the minds of many. It is not partial; it does not have specific preferences. It can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender, or status. The sickness resides in our homes, churches, schools; on the job. MI occupies every street corner, public park, and hospital waiting room. Hopelessly, huddle in corners of buildings, under viaducts, lounging in restaurants, squatting/lying on sidewalks, and lying/sitting in bus shelters. Mental illness is not partial.

The disease affects the rich, poor, and educated. No one is exempt. Truthfully, if every individual will search their family tree/line, there is a husband, wife, aunt, uncle, child, or cousin suffering from some mental disorder. Some folks are incapable of feeling the pain and trauma of mental illness until the disease becomes personal. To experience a friend or a family member cognitively slip away, revert from rational to irrational is

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devastating. Even more distressing is to watch a prosperous person who once enjoyed life, and held down a job suddenly becomes inconsequential.

Family Wounds

Families feel inadequate and helpless as they stand by and watch a loved one fight to maintain a sense of reality. The illness quickly becomes the main focus, and because family members overly empathize and others are hardened. Either emotion will cause disputes in regards to a variation of opinions on what needs to be done etc. *Anger, bitterness, blame, family isolation*, even sometimes murder can be the result of the pressures of mental illness. Despite all odds and some aggressiveness, significant others spend countless hours worrying and working effortlessly to help their loved ones to survive.

The dilemma of how to keep the ill person happy and from self-destructing is an enormous emotional and physical responsibility. My husband puffed one cigarette after another. The bedside Ash Tray which set on the nightstand overflowed with cigarette butts. It was nothing for my husband to smoke 2½ to 3 packs of Kool Milds 100 weekly. Some days he consumed an entire pack. Following every hospital discharge, my husband insisted on taking a Cab home, determined to stop at a store to purchase a couple of cartons of cigarettes before arriving home.

Infuriating was to come home from work, only to be met by a dense cloud of moving smoke that blocked the view of the furniture and clouded

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my path to our bedroom. I felt as though I had walked into an early morning fog. My husband, Dallas was the epitome of a chain smoker! Although, disgusted with the situation I understood smoking was a substitute for idle time and discombobulating thoughts. Smoking acted as a calming effect for his nerves and eased the tension for what he was battling inwardly.

It upset me horribly that smoking was lessening my husband's quality of life. It prompted me to take out Cancer Insurance. Smoking also was detrimental to my husband's health. During an attempted suicide, he punctured the pericardium, sac surrounding the heart, making him more susceptible to breathing issues. I refused to entertain or supply his habit by purchasing his cigarettes. He considered my decision disrespectful. He couldn't understand why a man's wife refused to buy her husband something he so desperately enjoyed.

I am not certain of what prompted the change, but after years of smoking, he stopped cold turkey! Together, impulsivity and Mental Illness work in opposition to Good. I observed a major part in developing some mental disorders is that the sick person becomes an individualist, self-centered and self-reliant. One evening I was in the kitchen baking a Pound Cake. Dallas came slowly through the door. "*Brenda come look at my brand-new car!*" Right off I noticed he said, "*My brand-new car.*" When I peeked out the door, right away I became breathless as I stared at the black and white four-door Honda Accord.

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I had to admit the car was fine! Nevertheless, the beauty of the car did not overshadow my commonsense about the expensive car payment; not to speak of the insurance. I asked, "*How much is the car note?*" He replied, "*four hundred and fifty dollars*, just like it was nothing. I felt my temperament rise! Cautiously, I toned my voice as much as I possibly could. I reiterated, ("*four hundred-fifty dollars, Dallas that is part of a mortgage payment!*") A once strong-minded, considerate, and conservative man had a mild tantrum. "*Brenda, you just don't want me to have anything...*" Calmly, I explained, "it's not that I don't want you to have a car but it is so expensive; a house should be the priority!" It was a waste of time and effort; unequivocally he was dull of hearing.

The car remained my husband's Toy for a short period. In less than a few months the car was wrecked and totaled; putting us in twenty-two thousand dollars debt. Interestingly, I would never be able to explain how we were relieved of the debt. Why, did the overwhelming debt didn't show up on our credit report? Undoubtedly, it was God's unmerited favor. Incidentally, the Honda Accord was among the (10) cars we possessed and lost during the life span of the marriage.

Catastrophic is the severity of the attacks mental illness takes on the mind. MI initiates confusion, causes the victim to think wrong to be right and right to be wrong. If Dumpsters could talk, they would expose the number of TVs hoisted into them. My husband believed the TV was the root of all evil

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and was of the mindset that Demons were inside the TV Tube. My husband's reality to resolve the problem was to dispose of the TV. (Smile), I guess in a sense if you think about what is revealed on the media today, there is some truth to it.

