Ortman, D. (2016). Depression anonymous: The big book on depression addiction. Msi Press, Hollister, CA.

By Robert L. Funaro, Ed.D, LLP, Hospice Volunteer, for the Michigan Psychological Association

This is the second work that this reviewer has been honored to read and review from the author Dr. Dennis Ortman. It is a noteworthy work delving into a clinical process addressing depression. It is this reviewer’s experience that Dr. Ortman in this work weaved masterfully the interconnectedness of the complex issues of depression with the paradigm of the 12 Step Program. He cites case stories, diagnostic information and recommendation along with a thorough and clear explanation of the 12 Step Program to communicate the relatedness of Depression and healing with the human processes necessary to assist clients to life very satisfying and fulfilling lives.

He clearly explains that Change, Understanding, Growth and Acceptance of one’s dynamics involve the many folded processes of loss, grieving, and acceptance. The work is a kind of roadmap for assisting a client with the inevitable reshaping, reframing of one’s perception of oneself. If one is willing to accept the challenges that facing, accepting, and overcoming this depression addiction can have in one’s life then the outcome can be most satisfying leading one to personal happiness and fulfilment. Learning to pay attention to one’s feelings and reflecting on the layers of one’s life can assist one to peel back the layers of depression. The reflective process permits one to contemplate the inner voice without giving in to the temptation toward personal desolation.  Overcoming one’s shame and guilt and searching for friends, colleagues, and professionals who can assist one to see the inner true self is a part of the journey towards healing and self-fulfillment. This process is very well explored in this work.

Using a systematic (step) process of approaching one’s inner dynamic, a person can understand their depression, accept it, face it and assist in the process of moving from power to powerlessness in the face of difficult life moments. The author excellently takes a calculated approach to some of the steps of understanding depression. The author offers suggestions to clients who are seeking “recovery” and self-fulfillment. He reminds the reader that *“change only happens when the pain of holding on is greater than the fear of letting go.”(*p. 111).

Acknowledging that one is depressed, recognizing the harm that it has on one’s life, can lead to self-compassion and forgiveness as well as healing. Being rid of “bad” habits and proceeding into a new life can be both frightening as well as invigorating – as clinicians, this reviewer believes, we understand this process and have seen it in our practices. This work is practical, challenging, thought-provoking, energizing and reflective all at the same time. With the addition of prayer and personal reflection life can take on a whole new aliveness. This reviewer particularly enjoyed the phrase that recovery from depression can *awaken a slumbering Spirit.* I hope that others will take the time to read this work and see how they can awaken this slumbering spirit in the clients that they serve in their practice. I close with this from Anon: “Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly” (p. 167).