

## Indeed, with hardship, there comes ease

This is from someone on the brink of the end and who came back alive. I don't know about you guys, but I had these complex thoughts of guilt, self-blame, feeling worthless, and burden to everyone around me. To be frank, I thought of ending that endless cycle of hell loop, but little did I know that I couldn't do it on my own. I was trying everything in my power to come out of it, but I failed and failed to give myself that little hope that it would get better one day. I had these two extreme thoughts, one was deciding to end it all for good, and the other was hoping that it would actually get better one day. I used to think this would be the last day I might see my parents and I used to go to the door and see them for one last time. This was my routine for almost 2-3 months. I went through all possible suicidal methods and fixed one, which I won't disclose. Still, you can say my only concern is not to traumatize my parents after they find me. I didn't want them to recollect that last visual of mine. Despite having very supportive and understandable parents and friends, I couldn't actually put my hand out to ask for help, thinking I would just add to their hectic lives. Covid 19 changed the lifestyles of almost everyone around me, and I knew what they were going through, so reaching out to them was difficult at the very least.

I don't remember the exact date one fine day, but I woke up, attended online classes, and fixed the time. I washed all my clothes and hung them in the sunlight. I prepared the last breakfast(I love cooking) and started playing BTS songs(you can judge me all you want, but their song lyrics did help me to pass on one shitty day after another). I went through the final checklist and called my sister and parents to listen to their voices again. I smiled, rubbed my tears off, and stood up. At that moment, just one thing popped into my head, Why should I do this to my parents and my very hardworking sister? Why should I put them through what I'm going through? I thought of trying a little harder because I had already hit rock bottom (at least that was what I thought then). Thankfully, I tried calling a good friend of mine, and he came running to me with juice packets(he knew I would have skipped lunch) and sat with me. All I did was cry, and he just sat there listening to it. He waited till my parents arrived and then took off. I told my dad after taking some time that day itself. He made sure to remind me what I have around me and that I always have him no matter what. I'm really thankful for him being that understanding, and he said all the right things, which somehow made sense to my fucked up brain.

I started trying, and I came to know about GCU. One Ph.D. scholar from my department suggested that I talk to Dr. Pooja and gave me her contact number. I called her right away, and she was very welcoming. Her warmth of trying to help me soothed my soul. I couldn't hold back my tears, so I started crying. She was just there on the other side, saying it's okay to cry your heart out, and she never asked me why. She asked me to do her a favor and made me cook a hearty meal for myself and go to bed for today. She then gave me the contact of Dr. Bhooma, and I immediately spoke to her. She took her time even though she was traveling. We had a long conversation, and I started pouring my heart out and cried like hell. That day I slept like a baby after fighting depression for

almost 8 months. After all that crying, I woke up with a fresh mind and started my day. I started spending quality time with people I love, like my family, sister, and friends. I didn't share what I was going through, but I just concentrated on the good side of it. I went to a psychiatrist after much deliberation. People somehow begin to judge when I say this. They were like what's needed for that and what might go such wrong types. I didn't care about any of it. I started feeling lighter inside after putting others' opinions aside.

Days went by, and I kept trying to make myself feel loved each day. It's easier said than done, and I learned it the hard way, like everyone does. I was prescribed light anti-depressants, and I can not say that alone solely healed me. Still, it actually helped the process of healing.

We often tend to forget how warm people are and how grateful we must be for our life. I am saying this because I didn't give much importance till then. I decided to look at the bright side, and it's okay to have those episodes of isolation but try not to stay there or dive in. Just put a hand out so that someone/something/or you alone will reach out, and trust me, it will get better, or at least you'll learn how to fight it, and it won't affect you anymore.

These things personally helped me.

- 1) I started doing things I love one by one. It can be something as simple as making your own coffee.
- 2) I want to get fit for just myself.
- 3) I want to be independent, and the more I started becoming, the more empowered I felt. I felt good about myself after so long. To be frank, I forgot how it felt.
- 4) Change of environment, making new friends, and meeting new people did help a lot.

Lastly, coming to campus was a blessing. I made lovely friends and met many congenial souls. Now I look towards each day with a positive mindset and start living my life to the fullest. There's help, and there will always be, and I know it sounds cliché, but it's true. I hope you find your driving force and fight this with all your might. There's no need for you to go through this all alone. We all are here for you. We are in this fight together.

~ A Ph.D. scholar