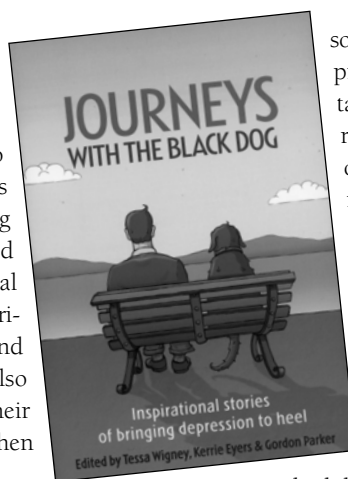


Stories of the black dog

Journeys with the black dog. Inspirational stories of bringing depression to heel. Tessa Wigney, Kerrie Eyers, Gordon Parker, editors. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2007 (x + 280 pp, \$24.95). ISBN 978 1 74175 264 9.

THIS IS AN INSPIRATIONAL BOOK, useful to people who experience chronic depression. It holds the stories of over 600 people who entered a writing competition, challenged to write about their mood disorder — the black dog. Divided into logical sections, the text moves the reader from the experience of depression through to stories of healing and recovery. Innovatively, friends and family are also included in one section of the book, providing their insights into the difficulties people experience when they have a loved one with depression.

I was pleased to see the “Staying on course” section, about adjuncts to medical treatment. My experience as a general practitioner and depression researcher is that many people find these things of equal, if not more, benefit than medication, particularly for those with moderate depression. Themes of having



someone to talk to and really being listened to are prominent throughout the book. The tips for maintaining wellbeing at the end of the book are great and revolve around having a passion in life, being kind to oneself, living in the moment and savouring happiness when it does occur.

The only limitation of the book is that it is weighted to the moderate to severe end of the spectrum of mood disorders, with many of the contributors having bipolar and long-term severe depression. Many of them are on medication and have been hospitalised.

I would recommend *Journeys with the black dog* to my patients and to all people who live with or are touched by the black dog — it will provide inspiration to endure, survive and hopefully even thrive.

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