

The Labyrinth

A woman's story of one woman's way

I have a regret I can't shake: in a fit of catharsis I threw away the journals documenting my depressive spells. Buried in those *Dear Diary's* were my conversations with suicide, acres of melancholic insight, a language for loneliness, uncontrived, and the seductions of my black smok'n affair with self-sabotage.

I know why I turfed them; I was taking a symbolic leap of *moving forward* because that is what you do to disengage depressive spells. You're in a constant tug-of-war with your *moving backward* and the *fleeting forward*, of a society living life at break-neck speed. Today, *moved forward* ten years from the slowest legs of my steepest depression, I regret my sudden impulse to spring-clean.

Regardless, my depressing story's etched in my psyche like an epic legend. Set in my adolescence, it narrates the many ways I self-destructed as a response to trauma. Animated, albeit gloomily, through my contemplative personality, I wrote meditations on a fractured childhood spiraling towards a future of buried rage. Those pages argued valid reasons for leaving the planet early and were fit for a manifesto *sans* inspiration. My lone movement marched the underworld, forging my psychological history in a morbid revolt. Those journals should be treasured beside my diaries of foreign sojourns, romantic ruminations and moon-time musings. They were scriptures from the brink of despair; vignettes of human vice beyond compare. Are they not remnants of pain

we solitarily traverse? Basic storytelling before it becomes pretty verse?
Indeed, they are evidence of the power of writing, fighting and re-igniting
that dismal, depressing flame, burning blue.

***Stories, synchronicity, kindred souls and community illuminate
signposts in our Labyrinth of Wellbeing. We sit at the core of its
loops and laneways, seeking inspiration, education and
validation from the outside world, yet our choices, our knowing
and our rise beckon from within. We need a mental health care
system that embraces the human experience as labyrinthine,
creative, unpredictable and intuitive, NOT a systematic science
that compartmentalizes our instinctive nature.***



These days I pitch myself as mentally delicate yet strong, physically able
and wide awake with a spirit of fire devoted to improving mental health

care. I'm a blessed, young woman with a colorful life and tremendous respect for the difficult places we visit privately and unspoken. My fear of *moving backward* again is tempered by a deep trust in the commitment from my soul to ask for help when I need it. Having hacked, hunted and prayed my way through crippling states of consciousness, I'm determined to ensure these states are more widely supported. Why can't we talk openly about suicide? Why can't we create sanctuaries of support that offer time, space, presence and transformative opportunities, without diagnostic checklists, drug experiments and shame? What's wrong with not coping – be it anxiously or hysterically? Is it not fact, that as we constantly evolve we must conquer our greatest challenges? Ain't that why we have each other?

Gained I certainly have from surviving suicide, private violence and an all-round negative mindset. These experiences are my honest experience of being human. While I may have endured trauma I got nowhere in denial of my depressions and her many faces, as my responsibility.

The day I took ownership for my own mental health and well-being, my epic, labyrinthine legend took a twist of unrivaled triumph! I churned through pages of despair, writing myself towards freedom and became an intrepid explorer of terrain other than psychiatry. I sought answers to existential questions beyond CBT and group therapy. I indulged in dance instead of psychoanalytical review. I gave my body nourishment through nutrition, life modeling, yoga and ritualistic care. I resuscitated my weary soul with appreciations of the sacred.

I dedicate my writing, life modeling, existential research and activist spirit to prising open people's closed thinking about psychological, emotional and spiritual challenges. My social activist project, The Babyfacedassassin, breathes life back into the uninspiring, pathological framework within which we view mental health; a framework long overdue for a revolution! I vote for Self-Love, Self-Compassion and Self-Empowerment! Being diagnosed 'mentally ill' can breed a mentality of victimhood and limitation, and neglects the gifts of the mind and spirit in the face of psychological despair. It's time we took a different tone with our differences.

The Babyfacedassassin embraces the multi-faceted nature of being human and advocates for the Creative, Embodiment and Sacred Arts as the leading paradigms in mental health care, with psychiatry as a complimentary alternative that is useful during crises.

While I live with the regret of discarding my own depressive voice on paper, I am filled with the greatest lesson of my life: to never deny that voice a place or space to sing, if only a whisper, for it is a voice of profound messages humanity can no longer hide.

© Charlotte Claire 2013

The Babyfacedassassin

www.thebabyfacedassassin.com

charlotte@thebabyfacedassassin.com

Photography: Pauline Langmead