Imagine every mirror in your home is covered with a sheet or a blanket. Covering the mirrors in our home was a way of not having to see or face the image of himself. I could never understand the concept. Despite the absurd thoughts, perceptions, and the way they make sense of the world, clearly, it is their reality. Disheartening is the tone in which the illness slowly distorts one's view of family members and close friends. Besides the ill person, family members seem to be the first to suffer.

It goes without saying, a sudden demand for loved ones to fit into their world of thinking and when they fail to do so, the ill person becomes aloof. Unfortunately, a friend or family member is considered the enemy. My analogy of mental illness is like a ship that has been docked, and somehow the pivot line loosens, the gust of the wind and the tides of the water slowly cause the Ship to drift, and soon it is beyond reach.

Thrust into a life of deprivation, mental faculties slowly stray from reality to a point of no return. Grappling with mental health, envisioned dreams and future goals become unattainable, and the person, in his/her own way, fights frantically to hold on to realism. Feelings of losing self will prompt the ill one to become disillusion, displaying misplaced anger, blaming

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and will target someone close as a scapegoat. In actuality, there is no one to blame.

Ill, but Human!

I reiterate, mental illness is prevalent and anyone can become prey to schizophrenia or a similar disorder. The loss of capacity to reason, to focus, to distinguish fantasy from reality, and to lose control, does not start and end with Schizophrenia. There are a number of mental disorders, (*Bi-Polar and Manic-Depressive, etc. Illnesses such as Alzheimer's, Dementia, Cancer, and Parkinson's disease* are all relatable degenerative diseases.) Hard to perceive is why the above emotional/mental issues and other physical ailments are readily accepted, and much concern, empathy, medical care, and funding are provided.

Briefly discussed is how other ailments are prioritized. Enthralling, mental health remains tagged with folks who are extremely judgmental and critical. Sufferers from mental illness don't need more criticism or judgment, but understanding, encouragement, support, and hope.

Perspective on Schizophrenia

My perspective on Schizophrenic is strictly subjective; therefore is not written in stone. I'm certain every Schizophrenic and the journey is different. Schizophrenia is spoken of as being problematic in innumerable ways. One is commonly said, is that the person suffers from multiple personalities. I observed my husband having conversations and being confrontational with

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invisible characters, but not near as much as I observed a consistent platform of complex battles/events taking place in his mind. His thoughts guided erratic gestures, outbursts, negative and repulsive actions, and reactions.

I mentioned in my book, "***Walking in the Shadow of a Schizophrenic / Power of Forgiveness.***" My, husband Dallas, had multiple gods, each with a different name, meaning, and function. I am a lover of old western movies. A particular episode from "Gun Smoke" was about a young man who killed a Farmer because he was trying to break an heirloom, his father's Guitar. Doc Adam referenced the murder the young committed in his' conversation with Ms. Kitty. He commented, "*Medicine is growing. We are finding cures for sickness and babies are being delivered, but who can get into a man's mind?*"

I found most hurtful and distraught about the Schizophrenia Shadow in my family was family was the awareness that even with adequate medical treatment, professional resources, and group therapy, there was no cure for our family members' minds! The loving man, husband, and father we knew, who was highly intelligent, a mind who was so intellectual he could have chosen just about any profession and did well. The mind that controlled every part of his being wouldn't get any better; we had only more deterioration in which to look forward.

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Due to having a chronic diagnosis, he was destined for the longevity of a mental fight, unpredictable anguish, which over time would grow worse.

Day to Day, we endured constant reoccurrences of erratic behaviors from highs to lows and from funny to outlandish. Moment by moment it was unknown what his mind frame would be. Different Doctors juggling medications, and interchangeable prescriptions/dosages trying to infer what meds were best to calm the fears, and psychosis, was an inconceivable uphill battle! Encounter with mental illness gave rise to major concerns:

1. Lack of medical attention, especially for those without health insurance
2. Mental Health Facilities/Hospital policies that allow a minimum amount of time to be hospitalized. Discharges from mental health facilities/Psych Ward discharged too soon; pushed back into society, unable to function and endangering themselves and others.
3. Percentage of mentally ill becoming homeless, especially our Veterans. In 2020, there was an estimate of 58,619 severely mentally ill homeless people left outside a shelter. March 24, 2020. [https://www.statista.com.state](https://www.statista.com/state)
4. The Mentally ill that end up in the judicial system for long periods without medical attention.
5. The vast number of Judges, State Guardians, and Mental Health Attorneys are indifferent, and insensitive to the very people they took an oath to protect and to serve.

