

**Acceptance,
Recognition,
and Control** (A.R.C.)
Against Depression



Ray J. Dodkins

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By
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Foreword

Depression is a subject most men do not talk about. I now know why that is the case. After counseling for two years, I realized two major things. The first was that I had not known of or been aware of the depth of depression I was in and the dramatic effect it was having on my behavior and my life security. The other point was that I still did not know why I totally denied what happened to me as a man. I had to search deep inside myself to first understand the threat and how and why I felt this way. My perception of what I was and how I was seen as a man started as a child and set my path in life.



Most families live in a comfort zone that encompasses the normal daily routine. Within that zone, some routines are pleasant and some are disturbing. Our family life may or may not be as fulfilling as we expect, but as individuals, we follow our daily routine and operate in our comfort zone. Circumstances occur in life that are out of our control. Some of these events stress us noticeably and others are dismissed by the mind as trivial events. These events are stored in what I like to think as a container held deep within us; this container gets filled and emptied depending on our levels of relaxation and moods. Simple events, such as a bill arriving early, a bus or train being late, or children wanting more attention, add

stress to our lives. The capacity of this inner vessel is maxed out sometimes by a major event in our lives, and we find unusual things suddenly occurring in our behavior. We struggle to understand and explain these abnormal feelings and behavioral changes. It now appears to our inner self that we have lost control! Now our inner manliness is threatened, and we start making excuses and are very critical of ourselves. In an effort to understand what's going on, we become more and more disturbed and feel more out of control. Our understanding of who we are and what we expect from ourselves as men is threatened. We must, then, understand what formed our inner unspoken feelings of ourselves and hopefully begin to unravel the mysteries of depression.

The inner feelings of growing up as a boy and moving through puberty are, at best, personally misunderstood and, in most cases, unguided. As children, we are influenced by our family and surroundings. This influence consists of both emotional and physical experiences, the effects of which are both felt and unconsciously absorbed, setting a pattern for our future lives, and having a profound effect on our thinking of who we are and who

we want to be. These experiences influence who we are and how we react to circumstances that confront us daily. In this never-ending learning curve, we imagine, in our minds, what it is to be a man through various stories or conversations with relatives, friends, or other acquaintances. You respect these people, and you unconsciously take on their perceptions of what a man should be like.

Those perceptions set the personal standard for you and manliness. This has now become the standard you set for yourself as to what is right or wrong in being who you are, how you react, when to care, and how much emotion to show so you can be admired as a man either by respect or actions, which are a measure of your own self worth and ability. These feelings are neither expressed nor spoken about and sometimes in the scheme of life dismissed, but important just the same.

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