

LOST CONNECTIONS: UNCOVERING THE REAL CAUSES OF DEPRESSION – AND THE UNEXPECTED SOLUTIONS

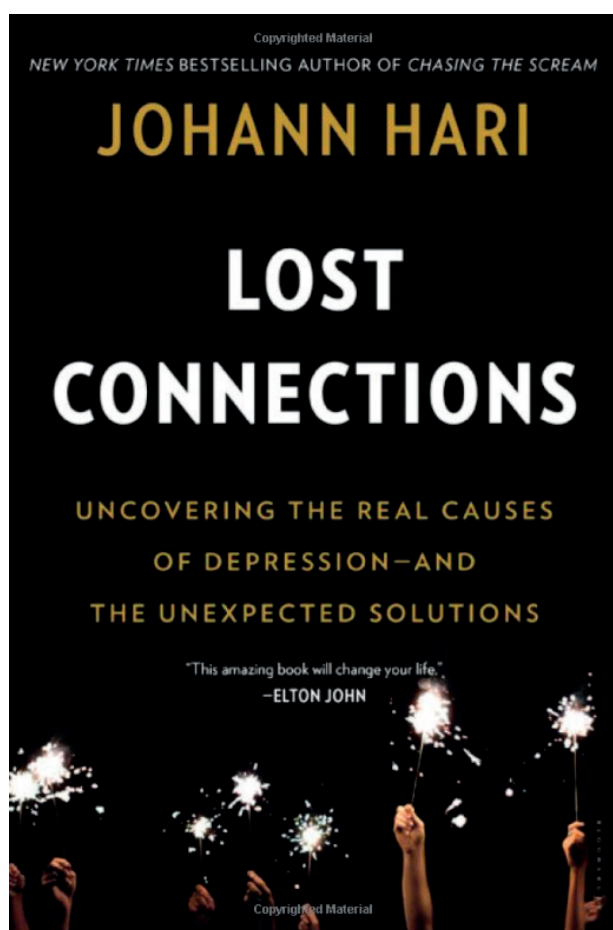
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Depression is one of the most common mental health disorder with an exponential increase in prevalence in recent decades. World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that more than 300 million people in the world suffer from depression and was listed as the single largest factor contributing to global disability. The high prevalence of

this disorder determined that depression to become the most common mental illness worldwide. The consequences are felt in all aspects of society, it is estimated that depression is the cause for the most days of medical leave, it is an important factor in disability, morbidity and mortality for young population with high cost for health care system and society. Depression deeply affects the individual at the core level of his existence, substantially decreases the quality of life, deteriorates interpersonal relationships and impair normal functioning. In addition, this patients have increased risk for developing organic diseases which also increase morbidity and mortality. However, even if depression is now recognized as one of the most important global health problem, its pathogenesis is still poorly understood. Nowadays the bio-psycho-social model is the most accepted theory in depression.

Johann Hari, in this book: *Lost connection – Uncovering the real causes of depression – and the unexpected solutions*, provides a synthesis of the psycho-social factors incriminated in the development of depression. His book is divided into 3 parts. The first part focuses on the flows in evolution of the psychiatric perspective on depression. In the second part he lists, explains and exemplifies the psycho-social factors that he identified as having a major



role in determining depression. Finally, the third part focuses on solutions.

For writing this book, Hari had a personal motivation as described in his book. At the age of 18, he was diagnosed with depression and received antidepressant treatment for a period of 14 years. Due to the oscillating evolution of his personal symptoms even under antidepressant treatment, Hari began to wonder if the old purely biological explanation for his condition: "depression is a chemical imbalance of the brain related to low serotonin levels" is the real explanation and that the antidepressant treatment is the only solution. Thus began a journey in finding out his own story that resulted in this book.

The first part of the book focuses on criticism on the purely biological perspective of depression and antidepressants. This part invites psychiatrists to deepen the pathogenesis and the mechanism of action of drugs. Hari also indexes an extensive bibliography that is an excellent opportunity to understand the controversies in the field of depression as a psychiatric entity. Although many of the notions exposed must be viewed with suspicion and critical eye, this book invites us to understand the importance of mental health from multiple perspectives and also to look with interest and tolerance at the current of antipsychiatry. It is important to note that Hari is a journalist by profession and has been battling depression for decades. We can also understand how important it is for the patient to understand the story of his own condition. This book invites us to reflect on the relationships that psychiatrists establish with their own patients and the fact that communication is extremely important. Truncated explanations can be extremely harmful to

the patient. It is obvious that in recent years psychiatry has evolved considerably, today most psychiatrists recognize the decisive element represented by the psycho-social component in depression development, and in all intervention plans, psychotherapy is a major therapeutic indication.

In the second part of the book, Hari focuses on 9 determined psycho-social factors of depression. It is also specified that these factors are definitely not the only ones involved in the pathogenesis of depression. From Hari's perspective, disconnection is the major mental process that represents the core of depression. He identifies 9 disconnections that he explains and exemplifies by attaching the appropriate bibliography, an extremely important and useful aspect for deepening the subject. The 9 disconnections detailed in this book are: disconnection from meaningful work, disconnection from other people, disconnection from important values, disconnection from childhood traumas, disconnection from social position and respect, disconnection from the natural world, disconnection from a secure future and the eighth and ninth causes are a summary of the role of genes and changes in the brain.

In the third part, Hari focuses on solutions, the solutions are exemplified for each type of disconnection.

This book is an excellent opportunity for the psychiatric community to look at other perspectives on how depression is perceived and understood. This book is also useful to the general public who are experiencing reactive depressive symptoms, minor and moderate depressive episodes that can find help among the lines of this book. It is also useful for people who, although not depressed, have a loved one who suffers.