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6. Last, Caretakers who desperately seek help for their mentally ill family member are treated as a villain.

Seriously, most caretakers and family member's motive is not to take advantage of the situation or to gain control of a check. Never was God's intention nor did Jesus leave out the mentally disturbed. I believe God purposed instilled a degree of intellect in men/women whose desire is to work with the complexity of the brain/mind. *Jesus said, "*Come all who are a burden and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" Jesus did not mean all would be devoid of the hardships of this world or would be healed of their physical ailments/

The scripture implies that God created all humanity. He loves us all, even in our imperfections. Jesus compels us to come to Him, to trust him and in doing so, it is His' power, he will make our burdens light. Jesus' spent his' entire 33 years building up, intervening in the burdens of those surrounding him. We should do likewise! As much as possible, we too should seek to make every man, woman, and child burden a little lighter. *The scriptures say we are to "*bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" **Matthew 11:28; Galatians 6:2*

We will never completely understand the functions of the human mind/brain or the how's and why the mind becomes sick. Many fates in this life we have to accept and trust in our Higher Power, that he is in control. "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your understanding; in*

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all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV).

No matter what the mental capacity of a person, it isn't so much the actions that should be the focal point. It's the God in the person. **"The disciples ask Jesus, "when have you been hungry, and we didn't feed you? When have you been thirsty, and we have given you no drinkthat? When have you been imprisoned, and we did not visit you? And the King said, "...in as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."*

Think of a mentally ill person in the light of Jesus. See Jesus in them. You, see Jesus saw the people's sinful state and their weaknesses. Jesus built character in the lowliest. His focus was what each individual could become. Jesus looked in the mirror of the individual's faces and saw himself in the people. He too was once hungry, homeless, burden by the mockery of the crowds of his' enemies, the unbelief of family and his own people, of nonbelievers, and even the cruelty of the cross.

His teachings were a culmination of understanding, acceptance, and unconditional love. **Jesus touched the Lepers, healed the woman with the issue of blood, had mercy on Zacchaeus, the crooked Tax Collector, made the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda whole, healed the demon-possessed girl, healed two demonic men, healed the woman with the issue of bread, and had mercy on the penitent thief on the cross."* Jesus' compassion goes

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on and on! * *Matthew 8:28–9:1; Mark 5:1–21; Luke 8:26–40 (English Standard Version)*

The Good Samaritan had compassion for the traveler who was beaten and left for dead. The GS, Jew knew the hatred between the two sects. He didn't see the man as a Samaritan. He didn't see color, differences, or culture. The GS wasn't concentrated on time, and where he needed to be. He immediately administered medical attention, took the man to a Motel, paid for his expenses, and offered to pay more if needed. *Luke 10:25-37 (KJV)*.

"... And they brought unto Him all sick people with various diseases and torments, those possessed with devils, lunatic, those that had the palsy, and he healed them." *Matthew 24:4 (KJV)*. It was never the mind of God to oppress or to keep people subservient to their faults and frailties. That was the whole purpose of the cross.

Some Mental Incompetence a Result of Our Decisions

There are a broad number of professional ideologies regarding cognitive damage/ mental disorders such as, (*Schizophrenia, Manic Depressive, Depression, Bi-Polar, psychotic disorders, anxiety, mood swings, obsessive behaviors, compulsive disorders, catatonic episodes, dissociative and more*). Other than hereditary, physical trauma to the brain or a chemical imbalance, it is my belief some mental interruptions can also be "self-

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inflicted.” Personal decisions and what is fed into the physical body can affect and throw them off-balance.

I have relatives who made decisions to indulge in alcohol/drugs and became victims of mental disorders due to long-term use of drugs and alcohol. Teens engaged daily in smoking large amounts of marijuana, consuming excessive amounts of alcohol and over-the-counter acetaminophen are at high risk of slowing down the cognitive process and damaging an already fragile mind. I witnessed friends indulge in over-the-counter meds and illegal drugs. Over a period of time, they weren't the same in their thinking, appearance, and some literally became mentally ill.

The Bible warns, “*Guard your mind for out of it are the issues of life.*” *Proverbs 4:23 (KJV)* What we do, don't do; what we see, hear, and what we take into our bodies all has an effect on our mental capacity/brings about distress and mental unrest. It is my belief another contributing factor to mental disorders stems from long-term emotions, (*un-repentant sins, self-blame, bitterness, anger, hatred, jealousy, coveting, an unforgiving spirit, and holding on to guilt*), will alter a person's mental attitude.

