

Sadness

Irritability

Lethargy

Desire

Creating Depression

By Avery Edison

Introduction

I don't hold a belief in God, but I've dabbled. I was raised in a Christian culture, and the faith of others has informed my worldview. It's an interesting lens to see existence through, whether you believe or not. The idea of a Creator constructing every part of the universe is so tempting, because it means there's a reason to everything, even those things which seem so without reason. So pointless.

I have bipolar disorder, which manifests most often as depression. I've suffered from/through/with depression for my whole life, pretty much. And depression can seem so incredibly pointless, so frustrating in the uselessness of it. I wrote this short little book(?) as an attempt to rationalize the irrational. To figure out why someone would want depression, and its component parts, to exist.

I don't mean to offend any Christians, or, indeed, anybody of any faith. This is all in good fun. As fun as mental illness can get, anyway.

Idea

God: I've got this note written down, "depression".

Angel: What's that, then?

God: I think I want to make some of the humans get really sad sometimes.

Angel: Don't we already have that? I mean, that's what "sad" is, right?

God: No, no - this would be much *worse* than just regular sadness. It would be almost soul-crushing despair.

Angel: It's important to have different *kinds* of sadness, you think?

God: I just want to add some variety to the emotional palette. Right now I feel like we've got a lot going on-

Angel: Happy, sad, lonely, scared, angry, shocked...

God: -but there's nothing that takes a *really deep dive* on a feeling, you know? Like... Like the "euphoria" we made for the orgasm.

Angel: Oh, so depression would just last for a second? Like a quick burst of pure sadness?

God: See, that's the thing, I'm not really sure about any of the details. I kind-of wanted to hash them out with you.

Angel: Sure, I'm always happy to act as a sounding board. Can I ask why, though? Why do you want to make them so, so sad?

God: Why do you think I'm doing *any* of this?

Angel: Um... I just figured it was boredom.

God: Well, I... Yeah. Yeah, it's mostly boredom.

Time

Angel: Do you have any idea how long you'd like it to last? Because if the equivalent is an orgasm, then that's just a few seconds...

God: Oh, right. Um, no, no I think it should last way longer. Like, months, maybe years. But also maybe just a day.

Angel: So you're kind of uncertain about length?

God: It's more that I want the uncertainty to be *a feature of the depression itself*. Like what we did with Bell's Palsy.

Angel: Okay, sure. Like, you don't know if you'll ever get better, and you have no idea when you should *expect* to be better.

God: Exactly. I want it to be a chronic thing. Is that the right word, "chronic"?

Angel: Uh, you invented all the words, so I would have to assume...

God: Oh. Ha! Yeah, you're right.

Angel: No, *you're* right. Heh.

God: But yes, I think it should really drag on. With no indication of progress, or change.

Angel: I really like that concept, the idea of the uncertainty of it.

God: Thanks.

Angel: I think there's a lot of room to fit that in to other areas of the depression, too.

Treatment

Angel: How about if there are some cures, but, like... it's uncertain if they'll even work.

God: Huh. I mean, I'd *wanted* to shy away from cures completely.

Angel: And I totally understand that - why would you want this to be something they could fix, right?

God: Exactly. I thought depression would be a thing you would just have to kind of... wait out.

Angel: I think that's what *most* people will probably end up doing, too. But if there were a bunch of different ways to help fix the problem, and some of them work on some people, and don't work on others, I feel like that'd make the people who *don't* get helped feel even worse.

God: So, like, there could be... I don't know, like a pill? Like, take a pill and you're all better?

Angel: Something like that, sure. But, of course, the pill will only *maybe* work. And maybe you even feel *bad* for *resorting* to the pill.

God: Especially if there are other possible cures that *don't* require medical intervention!

Angel: Like... okay, okay, um - Like just *taking a walk outside*! The sun! *The sun* should be a possible cure!

God: Oh, that's good. That's really good. If there are readily available, natural cures that might work, then the people who resorted to the pill would feel both better *and* worse.

Angel: It's like, "why couldn't you just go outside and catch some rays, idiot?"

God: Ha, yeah! The sun's *free*, dummy!

Angel: Right, the pill should be super expensive. And you should have to take it a lot. Like, every day.

God: And there's still only a chance that it'll work.

Angel: And there are a bunch of different kinds of pills, and if one doesn't work on you, you can try another.

God: It's like, um, raise the hope, then dash it, then raise a *new* hope!

Time redux

God: Can we go back to time, again? With regard to the way they experience it, I had some ideas.

