

Part 3 - Life on the edge, in a box: Depression derived from hyper-tense states of anxiety.

Previously I wrote two articles about the nature of the spectrum of mental-emotional dis-ease patterns, one I called a state of living “life on the edge” and the other is described as “life in a box”... respectively expressing the ancient qualities of fire and water but in pathological states of the human-condition. These are a spectrum of course and so the mid-point sees a state of internalization or depression that occurs from a situation of tremendous chronic anxiety.

The “life in a box” state is a situation of internalization, essentially this is about a kind of numbness and a situation of being “the Observer” from behind glass. This is why there is a potential for this state to create depression. It is unlikely to form the more manic and very anxious situations. However with the “life on the edge” state which feels like a much more exposed position, if this is chronic or has gone on for a long period of time of being in a hyper anxious/ traumatic/ “over the limit” state of tension, then it can cause a person to block out the emotional tension. This creates a kind of internal world which is often still very anxious but also forms an external block which acts like a shield or protection against the world. This is why I’m describing it as “life on the edge” but “in a box”, this therefore isn’t a “true” state of depression it is actually a state of anxiety that has formed what looks like depression from the outside.

Very often this pattern is mis-diagnosed within psychology to be a state of depression and treatment is given to deal with that accordingly. This actually can result in a worsening of the condition. If there is a depressive process going on, very often the energetic idea would be to expand and open a person outwards, to help them “expose”, however if this encouragement is give to a person in an anxiety state that merely looks like depression then this will actually encourage the depression because it worsens the state of anxiety that forms the depression in the first place. In the anxiety-based depression one actually has to calm and cool a person down, even though it looks like this is how they already are. In ancient medicine the nature of this pattern would be a situation of “true heat false cold” which means it looks like it's a cooler state but actually it's hot and fiery inside.

As with the previous two articles, I will try to represent the world view of a person who exhibits this kind of condition, we might call this pattern a mix of water and fire but it is really water within fire*.

*(Conversely “fire within water” would be a state of anxiety and tension that happens *within* “life in a box” type depression. While this is possible it is less likely, because depression states are so stable and “life in a box” state (very yin = stable) rarely encounter situations that take them into a state of supreme anxiety, though for some this may occur.)

“I really feel so stuck at the moment. I can't find a solution to my problems. My mind is always whirring with fears and tensions and it makes me so exhausted that all I want to do is sleep. I wish someone would give me a pill or something so that I could just feel calmer, more in control and then I could go about my daily life and not worry about

the future. I would say that I am not externally anxious, people even think I'm pretty calm and confident and I've got most things sorted but it isn't how I feel, on the inside I feel like I'm going crazy and I want to find a way out. God I wish there was a way I could be calm. At the moment I seem really indecisive about things but it's not that I don't feel, I know what I want to do and I know what I like and I used to be expressive of it but as time has gone on I feel more and more paralyzed by anxiety ...it's like a big wall, I get up to the edges of the wall and I want to break straight through, but the anxiety just doesn't let me, I feel like I'm stuck behind this wall of fear, it's a prison. It's been years since traumatic events stopped me feeling like I could at least express my fears easily, now I don't feel I can do that, somehow I've learned to hold them in and keep everyone else at bay.... It's like I'm living a double life, I've got a façade and people tell me I'm a bit of a recluse but on the other hand I never used to be like that...why am I caught in this depression, it's not me, ...I'm not like this. I wish when I was anxious I could talk about it, at the moment I seem to be traveling ever inwards....I don't want this any more, I need some help, I need someone to get me ...I feel so complicated”

This is the kind of expression that may be associated with a person who is a “life on the edge” expression but due to certain reasons there has been an internalization. People will generally display naturally either a more “life on the edge” or “life in a box” personality so the situation above is one of either a particularly complex individual's expression or can be where trauma has blocked a naturally expressive person from doing this and so they internalize and form a shell.

In either case the situation is difficult to sense. It exhibits both tendencies of the life in a box exterior calmness, yet an inner world that is anything but. This pattern tends to occur more in personalities with the yang type expression and less of the yin expression, so this means more in males (and females) who are *yang by nature*. The approach to begin to open this out is to actually see through the façade of the depression to the foundational anxiety beneath. As such one really needs to respond to this person like any other “life-on-the edge” type and actually ignore the ideology that they seem to be “ok” or calm as can be; in this case, the box-like expression is actually a “false” exterior it's not really believable other than superficially, which is actually how most people engage with one another!

The “life on the edge” type expression needs to be calmed down outside-in and so again everything on the exterior counts a great deal, the way of interacting with others to a meditative environment and a stress-free approach will allow a person to open up in their own way and they will gradually let down the guard of the depression state on the surface and start to express what they feel. The ice on the surface of their exterior quickly melts, whereas in a true “life in the box” person it doesn't really get affected by what you do externally, for them change only really ever comes from deep within them and so this is ultimately the more difficult pattern to effect. The “life on the edge, in a box” pattern is a nuance on the “life on the edge” pattern and so as a result one can simply understand this as something that needs to feel safe enough to resolve. The feeling needed is a calm and safe and “held” quality, which is something that allows this pattern to gradually resolve itself. In situations of trauma where this

pattern has been formed it can last many years, sometimes most of a person's life until they find a situation in which they feel comfortable. This is why in situations of very acute anxiety or short periods where anxiety goes through the roof it is sometimes useful for a person to have some tranquilizing calming herbs or in the very short term, drugs, to stabilize them. The nature of this pattern long-term however is something that needs to be dealt with from the outside-in, a calm environment and connections that are about feeling secure will always be at root to be able to allow these people nature's to express the true light that they are.

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