Agitation is a by-product of long-term pessimistic thoughts. Some behaviors derived from this frame of mind can look like mentally ill traits. Soon the mind looks at life/situations in an unclear and impractical manner. Decisions become based on individualism and self-indulging. There is a tendency to live in denial of one's irresponsibility and blaming others for a

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lack of success. Years of bitterness and extreme anger permeates a mind of violence and aggressiveness. The mind, body, and spirit are inseparable. If one is thrown off course, all are affected.

"Guilt is a feeling of having done wrong or failed in an obligation; regret, self-accusation, self-condemnation, a condescending conscience, remorse." ["King David discusses the shadow that lurked within, held him captive and, tore apart his conscience, because he lusted for another man's wife, (Bathsheba). Deceitfully, and through continuous lying, he covered up his wrongdoings. Deviously, David manipulatively concocted a plan to resolve the sins he created against Uriah and Bathsheba, himself, and God. Ultimately, David driven by sensuous thoughts, secrets, coveting, and denial resulted in adultery and the murder of a loyal Soldier, husband, and friend, Uriah."] I can imagine that David felt trapped in internal darkness. *Psalms, Chapters 5, 6, 32, 38 (KJV).*

["David's mind, body, and spirit were disturbed, consumed with irrational thoughts, and a stronghold of guilt. David's motives and actions were provoked by his self-serving attitude to the point he grew mentally and physically ill. It wasn't until King David acknowledged his' sins and became transparent with God. It enabled him to find tranquility and peace. Recovering emotionally and physically, David became whole again. ""]

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"Against Thee I have sinned and done the evil thing in your eyes" Psalms 51:4 (NLT) "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper but the one who confesses and renounces their sins finds mercy." Proverbs 28:13 (NIV)

"King David suffered from a cunning and baffling disease known as addict-addiction to self. Borne out of addiction to self comes all other symptoms of addiction." www.freedomfrommedom.com *A man after God's own heart: med on Project*

Self Deprecation

Self-deprecation is harsh criticism of self, finding fault, and feelings of inadequacy. Shame, rehashing a wrong, a mistake, embracing the past, self-punishment, and demoralizing can lead to distorted thinking. When I was growing up, mental illness was rarely spoken of. A guy living in our neighborhood, the neighborhood kids named him, "Pancake" because he walked the streets with flour on his' body from head to toe. He walked briskly up the street beating the air. Constantly, some neighborhood kids yelled, "He's crazy!"

Often *crazy* was a descriptive word used by adults and some kids to depict something that had gone wrong in a person's mind. On that note, the mentally ill and their family inflict enough punishment and lived with criticism and self-judgment. They don't need to encounter more condemnation from harsh critics. *Show some understanding even if you don't.*

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Bluntly refusing to forgive

A Pastor's wife shared her story of her brother, and her sister-in-law, who lost their son to gun violence. Undoubtedly, the couple had reasons to be angry and revengeful. Instead, the son's mother did something so profound! She visited her son's shooter in prison and shared the Lord with the young man. Despite her grief, she used three astounding words, {"I forgive you!"} She made a conscious decision not to be indebted to an unforgiving spirit.

She released her hurt to the Lord in exchange for holding a grudge against her son's murderer; leaving vengeance to God. The attitude of forgiveness is never for the person (s) who did the wrong. It's liberty for the person who has been victimized. Stewards of God, and keepers of one another, our responsibility is not to analyze or to fix people.

The Bible says, *"If a brother or a sister is overtaken in a fault we that are spiritual are to help restore that person in a spirit of gentleness."*

Galatians 6:1 (KJV)

Concern and unconditional love can be shown to others if you:

- Consider yourself.
- Stand in the gap and pray.
- Recommend places/resources to help and assist the vulnerable.
- Reframe from stereotyping, judgment, using demeaning language.

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- Humbly speak the truth, be optimistic, show kindness, and leave people hope.
- Leave the psychoanalysis to the professionals.

Unforgiving is like Cancer slowly eating away at the internal soul. Over time it's the Adversary, Satan's opportunity to capitalize on our sinful nature and all unwholesome thoughts and intentions. Unforgiving is an underlying reason for hate, revenge, emotional instability, and in many cases, murder. Unforgiving is a hindrance to present goals and prevents one from moving toward future goals.

I want to share a story about a young man. One Sunday morning this young man walked into the Sanctuary. He seemingly was in his 30ish, 6' 5 inches in height, slender stature, fair skin, and greenish-gray eyes. The young man had a musky smell. Above his forehead, he wore what looked to be an extremely large pair of black Gargoyles. The young man was soft-spoken and barely able to be heard or understood. His erect body sitting in the Pews was like a statue, and his eyes were fixated in one direction.