Angel: I figured that the whole “time flies when you’re having fun” thing would just mean that a depressed person would feel time go by slowly.

God: You’re totally right. And I love that, I do. But I also think that, it should also feel like time is going incredibly *fast*. Like there should also be a sense of the days just... slipping away from you.

Angel: Those two feelings seem, I don’t know, maybe a little mutually exclusive, though.

God: That’s what’s so *great* about it! You’d spend every day being like, “ugh, this is the worst, why do the days drag on like this” and then at the end of the week you’d say, “whoa, wait - how is it Friday already?”

Angel: I guess this would add in to that “never-enough-time-to-accomplish-things” feeling you wanted to include.

God: Oh, absolutely. And it could definitely amplify the impression of being a useless lump who’s wasted an incredible amount of time just laying around being sad.

Angel: So with regard to the logistics, do we mess around with relativity and localised time dilation specific to each individual sufferer? Because that could have a big impact on how the humans observe physics-

God: No, no, that’s the best part! *It’s all in their head*. Time, objectively, always moves at the same speed! It just *feels* like it’s going slowly.

Angel: Genius.

Doubt

Angel: I have to say, I'm loving just *how much* of this is all in their heads.

God: I think it's important that this depression thing be a *legitimate* illness, because I want the humans to *actually* suffer-

Angel: Of course.

God: -but I also think that having it take place purely as a mental issue adds this whole other layer of doubt and suffering to it.

Angel: Right, I mean, that's the great thing about it. You're gonna have people who know, who can *feel* that there's something wrong with them, but who also can tell that there's nothing *physically* wrong.

God: And you'll get some of the people around them, maybe even the entire *culture*, doubting that they're even ill at all.

Angel: Do you think some of them will deny that depression *exists*?

God: Either that or say that it's not serious enough to excuse some of the physical side effects.

Angel: Like the, um, the inability to do things, or the lashing out at people around them?

God: Exactly. Instead some people will just be all, "you're not depressed, you're lazy!"

Angel: Classic.

God: "Oh, I didn't realise being depressed gave you an excuse to be a dick!"

Angel: That kind of treatment by other people is just going to *compound* the depression, right?

God: Something I've really tried to focus on is allowing for, at every possible opportunity, that kind of compounding, amplification, and reinforcement of the depression.

Angel: Oh, you've definitely succeeded there.

Friends

Angel: I've been thinking about the support network issue.

God: You and me both. That problem is keeping me up at night.

Angel: We know that whenever people get sick, their friends are going to want to help them, right?

God: Yes, in most cases. That's why I built in all that empathy, plus some caveman stuff about protecting the tribe and whatever.

Angel: Okay, so, we can't turn off empathy in everyone who's friends with a depressed person, but what if we just made the depressed person *think* that they didn't have friends?

God: Or that the friends they do have just don't care!

Angel: Exactly! We get them to *cut themselves off* from support, even though it's what they *desperately* need.

God: That. Is. Genius.

Angel: I am only what you made me.

God: And what if we also put in a *reaction* to being rejected like that?

Angel: I don't follow...

God: We could make it so that if you have a friend who's depressed and you try to help her and she rejects your help, then you get mad at her.

Angel: Would they *get* mad? Wouldn't they understand it's just the depression affecting their friend's judgement?

God: That's the thing - they wouldn't *want* to get mad. They'd know it's insensitive. But they wouldn't be able to help it. It would be just under the surface, tainting every thought they had of their depressed friend, until...

Angel: ...Until it just becomes *easier* not to think about the friend at *all!*

God: Exactly. Boom - support network cut off.

Home

God: What would you think of a person who hated being at home?

Angel: Uh, I guess they would love being *outside* of their home.

God: So if a person hated being outside, then..?

Angel: I would assume they love to *stay* home.

God: That's what I thought. That's the logical thing, right?

Angel: Sure. If there are two states -at home, and not at home- you can't really hate *both* of them.

God: But here's my idea - what if we *made* the depressed people hate both of them. Or, rather, *think* that they hate both of them.

Angel: So you've got a depressed person who's spent the past eight days in their bedroom, for instance, and can't stand it a second longer-

God: -and at the same time the thought of leaving the house, maybe even leaving that *room*, is unbearable.

Angel: I like it as an idea, but wouldn't it be impossible for a person to hold two opposing thoughts at the same time like that?

God: That's the beauty - they're not *actually* thinking both thoughts at the same time. One second they'll hate being at home, then hate the thought of the outside world, then hate being at home again. It'll keep flipping back and forth, each option looking more attractive until the moment it's actually considered.

