



Daily Create: Show us a Feeling! tdc983

An explanation of my creative process and product
by Robyn Cashmore

Visual Embodiment of Depression (the descent into)

(NOTE: The photos I used are not mine. Details below.*)

It is September 27, 2014, and I have FINALLY finished the Daily Create (tdc983) from September 16. The instructions said to think about a feeling for “a bit.” Well, “a bit” is a very subjective length of time. And I always err on the side of way too long, way too involved, and way too many words. Hence the delay in my completing this daily create. Although I was in a fine mood when I first saw the instructions for tdc983, the feeling I started thinking about was depression. The daily create also said to create an embodiment of your feeling, then share with others and hope they understand it. So I created an image (which is really a series of images) that embodies my thoughts about depression without using any words. But I really want to also provide a verbal explanation of this particular project for anyone who cares to read it. Whether you have seen my image or not; whether you understand it or not; whether you are familiar with depression or not; feel free to read on. And even if I am the only one who ever reads this, it still will have been worth the time and thought I put into it.

There is great variation in the ways people experience depression. So please keep in mind that what I think and say is not meant to be representative of anyone else. What I started thinking is that depression is often not a feeling that you just wake up and have, as if the depression switch was turned on. It can be something that comes on gradually. Sometimes only time can tell if you are just having a few down days, or if you have actually started the descent into depression. So you start trying to track how you feel, and when, and for how long. And you count days. And you keep moving forward, hoping for the best, even as you are sinking slowly. Sometimes you realize you have stopped tracking the days, which usually means you are feeling better. You realize your mind is no longer weighed down with those unshakable thoughts, feelings, and fears. You are glad it wasn't one of those descents into depression, and you go about your business. But other times you keep sinking. You can't distract yourself with other things. Even as you keep yourself moving, you feel the energy draining. Things that you are sure you could once do easily and without effort seem to leave you exhausted early in the day. And at some point you realize, there is no doubt, the descent has happened. You are stuck in depression. But you keep plugging along, with great difficulty, hoping that your memories of once enjoying your day, of feeling joyful and carefree, aren't just a dream, and that you will find yourself there again.

So, instead of creating a single image that embodies depression, I chose to use multiple images that I feel embody the descent into depression. Below is a short explanation for each image.

* The url address for each photo is given directly under the photo. I used Google to search online for photographic images that best depicted the stage of descent that I had in mind. I inserted the photos into a Microsoft Word document and applied Picture Tools; Artistic Effects: Paintbrush to each and added the black border.

Visual Embodiment of Depression (the descent into): Notes re: creative process and product for tdc983

by Robyn Cashmore



At its best. Feeling present in the middle of life's joys.

Original Photo Retrieved from

<http://www.shutterstock.com/video/clip-6226238-stock-footage-ultra-hd-k-happy-family-playing-in-sea-water-on-beach-caucasian-mother-spinning-her-child-kid-on.html?src=rel/6226241:0>



Still active in things you enjoy, but feeling a little removed.

Original Photo Retrieved from

http://www.visualphotos.com/image/2x4764528/pacific_islander_mother_and_children_playing_with



Managing to be there for some of the things you usually enjoy, but finding it very difficult to take an active part in them. Joining in takes an intentional, concerted effort and, when managed, is very energy draining.

Original Photo Retrieved from

<http://www.shutterstock.com/video/clip-1208659-stock-footage-woman-lies-in-beach-chair-and-watches-by-playing-in-ball-people-at-sea.html?src=rel/1208860:3/gg>



Almost impossible to go to things that are not absolutely necessary. Things are falling off your mental radar because just keeping track of them (forget actually doing them) is overwhelming. Trying to at least make sure you are doing SOMETHING in most moments of the day, no matter how small, so you at least feel as though you are still moving towards being productive.

Original Photo Retrieved from

http://www.visualphotos.com/image/2x3876943/woman_sitting_in_beach_chair



Only doing what *has* to be done, if that. You really start to wonder if you are remembering correctly that there were times that you felt full of energy, and moved along easily, and socialized comfortably, because at this point that feels like a fantasy. All you can do is trust your memory and trust that this too shall pass.

Original Photo Retrieved from

<http://www.onneutralground.com/2014/01/03/friday-favorites-a-round-up-of-favorite-photos-from-2013/evening-silhouette-woman-in-chair/>



The bottom of the descent. Not fun. This is a scary place. It is way beyond negative thoughts: It is negative beliefs (no wise voice in your head countering them and reframing them as thoughts) and negative feeling in every pore. Physically you feel as if a heavy blanket has been draped on your body, or as if you are moving through sludge. If you are lucky, you still move along despite having no energy. Largely because as much as you can't imagine feeling worse, you know that allowing yourself to freeze or sink completely would definitely feel worse.

Original Photo Retrieved from

http://havocandshine.com/2012/08/15/ghosts-in-my-attic/631_cb91d678099bd0f487f90eeb6f02126f-2/