Periodically, he wore the same green army outfit and cap. Following worship I made a point to approach him with a hug; after all, everyone else was hugging. We fail to see people watch and notice our differences and prejudices. There were times he and I engaged in rational communication, and it was during these conversations, the young man revealed his name as Bobby.

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One particular Sunday doing worship I greeted Bobby. It was the first time I heard him state a complete sentence. Hesitating, as to whether or not I understood him correctly, I reiterated what I thought I heard Bobby say. *"You said you had a brother that passed?"* In a low tone, he shared his feelings for his deceased brother and gave me details of the funeral. Our conversation was lengthy. From my peripheral view, you could see and sense people begun to take notice. Pastor R looked quickly bowed his head.

On another Sunday, the young man exclaimed, *"I am going to bring my tithes."* Okay, I replied. I don't recall how long it was before we were blessed with another visit from Bobby. Nevertheless, on one other occasion, a few children came running upstairs and handed me an envelope. *"Sister Brenda, this man said to give this to you!"* Inside the envelope was a five-dollar bill. Bobby kept his word. The last memorable time with Bobby was during fellowship dinner. I walked into the fellowship hall and there he stood, gazing. The pastor told me after the fact that he asked for me.

"Hi Bobby, how are you?" He didn't respond. *"Are you hungry?"* Slowly, he nodded his head up/down. Across the room, I spotted a chair, brought it to the table, fixed Bobby a plate, and set it directly in front of him. After eating Bobby quietly left the building. Although Bobby's mind was sick, on numerous occasions he found his way to the Church. Most interesting was the fact that this young man specifically remembered my name!

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My mind wanders at times about Bobby's whereabouts. What is he doing? Is he still alive? I hope I made him feel comfortable, respected, and welcomed, if only for an instant. We can learn from anyone, even the mentally ill. Never underestimate the compassion and kindness you show toward others. Agape love is unconditional. God alone can plant that attribute within the heart and spirit of humanity. Jesus said, "*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*" Treat others as you want to be treated. I sometimes wrestle with this passage of scripture when it comes to others showing love. Truthfully, it depends on a person's self-love.

For various reasons, some lose their ability to love themselves and feel unworthy of anyone's affection. (*Their attitude becomes, treat others the way I feel or the way I feel the world has treated me.*) [*"Mental illness is a serious problem, but when we think of Christ our Lord, we can trust that he protects us from the dark desires that reside within our minds. We can count on him to offer us the guidance needed to think clearly. Trusting in the Lord, we don't need to worry about the dark maneuverings and plotting ready to be unleashed."* Lord protect us from the tricks of Satan... Lord clear our minds with your Holy Light. Light up our lives Lord."] KJV Online Bible

All are a creation of God. It doesn't matter in what state they end up. We need to have the mindset of Jesus. Meet people where they are, and without begrudging, provide whatever they need. Christ set the perfect example of how we are to live and to treat others. He didn't say it would be easy,

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nevertheless, we are commanded to bear the burdens and do justice for the vulnerable, the oppressed, speak for ones who have no voice. The world's attitude is to retaliate. You do for me, I'll return the favor.

It's not my responsibility! It's not my business, and so I'm staying out of it! I'm keeping my mouth closed!" Jesus taught the opposite. *"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. For if you love them which love you, what reward have you?" Matthew 5:43-47 (KJV)* There will be no excuses when you and I stand for our Heavenly Father.

When was the last time a needy soul remembered you by name for a deed you had done in the name of Jesus Christ? Jesus was a compassionate Lord. *Matthew 8:28-9:1; Mark 5:1-21; Luke 8:26-40 (English Standard Version)*

"From Caring Comes Courage" Tzu- Lao

"If you lavish attention on the man in fine clothes and say, here is a seat of honor but say to the poor man, you must stand or sit at my feet... Have you not shown partiality among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? (BLB) James 2:3-5

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"This Mental Thing"

Black as a Silhouette

Appearing as an object of solidity

Betwixt - external and the internal

Awaken with the best of intentions

Happy yet, angered

Congested with people, yet lonely

Responsible, dependable, yet codependence engulfs me!

Peaceful yet, restless and wandering

Alive! Yet internally feeling dead

Making my bed with the homeless

Who is this Silhouette who appears as I am?

BLM

"Be careful what you think, your life is shaped by your thoughts."

Proverbs 4:23 <https://Biblehu>