Angel: The person would become a prisoner of their own indecision.

God: Exactly.

Angel: I like it. Or I don't like it.

God: Ha, good one.

Effects

God: We talked before about how so much of this is all in their heads, but I want there to be a physical component, too.

Angel: Hmm, that's tough to manage, though, because anything that makes it *obvious* that the person has depression will mean it's too easy to diagnose.

God: Sure, sure - I want there to be as much ambiguity about whether or not you even have depression as possible. But I don't want to *only* symptom to be "sadness", you know? I feel like we can pack more of a punch than that.

Angel: You mentioned before the word "lazy", and I think that's something we could really tap into.

God: What, it just makes them lazy? But being lazy can be kind of *fun*!

Angel: You don't have to tell *me* that, you've seen me on the Sabbath!

God: Man, I'm so glad I made the Sabbath.

Angel: Depressive laziness could be *anti*-fun, though. Like, you're not *doing* anything, and you're not even *enjoying* that you're not doing anything.

God: Okay, okay, so... So you'd feel useless, maybe? Worthless?

Angel: And maybe you'd even *want* to do things, and find yourself *unable* to. Maybe even unable to get out of *bed*!

God: Again, we're getting the compounding thing going - because if you can't do anything then you can't see friends, or go to work, or take care of your family, and everything starts falling apart. Which...

Angel: Which just makes you feel *worse*!

Slumber

Angel: You wrote “sleep” down on a scrap of paper, here, and you just brought up the inability to get out of bed.

God: Sure, sleeping is a big part of laziness, right?

Angel: But do you think we could get some of that dissonance going again? Like, you feel desperately tired, but racked with insomnia?

God: That’s great! That’s really great. Just laying awake, tossing and turning...

Angel: And when you finally do get to sleep, you end up sleeping through the whole day, and you wake up and the sun has gone down, and you feel like a real idiot.

God: I bet it would even feel like it wasn’t worth trying to do anything, at that point, because the day is already over, right?

Angel: And if you *did* end up doing something, maybe tidying your house or watching some TV, then you’d end up stay awake all night, and you’d be tired by morning, and...

God: And you’d sleep through the day *all over again!*

Angel: So you’re feeling like an idiot, you’re locking yourself into this cycle, *and* you’re missing out on that important sunshine.

God: Right, right, the natural cure.

Angel: Well, it *might* be a cure.

God: Ha, yeah. Maybe! Maybe not!

Success

God: I have to say, I feel like we've really covered everything. I'm proud of what we've achieved today.

Angel: Me too, I guess.

God: Come on, you've contributed so much - I couldn't have done this *without* you. You should be proud!

Angel: I just feel like... I don't know, maybe this is all a little cruel? And pointless?

God: Ah. You want to know *why*. Why am I even creating depression in the first place?

Angel: Hey, it's not for me to question your wisdom, Lord...

God: No, no, I totally get it. And like I said, you put in a lot of work, you deserve to know why we did all this.

Angel: It would make me feel a lot better, I think.

God: At the start of this, I said it was boredom. I was being flippant, of course, because *nothing* about making this world, and these people, is boring to me. It's my life's work, you know? And I *wish* I could make everything perfect for them, give them lives free of pain, and suffering. But I tried that. Or, I'm *going* to try that. You know how time is weird here.

Angel: I sure do, although I still appreciate the watch you gave me when you promoted me.

God: The suffering is important, I think, because it makes the good things even better. You can't have light without dark, right? Maybe depression is a necessary countermeasure to happiness and joy. I like to think that, in the end, it will all balance out.

Angel: It seems like a bit of an uneven distribution, though. There'll be people who never know a day of depression, and others who will spend their whole *lives* depressed. How is that balance?

God: Um, well, I'm looking at things in the aggregate, I guess.

Angel: But you're the *only one* who can do that. For everyone else, it's personal!

(cont.)

God: I thought you didn't want to question my wisdom?

Angel: Look, I'm just saying...

God: You want me to make *you* depressed? Because I'll do it. I'll depress the *crap* out of you.

Angel: Please, no. I take it back. You're making the right call, on *all* of this.

God: That's what I thought.

Angel: ...

God: ...

Angel: It *is* the boredom thing, isn't it?

God: Yeah, I am just crazy bored up here.

The end

If you enjoyed this, and want to support the creator, you can PayPal a few bucks to vorpalsword@gmail.com. It would help me out a lot. No worries if you can't though. Thank you for reading!